



## Think it's a Jungle Out There?

Among humans, Tarzan was the most successful and recognizable to make the jungle his own environment. How did he do it? He learned to use the tools and resources all around him. He was adaptable and open to change. (Of course, he started quite young, having been shipwrecked as an infant. For real flexibility, we'd have to point to Jane, a New Yorker who applied her city smarts to this new kind of jungle where she'd found her life's passion). But back to Tarzan: He learned how to communicate with and 'read' his diverse colleagues and he even made one of them his sidekick so he'd always have a point of view to consider other than his own. And, because he became a valuable member of his jungle community, nurturing relationships with lions, elephants, birds and crocodiles, he could call on them for assistance whenever their expertise was needed.

*So - what can we learn from Tarzan in business?*

### **Learn to use the tools and resources you've got.**

Right now, you have a variety of hidden treasures in your business; a collection of intangible assets you've not maximized to their full potential: relationships, reputation, processes, skills and strengths that tend to become routinized and minimized. Shuffle them with the aid of an objective eye and you will find creative ways to solve problems and maximize opportunities.

### **Adapt and be open to change.**

Small businesses are blessed with the ability to shift directions far more nimbly than any large, complex organization. Just imagine the turn radius of a VW vs. a 14-wheeler. This attribute means you can shift gears and be appropriately responsive when circumstances and opportunities change in your business environment. Keep your eyes open and lose this phrase forever: 'But we've always done it this way.....'

### **Communicate with and 'read' your diverse colleagues.**

One of the hardest tasks a business owner has is to understand why her employees just don't 'get it'. The answer is often that they just don't get the

way in which the message was communicated or incentivized. Seeing things from another's perspective can be tough yet it's critical when trying to motivate staff. Tools such as frequent review meetings, assessments, co-creation of goals, team discussions, planning sessions, or effective coaching can help minimize this source of friction.

**Have a point of view to consider other than your own.**

We are all a collection of our own experiences and memories and these often shape our behaviors, expectations and decision making. While reaching into this department of our brain can be a useful short cut, it can also limit the range of possibilities we consider before making an informed decision. You may not have Cheetah available to you, yet it's invaluable to have access to those whose thinking process and point of view is not like your own. Your own R&D team, focus group, T.A.B. board or Business Conversations group can help.

Nurture relationships so you can call on others for assistance whenever their expertise is needed. With all his strength and cunning, Tarzan still knew he couldn't do it all and neither can any of us. It takes a wise person to know when it's time to call on another's expertise or connections to get a necessary job done the right way.

Now, about that loin cloth - that's no one's idea of Casual Friday, is it? And finally, next time you feel compelled to yell out that famous Tarzan cry, call your coach instead!

*Ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ahhhhhhhhh!*



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