

## Who Are We?

### What Recession? How Leaders Win in Tough Times

A workshop led by Greg Bustin for owners, executives and leadership teams committed to improving their performance in a time of turbulence and uncertainty

8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday, May 9, 2008, in Dallas, Texas

\$395 person; \$345 for each subsequent leadership team member

Participants will receive Bustin's new book, **Lead The Way**

Workshop limited to 34 persons on a first-come, first-served basis

Reserve your place today by emailing Greg Bustin at [greg.bustin@bustin.com](mailto:greg.bustin@bustin.com)

For leadership teams committed to improving their performance, it Most leaders can say succinctly and with confidence how their business makes money.

But as I travel around the country talking and working with leaders, my experience has been that these same leaders are less certain and less confident when asked to summarize why clients or customers buy from their companies instead of the competition.

"Because we're good at what we do" is a commonly heard answer. So is "Because we're better than the competition." Sounds like something a CEO would say, doesn't it?

Those answers may be truthful, but they don't reflect your competitive advantage. They fail to articulate a compelling benefit that allows you to separate yourself from the pack in the minds of your customers or clients.

What's more, my experience has confirmed a lack of clarity in most organizations around plans, processes and procedures developed for the express purpose of leveraging strengths, replicating successes and increasing performance.

Taken one step further, my experience has been that even if the CEO can articulate the company's value proposition, the likelihood of getting the same answer from the leadership team is small to non-existent. If the leadership team can't articulate a compelling reason why people buy from you instead of someone else, don't expect your customers and prospective customers to be able to do so either.

How would the leadership team at your organization fare with these questions?

#### Good news

If you're beginning to feel a little uncomfortable about how your organization would answer, there are two pieces of good news.

First, the executives I work and speak with are, for the most part, leading organizations that are already successful. They're doing a lot of things well. So if you're in a leadership role in a company that may have trouble answering some of these questions, but the company is doing pretty well, take heart. Then imagine how much more successful the organization could be if everyone knew precisely why customers buy from you instead of the other guys.

Second, I'm happy to share with you a process you can use to gain clarity and agreement around who you are as an organization and what makes your organization special.

In my new book *Lead The Way*, I include a model called an Identity Pyramid to help leadership teams define points of difference and confirm

values, principles and processes that are essential components of the organization. Over the years, my firm developed a list of 100 Critical Questions for use in strategic planning sessions with our clients.

Space doesn't permit me to share the Identity Pyramid or all of the questions, but here are seven to get you started (I use the term "customers" for customers and clients, since there's a difference):

1. How would we describe our company today? What's our culture?
2. How would our customers and prospects describe our company? Why would they say this?
3. What is our unfair advantage that causes our customers to select us over the competition?
4. Have we made our competitive advantage a centerpiece with our stakeholders?
5. Are we charging what we should based on the value this advantage offers our customers?
6. If we charged more for this product or service, would our customers still buy from us?
7. Have we articulated this advantage in a way that is easily understood and compelling?

Clarity around these and other related issues that examine performance from inside-out and outside-in perspectives will inspire greater loyalty to your organization with internal and external stakeholders. What's more, clarity around these issues will also improve productivity and increase revenue and profitability.

#### Be yourself

This exercise and these questions and others like them are designed to uncover or confirm your intrinsic competitive advantage – an advantage that already exists within your organization.

It's not a process designed to make your company into something it is not.

"Be yourself," said Oscar Wilde. "Everyone else is already taken."

This is a simple but powerful process for helping your company sell more of what customers and clients already are buying from you.

#### Take action

Ask and answer the seven questions above.

What other questions can you ask that will confirm, clarify or uncover an advantage you may have been overlooking or taking for granted? ■