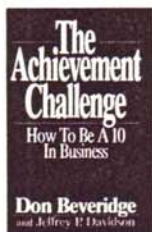


BOOK REVIEW

BUSINESS BROWSING

The Achievement Challenge



Imagine this page with only one dot printed on it. The dot represents you, the reader, starting out in a career. You know your immediate job, but you do not know the big picture which will allow you to become a "10" in business.

In fact, that happens to be this book's subtitle: "How to be a 10 in Business."

As your professional growth and development increase, add circles around that original dot, the authors say. The importance of seeking challenge and change is the focus of

this book. If your dot does not increase in size, "You are simply not promotable or your business will not progress," co-author Don Beveridge says.

He recalls a friend of his in kindergarten. People called them inseparable, yet all his friend sought was security. He went to work for a utility company when he was 17, practically never took vacations or took time "to learn to ski or fly." At one point in his life he proudly told Beveridge that he had turned down a promotion opportunity at his company.

His friend died of cancer at 48. "No change, no risk, little improvement. I cared for him deeply, but my friend . . . never got beyond that single, solitary dot on the paper."

This book is full of guidelines for success, both from the authors and from profiles of successful people at the end of each chapter. It is a book that provokes you — forcing you to think things out in your own mind.

If this question is taken seriously by the reader, then the answer should become self-fulfilling.

The advice for those in a stagnated business or career is summarized in a series of "isms" designed to provoke thought and, hopefully, action on the part of the reader. Much of the advice is common sense, yet many in the business world do not possess the ability to think in such non-abstract terms. If this book momentarily leads the reader back to simplistic concepts and attitudes, then the authors have accomplished what they have set out to do.

"Quite frankly, the only difference between stumbling blocks and stepping stones is the way we use them." Or "Success is not a goal. Success is a result." These are just two tidbits of wisdom found in *The Achievement Challenge*.

In its 12 chapters, the authors describe a road map to promotability; how to insure that you are continually challenged; the standards maintained by achievers; the reasons people fail;

learning from role models, while not emulating them; how to make change an ally; how an achiever can work within the organization; the characteristics of entrepreneurship; the competitive advantage of knowing how to execute strategies; personal organizational skills and how this fosters achievement; how business must become a "customer-focused culture"; and if you're a boss, ways to discover how your people perceive you.

Yale University conducted a study from 1954 to 1974. The 1954 graduates were asked whether their goals for future financial worth had been identified. Three percent had written the goals identifying a dollar value, 11 percent had goals in mind, and 86 percent did not have any goals.

The followup on this class was conducted 20 years later. Beveridge reports that "the 3 percent . . . with clearly defined, written, financial goals had a combined net worth that exceeded the combined total of the remaining 97 percent."

Rather than drifting through life, the authors believe a clearly identified goal will be a beacon to help focus your capabilities.

Have you ever asked yourself how your company would survive if you ever left it? This, Beveridge says, is a strong indicator of a loser. He speaks from experience. He did ask himself that question and resigned from his executive position with Mobil Oil Corp., selling his stock equity before he resigned. He personified himself as "a typical prima donna." Since that time the stock has increased and "has split two or three times for one." He tells how immature and naive he was.

Wisdom and knowledge evolve from defeat and failure, but Beveridge provides the reader with a short cut which he did not have.

And now the one dot nucleus on your imagined blank page can become, if you allow it to, the center point of a Redwood tree's cross section. ■

By Don Canaan

"*The Achievement Challenge*," by Don Beveridge Jr. and Jeffrey P. Davidson. Dow Jones-Irwin, \$19.95