

SUCCESS

157. The "3H Model" of Success.

The 3H's:

Howard.

Hilton.

Herb.

(1) Starbucks has hit a rough patch, but as "they" say, we should all have Howard Schultz's problems—a guy who took a cup of java and grew a business of over 10,000 iconic shops worldwide. There is no doubt that to run an international show as big as Starbucks is quite a chore, and the staff is tops, and there's data by the ton. Yet the boss, Mr. Schultz, aims (and usually succeeds) to visit—hold on to your hat—25 shops per *week*. He believes you've gotta see the real deal up close with all your senses (after all, Starbucks sells an all-senses "experience") to know the score.

(2) If there's ever been a more prominent and successful hotelier than Conrad Hilton, I'd like to know who it is. One Hilton anecdote: The story goes that at the conclusion of a gala honoring his career, Mr. Hilton was finally called to the podium to "share his success secrets." He made his way to the front of the house, and intoned ... *"Remember to tuck the shower curtain inside the bathtub."* And that was it, and back he went to his seat.

(3) In 2009, American Airlines and the Southwest Airlines held their annual meetings on the same day in Dallas, headquarters to both. APA, the Allied Pilots Association, picketed American's meeting. The Southwest meeting marked founder Herb Kelleher's retirement after 37 years. Like Mr. Hilton, Herb was asked to reveal his full set of secrets, and, like Mr. Hilton, he severely limited his remarks: *"You have to treat your employees like customers."* (Whoops, I forgot to mention that on the same day the APA picketed American, Southwest's pilots' union paid a small fortune to take out full-page ads in the likes of *USA Today* thanking Herb for his years of service—and support of the union and its pilots. Quite a contrast, eh?)

Bottom line from the 3Hs:

- (1) Stay in touch! (Howard)
- (2) Sweat the details! (Hilton)
- (3) People first! (Herb)

Pretty close to an "all you need to know" recitation.

158. A 5-Word, 5-Point "Complete" "Excellence Manifesto." Here goes, my "summary of everything" ... in five words:

Cause.
Space.
Decency.
Service.
Excellence.

Cause: An objective worthy of our commitment. An aim that supersedes the need for an alarm clock and that we can brag about to our friends, our family, and our mirror.

Space: Room to roam. Constant and insistent encouragement for taking the initiative. An expectation that everyone will perceive herself or himself as a Change Agent-Entrepreneur.

Decency: Thoughtfulness to a fault in everything we do. Fairness to a fault in everything we do. Sky-high respect for every person with whom we come in contact.

Service: We unfailingly aim to "be of service." Our leaders at all levels are "in service" to their staff. Each staff member is "in service" to her or his peers and internal and external customers.

Excellence: Our ultimate aim is always ... Excellence. Nothing less. In our treatment of one another. In the products and services we develop. In our relationships with customers-vendors-community.

"How are you doing" I: How are you doing on each point in general?

"How are you doing" II: How have you done on each of the five ... TODAY?

159. The Full Nelson—Or: 13 Lessons on "Navigating" Excellence. Lord Horatio Nelson, an old Navy man and avid student of naval history, to me epitomizes Excellence. And, near the 200th anniversary of his singular victory at Trafalgar, I happened upon a new biography (I've probably ingested a dozen over the years), Andrew Lambert's *Nelson: Britannia's God of War*. From it, I extracted 13 lessons that I contend are mostly applicable to you and me:

1. *Simple scheme.* Nelson's orders of battle were paragons of simplicity and clarity—he was a damn good writer among other things. (Doable for you or me? Yes.)
2. *Soaring/Bold/Noble Purpose!* Nelson pursued total victory. Many of his peers were willing, essentially, to rate surviving as victory enough. (Doable for you or me? Yes.)
3. *Engage others.* Nelson made his captains full partners in the process as he devised plans—unheard of in those days. (Doable for you or me? Yes.)
4. *Find great talent, at any age, let it soar!* Nelson gave his best captains, young or old, far more leeway than his counterpart admirals—and he eschewed seniority as primary measure of assigned responsibility. (Doable for you or me? Yes.)
5. *Lead by Love!* The sailors, every biographer agrees, loved Nelson, and he them. (Last clause in the sentence is crucial.) His concern for their well-being, regardless of the rough nature of the sailor's life in those days, was legendary. (Doable for you or me? Yes.)
6. *Seize the Moment!* Nelson's sixth sense about enemy weakness was remarkable. He would skip to "Plan B" in a flash if merited by changing circumstances. (Doable for you or me? Yes. More or less—"good instincts" are the indirect product of insanely hard work.)
7. *Vigor!* His energy was palpable! (Doable for you or me? Yes. Mostly. Low energy folks aren't picks for leadership positions—or any other positions, for that matter.)
8. *Master your craft.* Nelson was the best damn sailor in the Navy—sailors and officers appreciated that beyond measure. (Doable for you or me? Yes. Damn it. We are not all created equal—but often "the best" is not the one who tops the charts on raw talent.)
9. *Work harder-harder-harder than the next person.* No explanation needed. (Doable for you or me? Yes.)
10. *Show the way, walk the talk, exude confidence! Start a Passion Epidemic!* Nelson led from the front—visible, in full dress uniform as the cannons roared. (Doable for you or me? Yes.)

11. *Change the rules: Create your own game!* Nelson *always* took the initiative—thus forcing rivals, from the beginning and throughout maneuvering at battle, to be in a full-time reactive mode. (Doable for you or me? Yes.)

12. *Luck!* Believe it! Always necessary! Not "desirable"—but necessary. (Doable for you or me? Anybody can get lucky—and preparedness ups the odds of getting lucky. But, truthfully, lucky is lucky.)

13. *Be determined to come out on top, come hell or/and high water!* Lambert:

"Other Admirals were more frightened of losing than anxious to win." This last is a big deal—it belongs as either #1 or #13. (Doable for you or me? Yes.)

160. A Cheat Sheet for Tough Times. (and Other Times, Too.) Amid all of the advice "out there" on dealing with difficult circumstances, how do you ... boil it all down? Some thoughts:

- (1) Be conscious in the Zen sense. Carefully consider, far more than you normally might, how you project: Does your "energetic" approach, for example, look more like panic? Is your smile in place—nothing is amusing about tough economic times, but a permanently grim demeanor, even if it's merited, is a guaranteed de-motivator. Etc.
- (2) Meet ... daily, first thing ... with your leadership team—to discuss whatever, check assumptions. Perhaps meet again late afternoon. Meetings max 30 minutes, maybe 15.
- (3) If you are a "big boss," use a 100-percent trusted, private sounding board—check in daily, whether you "need to" ... or not.
- (4) Concoct scenarios by the bushel, test 'em, play with 'em, short-term, long-term, sane, insane. (Not necessarily a formal exercise—but a constant "playful" exercise.)
- (5) MBWA (Manage by Wandering Around). Wander. Sample attitudes. Visible but not frenzied. But visible ... visible ... visible.
- (6) Work the phones, chat up experts, *non*-experts, customers, vendors. Seek *enormous* diversity of opinion. (NB: Big bosses invariably spend too much time with "experts"! Expert = Blinders = Particularly bad in uncertain/ambiguous times.)
- (7) "Over"communicate!!!!
- (8) Exercise—encourage your leadership team to double up on their physical exercise; physical sharpness is insanely important to mental evenness.
- (9) Underscore "EXCELLENCE in *every* transaction"! (Now, more than ever!)

This document is #47 in a series of 48 highlights from Tom Peters' *The Little BIG Things: 163 Ways to Pursue Excellence* (HarperStudio, 2010). For more information, visit tompeters.com.

