

Gladwell's cure of creating a thriving organisation



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There is a long period of gestation behind almost any individual genuine creativity and a long period of practice is needed to create a thriving organisation, Malcolm Gladwell said at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg, where he was addressing delegates convened there for the inaugural Discovery Invest Leadership Summit on 22 July 2009.

Gladwell believes that the secret to creating a successful organisation lies not necessarily in talent, but in the leader's attitude, which should form the core of that long period practice.



Like every speaker who addressed the audience earlier on, Gladwell's idea of good leadership involves a certain degree of humanism whereby a leader's positive attitude will make a considerable impact on staff, laying the foundation for the creation of innovative ideas.

Gladwell also said that a leader should 'compensate' by working harder, being hungrier for success and taking his or her job very seriously if goals are to be achieved.

Gladwell is a staff writer for *The New Yorker*, and author of *Tipping Point*, *Blink* and *Outliers* and a former science and medicine writer for *The Washington Post*.

Crises bring opportunities

Sir Richard Branson, founder and chairman of Virgin Atlantic, told delegates: "We are truly in the middle of a great crisis, but in every crisis come opportunities and only a dynamic leadership can make a difference."



Sir Richard, who founded Virgin Atlantic in 1984, added: "The world today needs a good entrepreneurial thinking, so there is no need to get into business unless you want to make a difference."

He said wealthy people must use their wealth more responsibly and distribute it for collective use. "Those who have money in the bank must not let it rot there, but should use it to expand businesses in the aim of creating new opportunities for people."

Virgin is one of the world's respected brands that has expanded into aviation, hospitality and leisure, telecoms, financial services, health and wellness, and clean energy. He said that Virgin companies employ more than 50 000 people in 30 countries around the world.

"Stay true to your company's values and put smile on people's faces."

He lauded capitalism for changing the world of business, saying: "If monitored properly, capitalism can do wonders in society because it is the only viable system. The world has tried other systems that have all but failed."

People make money

Cape Town-born internet entrepreneur Ronnie Apteker said: "There are no bad businesses, only bad people. All these years I have learned that we don't invest in ideas but we invest in people. Rather invest in a bad business with good people than invest in good business with bad people."



“Ideas don't make money but people do make money,” he added.

“Persuasion is at the centre of all business activities and of our lives, but most leaders fail to persuade, motivate and inspire their people and communicate effectively.

“A good leader should nurture, empower, lead and listen to people.”

Lastly, he said: “Don't underestimate the power of luck. You can work hard but if you don't have enough luck, you won't get anywhere because luck counts.”

Apteker is a co-founder of SA's first internet services provider, Internet Solutions (IS) in 1993. He is currently involved with a host of online initiatives including vottle.com, sonicspaza.com, randgo.com, wantitall.co.za and Top of Mind.

The 2009 leadership summit was organised by Synchronised Marketing and Event Agency.

Visit www.theleadershipsummit.co.za.

ABOUT ISSA SIKITI DA SILVA

Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.

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