

As a leader, talk is cheap. Action is what counts and practice makes a difference. Below are practical steps to improve performance.

- **Ask yourself “What am I doing to invest in my team?”** There are always things in the company that would benefit from investment, but as Marc Reifenrath told us, “the better you make YOUR team, the better the whole team is”. What are you doing on a daily, weekly and monthly basis to invest in your team?
- **It's imperative to celebrate both the small AND the big wins.** Big wins are great and easy to celebrate, but it's the accumulation of small wins that positions you for the big ones. People lose heart when you consistently forget to celebrate small victories, which only reduces the likelihood of those big wins.
- **Aim to be the dumbest person in the room and pride yourself on accomplishing it if you do.** Ego is one of the biggest detractors from success and is a huge turn off to great employees. Check your ego, surround yourself with people smarter than you, and then listen to them if you hope to scale and grow. Otherwise, why hire them in the first place?
- **Balance the use of data with trusting your gut.** Both are important, so balance them appropriately. Too much reliance on data creates paralysis-by-analysis, and too much reliance on your gut leads to backtracking and rework. As with most of our blind spots, you may have to ask others around you if you've got the right balance for your company.
- **Be careful not to rise fast and fall hard.** Take the right steps to cement the foundation before you grow so fast that you're over your skis and can't sustain it. Verne Harnish calls it “growing broke”. This really happens, and you don't want to be the leader who did it. As Leb said, while shooting stars are exciting in the sky, you don't want to be one in your business. Slow and steady still wins many races.
- **Be a long-term thinker.** The most successful leaders are always learning. They read, they listen, they ask questions, and they view personal growth not as a task but as a responsibility. You already know you need to sharpen this skill for strategic planning and visioning, but what would happen if you expanded it to every area of your life?
- **Get Better Every Day!** Marc and the Spinutech team made this an important company value, but they didn't stop there. It's part of their culture, their branding, something they talk about in performance discussions and with customers, and an expectation each team

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member has of themselves. Learn about the power of incremental change and spend real time looking for any opportunity to improve. Small changes every day make big improvements over time. And be prepared to lead by example.

- **Remember that CEOs work for their people, not the other way around.** Former Home Depot CEO Frank Blake recently said he had it wrong until an employee told him his role as the biggest gear in the business is to feel when the smallest gear is moving. Marc spoke in this episode about the inverted org chart with him at the bottom supporting everyone else. Start asking everyone what you can do to make their jobs easier.
- **Realize you're not serious about culture until you create and track metrics to prove it.** You have financial metrics, customer metrics, sales metrics, marketing metric, HR metrics and a host of other data you look at to stay on track. If you haven't created KPIs and metrics specific to your own Values and culture, you'll never know how on or off track you are.
- **Remember mergers and acquisitions take time, and courageous leaders are willing to slow the sales funnel to allow the foundation to set.** The number of failed company mergers and acquisitions should give pause to any full-steam-ahead approach before time is spent integrating systems, processes, people AND cultures. It might even mean slowing your sales process and not taking on new business, but that's better than being another failed merger or acquisition.
- **Fire culturally-misaligned clients!** Your worst clients will fire your best employees, so don't hesitate to move on from clients who do more harm to your people than they're worth. As Marc suggested, one of the better team-building exercises is engaging your people to figure out how to recoup the revenue lost from firing culturally-misaligned clients.
- **Create clear- and mutually agreed upon goals with KPIs for every customer.** Like the culture metrics suggested above, how else will you and your clients agree you're meeting or exceeding their expectations without goals and metrics?
- **Take on the challenge of making every new employee's First Day the best First Day they've ever had.** You already aspire to deliver Wow experiences for customers, so why wouldn't you deliver the same for your employees. How might an amazing first day lock them in for the long term? Listen to this episode for some great ideas!

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- **Be willing to challenge your own beliefs, especially if it would positively impact your employees and customers.** Business responses to the pandemic have shown us all what's possible when faced with great challenges, but the pandemic has also forced us to question long-held beliefs about how business should be conducted. Some of the best work we do with clients is sorting through their beliefs to determine which ones are helping them and which ones may have served them in the past but are no longer doing so today. Perhaps you could benefit from a similar exercise.
- **You've heard this before, but you're no good to anyone if you're not good to yourself, first.** Hard work and dedication likely contributed to how you got to CEO in the first place, but you can't forget the importance of recharging your batteries. If you never take PTO and are always first in/last out, that sends a strong message to your team and creates unsustainable behavior from top to bottom.

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