



Awareness of The Big Picture

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Another key behavior of Great leaders is to maintain an awareness of the Big Picture. Let's see what that means.

Awareness of the Big Picture

- Great leaders will
 - Understand the business and the environment
 - Translate into terms meaningful to the people
 - Align with trends that add value
 - Take a strategic view of activities

Great leaders will

- Understand the overall context of the business and the environment in which they operate
- Translate the external context into terms meaningful to the people
- Align the organization with trends that add value to the company, the employees, the customers, even the community
- Take a strategic view of activities

This behavior picks up where keeping on top of external factors leaves off. This is where you take that external focus and bring it inside your business and use it to craft your inner workings.

Let's look at Walt Disney again. Walt was a leader who understood these concepts.



Walt Disney is such an iconic name around the world, that I don't need to give you much history of who he is or what he created.

We can quickly see that he understood the environment he had to operate in during his lifetime—the political arena, meaning WWII, and the political arena of Hollywood and how he kept that in mind as he led his team and his business.

We're going to go over 2 case studies to give you examples of this:

Case Study 1: Walt Disney

December 7, 1941

- US Army takes over Walt Disney Studios in LA for WWII tank and artillery repair shop
- Film distribution was halted overseas
- Walt began doing films for US Government projects

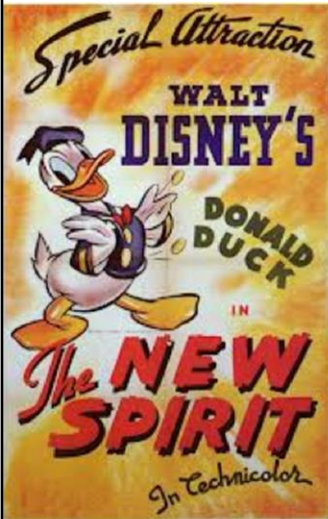
The first example began on December 8, 1941.

- The United States Army took over the Walt Disney Studios as a repair shop for tanks and artillery. Many of Walt's artists went to war.
- Worldwide markets were closed to film distribution, which meant Disney animation films could not be sold outside of US.
- And even Walt himself had to have a government ID to get on his own property.



Walt had to figure out how his company was going to survive these radical circumstances.

Case Study 1: Walt Disney



Working on one of the many projects Disney did for the treasury department, Walt created a film starring Donald Duck called, *The New Spirit*.

In this film, Walt used humor and loyalty to speak to the American public. The 1942 film did so much to inspire Americans. That year twice as many Americans paid their taxes as in the previous year.

And that tax money helped us win the war. So, now you know---you have Walt Disney to thank for paying your taxes--LOL

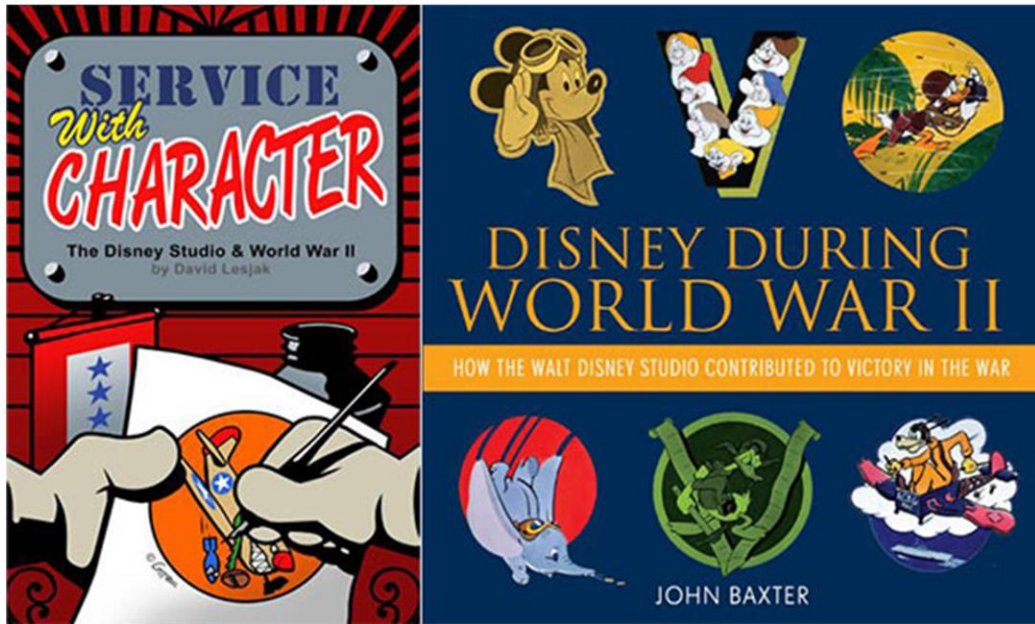


Let me break it down--Walt Disney understood

- the environment his company had to contend with



- He was able to get his team on board to create films promoting US patriotism

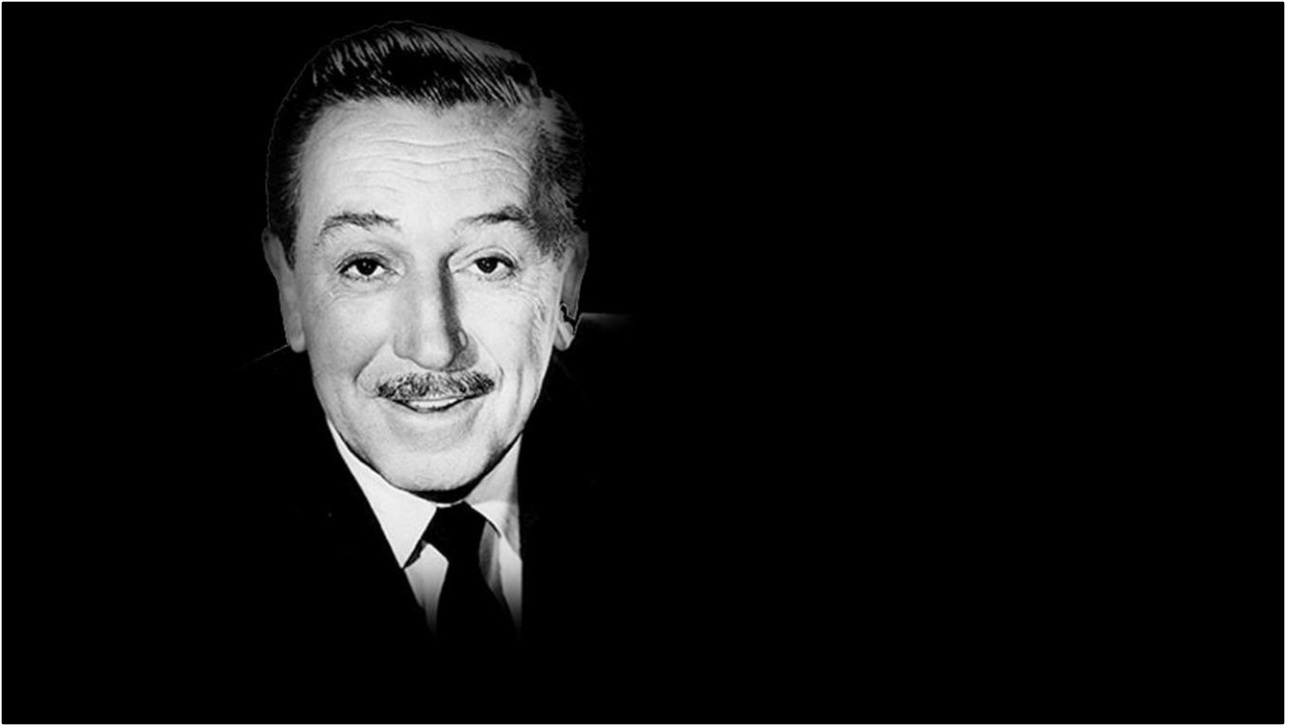


- He helped create jobs, helped generate tax money to pay for weapons to win the war
- He understood that until the war was won, the company would not be able to expand its overseas business



- But once the war **was** won, Walt was able to distribute films overseas and THAT raised the money which allowed him to grow the company and move into areas beyond studio film animation.

Walt took his awareness of the big picture and used it to lead his company.



The second example I want to share comes from a few years later, when Walt could not find the money to build Disneyland.

The only way he could see to earn enough profit was to get into television.

But the major Hollywood studios put pressure on each other not to support television production because they really believed it would ruin the movie business.

That's an example of weak leaders who could not see the big picture.



But Walt could and he took courage and went with television anyway. Because he did, we have classics like *The Mickey Mouse Club*, *Davy Crockett*, and *The Wonderful World of Color*.

Because of his awareness of the big picture and his decision to move into television, Walt gained the financing to open Disneyland.



And when he did, on July 17, 1955, Walt Disney dedicated Disneyland before a television audience of millions.

So, his decision paid off!



We see this again in other decisions Walt made in running his business. He refused to allow Disneyland to become sloppily run or maintained.

He held the park to high standards of customer service as well as paying attention to detail of design and operation.

The result was that Disneyland became a phenomenal success, generating demand for other parks in places like Orlando, Paris, and Tokyo, and creating a critical component of the Walt Disney Company.

Walt Disney understood

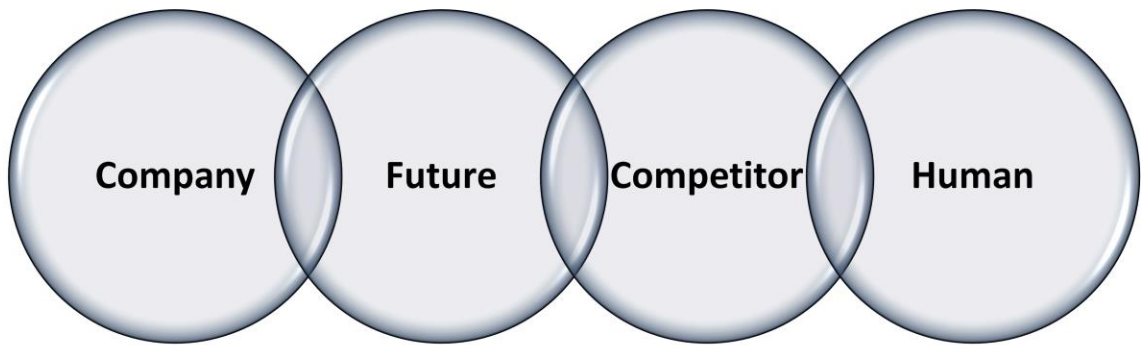
- the environment his company had to contend with AND what he needed for long term success
- He was able to get his team on board to move into TV production
- once he opened Disneyland he held his staff (or his cast members as they're called) to strict quality standards and values that have been sustained for 20 plus years after his death....that's strong leadership!

Walt Disney understood

- the environment his company had to contend with AND what he needed for long term success
- He was able to get his team on board to move into tv production, which was no easy feat because other film industry leaders were definitely against that
- Once he opened Disneyland he held his staff (or his cast members as they're called) to strict quality standards and values that have been sustained for 20 plus years after his death....that is truly strong leadership!

Exercise

1. Examine big picture issues using 4 categories



Here are some exercises that will help you keep the big picture in mind as you lead your team:

Exercise 1: Use these 4 categories to examine the big picture and decide how to bring it in-house to further your team and company growth:

- The Company: Who are we? What do we excel at? What do we fail at or under achieve at? Are we activists in our industry? Who (or what companies) can we look to for inspiration? Be sure to look inside and outside of your industry.
- The Future: What shifts are happening? To our Consumers? To others? To the environment? To the economy? How might these shifts affect our company?
- The Competitive Domain: What is the conventional wisdom in the industry or the economy? What must we commit to in order to take advantage of opportunities? What must we stop doing? What must we start doing? What must YOU do Less of or More of?
- The Human factor: What strengths do we have to leverage? What weaknesses do we need to overcome? How will life change for each member of our team if we stay the same? How will life change for each member of our team if we make changes?

Common Mistakes

- Keeping information to yourself
- Failing to recognize your team intelligence
- Failing to involve your team

Look, it's easy to lose sight of the big picture and how it affects your team. Here are some common mistakes to be aware of and avoid:

- Keeping stuff all to yourself –Not proactively keeping your team informed of high level WHO, WHAT, WHERE, HOW, and WHY information and decisions. There's just something stinky about a leader who gets direction from above, or sets the direction, and then forgets to share it with their team or decides not to share it with their team.
- Another mistake is failing to recognize your team's intelligence – listen, they're not stupid. When there is information that is shareable—be transparent. Don't cross the confidentiality line, but don't keep secrets just to be power hungry.
- Failing to involve your team with upcoming changes – enlist their insights and front-line knowledge, listen to their ideas and be available to your team when they have concerns.

We saw the results from Walt Disney getting his employees on board and involved in “not so glamorous projects” in order to keep the company going and eventually growing in spite of a World War.

Exercise

1. Ask yourself these questions:

- How can I involve my team or some of the members of my team in addressing the big picture issues?
- What are the risks of involving my team?
- What are the risks of NOT involving my team?
- How do I determine what information is too confidential to share?

Based on the outcomes of the last exercise, in which you examined the big picture, ask yourself the following questions:

- How can I involve my team or some of the members of my team in addressing the big picture issues?
- What are the risks of involving my team?
- What are the risks of NOT involving my team?
- How do I determine what information is too confidential to share? In other words where is the line between transparency and confidentiality?

Since it isn't always clear where you should draw that line, be sure to discuss any plans to involve your team and share information with them, only after you have discussed it with your upper management.

Do this until you become very comfortable with how to make the distinction between proprietary company information and educational insightful information that your team should have.