



FOR AMANU{U}ENSANS...

July 14, 2009

UPCOMING EVENTS...

- > **Time Management Workshop ... 1 Day, August 24, "From Procrastinating to Prioritising ..."**
- > **Communication Skills Workshop ... 2 Day, September 03-04, "From Contact to Connections by Engaging Conversations ..."**
- > www.amanuenses.net

NEWS FLASH...

- > **Employability Skills?** We provide Companies access to Foundational Business Skills Training under the **ESS & SPUR** schemes in Singapore ...

RECENT ARTICLES...

- > **Re-Tooling the Talent,** A Strategic look at Training Investment Decisions ... SP Star Speaker Series, How can Training "SPUR" You onto Your Desired Future?
- > **Strong Networks Provide Support in Hard Times,** Looking at your Network as an Asset that requires Managing ... CMI Professional Manager

"It's how you finish, that matters ...",

How often do we forget that?

"there are times where differentiation is critical, and times where it is not ..."

VIVE LE TOUR ... C'EST FANTASTIQUE ...

There is something about the Tour de France ... that captivates me. It grabs my attention, lifts me up & holds me there, for much of the month of July.

Embraced, suspended, absorbed, it does this unerringly each & every year. The pleasure it brings, and the business insights it yields, all flood back like the most favourite of boyhood dreams.

As a young boy growing up in the UK, on weekends we'd grab our bikes, and ride. Sometimes on long, hazy, Summer weekends, we'd think little of riding 15, 20, 25, even 30 miles there ... and then all the way back home again.

All you needed to venture out into the untapped surrounding countryside, were some great mates, a good bike, your mom's best packed lunch, and a few coins in the pocket, as well as a mindset full of the best intentions for whatever serendipity had planned along the way.

Men, machinery, materials & money, plus a little courage, all combined in desultorous alchemy, to deliver one of life's great experiences.

Small on Teams, big on Teamwork.

No longer am I a boy ... so why then is it that I still adore the Tour?

It's the Teamwork, a strong business ethos that underpins. When we choose to look, we see the Tour provides clear insights into Teamwork; Competition, Collaboration & Coopetition.

In fact, the Tour tells us that we may often be overly competitive to our own detriment. So, how does it do that?



Let's take a step back to appreciate ...

The Tour is made up of ... some 180 riders, split into 20 separate Teams.

Teams are sponsored, so usually they dress vibrantly in the colours of their sponsors.

The Tour is a timed race around France with a simple Objective, not dissimilar to objectives we share in business; to win.

The winner is the rider who arrives back in Paris after 3 weeks, with the quickest time. They get the Yellow jersey.

Within this main Objective, there are numerous other "Categories" of winner, for instance ... the King of the Mountains is the fastest over the hills (Pink Polka Dot jersey), the Sprinter (Green jersey), Young Rider (White jersey) etc.

Teams have multiple sub-goals: to be the fastest overall, to win different Categories, even to win Race Day Stages. It is highly Competitive, and oh so intense.

However, there is one really unusual aspect of Cycling ... to Compete, you first have to work with other Teams; your Competition. Winning Teams are truly great at Collaboration & Cooperation.

Understand that on any day, riders can cover over 200 kms, sitting in the saddle up to 6 hours. But, when somebody breaks away and steals a 15 minute lead, how is it possible for others to still win?

Simple: the "Peloton", the main bunch of riders choose to work together as one, large, Collaborative, Team.

In doing so, they wind back in the break-away.

It is fascinating to see out-and-out Competitors, pulling together as one Team, collaborating with tremendous harmony.

Strategies & Tactics combine ... in full realisation, when the breakaway is caught somewhere near the finishing line, usually in the final 500 meters, or last 20 seconds.

It adds weight to that old adage "It's how you finish, that matters ...", though how often do we forget that?

In cycling, the concept of "Coopetition" is part of the baseline for success, rather than an exceptional added extra.

What the Tour highlights is ... that business is a long race, and, that there are times where differentiation is critical, and, times where it is not as important.

In the middle of a 6 hour ride, there is no real need to be different. Better to be part of a bigger Team in the Peloton.

The only time & place to be different, is at that point where that difference really matters; in the finishing straight.

Didn't Michael Porter teach us ... this same thing with his Value Chain?

There are places in the Chain where Customers perceive you create Value. You need to be especially different here.

There are also places where Customers perceive no great Value. Better to focus on doing a reliable job at these points.

Yet in business, how often do we see this message ignored?

Far too often, we see people trying to be different in everything they do. Yet, who is it that values those differences, in those areas, and at those times?

What's the Value in being perfect ... in places where people place no Value?

Better to harvest any excess energies you have in business. Get them focusing ahead, let them identify areas where it is important to be different, encourage them to target investment of your precious resources accordingly.



In closing, I'm reminded of a boy ... I saw at a coffee shop. As I sipped my latté, he sat there with his friends, slowly slurping on his solitary can of Coke.

He drank the coke with ease, until it was clear that the drink was running out. He slurped once, then quickly slurped again, even more noisily this time.

He then reached for the can, picked it up, to slurp with even more vigour. Finally, he rattled the can, took the straw out, tipped it on its side, and dripped the remnants into his wide open mouth.

This guy knew how to be efficient, and, he knew where to be different. He conserved all his energies & cunning for that one final moment; to successfully squeeze the last drop out from the can.

Wouldn't business be so much more effective ... if Teams worked better together, to focused their many differentiation efforts, only onto areas where differentiation truly counted?