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Sent: Thursday, October 01, 2009 4:29 PM
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Subject: FWD: [The Enlightened Leader] Volume 27 - December 2008

This message was forwarded by: *leslie olin* <leslie@theizzogroup.com>



December 14, 2008

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Reflection- Is There An Upside to All This Down News?



Since the last time I wrote you the economic news has only grown increasingly grim with auto companies on the brink of collapse and job cuts being announced on a daily basis. I know many of our clients and readers are experiencing tough times and having to make some tough decisions as well. But there may be some upside to all this down news. In fact, there is almost always upside to down times.

Though it may be hard to see beyond the present slowdown, I thought it would be wise to remind you of some of those upsides. One of the upsides is that organizations get lean during down cycles and these times lend the urgency needed to re-think how we do things. If there was ever a time to engage your people in thinking about how to do things smarter and more efficiently this is the time. One of my clients is asking every team throughout the company to look for ideas on how to cut costs and remove unnecessary work. Not only does it give employees an opportunity to help stave off layoffs but these efficiencies will last beyond the slowdown.

Another upside to down times is that market share is often gained during down cycles. There are a number of reasons why this happens. The most obvious one is that some of your competitors go out of business but there are other factors as well. Many companies slash and burn during tough times-cutting R & D, cutting the sales force, letting good talent walk out the door, or having layoffs to effect short term profits. Companies that keep their people engaged, keep service up, and keep talented people, will often grow market share during the downturn and then turn that market share into real gains when the pie grows again. It is the job of leaders to see beyond the short term to get ready for the next up cycle. Find creative ways to keep talent, offer part time flexibility to staff, keep in touch with clients even if they aren't buying, build relationships with prospects, and serve existing customers with the same spirit as during up times. This may not pay off during the downturn but watch what happens when the cycle turns.

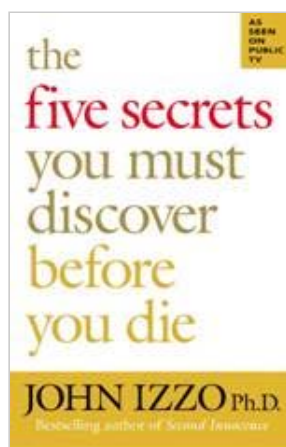
There are also lots of personal upsides to all this down. Often down times lend us perspective. We realize that the things we have been accumulating really weren't the source of happiness anyway. We stay at home and cook together, we give smaller presents with more thought, and we discover amazing things to do right here in our hometown. For some, the downturn may lead to a time without work and an opportunity to consider a much needed career change. Many a life changing career change has come during a slowdown.

One more thing to remember is that the world hasn't changed as much as we think it has. The sun came up this morning, its raining here in Vancouver just as it should be this time of year, and the soil is going to rest for the winter getting ready for next year's harvest. I know this is a tough time but staying hopeful is critical. Yogi Berra, the great New York Yankee once said "when you come to a fork in the road take it." This time will pass and the cycle will turn again. Even if this time has dealt you a tough blow, you never know the upside that might be on the other side of down.

I wish each of you a holiday season filled with joy.

John

Give the Gift of Wisdom This Season



With everything going on in the world this holiday season, the best gift this year may be the gift of wisdom and inspiration. Dr. Izzo's book, *The Five Secrets You Must Discover Before You Die*, offers the perspective of 235 people from age 60-106 and what they had discovered about finding happiness and purpose. Its so easy with all the gloom in the air for people to get discouraged and this book offers practical advice on how to stay in the moment, live with less worry and deal with challenges more effectively. The book was named the best Self-Help book of 2008 by the Independent Publisher's Association. So this year give the gift of wisdom.

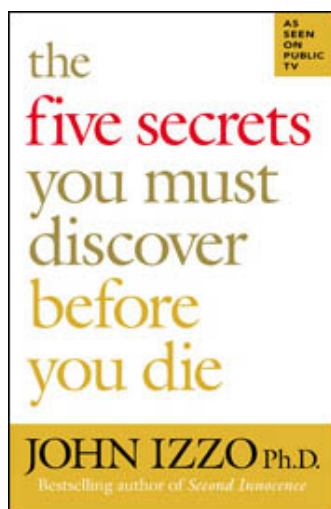
to order **in time for Christmas** - DIRECT LINKS ARE BELOW!!

In Canada - <http://www.chapters.indigo.ca/books/Five-Secrets-You-Must-Discover-John-Izzo/9781576754757-item.html?ref=Books%3a+Search+Top+Sellers>

In the United States: http://www.amazon.com/Five-Secrets-Must-Discover-Before/dp/1576754758/ref=pd_bbs_sr_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1229316944&sr=8-1

Holiday Gift Idea- Free Movie and Discounted Book

Free Movie of The Five Secrets



New FREE Internet Movie - Over 300,000 Online Views

Here's a cool new way to experience our bestselling book: *The Five Secrets You Must Discover Before You Die*. In collaboration with author Dr. John Izzo, we've created a self-running 3-minute Flash version with highlights of the book on beautiful landscapes with uplifting music. Please give it a try, and if you like it, pass it on to friends and loved ones.

[Watch The Five Secrets Internet Movie](#)

Free Gift : 58 people from the final section of the book share their secrets to life in one sentence or less.

Join the Conversation: What's your secret to life in one sentence or less? Add your own secret and see what others are saying (see last page of movie).




Dr. Izzo Speaks on Leading in Uncertain Times

Dr. Izzo has been speaking to many leadership groups lately on **Leading in Uncertain Times**. Many businesses are having to reduce costs, make tough decisions, find ways to keep staff motivated, while keeping everyone focused and on side. In this keynote or workshop, Dr. Izzo explores what employees need from leaders in uncertain times, the keys to keeping a positive work environment during downturns, and offers the six things leaders must do during uncertain times including communicating relentlessly, staying focused on the long term vision, engaging people in solving problems, etc. He also shows why some companies actually gain market share and increase their competitiveness during down cycles and how your company can do so. The talk also focuses on how leaders can maintain their personal motivation during uncertain times. Contact us if you want to know more:

www.theizzogroup.com/speechdescriptions2007-b.htm

Book Review

To Bless the Space Between Us by John O'Donohue

 This book is actually a Book of Blessings authored by the Irish writer John O'Donohue who died last year at the age of 51. The book explores a number of key facets of human experience including beginnings, thresholds, callings, homecomings and endings. Each section includes some wonderful prose by O'Donohue followed by a series of blessings which are incredibly profound and difficult to describe. The blessings are a form of poetic affirmation. This book is highly recommended for anyone (or anyone you know) who is experiencing a threshold in their own life. The best thing about this book is that you will feel better about the world and about your position in it when you have completed a reading. When Dr. Izzo read a portion of it to one of his clients they said "when I hear writing like that, it makes me believe in the world." A great read for the holiday season.

On the Road with Dr. Izzo

Well I have just finished my last trip of the year returning from Phoenix where I lead a group of senior leaders discussing how to create a culture of collaboration and how to lead in tough times. I stayed at the Phoenician Hotel in Scottsdale where the service was as great as ever. Still the hotel's numbers are down and you could see the worry amongst the staff. At the session with senior leaders from an oil and gas business, we discussed the fact that even in a business that is doing well right now, employees have a generalized anxiety they bring to work from watching the evening news and the experience of their neighbors. I reminded them how critical it is to communicate and be visible during tough times.

My trails these last few weeks have taken me to Virginia to work with health care leaders, to Toronto where I was speaking to leaders in the construction industry and to Saskatoon where Olivia McIvor and I presented at a conference on creating a culture of mentoring. In Virginia I was speaking about hope and how to lead people through turbulent times and at the conference in Toronto reminding leaders that downturns are not a time to take your eye off the talent chase since it is both a great time to win new talent and a time when we are vulnerable to lose good people as well.

In November I was with my good friends at Northrop Grummen in Baltimore speaking to their leaders about creating a culture of engagement. They have been engaging leaders in a program to enhance the culture for two years and the results are starting to really pay off. They have reminded me that real culture change takes time and wise leaders are patient. The president of the Electronic Systems division (with whom I did a series of forums earlier this year) likes to remind leaders never to underestimate the importance of our position. That is, people are always watching us and our mood and posture can have a big impact on them.

Finally I did a one day program on Living Your Leadership Legacy for several hundred government leaders in Alberta. Throughout the day we explored what it means to be a leader of influence. It reminded me that we all want to leave a legacy and to know that something was different because we were here. We had them write their own retirement speech and to try to live up to that hope.



Tips for Keeping People Motivated During Downturns

Keeping employees motivated during tough times isn't always easy but here are a few tips:

Keep celebrating even if the "wins" are smaller. People still want to feel like they are on a winning team so celebrate even small victories.

Ask people how they are doing and really listen. Remember even if your company is stable, people are carrying around a generalized anxiety right now so leaders need to be more visible and lend a needed ear. Sometimes just getting out the anxiety help.

Communicate more. Give regular updates even if there is no new news. People want to know that they are being kept in the loop

Give people something to do. The worst thing for employees is to feel out of control so find a way to engage them in generating ideas to cut costs, keep serving customers through the downturn and even on keeping morale up. The more people feel involved the less they will feel like victims

Have the holiday party-even if it's a scaled back version. Don't cancel the holiday gathering do it on a smaller scale.



We sincerely wish you a peaceful holiday season.

The Izzo Group

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