

People Solutions

Finding Potential

March 6, 2009

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"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us."

I have ended many a presentation with that quote splashed up on a PowerPoint slide. I first heard it in a movie clip from *Coach Carter* but have also seen it mentioned by other notable people since then.



**The greatest RISKS
RETURN the greatest
REWARDS**

Go ahead and read through that quote again and let's begin to analyze it as I give you my take on what it means. Then you can see how it aligns with your thoughts. Every time I show the quote I wonder if my audience and I really capture the significance of it, the challenge that it is giving to all of us and the truth that it's saying about human nature. My thought is that it's challenging us to become better than what we are right now at this moment. It is saying that inside every person is a potential that we could tap into that is "beyond measure" and in our current state, beyond our comprehension. The fear? The fear is not our inadequacies; it is our fear of changing in order to unleash this massive amount of light, potential, energy, action and results that are trapped inside. In order to let it out, we need to change what we are currently doing and do that and that alone which will allow us to become better... better beyond measure. Simple words on a paper if only just read and glossed over but vital to our

future if we let them move us.

In a few moments you are going to read about the Mulch Mule and if you are a club manager, bank president, salesperson, factory worker, teacher, accountant, nurse, mother, father, spouse ... you may now be thinking ... end of the article for me. But I am going to ask you to keep reading not to learn about the Mulch Mule but to learn about how the quote that we started our conversation here with is brought to life by the leaders that were not frightened by the untapped potential in their companies, employees and themselves.

For the past couple of years I have had the privilege of networking with a great group of companies that we humbly call SMART COMPANIES and in that time I have observed one great commonality amongst their innovative products. They each have to work very, very hard to get their target markets to make a decision to buy. It is not the price, the service, or a matter of doubting the effectiveness of their products that they battle. It is helping their clients break through the bonds of change that may be holding them back to unleash the incredible potential in their organizations through a new idea, tool, or technology. I am inspired in a time when too many companies are taking the approach of "hunkering down to die" (which is the focus of next week's newsletter) that Smart Companies are driving forward finding ways to let their lights shine ...



By the way, the last of part of the quote is ...

"And as we let our own lights shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

Liberating Others . . .



Filling Trash Barrel to Mulch Around Building

Before we made calls to interview companies that owned the Mulch Mule, I was speculating on what I would be writing here. I expected we would hear things like, "The production teams did not like it at first, but after they learned how to use it then we were able to really benefit from it." Or "It has taken awhile to get our ROI back" Or "Once we learned how to use it, then it was a great product." After calling I realized my anticipated answers could not have been any further from what the current reality truly was. I have put my surprise discoveries in italics after

some of the customer's comments. Consider what these forward-thinking companies have to say and how the same can apply to you, your business and your people.

Gary Clark from Environmental Management in Plain City, Ohio, who owns five Mulch Mules and has 275 employees said, "We were looking for a way to mechanize the process of putting down mulch that would have less of an environmental impact and allow us to be more productive than what we currently were ... when the employees started talking about the MULCH MULE, they could not wait to get the first one here and they loved it from the time they filled the first wheel barrow load. I've been quoted to say that if you want to compete with Environmental Management you need a Mule."

SURPRISE! His employees were looking forward to and anticipating the change as a positive thing.

DJ Vander Silk of Grand Rapids, Michigan, talked about how the decision was actually made to bring a Mulch Mule into his company. "The decision was made as a team," he says. "For years we would look at them at different shows and on the website but always thought they were far too expensive. Then, as a team we sat down and had a great discussion around the numbers and it just made sense. The team loves to see we are saving money and everyone is always fighting to use the Mulch Mule, that's why we now have our second one and that purchase was a team decision as well.



New 10-Yard Truck Mount with
25 HP Leaf and Debris Loader

SURPRISE! It was a team decision to make the investment and the decision was made through analyzing real numbers. They became excited about the potential of innovation rather than the cost when they knew the facts.

"There was no challenge in bringing the Mulch Mule in," Brian Pierce, owner of Pierces Lawn Care, Mason, Ohio, says. "The team saw that it would eliminate a labor procedure that would help make their jobs a lot easier. Who would not be open to that? We have a culture here that is open to ideas and the employees are encouraged to bring them up and try them. If they don't work, great ... let's find something that does."

SURPRISE! He mentioned the word the "CULTURE" and we were talking about buying a big piece of equipment. The conversation always went back to people and culture and communicating. It was also great to hear that it eliminated a labor procedure, not "labor." Eliminating labor means people lose their jobs; eliminating a procedure means you have increased your capacity to serve.



New 10-Yard Mini Mule

Each of the owners we interviewed had another awesome thing in common when it came to making a decision to bring change into their companies in the form of the MULCH MULE. They all in some way talked about QUALITY OF LIFE. As John Pontarelli of Coventry, Rhode Island, added, "I always look for equipment that makes the job easier for my people. Why would I not purchase something that takes all the back breaking agony out of a process like moving mulch?" Most said the time and labor savings are great, but the

attitude of the employees, the safety in less back problems and the opportunity for people to get done in less time so they can get home to their families faster and feeling better than before is worth even more.

SURPRISE! An awareness of the term "Quality of Life" and for it to be as important as bottom line results was a refreshing discovery in the companies that were open to making a change in a process.

Early on in the newsletter I challenged the club manager, salesperson, mother and a host of others to stick with reading through the article. Hopefully at this point it is no surprise to you why I asked you to do so. Bringing change, a new idea, or innovation into a company, organization, or even a family is not a technique that can be applied at the time a change is ready to be made. Realizing our potential by bringing about change comes with a mindset established long before the change was needed. The MULCH MULE simply became a great case study for examining this. The companies we talked to and the discoveries we made as a result may help all of us in preparing for change that ultimately will come our way.

DISCOVERIES FOR SUCCESSFUL CHANGE:

- Employees anticipate change as a positive thing.
- Decisions for change become something that are discussed rather than dictated.
- Use real facts to analyze and make decisions easier.
- Be aware of the culture of the organization and what steps can be taken to improve communication in that culture.
- Think in terms of eliminating labor procedures rather than labor itself, enabling you to increase your capacity to serve.
- Putting a sincere emphasis on the quality of life your people have will help the right decisions be made. Change can then be a natural occurrence that is accepted by everyone.



It's so easy kids can do it.
Todd's son Maverick 8 and daughter Lindsey 9

Take a moment and read through that list again, then go back and read the quote we started this newsletter with. Do you think if we followed closer to the criteria discovered in the Mulch Mule customers we would be proactive in striving to achieve what that quote suggests? Finding our potential is a journey that every leader must be on and helping those they lead follow as well. In this awareness which liberates us and those we lead, we can conquer the fears that keep us all from unleashing the power within that is beyond measure.

- Jim Paluch

So, What Is It?



25 HP Leaf Vacuum Option

Now if you are the club manager, bank president, salesperson, factory worker etc. that we encouraged to keep on reading, you may still be wondering, "What in the world is a Mulch Mule?" Go ahead and [click here](#) to be entertained by this mechanization and be inspired to think of how many processes in your business could possibly be improved with an innovative approach. If you happen to have a landscape company looking for all the possible ways you and your team can work smarter with the best tools available, you've

probably already stopped and explored more ... why not give you and your team the opportunity to be "Powerful beyond measure!"

Quotes

"Your crew is a direct reflection of you."

"We must adjust to changing times and still hold to unchanging principles."

- Jimmy Carter

"An individual is more apt to change, perhaps, than all the world around him."

- Daniel Webster

"All change is a miracle to contemplate; but it is a miracle which is taking place every instant."

- Henry David Thoreau

"The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we

must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew."

- Abraham Lincoln

"The past is like a padlock and change is like the key. When used, it frees us. If not, the lock will rust shut, making us slaves to our past."

- Jim Whitt

Smart Companies

Click on the logo to learn who these companies are and read a brief description of what they do.



Lighten Up One More Time!

Last week we put in some pictures and asked you to submit captions that were not only funny but positive and inspiring. Here are two captions we received, and we'll run some more next week. Thanks for making us laugh!

Received from Maynard Eanes:



WHO'S JOB WAS IT TO PUT THE PLUG IN?

Received from Tom Swan, Jr.:



**Boy, this is a lot better than crowding into that puppy bed!
Now we just need 5 hands to rub our bellies!**

JP Horizons Blog

Be sure to visit our blog and see what's new.

<http://jphorizons.blogspot.com>



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