

ENTER THE DRAGON'S DEN



THE TELEVISION PROGRAMME "DRAGON'S DEN" USE TO BE A BIT OF TV THAT I REALLY ENJOYED. There was a lot to like about the programme. I particularly enjoyed the good and bad pitches, the product innovations and the insights the Dragons gave those willing to venture before them.

THEN SOMETHING CHANGED FOR THE DRAGONS.

I'm not too sure what it was but I could speculate that some of them started to believe in their own mystical dragon abilities. I watched an episode on the BBC last night and was looking forward to being inspired and entertained. But before I go any further let me share my belief of what I think the Dragon's Den is really about:

1. Dragons have money, experience and knowhow look for businesses how need any or all of their money, experience or knowhow.
2. Start Up businesses who need money, experience or knowhow try to 'woo' the Dragons.
3. Be entertained.

Therefore, a Dragon will be asking them self during any pitch, “Can I leverage my resources to drive growth and profitability in these fledgling business and grow my own empire?”

If that’s your understanding, why is it the Dragons have taken to getting irate when an Entrepreneur has a hole in their proposition? After all, if everything was hunky dory why would they be pitching to the Dragons? So it seems to me the Dragons are acting as if they are judges on Britain’s Got Talent. For example, if someone has a really great Organic breakfast product that everyone loves – Customers, shoppers and consumers but the cost base is too high, a Dragon has a really good opportunity to find a way to mitigate this weakness and build on the products existing strengths. Not humiliate them on national television – if you want that, audition on the X Factor or go on the Jeremy Kyle show!

Our own leadership and team work principles should really be the same. How do we draw out the strengths of the people we work with and help them manage their weaknesses? Marcus Buckingham has done some revealing work around the topic of Strength Leadership. He defines a strength as something that:

1. You’re good at
2. You feel energised when you are doing it

You really do need both points for it to be a sustainable strength. It’s not merely enough to just be good at it. For instance, I’m good at ironing but it’s not really a strength because it doesn’t make me feel good when I’m doing it! The continuous high pile of laundry will attest to this!

To get the best out of yourself and the people around you there are some questions that will really help you understand the DNA of someone’s strengths and weaknesses.

FOR STRENGTHS *

1. What was the best day’s work you’ve had in the last three months?
 - a. What were you doing?
 - b. Why did you enjoy it so much?

FOR WEAKNESSES *

2. What was your worse day in the last three months?
 - a. What were you doing?
 - b. Why did it grate on you so much?

FOR TRIGGERS *

3. What was the best relationship with a manager you've ever had?
 - a. What made it work so well?
4. What was the best praise of recognition or praise you've ever received?
 - a. What made it so good?

FOR UNIQUE STYLE OF LEARNING *

5. When in your career do you think you were learning the most?
 - b. Why did you learn so much?
 - c. What's the best way for you to learn?

Spending some time on answering these questions will lead you to discover what gives you the right energy to be productive, the conditions you like to interact with your leader, how you learn best and what zaps you of energy. In speaking to a friend who was suffering from a dilemma on what to do about his career I said to him, "Go to a place that gives you the right energy, if you don't you'll continue to work in purgatory!" So he did, he decided to put the right Fuel into his life!

**taken from One Thing You Must Know written by Marcus Buckingham*