



AIM Consulting, LLC

The Difference between “Good” and “Great”

Why the time to change is NOW!

Ever wonder why in some markets small fast food franchises out-sell McDonald’s and Wendy’s? Ever wonder why beer or soft drink market shares differ by region and sometimes by neighboring territories? Ever wonder why sales rates in some stores or on some routes are very different... in the same market?

The difference is not in the product, it’s in the people and processes. The difference in results is the difference between “good” and “great.” Great people and great processes generate great results. What makes an operation great? Leadership setting the direction, setting performance expectations high, and not settling for less.

Ever read *Good to Great* by Jim Collins? It’s a good book ... no it’s great! It is the result of a research project that asked the question “can a good company become a great company?”

The answer is YES. As the author points out in *Good to Great*, it doesn’t take a revolution. It doesn’t take a significant change in strategy. It takes discipline, it takes focus, and it takes the right people.

Many beverage distributors and bottlers continue to do the same things and wonder why they are getting reduced results. Their organizations have built-in inefficiencies.

Their people are complacent. Sometimes they have “retired on the job.” What’s needed is a renewed focus on the fundamentals – a questioning of how you do everything. What should you START, STOP, and IMPROVE?

It’s time to break current thinking and eliminate thoughts such as ...

- Stack it high and sell it low.
- Put it in the backroom, it will sell next month.
- Sales were down due to the weather...
- That route is difficult due to...
- This retailer is never satisfied. He doesn’t understand our policies.
- We’ll only get our fair share of space and displays. There’s nothing else I can do.
- This account is always out of product on Monday. That’s just the way it is.

“[Continuous improvement] begins with the acceptance of status quo is not perfect.”

– Kiyoshi Suzuki

Great organizations don't accept less than great thinking. Excuses are not allowed.

Empowerment and accountability for performance is the expectation. Mistakes are communicated...not to place blame but to learn how to improve.

The message here is it's not as much about strategy as it is about execution. All employees must think of the company as they owned it.

Everyone must listen and learn from all customer and employee interactions. When's the last time that your receptionist took responsibility for an account issue that was noticed during a shopping trip or while having lunch on the weekend? It's accountability and attention to detail; it's the “culture of great.”

Employees and customers want to be associated with greatness. Employees are proud to work for an organization that is great. When sales reps sell, they can be assured that the order will be delivered on-time, with an accurate invoice, and merchandised with perfection.

Getting from “good” to “great” is about continuous improvement. *Kaizen* is a Japanese word for continuous improvement. Kiyoshi Suzaki (a Japanese consultant) said, “Kaizen begins with the acceptance of status quo is not perfect.”

Remember “status quo” will not get you to great. You must challenge existing rules and paradigms.

- Whether pre-sell or driver-sell, why do you do things the way you do? What other sales and delivery strategies may deliver improved performance?
- What is the impact on retailer satisfaction of your current business practices?

- When you look at current hiring practices, performance appraisal, and compensation systems, what attitudes and behaviors are you “really” motivating and rewarding?

What is really changing? The key change is in your people and processes. The goal is structured processes designed to meet employee and customer needs; continuously improved; and delivered error-free.

How do you make this change? Simply by setting the direction and training, motivating, and rewarding your employees. Good companies accept good performance. Great companies always set the bar higher.

When is a good time to change? The best answer is NOW. There is no good time. There will always be challenges, product introductions, economic issues, seasonal pressures, and the list goes on. This change will not happen over night, but you will quickly “see” the difference. Employees will be more energized. Customers and partners will enjoy doing business with your organization. Leaders will be rewarded for their vision. Results will improve.

“Good” is not good enough. Take the challenge to be GREAT!