

From 'The Enterpriser' to 'Atomic Leadership'

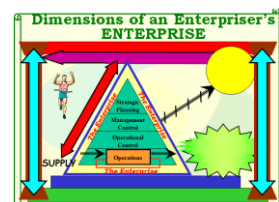
It all started when somebody in an international organization said, "John, you have had your own businesses and are a management trainer, will you help me?" I thought that this was very courageous; as I have seldom seen people appointed to senior management positions admit that they needed some help. This happens too often when subject matter task-orientated experts are suddenly put into people orientated leadership positions having previously encountered bad role-models and no or limited leadership experience or training. As I left his office he told his secretary that he had asked me to help him. She said, "Teach him how to prioritize". Somebody else recommended something else. Where to start?

On getting home I pulled out all my training books and started to write down all the different concepts involved with business, leadership and management. After approximately seventy-five items I determined that I did not really know where to start. I looked at it all from my experiences of having been employed in 28 different jobs or occupations that I had earned money from including waiter, fruit picker, businessman, consultant, trainer, coach and Chamber of Commerce and Industry Director, I decided to group all the items, initially calling the groups attributes, later changed to dimensions, with their components as elements. I did not want to end up with ten groups but that is what happened. At the same time I surveyed by e-mail, chief executives, managers and business owners.

What to call this? Well I noticed that we had businesses and businessmen, businesswomen and entrepreneurs; departments and Heads of Departments; enterprises but no enterpriser. So here we are combining leadership with entrepreneurship as I believe that the definition of an enterprise I found characterizes any leadership position whether in a tiny business, large multinational or international agency. The definition of an enterprise being *'an undertaking, especially one that needs courage or that offers difficulty.'*

The Enterpriser with the ten dimensions of an enterprise was born, but still required testing. The concept was used to facilitate two international secretariat senior management retreats producing for them extensive lists of items to be researched or implemented. The Enterpriser concept was also used in training entrepreneurship in an MBA type program run by the German government for unemployed university graduates. They would be taught the dimensions and then they selected businesses and organizations to determine if the dimensions all really existed and were valid. The students selected operations to interview including market stallholders, restaurants, police precincts, a priesthood, government departments, a brothel, large businesses and agencies. They found in each case that the dimensions were all in place in some form or another. This was further evidenced when debates were held by them to attack or defend each dimension.

Being a visual person I drew up a design to represent the 10 dimensions. This diagram had the management pyramid in the centre with the typical pillars and foundations. I was happy with it until my daughter looked at it and described it in rather unflattering terms. Later I was reading up on some Egyptology to where it mentioned the pyramids in Gaza, Earth and anchoring with the star system Sirius. So here I was, in these times of rapidly increasing change with an anchor in the middle of my Enterpriser representation and disparaging remarks from my kin.



One day I was having a drink with a Physicist from the Nuclear Research facility (CERN) and we started discussing atoms as a fundamental building block of life. Then we started to look at leadership and management in relation to the properties of an atom. Atomic Leadership was born and I incorporated the atom (Beryllium in this case – 4 atoms) into a logo I had designed for a tourism business. No more anchor. That was the journey from The Enterpriser to Atomic Leadership.

It very effective in teaching entrepreneurship, compiling Business Plans, Job Descriptions and in identifying and correcting areas of weakness in an Enterprise using the Rating Questionnaire because it cover all the Dimensions and Elements.

The most important dimension? – we can discuss that
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