

Start With Why- How great leaders inspire everyone to take action

Simon Sinek- Penguin Book- 2009

- At the heart of every business is a business plan
 - At the heart of every business plan are numbers and strategies
 - But numbers and strategies are not the true heart of a business
- Every business starts with Why!
- Anyone or any organization can explain *what* they do; some can explain *how* they are different or better but few can articulate *why*.
- *Why* is not about money or profit. *Why* is the thing that inspires us and inspires those around us.
- *Sinek* provides a framework which organizations can be built, where people can be inspired- and it all starts with *why!*

- Sinek discovered the *why* when he had fallen out of love with his work. Having great clients was not enough, he wasn't being fulfilled.
- He shared this simple and powerful idea with his friends. Inspired, his friends started to make similar big changes in their lives and this huge concept spread.
- Starting with *why* is a way of thinking, acting and communicating. It is that one thing that allows natural born leaders to inspire.
- This ability is not exclusive to them. We can all learn this pattern- we can all learn to lead.

- Why do some businesses succeed while others don't? Some of this can be attributed to their decision making process- which is based on their data collection process. More critical to their thinking are their assumptions. Assumptions are based on perspective- either broad based or too narrow.
- Some companies may try to manipulate you by offering gimmicks; mostly based on the price of their products or via promotions.
- As consumers become more value based in their daily buying decisions, being misled doesn't feel right. This does not lead to consumer loyalty. Consumer loyalty is the focus of any successful business as it translates into repeat business from new and existing customers.

- Sinek offers us a compelling alternative. His *Inner Circle* concept is unique as it starts with *why* as the central premise of a business, followed by how and what. Most businesses start with what and may back this up with how but very few explain *why*.
 - Sinek proposes that every business knows *What* they do- their products and services. Through their value proposition, they explain *How* they do things.
 - Very few can explain their purpose, cause or belief. What causes you to get out of bed every morning? What gives you the biggest charge as a business or business owner? This is not about money or profit- we are talking about the magical spark that created the business in the first place!
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- One interesting theory he proposes is about our need / desire to belong. Extrapolating this, we consumers have a yearning to relate to businesses based on our connections to their values. Thus, we feel better about our consumer choices because of our deep connection with a company. This connection is based on *why* a company is in business.
 - As a business, you need to be able to clarify *why* you do what you do. People don't buy what do as they buy *why* you do it. If you don't know *why*, how will anyone else?
 - Sinek states that how are your values or principles that brings your cause to life. It is a reflection of your systems and processes. More importantly how relates to the culture of your company.
 - Once you have *why* which is a belief, *how* are the actions of your belief, the *what* are the results of those actions. Consistency of *what* is critical.
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- Trust is the backbone of any relationship. This extends to businesses and is the drive to consumer loyalty and their willingness to refer You and your business.
 - Successful companies do their best at delivering their trust in their employees as the employee is the key to any and all consumer interaction- especially the consumer's decision to buy your product (repeatedly).
 - Sinek proposes that the quest of any successful business is finding people who believe what you believe. This extends to employees and customers / clients.
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- The role of a great leader is not to come up with great ideas. It is to create the environment where great ideas and fostered and created on a regular basis.
 - (Success of a great leader is not measured by the followers they have but by the number of leaders they develop).
 - Energy motivates but charisma inspires. Charisma has nothing to do with energy, it comes from clarity.

- Sinek's Inner Circle is not just a communication tool but provides an insight to how a company is organized and how it inspires their employees and clients.
- If you speak clearly, you will be understood and possibly followed. The latter will determine how well you listen and act on what you have learned from listening.

- Sinek puts forth the biggest challenge for any company is success. Why? As you become more successful, companies have a tendency to forget about the *Why*. When you forget about the why, you don't stay true to your beliefs, your employees and clients. As he states, things become fuzzy. People make decisions and are influenced by their newfound success. In short, they lose perspective.
- He states, good successions and companies keep the why alive and front and centre. This is not easy to do and separates the successful businesses from the really successful ones.

- *Why* starts with inspiration. Inspiration is different for each of us. But inspiration is values based.
- The key to any successful business or the creation of one is one's purpose and sense of belonging with others.