

Global leadership expert shares his experience with Streamwise

Jon Gornstein is a global leadership expert and pioneer in the practice of change leadership, organisational alignment and interpersonal communication. Recently he travelled to Australia as a guest speaker for training seminars hosted by Streamwise.

With a career spanning 25 years, across more than 40 countries, there is no-one better to ask about leadership and working with cultural differences than Jon Gornstein...so we did!

What was the motivation behind founding Persona Global in 1980?

I saw a business opportunity. We realised that we could make people's lives better by giving them a system for dealing more effectively with others, especially those with a different communication style than their own. Our research showed that for people in business, the results of learning and applying these skills would be less stress for managers and better bottom line results.

What challenges did you face introducing your methodologies into different cultures?

We always work with local partners who know how to take our Persona Global business principles and adapt them to their local culture. Our methodologies seem to work everywhere with cultural adaptation. We're working in more than 60 cultures and 40 languages.

How would you describe effective communication?

An effective one-to-one communicator has the ability to look through the other person's eyes to understand their interpersonal needs. Understanding what another person is telling you with their behaviour - what they do and say - can enable you to both build trust and be persuasive, if you know how to use your own behaviour to build trust. Bottom line: An effective communicator creates win/win outcomes that lead to business results. In short, for managers and leaders, leading from a position of trust will bring out the best in those they manage and lead which produces a positive impact on business results.

Do you believe that there are generic business strategies that can be applied across industries and/or countries?

Yes, when it comes to the people side of business. Remember, machines and companies don't buy products or make strategic decisions...people do. All people want to be understood and respected. How this occurs is culturally specific but these values are generic to people everywhere. Any business that does not employ people strategies is really in danger. Technology can be bought but it is really effective people strategies that produce a competitive edge, especially in tough times.

What do you believe is the biggest problem facing those in leadership/management roles today?

Finding and retaining the best talent. That, and coping with a continuously changing business environment created by competition that is borderless.

Why are persuasive communication skills so vital for corporations?

Because they can give a company a "competitive edge." People need to know how to build trust with others and that is what our communications skill workshop is all about - having a competitive edge, because their people will be more committed, work harder, give their best ideas and have impact on a company's business results. With a culture of trust you have a competitive advantage.

How do you think CEO's could better communicate to their employees?

Simple, learn how to read their behaviour and thereby learn how to gain their trust. Each of us is an individual and wants to be treated as such interpersonally.

How does leadership development directly affect individual and overall company performance?

Good leaders are able to better align their direct reports with the company's mission, vision and strategy which makes the company more competitive.

Can you explain Organisational Change Readiness and why is this important?

The ability to deal effectively with a constantly changing world is a “fluency” that in a very real sense can mean the difference between surviving and prospering or going bust. Companies need to be agile to react quickly to globalisation.

Australia may soon enter a recession, what advice or strategies do you think could help those in leadership roles guide their companies through difficult times?

Earn the respect and trust of their company's people and they'll give you back the best they have, they'll make the difference. Your people, and your company culture will determine if you're still in business once the recession cloud raises its unpleasant head.

For more information

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