

DOWNTON ABBEY REVISITED

“It’s a brave new world we’re headed for. We must try to meet it with as much grace as we can muster.” So says Downton Abbey’s Lord Grantham as WWI comes to an end. To His Lordship, it’s a world turned upside down as he watches his family step outside the box and take on new roles in response to new situations. Lady Sybil becomes a nurse and runs off with the estate’s Irish chauffeur. Lady Edith learns to drive and mans the tractor on a nearby farm. Lady Mary becomes engaged to a rough-edged, commoner newspaper man. His wife, Cora, absorbs herself in wartime projects to the extent that she has no time to lunch with him. And that’s just the turmoil of Season 2.

In Season 3, the future of Downton is threatened by, ahem, financial difficulties. Lord Grantham finds that he must drastically change the estate’s management and eventually cedes his power to his two sons-in-law. Matthew and Tom sell him on their new ideas and strategies and, simultaneously, sell themselves on their abilities to become overseers of the estate. It’s a bit of a stretch for this young lawyer and chauffeur-turned-journalist, and we’ll know how the plan succeeds in Season 4. While Downton Abbey may be a fictional realm, it reflects our own reality; this kind of change is happening now in our current “brave new world.” And we’re responding by accepting new roles and responsibilities, at home and in the workplace. We can do this because, even though each of us possesses a core set of talents and knowledge, we are capable of stretching outside our comfortable skill sets to perform new tasks and effectively influence others.

Take it from Matthew who declares, “I’ll be no use to anyone if I can’t be myself.” Well said, he. He knows he’s an attorney with clients to serve, and yet, there’s Downton to save, so he shoulders new responsibilities and divides his time and talents between the two jobs. We all start with our unique

set of talent, knowledge, skills and experience, but then we apply them to new circumstances and, in doing so, expand our range. Daniel Pink shows us an apt example of this phenomenon in this issue’s featured book, *To Sell Is Human*. He tells of engineers from Palantir who travel out into the field to work with clients. Though their core skill sets may be more suited to the development of the intelligence software they design, they actually become salespeople. In lieu of formal sales training, they are assigned two books to read: one is about the September 11 terrorist attacks, and the other is a book about improvisational acting.

Imagine a “typical” engineer who is trained to do things “the right way.” Now he/she’s expected to emulate the apparent chaos of improv, following its three guidelines that Pink writes about: “(1) Hear offers. (2) Say ‘Yes and.’ (3) Make your partner look good.” Suffice it to say that these loose rules may be a stretch for individuals – and here we recognize that not all engineers may be described as such - with a high inclination to conform to definite procedures and principles. But Palantir computer engineers appear to be meeting the challenge



by developing the “people skills” – or what Pink would call “attunement” - they need to sell their product to clients.

Some may view this use of an engineer’s – or any other employee’s - time as going above and beyond the call of duty, but in today’s business environment it’s necessary. Pink writes: “A decade of intense competition has forced most organizations to transform from segmented to flat (or at least, flatter). They do the same, if not greater, amounts of work than before – but they do it with fewer people who are doing more, and more varied, things.” More and more of us will be asked to take on duties we never thought of performing.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Book Learning <i>To Sell Is Human</i>	2
Business Cornerstones Conference	3
Closing Thoughts	4

BOOK LEARNING

In *To Sell Is Human*, Daniel Pink debunks at least three myths about sales careers. (1) Sales is a field of last resort for the less intellectually gifted. (2) It's a world inhabited by money grubbers and shucksters. (3) Its ranks have innate talent to sell, sell, sell. So not true, all three. As proof, he shows us the world of "non sales selling."

Pink writes about organizations whose highly trained engineers, computer programmers, and executives regularly engage in activities that directly serve customers. Even though these interactions don't usually end with a purchase, they effectively "sell" customers on the merits of their organizations' goods and services. Pink also reports the results of a survey that reveals people "across a range of professions" actually spending 40% of their time on the job moving others. Frequently, this phenomenon occurs outside the arena of big business.

Pink points to the growing number of entrepreneurs in our midst. In addition to selling products and services, these small business owners extend their "sales" efforts towards employee motivation and satisfaction. Also, Pink recognizes the worlds of education and health services, which he dubs Ed-Med. As he points out, both teachers and doctors sell. Both convince others to part with resources of time, attention, and effort to reach their goals. Says one teacher: "I'm selling my students that the science lesson I'm teaching them is the most interesting thing ever." And one doctor: "Medicine involves a lot of salesmanship...I have to talk people into doing some fairly unpleasant things."

In his chapter titled "From Caveat Emptor to Caveat Venditor," Pink shows how the internet levels the sales playing field and renders the smarmy used car salesperson obsolete, especially at Car Max. There, buyers who haven't already brought internet automobile research results with them can access information at Car Max computer banks. And salespeople, working with buyers, position their computers so that both may view data on the vehicles. Besides this "information symmetry," Car Max assigns a set price to its cars. No haggling allowed. Though salespeople earn their salaries through commission only, those commissions don't vary with the price of the cars. This eliminates the possibility of customers being pressured into purchasing more car than they can afford.

As for the last myth, that of the natural born salesperson, Pink believes that everyone has the ability to sell. "Each of us – because we're human – has a selling instinct, which means that anyone can master the basics of moving others." He believes that the old ABCs of selling, "Always be closing," are now trumped by the new ABCs of moving others: "attunement, buoyancy, and clarity." Pink describes what each of these means and provides pointers on how to develop them in ourselves.

He defines "attunement" as the "ability to bring one's actions and outlook into harmony with other people and with the context you're in." Because conversation is the best tool we have to connect with one another, Pink refers to a strategy used by Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great*. He prefers to start a conversation by asking, "Where are you from?" This allows the other to respond in a variety of ways and take the conversation in any direction they desire. Pink admits he prefers Collins' question to his own "What do you do?" because it can make people uncomfortable if they're not happy with their work.

The effort to move people doesn't always produce immediate success. People often refuse to buy what we offer, or to learn or perform the way we'd prefer. Therefore, we need to know how to recover from rejection. Pink calls this skill "buoyancy," and it requires a positive outlook. Referencing the work of Martin Seligman, Pink suggests working on our explanatory style when our sales efforts aren't successful. "The more you explain bad events as temporary, specific, and external, the more likely you are to persist even in the face of adversity."

While selling has long been associated with problem *solving*, Pink aligns it more closely to problem *finding*. This requires "clarity," which he defines as "the capacity to help others see their situations in fresh and more revealing ways and to identify problems they didn't realize they had."

One suggestion to develop this skill comes to him from an innovative design firm: "When you want to figure out what kind of a problem someone has, ask a 'Why?' question. Then, in response to the answer, ask another 'Why?' And again and again, for a total of five whys." This process uncovers "reasons for... behaviors and attitudes" and the problems that most need solving.

After Pink shows us the qualities we need to develop if we are to move people successfully, or - as he puts it - "how to be," he prepares us to take action and turns our attention to "what to do" in sales and non-selling sales. His three categories are: "to pitch, to improvise, and to serve." The cases and developmental examples he shows us are varied: from Hollywood and Pixar to advertising agencies, the courtroom, politics, Twitter, improvisational theater, busses in Kenya and health care.

At the end of his chapter on service, Pink gives us two questions to consider:

1. If the person you're selling to agrees to buy, will his or her life improve? 2. When your interaction is over, will the world be a better place than when you began?

Obviously, to him, the world of sales is no longer business as usual.

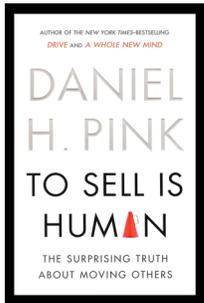
To Sell Is Human

By Daniel Pink

Riverhead Books, 2012

260 Pages

\$26.95



"There are no 'natural salespeople,' in part because we're all naturally salespeople. Each of us – because we're human – has a selling instinct, which means that anyone can master the basics of moving others."

– Daniel Pink

BUSINESS CORNERSTONES CONFERENCE REPORT

Several weeks ago, we invited some strategic partners to co-host our quarterly Business Cornerstones Conference. This session dealt with Plans: Strategic, Marketing; Facility, and Succession. Ray Main, Bernie Lowe & Associates, laid out a plan for navigating the Affordable Care Act. Kevin Schleuter, Proximity, helped explain the rising importance of real estate and property utilization in supporting culture and improving profitability. Samuel I. Kreamer, J.D. & C.P.A., Kreamer Law, highlighted some of the ins and outs of successful generational and partnership business transfers.

So far, our conferences have attracted people from across the country, a variety of businesses, and excellent presenters. The next conference is scheduled for August 6, 2013. The presentations demonstrate how to connect the dots between Process (the rules of engagement) and Profits (the applause of a grateful market). Mark your calendar now. Additional details will be released soon!



Here's A Thought

"It is your work in life that is the ultimate seduction."

-Pablo Picasso

DOWNTOWN ABBEY

Continued from page 1

If we find ourselves "stuck" with a self-image of being only what we've always been and doing only what we've always done, we'll find the new challenges even more daunting. What we'll need is a new self-image as well as a new approach to our colleagues and clients.

Back at Downton, Tom Branson fights for the right to marry Lady Sybil and informs Lord Grantham, "I'm not a revolutionary, I'm a socialist. And I won't always be a chauffeur." Quite right. He soon becomes a journalist in Ireland. And, after a course of events too twisted to unravel here, he finds himself back in England being forced by the Dowager Countess into a morning coat - or as he calls it, "the uniform of oppression" - to serve as best man in Matthew and Mary's wedding.

Thus, a whole process of "attunement" begins. (See Pink's definition of "attunement" in our book article on Page 2.) Little by little, after another course of events that we can't divulge here, he begins to conform more closely to the norms of the English aristocracy. On the road to Crawley family acceptance, he retains his Irish identity and still keeps in touch

with his "downstairs" world. At the same time, he softens his attitude toward Sybil's family and tweaks his approach toward them. Even by simply dropping the subservient form of address, "m'lady," he begins to resemble them more closely. He also becomes of service as an equal. When Matthew and Mary's impending marriage is threatened, he facilitates their reconciliation. The Crawleys aren't going to change and conform to him, so he alters his behavior to sell himself to them. He even becomes part of the Save Downton team as their estate manager. (His uncle back in Ireland was a farmer, you see.) Eventually, Matthew's mother, Isobel, tells him, "You've managed a very delicate proposition superbly... You have a position now, and you're entitled to use it."

We've seen people in real organizations thrive when necessity calls them to take on new roles and responsibilities. They do it by taking stock of their established skill sets; recognizing what knowledge, abilities, habits and behaviors they can develop to enhance those skill sets; and doing the work to acquire them. Many, in the midst of this process may relate to Tom Branson when he says, "I've been on a bit of a learning curve, as it happens." Frankly, it's often a stretch for these individuals, yet they succeed. And in doing so, they exercise a new flexibility that we, and maybe even Lord Grantham, would call grace.

Our Tools

Professional
DynaMetric
Programs®

ProScan® TeamScan®
JobScan® Strat-Map®

Increasing Behavioral
Flex *Ability*™

Integrated Planning
Methodology™

Index of Workplace
Attitudes™

Internal Marketing System™

Cultural Due Diligence
System™

Closed Loop Performance
Systems™

Dan Schneider
Joan Schneider
Cultural Architects

Phone: 641.791.9060
Fax: 641.792.7534

Email:
dan@workwithedge.com
joan@workwithedge.com

www.WORKWITHEDGE.com

CLOSING THOUGHTS



from DAN

Downton Abbey is a wonderfully scripted series involving, among other topics, the intrigue and drama associated with succession planning at family and organizational levels. Not soon enough, Season 4 will begin with the fate of the family legacy thrown into disarray and shock at the conclusion of Season 3.

Everything, even Downton Abbey, has a season. Sooner or later, every family and every organization goes through a succession season. In publicly held companies, that season occurs every five to seven years. In some businesses, the CEO succession season brings about a complete changing of the senior leadership team.

There's usually some drama associated with that change as the new leaders begin creating a new culture in their own image and likeness. Often, they fall prey to "either . . . or" thinking: either we can build on success of the way we've always done things, or we can strike out on a brave new course that will increase profitability, market penetration, etc., etc., etc.. Our question about this season of change is probably obvious to those not involved: "How about we do both?"

In privately held businesses, especially those that are family owned, the succession season

occurs at the end of a twenty-five to thirty year cycle of leadership, and one generation of the family replaces another. Regardless of the amount of preparatory grooming, the next generation is rarely ready for the job on day one.

Sometimes, the heirs apparent have no interest in the responsibility; sometimes, they simply don't have the talent for it. So what's the Lord or Lady of Downton Abbey (feel free to substitute the name of your business) to do in a situation like that? Fortunately, a family business is not necessarily the family legacy; and the business can be sold to outsiders or to inside employees. There's also a way to build a succession bridge that keeps the business in the family, albeit led by non-family member executives, until the next generation of family members demonstrates the commitment, capability, competence, and character to lead the family business.

Here in the Midwest, we're accustomed to seasons. Sometimes they're predictable; and sometimes you get heavy snowfalls in May. The keys to surviving the seasons, especially the unpredictable ones, are to be aware of what's going on around you; build rapport with those around you; stay focused on the outcomes you value; and, above all else, stay flexible.