



Dave Mitchell

the Leadership Difference

Laugh and Learn

June 2012

This month Dave shares some tips for leading during economically turbulent times and identifies three wines that rocked his world (literally) while he traveled abroad.

Thriving During Challenging Times

Every day I hear from clients about how difficult it is to succeed in this economic climate. While things appear to be improving, many companies and individuals are still working very hard and not seeing many positive results. Here are some tips for maintaining high performance during these struggles:

- Communicate more and be positive when you do it. Often companies talk less when times are tough. The opposite is a much better strategy. Acknowledge the challenge, invite the staff to discuss how we can respond to our defeats, and show confidence in your people that they will prevail.
- Praise your romantics, reassure your experts, invite ideas from your masterminds and give space to your warriors. This will keep motivation high.
- Identify people who are down and spend some time with them. Support and encourage them to re-ignite their flame. But, if they don't regain their mojo, let them go. It will be the optimists that will lead your recovery.
- Get mad and then get a plan. When you lose a piece of business, it's okay to be angry (at the situation, not at staff members). It's actually very cathartic for your staff. Then quickly move to solution mode.
- Focus on the pipe line. A full pipeline provides hope and hope is necessary to keep morale and effort high.
- Keep an eye on the veterans. Your experienced people can get very negative during challenging times and this can hurt morale with the newer employees. Make sure your veterans are upbeat.
- Try to spend some money on the team. Of course, I recommend training programs (big bag of duh), but other fun activities are worthwhile, too. It provides a break in the pressure and demands and (in the case of training) may give your team new tools to use to overcome the challenges they are facing.
- Celebrate every success. Momentum is just as important in business as it is in sports. Every time you make a sale or experience a victory, make it a point to celebrate it. Don't let work become drudgery.
- Talk to your clients, especially the ones who didn't choose to work with you. By maintaining dialogue with lost clients you remain top of mind should they have a bad experience with one of your competitors.
- Look for other revenue streams. When talking with clients you may discover market needs that are not being filled by your industry. Experiment with new services and differentiating concepts.
- Above all else, act out of faith, not out of fear. Fear is the worst possible foundation for decision making.



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Around the World in 14 days

I recently had the opportunity to speak in Madrid, Spain; Verona, Italy; and Oxford England over a two week period. Each experience was amazing. The people, the culture and the food were all unique and exciting. Of course, for me, the wine experience was equally incredible. Here are three wines, one from each location, which really impressed me.

Bodegas El Nido Jumillo Clio 2008 -

Had this fantastic wine while dining on suckling pig at one of the most iconic restaurants in Spain. Las Cuevas de Luis Candelas, so the story goes, is named for a famous Robin Hood-like bandit and is housed in the building where he used to hang out. The bar is among the oldest in Madrid, dating back to the 17th century. Fortunately, the wine is much fresher with great acidity, berry flavors and matches well with all meats.

Ken Forrester Chenin Blanc Western Cape Petit 2010 -

It was an unusually warm and sunny day in Oxford, England and I was sitting on the deck of Fishers Restaurant. They had a charming lawn area with picnic tables and even provided picnic baskets for those who wanted to dine in the yard. I spied this lovely, crisp and slightly sweet offering on the menu. Bonus...they served an 8 ounce pour!

Tommaso Bussola Valpolicella Superiore Ca del Laito Ripasso 2005

My hotel in Verona was a very short walk from Piazza delle Erbe, the town's forum during the Roman Empire. History was all around, as were ristoranti. I don't even know the name of the little bar I wandered into off an alley, but the Lasagna Bolognese was amazing and they offered this selection by the half bottle. I may have been the only solo diner in Italy (O Sole Mio), but I was as content as could be enjoying the lovely balance and medium body of this Veneto wine. Molto bene!



Have Mouth, Will Travel

I love what I do.

Every now and then there is a stretch of travel that looks daunting. From May 11 to June 6, here is a list of the cities I spent the night: Denver, Detroit, Denver, Los Angeles, Orlando, Washington DC, Denver, Madrid, Verona, Oxford, Orlando, and Denver. I was in twelve cities, four countries and spent 26 days out of 28 on the road. And you know what? It was amazing!

The only negative was the earthquake in northern Italy. Thank you to all my clients for making this a great experience and a special shout out to Heinz Corporation for adjusting their schedule so I could see my son Slade graduate from high school. Now I just need to re-introduce myself to my family...