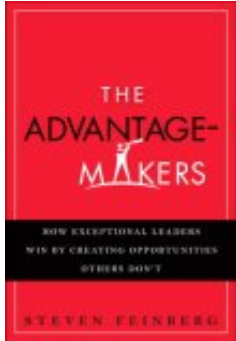


How To Avoid The 5 Laws Of Defeat Of Business Leadership

2007-11-08

Even the most successful business leaders make mistakes, sometimes minor missteps, other times poor judgment which sends a business reeling and forced to play catch-up to recover. Organizational strategist and leading business consultant Steven Feinberg, who has helped major companies such as Wells Fargo, Visa and Sun Microsystems, says mistakes don't 'just happen,' but are the direct result of poor timing, interaction errors, perceptual problems, and organizational deficiencies.



'These mistakes are based, in one way or another, on what I call the 5 Laws of Defeat,' says Feinberg. 'Knowing what to avoid when it comes to leading is just as important as knowing what to do.'

Feinberg, author of *The Advantage-Makers: How Exceptional Leaders Win by Creating Opportunities Others Don't*, identifies the 5 Laws of Defeat as:

1.) **Opportunity knocking - do not disturb**

'Opportunity myopia,' notes Feinberg, happens when narrow thinking rules behavior.'

'Leaders get so focused on established goals, they often miss opportunities because they don't understand the strategic context in which they can see a way to win.'

Feinberg cites Sears as a classic example. Sears passed on the opportunity to purchase the Home Depot chain because of their own financial problems, without seeing the value of the proposal to acquire Home Depot.

2.) **Perceptual bias - we think we are thinking, but are we?**

'One of the easiest mistakes leaders make is confusing perception with reality, they don't see what they don't want to see,' says Feinberg. 'Stepping back, removing oneself to see a true picture of your decision making is difficult to do. In my work, I make leaders aware of perceptual biases and errors that cloud clear, accurate judgment.'

3.) **Competing against yourself - at cross purposes**

'Businesses shoot themselves in the foot by competing against themselves, and they are rarely aware of it,' adds Feinberg. 'Some examples include: pushing for growth while pushing for cost savings, promoting innovation but punishing mistakes, giving mandates to people in your organization, but not giving them adequate decision-making authority to carry it out.'

4.) **Stuck in your persistence - making sticky problems stickier**

'The adage: 'If at first you don't succeed, try, try again' isn't always good business,' notes Feinberg. 'We can get stuck in our own persistence, whether repeated interpersonal conflicts or pushing projects we believe in, even though they are not working after multiple attempts. The road to hell is paved with mishandled interactions. Recurrent problems leave clues-the repeated attempted solutions that don't work. Changing the game, by first stopping the game is a good initial move.'

5.) **Reactive tendency - playing to avoid losing**

'When a leader is outcome-oriented, the emphasis is on achieving the outcome, you play to win rather than complaining or blaming circumstances,' says Feinberg. 'Reactive mishandling of situations almost always guarantees lower outcomes.'

'What I call 'Advantage-Makers' are those rare leaders who win more often because they know how to consistently transform challenging situations into the best possible outcomes,' notes Feinberg. 'They see opportunities where others see problems, influence outcomes where others are stuck, and create advantages where others are challenged. move forward when others are stuck. If you are not an Advantage-Maker you will probably lose to someone who is.'

Dr. Steven Feinberg, author of *THE ADVANTAGE-MAKERS: How Exceptional Leaders Win By Creating Opportunities Others Don't*, has spent more than thirty years applying the study of human behavior to performance efficacy and has advised senior executives on key leadership, team, and organizational issues, with an emphasis on advantage-making. Clients range from Fortune 500 firms to start-ups including Wells Fargo, Visa, Citibank, Symantec and Sun Microsystems. Dr. Feinberg graduated magna cum laude from the State University of New York at Buffalo, received an MSW at Tulane University, and his PhD from Professional School of Psychology, San Francisco. He is on the faculty of the University of San Francisco's Department of Organizational Behavior and Leadership.

This article comes from Hotel News Resource

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