



Have a clear sense of Purpose!

by George Carol

As Managing Director of Impact Consulting Ltd. Robyn Pratt's purpose is to "create the space" for individuals and companies to think and act differently in order to drive the necessary change which will ultimately lead to improved results. Impact's mantra is to create a partnership with the clients they work with whether the project be related to development of on brand Service Culture to drive loyalty through strong engagement or developing a tailored Change Management or Innovation program to drive future growth to the organization. In this interview, we discover what it means to have 30+ years' experience across multiple functions on an international level working with leading international brands including Starwood Hotels & Resorts, Dolce Hotels & Resorts, Sands China, and M. Demajo Group amongst others.

MBR: Where does your passion for managing change towards achieving measurable results which add value for all shareholders come from?

RP: In my various leadership roles for Starwood whether it was at a hotel, regional or international level I was in charge of implementing various initiatives and changes which involved a lot of time and energy from all involved. If the results of any type of change are not visible or cannot be felt, I would question the reason for the change. Everyone wants to see results for their efforts and this is no different to implementation of any type of change within organizations. Making change meaningful is vital to achieving buy in at all levels of the company.

MBR: Can you tell us about your book "To Build a Lifetime" and its resonance with the power of communication and decision making?

RP: At the age of 40 due to a major allergic reaction to anesthetic during surgery, I lost my memory for a period of six months – I guess I still don't know what I don't know! This experience taught me a real lesson as to the impact of "listening from a blank page"! Too often we listen and make decisions based on past bias and judgements which are all related to our own experiences and culture. It is amazing how differently you learn when you truly listen to the message being given to you from another person when you move aside your own listening!

MBR: How do you bring positive change by focusing on improving internal and external customer engagement and loyalty as key drivers of success?

RP: Our strong belief is that a company or brand's success relies on the emotional connections created both for internal and external customers when interacting with this brand or company. It is proven through research across industries that a high level of employee engagement leads to high levels of customer satisfaction which in turn creates loyalty and financial success. Impact Consulting works with companies to develop on brand customer experiences through creating service culture driven by company vision and values which are reinforced and tracked on an ongoing basis.

MBR: Do you take time to reflect on your achievements or are you always looking for the next challenge?

RP: Achieving results which are linked to success metrics of any project are important to me, so yes I guess it is part of my DNA to focus on the results and achievements of any project or initiative I take on. I don't think of myself as someone who is always searching for the next challenge, but of course as a business

person one is always focused on planning for future opportunities and potential which I believe comes along based on creating a strong credibility amongst clients which leads to word of mouth recommendations which is to date how most of our business partnerships have come about.

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MBR: What are the key initiatives that have made you such a leader in your area (change management/innovation)?

RP: I believe I gained most of my experience and insights as relates to change management and innovation during the period I was in charge of Six Sigma and Operational Innovation for Starwood Hotels and Resorts in Europe, Africa and Middle East. Since launching my own business I have remained an Associate with Strategy Regeneration which is an international company focussed on innovation. I am a person who believes that we never stop learning and am always looking for opportunities to further develop my expertise in these areas.

MBR: What are, from your perspective, the biggest challenges for women in leadership roles?

RP: Of course there is the obvious challenge being the one where we need to balance all the balls relating to family, husband, career and self however, this can be the same for our male colleagues as well. Sometimes I feel that we as women create issues for ourselves – the best person for a job should be "the best person for that job" whether male or woman. I would never like to think I was given any preference because I am a woman. I have made many sacrifices to achieve success in my career over the years as have had my male colleagues, so I think it is up to each individual to consider their goals and ambitions, and decide what is required for success. Then it becomes a decision as to the choices to be made to achieve success and sometimes these are difficult decisions to make.

MBR: How would you qualify the progress made to date with regards to how women are being perceived as an authoritative figure?

RP: I believe significant progress is being made in this aspect – I am at present a Mentor for NCPPE Mentoring Program to assist in the development of women for future leadership

roles in Malta and I feel that with initiatives such as this and more support for woman taking on leadership roles at both corporate and government level, we will definitely see an increase in woman in leadership in the future.

MBR: Do you think that female leaders use an authoritative leadership style more often than male leaders as a mean to impose their authority?

RP: No I don't. I feel that leaders irrespective of their gender use the style applicable to them and their situation.

MBR: What did you learn about leadership qualities, values and virtues from your experience of developing into owners of your own business and managing the business - Any thoughts on the skill sets?

RP: I have gained many insights and learnings when moving from a corporate position to my own business. It can be lonely at times and you need to motivate yourself to push forward, especially during those challenging times when there is so much to do and nobody to delegate to. I think the key lesson for me that I have gained relatively lately is that successful organisations have a strong sense of "why" (purpose) before anything else. If you don't have a clear understanding of "why" you are doing what you do it can become difficult at times to see the wood for the trees. Set your Vision and Goals in relation to your Purpose and everything else seems to then fall into place. **MBR**

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Prior to forming Impact Consulting, Robyn was Vice President & Brand Leader for Design and Luxury brands for Starwood Hotels, Europe, Africa, & Middle East (EAME) where she led the change management and innovation efforts of nine brands across 240 hotels. With 35+ years of experience working in different countries and spanning a broad cross section of disciplines ranging from Sales and Marketing, Operations, General Management, Project Leadership, Change Management, Innovation, Brand Strategy and Leadership. Based on her experience with a six month loss of memory following a medical procedure, Robyn wrote and published "To Build a Lifetime" and shares her learnings from this experience when facilitating workshops related to the power of communication and decision making. Robyn is a Strategy Regeneration affiliate. Visit www.impact-consult.org/en/ourteam