

Leaders encouraged to ‘swim against the stream’

Appeared in the Tri-City Herald 6/18/06

In today’s world of fast-paced, high-tech business, only those who have the right information at the right time will survive.

Bob Vosburgh, founder of 9gs, a leadership consulting firm, is a former Air Force “Top Gun” pilot who has also served in the corporate world beginning as a salesman, working his way all the way up to chief executive officer. Vosburgh has applied his mantra of organizational excellence to succeed at every level. He shared his philosophy at a recent Tri-City Regional Chamber of Commerce meeting in Kennewick.

Vosburgh’s premise relies on keeping the flow of information moving at a relevant pace; organizational leaders must build a strong, productive team that is empowered to take risks. Vosburgh explains how to do this by breaking the organization into three parts: Self (what you need to do), Team (getting the right people in place with accountability) and Atmosphere (with the first two in place, let’s create a great work environment).

For Self

Lead with excellence and integrity – Do the right thing, even when nobody is watching. Take the time to evaluate projects for what went well and what needs improvement.

Develop mentor relationships – Find people you respect to bounce ideas off and advise you. Once you find those relationships, nurture them.

Find balance in all that you do – You need balance in spending time with your family, getting enough sleep, being physically fit and working. Working more just makes you less efficient and less effective.

For Team

Communicate effectively – Listen at least two-thirds of the time and give proactive opportunities for growth. Allow employees to have input into strategy and goals. Make a plan, and execute it daily.

Hire well and fire well – Hire the best people possible for the job. Find people with passion. Be willing to make the tough decision and remove anyone who is negatively affecting your team.

Empower your team – Trust your team to get the job done. You don’t need to micromanage them; just be aware of what’s going on in your team.

For Atmosphere

Be positive – Enthusiasm is contagious. If you have an optimistic view of your organization it will spread to the rest of your team.

Give recognition where it’s due – Recognition should be given accurately and often. You should take the blame when things go wrong and give away the credit when things go well.

Motivate your team – Keep in mind that passion motivates more than money. Motivation is all about people; find out what motivates your team and implement it.

By sharing personal experiences, Vosburgh delivers a powerful message, which he summarizes in the following way: “Only dead fish swim with the stream. Life’s journey is not to arrive at the grave in a totally preserved body, but to skid in sideways, totally worn out and screaming, ‘What a ride!’”

More on Vosburgh’s team can be found at www.9gs.org.

###