

This Is It—# 6 of Eight Keys

“This is it. This is the moment. This key for success depends on your ability to focus your attention on the present moment and the willingness to make whatever you are doing as most important. As I am writing this article, I am sitting in a restaurant watching a highly efficient waitress serve about forty people from the Catholic Womens’ League. This waitress is moving deftly among the tables, juggling plates coming from the kitchen and removing dishes from those who are finished. She is smiling pleasantly with each customer and saying just the right things to make each feel comfortable. Many of the customers came and left with little realization or acknowledgement of this skilled waitresses’ presence. She is truly able to focus on the task at hand. Who knows what is going on in her life or the difficulties she may be faced with by the kitchen staff or her boss? She is focussed on the task at hand.

Your ability to focus your attention on each task in front of you will determine your efficiency scale. Leaders must juggle many issues all at the same time. I remember speaking with a professional juggler about his success with an ever increasing number of balls that he brought in to amaze his audience. He told me something really interesting that relates directly to leadership. He said that he did not focus on the catch as most would think. Then I asked him, “how do you catch the balls so consistently?” He said, “I focus on the goal. I concentrate on the exact spot in the air that I want that ball to reach and then throw it there with the confidence that the ball will fall into my other hand.” If you, as a leader, have a clear vision of what the end product should look like, then focussing on that goal will keep everything in perspective. This kind of concentration will save time, avoid distractions and keep both you and your associates on task.

When I was little, I had the opportunity to watch Wayne Gretzky and the Edmonton Oilers play against Toronto. I was given a free ticket right behind the Edmonton bench and from that day forward have always been



interested in hockey. I was so enthralled with this superstar that I watched him for the entire game. I can't even remember what the score was, I just know that Toronto didn't win back then either.

For the entire game I just watched the "Great Gretzky." He was so focussed on the game. While other players at times seemed distracted, were talking with each other, Gretzky would tip forward on the bench, lean on his stick with one arm on the boards. He was totally in the game even from the bench. When his shift came, he had his leg up and over the boards and his skate on the ice a full second before his line mates. He was in full stride and at least one stride length ahead by the time his line was in motion. This kind of concentration and intensity helped to make him the star that he was. Aside from his natural abilities, he was able to focus with passion and "Make Things Happen!" You can have all the skills and talents you want; however, if you are not prepared to give it your all, you will fade into mediocrity.

How do you get yourself to focus on the key elements of your business? Well it all starts with having a clear vision of what your business is all about. Wayne Gretzky didn't have that issue to deal with because his goals were simple, Win! In business, the bottom line is "green." You are in business to make a profit; however, there are many ways to do this. Wayne Gretzky knew that he had to score goals to win games but he was also aware that he had teammates who could also score. Wayne often had more assists than goals. Although he wanted to personally break records, he did not lose sight of his company's goal, Win! Because Wayne passed as much as he shot, the goalie and defencemen had no idea if he would pass or shoot. This added to his threat on the ice. Winning was the goal. If your team has a clear set of goals, it is much easier to focus. Stephen Covey states clearly, "Begin with the end in mind."

Once you have clear goals, then time is not wasted on peripherals. It is harder to get distracted and you will have a tendency to put things in order. Deal with what comes up, handle it, "Once Right The First Time"; see it through to the finish. Put issues behind you because you have dealt



with them and then move forward with tenacity. This is called “relentless pursuit!”

Stay focussed on your goals!

This is the “This Is It Key” for true success in life. This is the sixth of “Eight Keys For Success In Life.”

