



Think BIG. Act small.

Jason Jennings, author of the national bestseller, 'Think Big. Act Small,' and his research team screened more than 100,000 American companies to find nine that rarely end up on magazine covers. These nine companies increased revenues and profits by 10 percent or more for ten consecutive years. (You might recognize a few names; Sonic, Cabela's and PetCo.) Jennings shared his discoveries with Denver business leaders at the Association for Corporate Growth Conference last week. Here are just a few of the common denominators found in all of these high performing companies.

Cause:

Great leaders and companies have a cause that has nothing to do with money. Jennings was quick to emphasize that a cause is not a mission statement or a vision statement. It is why you do what you really do. A cause provides purpose, passion and momentum.

Culture:

In a flat world, competitors can steal your ideas, products, services and people. What they can't steal is your culture. Culture is and will be the ultimate competitive advantage in a global economy. The leaders at these nine organizations possess a fundamental set of truths and laws by which he or she leads his/her life. As a result, it becomes the basis of reasoning and action for the company. If someone fits the culture, they're in. If they don't fit the culture, they're out---fast.

Keep Your Hands Dirty:

These leaders are humble and keep their 'hands dirty' by making sure they are involved in day-to-day interaction with customers. Jim Cabela, cochairman of Cabela's, spends each morning reading through a stack of papers containing customer comments and/or complaints from the previous day. (How many chairmen of multibillion-dollar firms do you think spend several hours each day reviewing all of the previous day's client comments/complaints?) Jim Cabela's response, "What could be more important than listening and responding to customers and doing whatever else you have to do to make and keep them happy.

Stewards:

Humble leaders create humble organizations and Jennings discovered all executives at the helm extremely down to earth. They value service over self-interest and feel they are stewards entrusted with the responsibility of carefully and judiciously guiding their organizations. They feel responsible for the company and everyone in it.

If you want to improve your bottom line, think BIG, act small.

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