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TOWER POWER

Business today is a moving target - marketing plans and employees are being corrected while the plan is being built.

by **Bob Goshen**

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I still remember the days of college football, especially those two-a-day workouts. Every morning and afternoon, we met at the practice field to go over various techniques and drills.

The specialty coaches were on the field working with the players, while on the 60-foot tower stood the head coach. He observed each player and made notes while, at the same time, he watched his coaches as they carried out his game plan. You would often hear him shout words of encouragement to his coaches.

So it is with a good CEO. He or she not only should be observing the employees but also encouraging the leadership team that has the responsibility of carrying out the marketing plan. Business today is a moving target - marketing plans and employees are being corrected while the plan is being built. Gone are the days of writing a business plan or marketing plan and giving it a year to see if it will materialize. From the time a new strategy is created and execution begins, the obsolescence clock starts ticking. The timing for the release of a new product is as critical as the product itself.

> **I am a “strategic internist,” one who believes all answers to all corporate challenges can be solved by the existing leadership team if they are properly trained, if there is someone at the table**

who has "tower power," someone who has the ability to hear and see things management might overlook, someone who can offer a fresh look at existing challenges.

Here's my step-by-step process for making that happen:

• **Create** Sometimes a CEO lacks the passion to make a project work - he or she creates the idea and passes it off to a subordinate. I often say, *"When you remove the creator from the creation, the creation will die."* The creator of the project, the one who gave birth to the idea, must stay involved if the project is to succeed. And those who have been selected to execute the project must have equal passion to keep the momentum needed to achieve maximum results. The difference between an idea and a great idea that works is passion. John Wesley summed it up when he said, *"Catch on fire with enthusiasm and people will come for miles to watch you burn."* Are you passionate about making your project "come alive"?

• **Evaluate** Take time to listen to everyone around you; seek the input of those who will be affected by your strategy. Have all the players who can add value to the strategy in the boardroom together, especially those who will be called upon to execute the strategy. Companies often fail to bring new ideas to life because they build their marketing model from the top down instead of from the bottom up. As you evaluate, you must exercise discernment, perceive what others overlook. You are the one who has the mental ability to identify and chose what is of value. The time you spend evaluating with your employees should be very exciting, creating synergy among those who will be "carrying out the game plan."

• **Formulate** After you receive all the input from the group, you begin the process of formulating a strategy. The who, what, when, and how. Ask yourself who can add value to the strategy? What other individual or company can benefit from the direction you are moving? Who would receive value by endorsing the project? Who might desire to sponsor the project? What is the purpose of the new strategy, defined in fewer than ten words? What measurements and performance standards must be set to ensure progress? What is the projected ROI (return on investment)?

When will the strategy be completed and ready for execution? When should you set your next meeting to discuss progress? How will you execute the marketing plan? How will you define measurements? How will you mentor those who will execute the plan?

• **Initiate** Recently I happened to catch a short segment of Jeff Foxworthy's TV show. He portrays a character called Larry The Cable Guy who continually uses the statement "Git-R-Done." Amazing as it may sound, this is where most companies collapse in the process - the "execution." You can spend weeks creating and evaluating and formulating the finest strategy conceived and still fail. If you expect your plan to work, you must have a leadership team in place. They must understand the upside and potential downside of the plan. Every week you, the CEO, must mentor your team, edify your team, and continue to encourage their performance. You must listen to their needs as they move the process forward.

• **Celebrate** Once you have properly positioned the new strategy, and all seems to be moving in the direction you desire, take time to thank each and every member who contributed. Take them to a nice dinner, personally address every individual at the table, and tell each person how valuable they were in the process. You have heard it said, *"People don't care how much you know until you show them how much you care."* I look at the end of each project as the beginning of building a team for the next project. When you recognize and reward those who helped you achieve a goal, you get a higher level of commitment for future projects.

As the CEO, your job is to remain on the "tower," overseeing both the project and the people.

Bob Goshen is a man who tells it like it is. It is obvious he is a man who has earned the right to talk the talk because he has walked the walk. He speaks with the innate authority of someone who has seen battle, and has the scar tissue to prove it. He understands leadership, at the intellectual level, at the heart level, and at the gut level. He knows what works, and what doesn't work. And

more than anything else, he understands the power of leadership and the value of common sense in a high tech world where it is believed all problems can be solved with the keystroke of a computer. Check out more about Bob at his website: http://www.bobgoshen.com/