

# BUSINESS

## PERFORMANCE INSIGHTS

### Adaptability the key to success

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Have you ever caught yourself wondering when your problems will be over?

Problems come as a direct result of change or as a symptom that change is required. Many companies are experiencing changes that are required to survive this economic slow down in the real estate industry. The impact of these changes is especially difficult for the companies that have not experienced this part of the cycle before.

Accelerating changes make the challenge to survive more complex. Strategies that were effective yesterday no longer work. Leaders can become prisoners to their own style and company's cultural values.

The importance of adaptability has been researched as far back as the 70's in "Search for Excellence" and the 80's with "A Passion for Excellence." These books essentially identified the ability to adapt to change, to take action, and to use a strategy appropriate to the circumstances as leading to higher performance. "Built to Last" showed that companies that could adapt out performed the general marketplace in stock value on a 15 to 1 basis.

On an individual executive basis, research with 916 top executives, the executive who demonstrated behavioral complexities led higher performing companies.

When it comes to small business owners, learning to demonstrate adaptability is the first step to achieving higher performance. Somebody once said, "the behavior that got you where you are is not that same behavior that will get you where you want to be."

The adaptable leader can be said to have both an "insider" and "outsider" perspective. The adaptive leader com-

bines two very different characteristics; flexibility, the willingness to change and versatility, the ability to change. The level of adaptability you demonstrate impacts the willingness of others to respond to your actions. They are more at ease and encouraged in their dealings with you. Flexibility is an attitude that is present in your actions to effectively change your view, approach, or position when it is appropriate. You are able to adjust your preferred way of doing things when it interferes with accomplishing what you want to achieve.

Versatility reflects the degree to which you realistically and productively manage a variety of different situations by changing your position where appropriate. You are not tied to your own preferences and expectations that discount reality or other factors that should be considered when determining outcomes.

The power of these principles was clearly demonstrated in a recent monthly management meeting I attended. We were reviewing sales goals and lead-generation for the upcoming quarter. We were generating more leads than the current sales force could effectively handle and closing ratios were below plan. Also, potential customers were not getting the attention that they deserved. The overarching issue was that unless we could solve this problem, it would be a long cold summer when it came to cash flow.

The owner was not demonstrating a high level of adaptability regarding the solutions that were being provided by the team. The end result was that the team was becoming frustrated and shutting down fast. At the next break, I shared my observation with the owner and suggested that the owner find a way to be more adaptable regarding the solution.

The owner was able to do this and the results were immediate. The team responded with energy and creativity. A solution was developed that allocated more resources to the sales effort. It was a new approach and the team was motivated. The plan produced results by the end of the next day.

In smaller businesses the owner has tremendous influence over the way the problems are perceived and therefore how the solutions are developed. The more adaptability the owner can demonstrate the more adaptable the company can become. ■

### New showroom



Chuck Bebber, left, and Andy Bebber turn the first shovelfuls at their new Brothers Lighting Depot showroom on Colonial Boulevard in Fort Myers.

Brothers Lighting Depot recently broke ground on a state-of-the-art lighting and ceiling fan showroom at 4030 Colonial Blvd. in Fort Myers. Andy and Chuck Bebber plan to have the latest technology in lighting and ceiling fans. Brothers

Lighting Depot has been in business for 17 years under the name Lighting Depot on Beacon Manor Drive in Fort Myers. The new facility will be open by the end of the year. ■

### The Power of Personal Service.



Left to Right: John Reingardt, Dennis Kucera, Bill Valenti, John Hodas and John Fritts

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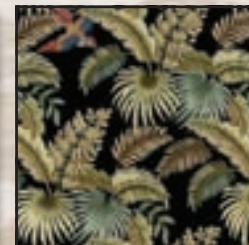
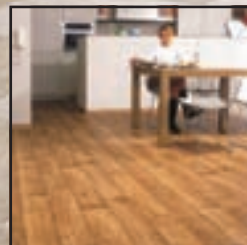


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