

Do You Know What You Want?

To get your business — and yourself — to where you want to be in the future, you have to ask yourself some important questions today.

BY MARK RICHARDSON



We all have heard (and most of us believe) that life and business are both a journey not a destination. The pace and complexity of this journey continues to increase and for most is more stressful. This may be a result of the proliferation of choices and the speed at which we operate today or simply our knowledge and thirst for happiness is much greater.

Now more than ever, I think we all have a yearning for life balance but spend very little time making that happen.

Having gone through some major passages and transitions over the last decade, I find myself advising many businesses big and small or leaders within these businesses. They are often looking to address business growth strategies, team development, or general leadership structure issues.

GETTING TO THE ROOT OF THINGS

First, we drill down into market conditions or operational challenges as we try to understand prescriptions to address the pain or opportunities out there. These answers while important, they are sometimes band-aids that cover deeper issues.

However, more times than not, I find myself moving toward more of a business therapist than just an advisor and I find a question that I often revert back to is: “What do you want?” or “What do you want to do when you grow up?”

For many of you reading this column, this question is probably on your mind but you are a little embarrassed to ask it yourself. Very few have a well-articulated answer and even fewer have a plan in place to get them there. So wearing my therapist hat, let me first say you are not alone so don’t feel bad. I suggest you invest the right time and energy to work on an answer to this question.

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

One way I get leaders to address these issues is by asking a few questions. There is not a right or wrong answer but not knowing is not where you want to be (if you don’t know where you are heading any road will take you there).

Here are a few questions to contemplate:

- 1) What would you like to be doing in five years?
- 2) What is a typical day in the life of you?
- 3) Who is the next “you” in the business?
- 4) Do you have a plan in place (with proper milestones) to achieve these passages?
- 5) Do you have a coach to help guide you in your journey and growth? (All professional athletes have a coach and the most successful business leaders do, too.)
- 6) Are your key people aligned with your vision? If not, the likelihood of getting there is very low.

The bottom line with this subject is simply this — While we all want the business to have a life of its own, the truth is most of the time the business is “you.”

Success is a product of your leadership. Its future is contingent on your ability to inspire and motivate others to be part of your vision. Your business plan needs to be intimate with your personal plan. If you are growing, the business can grow. If you are looking out five years then the business will be the vehicle to get you there.

If you are asking the right questions this will create the right dialog within the business.

So in closing, rather than spending most of your time focusing on the here and now, begin to dream again. Invest a couple of hours a week thinking tough and writing down your thoughts about the future.

None of us have a crystal ball but I believe there will be a future and how you position for it will make a big difference on where you will end up being. ■

Mark Richardson, CR, is an author, columnist and business growth strategist. He authored the best-selling book, “How Fit is Your Business,” as well as his latest book, “Fit to Grow.” Both books are available at www.amazon.com.

EDITORIAL

Tim Hodson Editorial Director
thodson@greatamericanpublish.com

Jasmina Dolce Managing Editor
jdolce@greatamericanpublish.com

Abby Kleckler Retail Editor
akleckler@greatamericanpublish.com

Ana Olvera Assistant Editor
aolvera@greatamericanpublish.com

Greg Ryan Multimedia Designer
gryan@greatamericanpublish.com

ADVERTISING

Bob Bellew Vice President, Group Publisher
bbellew@greatamericanpublish.com

Amanda McAdam Brown Integrated Media Consultant
amcadam@greatamericanpublish.com

Kim Sammartino Integrated Media Consultant
ksammartino@greatamericanpublish.com

STAFF

CORPORATE OFFICE 616.887.9008

Kim Meyers Classified Advertising Manager
kmeyers@greatamericanpublish.com

Becky Stovall Audience Development
bstovall@greatamericanpublish.com

Sally Ostman Business Manager
sostman@greatamericanpublish.com

Matt McCallum CEO
mmccallum@greatamericanpublish.com

AD INDEX

ADVERTISER	PAGE
Benary	8-9
BioWorks Inc.	2
Drone World Expo	16
Evonik Corporation	11
Jiffy Products	12
MasterTag	13
Premier Tech Horticulture	7
SBI Nursery Software	15

GPN accepts no responsibility or liability for the validity of information supplied by contributors, vendors, advertisers or advertising agencies.