

# SYNCHRONISING PERSONAL SUCCESS WITH ENTERPRISE SUCCESS

by Henrico Knoesen

*"Build the people, and the people will build the business" - Anonymous*

"Is this real success?" thinks Peter Jacobs\*, as he awaits the presentation of the prestigious "Success Story of the Year Award."\* In the past year Jacobs' company has grown in leaps and bounds. Orders have poured in and his business has literally been "printing money". His company's product has won several accolades from both technology and marketing institutions and comments like "Congratulations on your new wheels" (a Porsche 911 cabriolet) from his personal idol in business are far from rare. But instead of being overjoyed, Peter is experiencing severe personal pain. He is suffering from hypertension and recently had to start taking Prozac for his mood swings and feelings of depression. His wife has just filed for divorce and he missed the final of the Craven week rugby in which his son played lock for the Western Province team.

He is caught between the public performance of success and his own personal pain and not knowing how to resolve this conflict. Jacobs is just one of many business people, currently and historically, who has discovered that the societal definition of success - the achievement of great monetary value, status and power - is hollow, unfulfilling and even a massive disappointment. He had learned at business school and in practice that success from the enterprise's point of view, is the generation of profits, constant earnings growth and the creation of shareholder value. Once this primary purpose of business is fulfilled, the enterprise can embark on corporate social investment and other ancillary forms of social investment. He probably also listened to John Maxwell, internationally renowned speaker and best selling author, who states that leadership is about the exertion of influence. Maxwell further states that the leader's primary purpose is to influence both the enterprise and the employees in concert to ensure that both achieve success.

But personal success, that's a whole different ball game. Personal success can be defined as what some wise person called "the persistent pursuit of your purpose with passion, to reach your full potential, effectively and efficiently arranging priorities, managing pleasure and pain with wisdom." A sound philosophy of business is a prerequisite for enterprise success. This philosophy should entail among others a purpose statement, a vision, mission statement, core values and renewable goals. It is the leader's primary task to formulate this business philosophy in concert with his/her management team and then to communicate it down to grass roots level. One good method is to utilise the "On Ten" principle, which ensures the leader's philosophy will not only be communicated but also be implemented at grass roots level. "On Ten"

means that the leader will mentor 10 persons of his/her immediate management team on an accountable, transparent and responsible basis regarding the philosophy. These 10 persons will then "multiply" this process with their individual respective 10 persons until everybody in the enterprise has been involved. The "On Ten" principle is further utilised on an ongoing basis to continuously evaluate and fine-tune the business philosophy as well as the implementation thereof to ensure enterprise success.

Ricardo Semler, owner of one of Brazil's most successful companies, sees his directors as "counsellors", the managers as "partners" and all others as "associates." The leader should strive to follow the example set by Semler. He should further utilise the alignment process of "On Ten" in a continuous way and this is concretised by using group sessions and individual sessions. An external facilitator for group sessions is also used and group sessions take place twice yearly with a maximum of 30 participants at a venue not linked to the workplace. At these group sessions the enterprise philosophy is originated, hammered out, reviewed and fine-tuned. Typically the participants in the group session will have designed and formulated their concept-personalised philosophies with the help and assistance of the facilitator prior to the first group session. It is the facilitator's task and responsibility to launch this alignment process ensuring enthusiastic participation from all participants. The facilitator also intertwines the respective individuals' personalised philosophies with that of the enterprise.

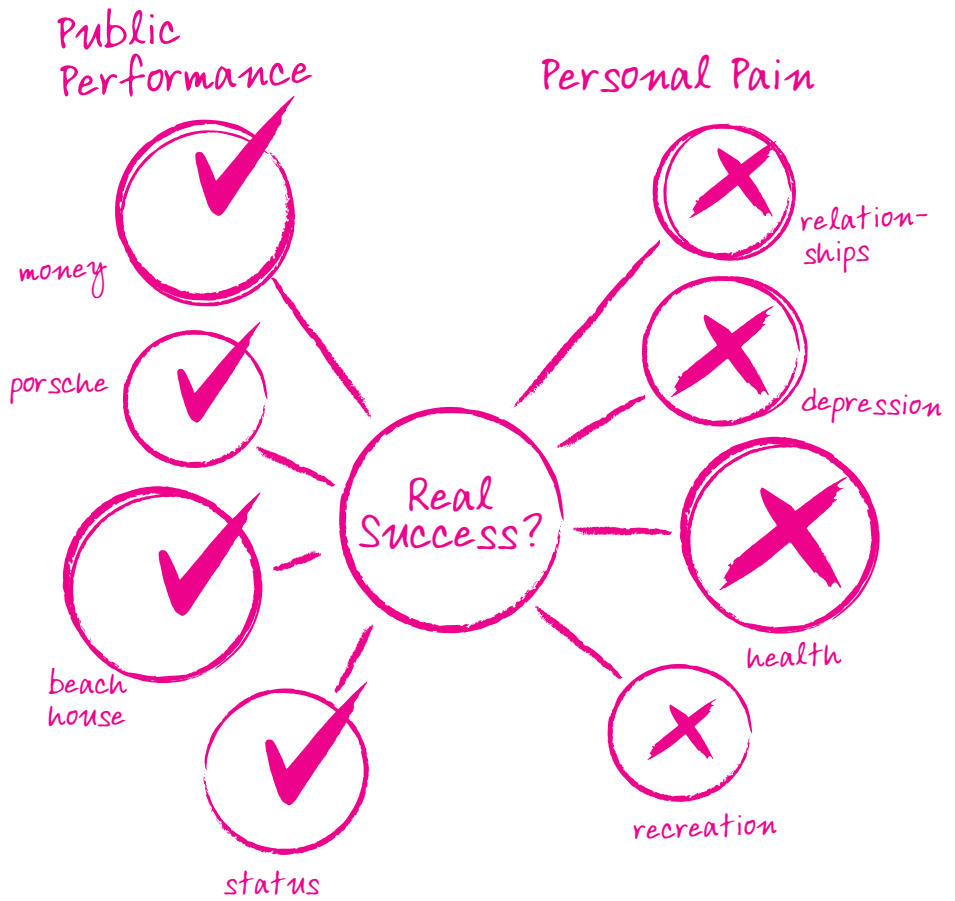
It would be naïve to think that such a process would take place without tremendous demands on emotional energy and conflict handling skills. During such processes, all participants, individually and collectively, will progressively come to the realisation what the outcome of this "chemical reaction" will be. Ideally all participants will satisfactorily formulate and galvanise their individual personalised philosophies with that of the enterprise. Inevitably, differences of opinion and conflict will result. It is then up to the facilitator, the leader and the participants, to identify individuals who are not capable or not willing to galvanise these elements and involve them more intimately. Individuals start questioning the meaning of life in general, battle with the formulation of their own purpose and further raise questions regarding the true meaning of success and come to terms with "significance". Most often, after an intense group session, the cohesion amongst the team is enhanced. However, after some time, it will not be surprising when some individuals resign to join other companies

\* names are fictitious

or even embark on a total new direction or vocation. Formulating a sound philosophy of life on an individual level is as important as a business philosophy. A philosophy of life should consist of a purpose, vision, mission, values and goals. The primary purpose or meaning of life, on a personal level, is the attainment of happiness and fulfilment. Formulating a personalised philosophy of life is an ongoing process and involves the individual's own "board of directors", his/her mentor and his/her business leader. The "board of directors" is an advisory council of trusted individuals from various ages and disciplines. It is the individual's responsibility, with assistance and coaching from his/her advisory team, to establish his/her personalised purpose, gifts, talents and vocation. Some individuals know their personal purposes instinctively while others need to embark on a professionally assisted process to establish their purpose. Sadly, some people die without ever determining their purpose or calling in life.

Determining your purpose or calling in life and pursuing it with passion inevitably results in achieving happiness and fulfilment. It is also vitally important that the personalised philosophy of life be continuously evaluated, fine-tuned and adjusted, with the assistance of the advisory team, to ensure objectivity and successful implementation. Creating synergy between the primary purpose of business, the primary purpose of life and the individual's personalised purpose is the great challenge that faces the leader of today's enterprise. The leader must create a climate and atmosphere where the enterprise supports the individual and the family as opposed to the individual and family supporting the enterprise.

A healthy society is dependent on healthy families and healthy families are dependent on fulfilled individuals. Capitalism is dependent on successful economies and successful economies are dependent on successful businesses. The symbiosis between a healthy society and capitalism and between families and individuals and businesses will create sustainable success. This symbiosis will ensure happy and fulfilled individuals, businesses that will prevail beyond profit and societies that will leave a positive legacy for their children. This symbiosis can only successfully materialise by intertwining soundly formulated business philosophies with personalised philosophies for life. By bringing the business philosophy together with the individual's personal philosophy a more motivated, enthusiastic and committed work ethic emerges. It becomes like an orchestra performing. Enterprise takes cognisance of the individual and family needs, while the individuals gladly "build the business".



*Henrico Knoesen is Part-time lecturer,  
School for the Built Environment, University of Pretoria.*

[henrico@knoesen.com](mailto:henrico@knoesen.com)