

# STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

## The Enterpriser®, Part I

*(Developing others for the magic of their success)*

John Allen

*“The Enterpriser” is derived from the author’s experience in management positions, training coaching and mentoring activities, entrepreneurial ventures, business association leadership and research. It has been used to coach and train senior United Nations management, the secretariat of an international sports federation and is approved by the German Government for use as a component to train graduates in an AIM (MBA-type) program. This is Part I of a two-part article.*

How many times are people thrust into leadership or management positions because they are good at what they are doing? Technical experts, academics and top task performers are promoted - “Go manage---you are the leader now---it should be easy for someone with your ability.” One moment they are achieving through their own abilities and knowledge and the next moment they are responsible for achieving through the efforts of others.

Instead of ‘fixing the bus’ they are now responsible for driving it. Leaders *drive* the bus. If they have their heads in the engine they can’t see where they’re going, much less actually arrive at the destination. Depending upon the size of the bus, others now have to clean, repair and maintain it and attend to the needs of the passengers. All the leader has to do is drive.

The problem for leaders is that people are all different. They come in different shapes and sizes with different value systems, beliefs, cultures, needs, etc. This is what makes leadership interesting—and challenging. It’s been said that “if you don’t like people, get out of management.” Systems, policies and procedures are created in order to control people. Have you noticed that businesses and organizations tend to change systems and procedures, as it is easier than changing people? Have you thought about how many laws, policies and procedures are created by people who have never “been there?” Little consideration is given to those affected.

Before considering all the concepts that affect leaders one needs to determine what it is they lead and what they call themselves. Do they lead or manage an enterprise, business, bureaucracy, department/section, team, process, systems or some of “all of the above?” Are they leaders, managers, executives, directors, administrators, entrepreneurs, *intrapreneurs* or, again, some of “all of the above?”

For the purposes of this article, they lead an *enterprise*, based on the following definition: “*Enterprise – undertaking, especially one that needs courage or that offers difficulty.*” I believe that this definition is one that can be identified with by most people in leadership positions. Therefore, being responsible for an enterprise, resplendent with teams and systems, one could be considered an “Enterpriser.” My definition of “Enterpriser” is: “*a person who incorporates the qualities and abilities of a leader, manager and an entrepreneur, and has the courage and willingness to engage in enterprise.*”

We now have our “Enterpriser,” complete with a multiplicity of concepts to consider along with a multitude of possibilities and probabilities regarding application. No wonder risk taking is a feature of life as an “Enterpriser.” The amount of risk taking is normally determined by organizational culture, i.e. levels of responsibility and position within the organization. I’ve

witnessed a large organization that limited risk by requiring approval from five (5) different levels of management. They did not have a problem with having to respond quickly.

Now that we have the concepts, what are the basics? What dimensions can be considered generically across the spectrum of leadership? I have grouped these concepts into ten (10) dimensions (ten was the end result, not the goal) with their associated elements---the big picture.

First I considered the dimensions that an "Enterpriser" should have. In so doing, I ended with the question, "Do all leaders have/display the same dimensions?" To name a few, compare Mandela, Gandhi, Hitler, Kennedy, Thatcher and Meier. My projection is that there are only two (2) dimensions, with a rider, for the effective "Enterpriser."

- a. Never lose sight of your goal (Vision)
  - b. Get others excited about that goal (Passion and Communication)
- (Rider: Good "Enterprisers" surround themselves with good, competent people)

If people are recognized and are excited they will automatically apply and stretch themselves to achieving vision. One of my bosses once said "I really don't have a clue what you're doing, John, but carry on anyway." What faith, what trust---I produced for him. The next boss asked, "Where is the rule book?" I left. It was not the environment for me. I have witnessed occasions where lack of achievement or productivity was solely due to the leader or manager, not the systems or the staff.

My full list of 'dimensions of success', with related quotations:

VISION – *"Begin with the end in mind."* – *"Imagination is more important than knowledge."*

PASSION – *"Yes, Yes, Yes!"* – *"Some men see things as they are and say why. I dream of things that never were and say why not."*

STRATEGY – *"Ninety percent (90%) of strategy is execution."*

MARKET/CUSTOMERS – *"Nothing astonishes men so much as common sense and plain dealing."*

ORGANIZATION – *"Disorganization is the opposite to calm – it creates chaos, demands attention, and constantly reminds you of all that remains to be done."*

INFORMATION – *"When good people are given good information they typically make good decisions."*

DECISION-MAKING – *"The only man who never makes a mistake is the man who never does anything."*

COMMUNICATION – *"Ninety percent (90%) of execution is communication"* – *"Tell everyone about everything that matters to you and to them."*

CUSTOMER SERVICE – *"Very few customer expectations are unreasonable."*

VALUES and STANDARDS – *"There is no right way to do a wrong thing."*

If but one of these dimensions is weak, the enterprise will not be as successful as it could be. Let's use the "leader drives the bus" analogy:

Vision – The staff and passengers know where the bus is going.

Passion – They are excited about where they are going.

Strategy – There is a map and a plan of how to get there and the bus is properly manned.

Market/Customers – People know about the bus and are willing to pay for it, use it or sponsor it.

Organization – The staff are fully equipped and organized, and systems are in place for all services.

Information – Records are kept of transactions and activities.

Decision-making – Staff know their authority levels, problem solving limits and are able to use initiative whilst being held accountable for their responsibilities.

Communication – Everyone is kept informed about progress, knows where they are and what is planned next.

Customer Service – The customers are treated like kings and queens and always feel welcome---we need them to come back again!

Values and Standards – Staff are competent and the bus is clean and smart, runs on time and is kept environmentally efficient.

People should be held accountable only if they are provided with clear guidelines about the outputs for which they are responsible. Job descriptions can take from a few lines to a full thesis. They normally describe and bind people to process. A machine operator should be responsible for producing “x” number of widgets in a given period with a determined quality standard. The desired output will not be achieved if training is not given, the equipment operated and maintained correctly, hygiene and safety standards observed and the work hours completed. Output orientation should not be considered exclusively, however, without due consideration to process, wherein lies the improvement of efficiencies and productivity. It is the same for leadership. With clear direction and an overarching umbrella approach, leadership can be made easier and, more likely than not, result in success.

My surveys show time and again that people generally want, amongst many things, for their leaders to treat them with dignity, respect, honesty and fairness. It seems simple enough; why is it not done? Perhaps it is that they also require a vision or purpose, communication, motivation and enthusiasm. They then complicate things by wanting to operate as individuals while simultaneously being part of a team. This is what makes being an “Enterpriser” challenging and fascinating, so long as you don’t try too hard to categorize it and put it in a box.

So then, if *everyone* in an enterprise is important to the success of that enterprise, why is it that in many cases top management does not take the time to greet or talk to their own staff---the folks who “make it happen?”

### **Next – Applying “The Enterpriser”**

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# Applying “The Enterpriser<sup>©</sup>”

(Developing others for the magic of their success)

In the previous article we looked at leadership and the dimensions required in a successful Enterprise – “*undertaking, especially one that requires courage or that offers difficulty*”. Your Enterprise could be your own business, a branch or department in a business or bureaucracy, your association, club or even family.

An Enterprise is multidimensional. Every dimension or attribute has tremendous significance and is related and dependent on every other dimension. Each dimension has its own components or elements. We tend to draw our structures and organograms two dimensionally with the leader at the top and the troops in layers of importance beneath. Lets shift the paradigm and imagine the Enterprise as a spinning orb that is moving in a cycle with the leader up and at the side – in other words the leader is the one in front showing the way. Inside the orb imagine the dimensions, people and systems structured in a three or more dimensional matrix all connected and interacting with each other.

Imagine that the Vision is the core or axis on which this orb spins and that Passion is the energy that permeates all of the dimensions providing creativity and the life force. Strategy and Organization supply the structure, the Market indicates direction, Information and Decision-Making reflect intelligence and choice whilst Communication provides linkages. Customer Service is the desire to provide and be inclusive and the Values and Standards reflect the judgements required for maintaining momentum and evaluating any activity. This picture is complex and dynamic and that is why the leader or *leadership team* requires insight, feeling and courage to make it work.

In applying the Enterpriser we need to ensure that each Dimension is fully in place. I provide a list of the elements within each dimension and some questions that can be asked to determine their completeness.

**Vision** – (*Mission, Foresight, Creative Thinking, Targets, Flexibility* )

Do you have a vision that is appropriate for your enterprise and for the times; that sets standards of excellence and reflects high ideals; that clarifies purpose and direction; that inspires enthusiasm and encourages commitment; that is well articulated and easily understood; that reflects the uniqueness of the Enterprise and is ambitious?

**Passion** – (*Feeling, Motivating, Praise, Trust, Belief, Excitement.*)

Can you express your vision with passion and get others excited with your goals? Are you self-confident – Especially are you confident at and about your Enterprise? Are your people motivated? Are praise and energy prevalent in your enterprise?

**Strategy** – (*Continually Allow for Change, Strategic and Business Planning, Finance, Products / Services, Management Style, Structure, Productivity, Organisational Culture.*)

Do you have a strategy to achieve your vision? Do you continually allow for and acknowledge change in your strategies (Innovation)? Are your products and/or services suitable or appropriate for your strategy? Is your Enterprise appropriately and competently staffed/manned? Have you short and long term achievable plans and objectives? Are they continually reviewed? Have you business, strategic, marketing and/or financial plans? Have you the appropriate management style and organisational culture for your Enterprise?

**Market – Customers** – (*Defining the Market, Marketing, Selling, Advertising, Distribution, Packaging, Merchandising, Internal and External Customers, Image.*)

Have you clearly identified your market and your customers? Do you know your Internal and External suppliers and customers? Do you know what your customers want? Are your products or services effectively marketed, distributed, packaged, advertised or merchandised? Do you include your customers (and suppliers) in your problem solving and decision making?

**Organization** – (*Organising Self, Organising Others, Prioritising, Delegating, Operational Systems, Time Management.*)

Are you properly organised? (To do list, scheduler, planner) Do you organise and delegate to others effectively? Do you prioritise and manage your time effectively? Are your systems effective, efficient and continually reviewed and updated?

**Information – Records** – (*“Keeping score”, Information Flow, Data Collection, Trending, Financial Records (Cash flow, Profit and Loss Statement, Balance Sheet), Use of Technology.*)

Are your information and records suitably recorded and stored? Is your information kept up to date? Can you depend on it? Is your information suitable and accessible so as to assist in research and problem solving? Are you using suitable technology for information flow and storage?

**Decision Making** – (*Problem Solving, Authority Levels, Responsibility, Accountability, Initiative, Analytical Ability, Interactive Listening.*)

Is problem solving effective and are people aware of their levels of authority Are there delegated responsibilities in your Enterprise and are people held accountable? Do you allow for mistakes and/or do you learn from mistakes? Is initiative permitted, If so, is it rewarded?

**Communication – Network** – (*Feedback, Meetings, Diplomacy, Protocol, Negotiation, Report Writing, Presentation Techniques, Communication media. Networking*)

Do you communicate to Everyone about Everything that matters to you and to them? Do you get and give regular feedback? Do you chair meetings effectively and do you hold regular communication meetings? Do you have good report writing and/or presentation techniques? Do you negotiate effectively? Do you actively nurture, grow and share your network?

**Customer Service** - (*Relationship building, Dimensions of Service, Policy, Efficiency, Welcome and Greeting.*)

Do you have a Customer Service/Care Policy – A Bill of Rights for your customers? Does your policy cover both your internal and external customers? Is your Operation/Service Reliable, Responsive, Assuring, Empathetic and Looking Good? Do you test your service and do you know what your customers want? Do you treat your own people the way you treat your customers?

**Values and Standards** – (*Core values, Trust, Discipline, Policies, Competence, Quality, Output Orientation, Environmental Conservation, Measurement*)

Are your Enterprise’s core values continually stressed, revisited, assessed and regenerated? Is everything done to ensure the values including Competence (Good people), Excellence and Quality and Environmental Conservation? Are people positively confronted when appropriate and is discipline procedurally and substantively fair? Do you actively and continually stress output rather than process (results/output orientation)?

“The Enterpriser” can be used to provide focus, or as a basis for training, developing teamwork and initiating a development or change process. There are so many issues nowadays for “Enterprisers” to consider, concepts to debate, ideas to be thought about. I urge you then to get the basics right or as the creative thinking gurus would have it – *Highlight the Essence.*

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Recently I facilitated a retreat for a United Nations Branch of twenty professionals and we debated and discussed the importance of each one of the ten dimensions associated with an Enterprise that strives for impact and success. The motivation for a retreat can be summed up by the quotation “No one can see their reflection in running water. It is only in still water that we can see.” The follow-up report detailed over forty items that had been raised by the participants. This may be considered a lot but many of them were recommendations on putting operational concepts in place, as it was a newly formed Branch. The better one is organized before embarking on a journey the more enjoyable and successful the journey. I spoke with the Director prior to the Branch meeting following the retreat and his concern was that following the high of the retreat everyone had returned to their daily grind and maybe the commitments made during the retreat were now a thing of the past. How then to apply the concepts? The leader should rise above the daily grind and maintain focus and direction in all the dimensions. If only a few areas receive attention the others will suffer. Prioritize and implement.

During an MBA type program in Germany the graduate participants were provided with all the theory and then we visited a local market and shops in order to determine if these entrepreneurs from different backgrounds and a multiplicity of different activities practiced or incorporated the ten dimensions. It was interesting that the majority of them had assimilated the dimensions consciously or unconsciously.

An enterprise can exist or be partly successful without all the dimensions but will be even more successful with all of them in place. If you are just starting, build with all dimensions in mind. In an existing operation continually review each dimension.

**Happy Enterprising**

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