

# The Inspiration Game

*What does it take to win in business? Great ideas, talented and committed people and a culture that fosters high performance... it sounds straightforward enough. For decades, business leaders have been striving to achieve the perfect blend, yet the rules won't stop rewriting themselves and so, for many, impressive and enduring success remains elusive. What is it that sets the real winners apart?*

As founder and managing director of LDL, one of Britain's leading performance and leadership consultancies, Robin Fielder is ideally placed to survey the business landscape and share his observations with us.

"Is it any more challenging to succeed in business today than it was twenty years ago?" I ask. "It's a faster-moving environment and the people factor is much more important. As people become more knowledgeable, better trained and more sophisticated they are looking for something better in organisational leadership. In many organisations, people perform to acceptable standards but are unmotivated to contribute the discretionary effort that is theirs alone either to give or hold in reserve. Companies that tap into this energy have a big competitive advantage."

It's this competitive advantage that Fielder and his organisation have been interested in for more than thirty years. Over that time, they have explored and developed learning systems that allow business leaders to turn teams of everyday people

into some of the most productive in their industry.

## **Turbo charge your business**

As Fielder explains, it's seldom a straightforward process. "Most senior executives are incredibly driven. They want to be successful. And they're tough minded. They understand the maxim *if you can dream it, you can do it*. However once your business starts to grow there is a gap between dreaming and doing that requires the support of other people."

"Deep down, every senior executive wishes they had a 'more button'," he continues, "something they could press that would instantly turbo charge their business and deliver enhanced performance at every level. There isn't a 'more button', of course. But there is a team of skilled people, and the task is to get these people to routinely outperform themselves under pressure. That is the role of inspirational leadership."

## **What keeps you up at night?**

Chances are its people, people, people. Attracting people, motivating people, and retaining people. People are our biggest

asset and our biggest headache.

In a DTI/CIPD survey of more than 1500 managers, people were asked what they would most like to see in their leaders. The most popular answer was 'inspiration'. When asked if they would describe their current leader as 'inspiring', only 11% said yes revealing an 'inspiration gap'.

So how do you set about bringing inspirational leadership to bear on your business? There can be no doubt that inspirational leadership is as much about raising organisational energy by instilling the will to win as it is about the skill to win. Leaders must get people excited about something they've never seen before, something that does not yet exist.

Almost every leader at some point asks themselves *how can I get my people to think like I think?* When they do this they're not looking to create an army of automata, they are just searching for ways to encourage others to adopt a positive mindset, take responsibility and identify with the aims of the business.

“But it’s not only about individuals. Inspirational leadership is a system; a way of organising the interactions between people that effectively duplicates a more confident, goal-oriented and productive mindset across an entire organisation.

“People don’t want to be managed, they want to be led, to be inspired to higher levels of excellence and they want a leader who can develop their potential.”

### **Find the magic in a person**

“Inspirational leadership creates a culture where people take responsibility and believe in themselves. A culture that makes people feel capable, confident and strong. A culture that sets out to find the magic in a person; find the things they excel at. And then accentuates those positives, and encourages others to do the same. That’s not to say you don’t work on weak areas. Of course you do; but you don’t do it to the point where it breaks the person’s spirit down.”

The end result allows you to set bigger goals. When people are engaged and pulling together you can raise the bar and drive higher expectations.

It’s a style of leadership that is perfectly suited to rapidly changing, highly competitive environments, and Fielder and his team at LDL witness dramatic breakthroughs on a daily basis.

“While it’s true that boosting people’s self-belief won’t, in itself, anchor them to your company, by adopting an inspirational style, you will attract and retain staff through

commitment and engagement. What that means in real terms is a workforce that *wants* to work for you...”

### **Spread the word**

LDL has boiled inspirational leadership down to eight core competencies that it captures and passes on in a single, one-day seminar for directors, managers and potential leaders across all functions of business.

The high energy, high impact format centres on how to create a winning culture, put more leadership into your team and inspire people to outperform themselves.

The programme provides not only all the tools you will need to improve the performance of your people, but also shows you in a highly structured step-by-step format, how to put them into practise.

We’ll leave the last word to Robin Fielder: “Just because you know what needs to be done, that doesn’t mean everybody else in the business is committed to it. You need to

inspire the people on whom you depend – share your enthusiasm and will to win with them. It’s your dream. Pass it on.”

*The Inspirational Leadership Seminar, with Robin Fielder, is a fast-track, one day leadership development event. Locations: London, Leeds and Edinburgh. Tickets £399+VAT per person. Time 10.30am – 5.00pm. For further information call LDL on +44(0)20 7381 6233 or visit [www.ldl.co.uk](http://www.ldl.co.uk)*

