

Success Makes Pretenders of Us All

Dr. Stan is a big bear of a man with a winning smile, and a presence that invites you to hug him. He greets each patient by taking their hand in his as he says “Hello”. This small gesture seems to say “It’s ok, whatever brings you here – we will figure it out. We will fix it.” This confidence and caring translates into a packed waiting room – each person patiently waiting for their two and a half minutes with the good doctor.

I’m there so he and his wife can tell me about the expansion they are planning for the clinic. I ask them WHY, why expand? Why now? As his wife begins to recite a laundry list of reasons, I look up, and Dr. Stan’s eyes meet mine. And I see it; his eyes are telling me why – “because I’ve got an emptiness deep down inside and it won’t let me go. I’m hoping this expansion will keep me busy enough, that I won’t feel the emptiness and the aloneness.”

I’ve discovered that many of us fulfill our career or business path without finding what we were really looking for. We see ourselves standing at the top of the ladder, looking down at our many accomplishments and wondering why it isn’t enough.

Success makes us pretend it’s ok – nobody can feel your need for more. From the outside, everything seems just fine, but on the inside, you die a little with each new day. You long for meaning, for something real.

The reality is that inner fulfillment doesn’t come with ordinary success. The truth is that success is a one-dimensional product, like a piece of paper; while fulfillment is deep and three dimensional. Success is not enough, no matter how bright and shiny it is. It is a fleeting here today, gone tomorrow, kind of thing; while fulfillment is deep, emotional and long lasting.

If you understand that longing, to be more, to do more; I am going to outline a simple process you can follow to start your movement today!

Before you begin there are a couple of things you need to have in place in order to be successful. The absolute first thing you need to identify when planning to start a movement is a group of people with a common interest. You cannot have a movement without a following. In the beginning that following can be as small as one person, but you do need to work on growing it, in order to give your movement its legs. Communication is another necessary component, without efficient and effective communication, there is simply no way to move forward.

With these two components in place you are ready to begin working on the movement itself. In every process, group or endeavor, there is a space between where it is now, and where it should be, in order to meet the needs of its stakeholders. This space is known as the performance gap. What you need to do to start your movement, is to build a bridge between these two spaces.



The performance gap can be broken down into a problem/solution format. The problem is a lack or gap of some kind. The solution is to create a movement that fills it.

Building your Movement, The Process

Pitch the Product

During this phase you will need to bring all the interested parties together and let them get to know each other. Over the course of two to three meetings you should describe your movement, build out the vision and design a framework. By the end of your time together you should have a working group of people, who understands your vision and is willing to work together on it to move it forward.

Build an Engaged Community

This is the phase where you change your group of people into a functioning team. Teams are built by giving them a common goal or purpose and allowing them to spend time together. They need a place where they can chat, brainstorm and post their ideas. This can happen in real time or in an asynchronous environment. It can be anything from a bricks and mortar location to a Face Book group or any combination that works for you.

Create an Action Plan

For a movement to work properly it must be a group project. Don't be afraid to share leadership with other members who are experts in their own areas. They can help you to move the project forward in ways you could never imagine on your own. In this type of environment, it is best if you use a shared file that can be updated by any team member. This allows anyone associated with the project to check on the status of an action item, and project files can easily be transferred from one part of the team to another. This will keep all stakeholders in the loop, build engagement in the project and keep everyone operating within the agreed upon project timelines.

Be the Coach

Keep the conversation and the work moving. Be sure to build engagement and dialogue by sharing stories, progress reports, pictures and aha moments. Encourage all team members to do the same. Active sharing will build cohesion and participation in the group. Offer guidance to your team, trust them and listen to their suggestions. Be sure to share successes and failures, best practices and lessons learned.

Remember as the leader of the movement your job is to provide clarity, depth, and enthusiasm. Your job is to start the "fire" and move it forward to the place where it takes on a life of its own. As the "fire" grows and builds momentum, the movement gains strength, and team members will step into leadership roles that are a natural fit to them and their experiences. Do not worry about this; a strong movement will move forward without you. It leaves you available for a role based more in strategy, than in day to day operations.

Once the project is complete, a single post from you will reignite the fire. Direct it to the team members who have participated in the previous project and brought it to a successful conclusion.



It should read something like this; “Congratulations on the successful completion of our project! Who is ready to begin a new project?”

And you will be off on a new mission...

Are you feeling unfulfilled? Do you have success, social standing and the respect of your peers; but somehow that is just not enough for you? Stop letting success make you a pretender! Don't imagine that everything will be ok. Address the emptiness and find fulfillment. ***Do it now!***

Look at your community, industry or profession. Is there a problem not being addressed? Do you have a solution to implement, that will solve that problem? Are you ready to step up to the challenge?

Yes, starting a movement will be demanding.

Yes, it will require using leadership and interpersonal skills you may not even realize right now that you possess.

Yes, there are times when you feel that you are sailing uncharted waters, into the eye of a storm.

Starting a movement may, at times, leave you feeling overwhelmed and out of your depth. However, creating a change, watching it gain momentum and grow, and the unbridled enthusiasm of your team members, will be worth every challenge that you have faced and overcome.

If you are willing to step out of your comfort zone, engage others and build your movement, you can make this feeling of needing or wanting something more, a memory of something that once haunted you, that you need never face again.

And always remember:

The journey of a thousand miles begins with just one step.

- ***Lao Tzu***

