



20 May 2009

Greetings to the Team from Australian Business Camps!

Two months have passed since we attended our first Australian Business Camp, but still, the dust hasn't settled. We went to the camp knowing that we needed to do something; we could scale the business back, we could ramp it up but what we couldn't do was stay still and survive. In the first hour of the camp, the dust was flying! In one short, sharp dose, we were reflecting on why we were in business and what we were doing with our business. We knew in that first session on Day One that we would not be scaling back and we would not be standing still – but we would be making changes! And we knew that these three days with Australian Business Camps were likely to be one of the best investments we had ever made.

As the camp unfolded, we rang our team every day, each call with a new insight and a call to join us:

- forget the old job titles, we are all in the customer service division now;
- we've realised where we really need to be, now we just need to get there;
- get excited, this bus is going cross-country and we've got a seat for you;
- we're raising our prices – yes, we know everyone is talking recession, yes, we did say we are raising our prices;
- clear your diaries for 2 days of planning our new bus route;
- we want to know your goals; think about it, think big, dream;
- we're sending you to the Australian Business Camp next year!

When we left the camp, Randall and I knew that we had one more goal to add to our list: to be the delegates who return to the Australian Business Camp in 2010 to share the impact the camp had on us and our business. We wanted to be those delegates because we wanted to implement all that we had learnt. We wanted our story, Train to Succeed's story in 2010 to be a very different one from the one we would have told in 2009.

So, as the dust still swirls, we wanted to give you an insight into what a difference the lessons we learnt at the camp have made. There's the intangible – motivation, excitement and courage! One of our team gave up all his other consultancy work to come on board full-time solely with Train to Succeed because he wanted to be a part of an organization that was going after the dream! We continue to have other business people who ask us how in these economic times, we can be thriving and striving for more with such passion? We tell them to book into the Australian Business Camp 2010. Yes, we have moved into the advocate quadrant!

Since the camp, we've held onto the passion and excitement, and we've started tipping our business on its head. We spent two days together making sure that we all had the same end in mind, and mapping out the route to get there. We took our team into our home and we sat around our dining room table writing our values, our core purpose and vision on giant post-it notes that we plastered around the walls of our home as we worked.

Core Values: Respecting human dignity by treating others with honesty, integrity, generosity and good humour!

Core Purpose:

Train to Succeed exists to be the best holistic Career Development Service by:

- delivering a pathway to our clients' professional success
- delivering flexible tailored training
- providing a simple solution to Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- providing career advice

Vision: To empower people through professional development with flexible educational solutions delivered by a skilled passionate professional team.

Our team now refer back to our values, purpose and vision daily and it has become a common question: how does this decision sit with our values, purpose and vision?

Randall and I have looked closely at our own roles and have been working on the business, more so than in the business. With our new focus, we've found it easier to pass the baton onto our team and have been impressed with their commitment.

We've taken a fresh look at our team and our commitment to them. We're getting their feedback on what we're doing right, what we could do better and how we can work together to help them realize their dreams. Tom O'Toole's story about his daughter and the dream takers has resonated with us, and even our 6 year old son now talks about his dreams as if this is a normal every day, every family conversation.

We have made a fresh commitment to *serve* our customers. We all talk about the jeopardy of perceived indifference and the importance of honouring our corporate values in all that we do. To this end, we've moved some people off the bus and rearranged some of the seats. We've all become fascinated observers of customer service when we are the consumers. We share our experiences with each other, the good, the bad and how we can use what we've observed. We have started a dialogue with the team from Stew Leonard's to learn all that we can about making our customer service outstanding.

We're implementing a plan to better communicate with our clients. They are not a figure that appears in our bank accounts – our clients hold vital information about our business and we want to hear what they have to say. We're creating an atmosphere in which answering the telephone is not an inconvenience, but a chance to enjoy the ride!

We have employed four new staff and put them through an interview process that was designed to assess their attitude, particularly to customer service. Next week, we begin a week long induction program that includes a visit to a local shop attendant who

delivers fantastic customer service. She was surprised to receive a call from us but delighted to be a part of inducting our new team members.

We've isolated our unique core differentiators and written our guarantees. We're ready to deliver a product that is supported by a solid business foundation. We're locking down our systems and processes, including implementing a new document management system. We're aiming to reach a stage where anyone of our team can own a problem and deliver a solution.

We've raised our prices and love the increased revenue that accompanies our increased service. Warren Buffet is right, *the price is what you pay, but value is what you get* with Train to Succeed. We're watching our spending with more care and we now see our accountant, Paul Young from Cabot Square, as part of our team.

We have purchased commercial premises to house our team and our business, to better serve our customers. We've a clear end in mind, and this premises is part of pursuing that end. When the process became complicated, thanks to the joys of the current economic climate, we remained focused on where we were going.

All of this will take time, and our desired end is not one that will be reached overnight. Our decision to implement the strategies from the camp is an ongoing and challenging process. Even so, the journey has become an adventure!

Attending the camp came at a cost; not just financially but in juggling our family as we turned up with 4 young children (including five month old twins) and two sets of grandparents, as I raced off at each break to feed the babies. Our investment, though, was equally matched by your investment in us. In three days, you delivered messages we needed to hear and gave us strategies to enable us to act on our desire for change. We value the impact Australian Business Camps has had and continues to have on our business. We now view Australian Business Camps as part of our team committed to our success. We call that outstanding customer service!

Regards



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