

BUSINESS – Have we lost our way?

Be
Unique
Serving the
Interests
Needs and
Expectations of all
Stakeholders
Sustainably

Introduction

By Vanessa Hall & Chris Steely

Introduction

V – This is Vanessa here with Chris. We are coming together to share and put together our thoughts on a new book and recording idea called, *Business: Have we lost our way?*

Business is an acronym that stands for:

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We've got some interesting things to share with you about how we even came to be from opposite sides of the world and work on this together. So Chris, why don't you share a little bit about yourself first and what drew you to be involved with this.

C – It *was* interesting how we found each other. I've been in business now for about 25 yrs. I own a couple of businesses right now. I'm considered a leadership and personal effectiveness expert and focus on building powerful teams that are committed to success. I have served in a variety of capacities in corporate America and I just rolled off a position as the Director of Coaching at the world's largest business coaching company which took me all around the planet including down to Australia and New Zealand.

I make my living making businesses and organizations grow stronger and be more successful and spend less money and make more money through the process of fulfilling trust, confidence and credibility. I give presentations to business leaders and business owners. I know, Vanessa, you have the book ***The Truth About Trust in Business*** which has become one of my business Bible's

so I've got to hand it to you for writing that book. My book is called **GPS for Success**. What I really enjoy about what I do is being a servant. In essence, a public and business servant doing what it takes to empower people out of their conditions of mediocrity and potentially breaking status quo to do what they need to do to be successful. Business is my calling.

I was an officer in the United States Marine Corp, I won a national athletic championship while I was in college, I've got my undergraduate degree in marketing and an MBA from Boston University. So it's a very eclectic background and I really enjoy what I do. It was interesting that one of the affiliates that I met during some training here in America was from Sydney and she actually mentioned me to you and the next thing you know, you and I are on the phone. So why don't you give people a perspective on what you're all about?

V – My focus is all about trust. It's about building trust back into business, back into homes and communities around the world. My background was in compliance and risk management and governance in business, mostly in Financial Services. This found me working at what I call the *mistrust* end of business, dealing with issues, problems and breaches and seeing some of the struggles that organizations have in facing what is often seen as a conflict of interest and trying to understand how to best serve all of the parties and all of the stakeholders. I've also seen a lot of really bad decisions made and worked with businesses both in that capacity and then as a consultant to a number of businesses both small and multi-national.

I guess one of the things that I've seen in that process is that I think that we have actually lost our way to a large extent in understanding this: **'What is the purpose of the business and what are we actually here for?'** It is all about that serving that you mentioned. It's about being a servant and I think we've actually lost the heart of business and what it's about. My focus in the business that I run now, entente, is all about trust. It's about helping people remember that trust is the ultimate in terms of how relationships are built and that business is fundamentally about relationships. It's about the relationships

we have inside the organization as well as the relationships we have outside the organization, and that business is fundamentally there to serve.

It's quite interesting, though, how we did come to meet. The lady you mentioned, Zoe, who contacted me had heard me speak and she emailed me and said she was very excited about the messages and thought that I should probably speak to you. She gave me your details, we emailed and I think we spoke over the phone back four or five months ago.

C – Then the next thing you know, you were on your way to a big event in New York City and you went through Los Angeles and we got together at Disney Land.

V – I was travelling with my family. My son was going to Disney Land and it seemed like a fairly central point for us to meet. I just remember sitting in the café with you at a table at a resort in Disney Land talking about this concept of BUSINESS and, has business lost it's way and looking at this acronym, Be Unique Serving the Interests, Needs and Expectations of all Stakeholders Sustainably. And it just clicked with both of us instantly and we decided to record this and turn it into a co-authored book – and here we are!

C – You know, you talk about trust and there are so many different ways we barter in society. Back in ancient Roman times, people used to exchange salt for services and that's where the word salary came from. Now we have different means of exchange, you know, typically money. It's an idea. It's backed by gold, it's backed by confidence and these days it's often backed by debt. But what I've found is that there are other currencies as well. I've found that trust is actually a currency. It's something that you can exchange and it's something that's very valuable and imperative in all relationships. We have to make profit in business and if you're not making a profit then you have to wonder, why in the heck am I doing what I'm doing and spending the time to do it? I admire business owners who love what they do but at the same time we need to make money. Often time the profit motive becomes skewed and we lose our way because we get oriented on how we can make money versus serving first. Then

often times trust takes a back seat and it's a shame because it's such a valuable currency.

V – It's interesting that you talked about the importance of making a profit in business. If you take a step back and look at, why did the concept of business even form? When I look at business, fundamentally it's a group of people or an individual that believes that they have something that is of value to someone else. Whether it's a product or service, or a skill, it's of value to someone. The concept of business is then formed by a group of people who then come together who have a different set of skills and different abilities or ways to take that product or service and make it more efficient in order for it to then reach the people who then gain the value from it. I think that businesses have forgotten that ultimately that's what they're there to do. I've seen many, many businesses get caught up on what's happening internally and forget that actually we're supposed to be a group of people who are working together towards a common purpose. That common purpose is to add value to these people. I think that the profitability comes from that. It's a by product of adding value to someone.

C – It's value for value. It's a value exchange. Often times I coach start up businesses as they're coming up with a concept like, "Hey, this is what I want to do and serve and make the planet a better place." And then I say, "Let's take a look at your value. Take a 20,000 foot perspective, a little objectivity on the business and what value are you really here to convey." And that's really the fundamental building block of a business. Again, value for value. There's so many different ways to exchange that value.

V – I know for myself, as a creative person, it's easy for me to lose the focus of what we're about and to lose the focus of the value that we're adding to people. It can be very easy to get busy *doing* stuff and creating more things without actually sitting down to look at how is this serving others and what do I need to know and what kind of thinking do I need to apply to what I'm doing to create something of value?

C – One of the challenges I find in today's age with all the technology is that there are so many messages and so many great teachings by so many great gurus and people out there that I guess the imperative is which ones do you distill? Which ones do you instill? I've actually made up my short list of what I consider my 100 guru's. I've got literally hundreds of books in my library and I've read probably about 1800 books in my life. We are limited by our intellect. Our intellect is broadened by reading and broadening our audio dynamic. I know that every time I'm in my car and I'm driving, I'm always listening to a book. There's so much out there. It's how do you distill all those messages and pull them all together. One of the things that I find, is allowing business owners, whether that be the small business all the way up to the large corporations, to be able to pull all of the messages that they've gleaned through their lives, an MBA curriculum or even a book they recently read, how do you pull that in and apply to your day to day tactics or your business to be able to make your organization more effective?

V – Do you think that leaders in organizations in particular, have difficulty managing the business partly because at an individual level they lost their own sense of purpose about what they're even trying to achieve in this? They read a lot, they seek advice from many sources, they try to pull it all together, but their lack of clarity about their purpose means it all goes into a black hole and swills round in there. All that knowledge is not being tapped into and used.

C – It's interesting because we're all born into this world as individuals and even though we have families, as we go through this dynamic, as I sit and speak, as I'm talking and these words are coming out of my mouth, I'm the only individual that I have no objectivity on. This is one of the value propositions that I can convey to the world, I inspire people to have a sense of objectivity because we all are individuals and we all have, as Maslow says, our hierarchy of needs. We all need to have our individual needs met. One thing that I've found through my decades of business experience is there are a lot of people who are successful and we emulate their styles and we read when they write books and they go on to be idols and gurus and icons in the business community and they call themselves self-made. What is a self made person? Maybe they have the

inspiration and the aspiration and they exercise the perspiration to do what it takes and achieve but nobody does it alone.

The key is to leverage, to take the individual that we are and leverage the community. As we get out there and maybe feel lost as individuals often times you can employ the fundamental concept of psychology around how an individual navigates around this one life line that we have. Nobody gets out of this life alive. At the end of life you look back and reflect and the key reflection that I've heard when you get to the end of your timeline is, how did you influence others and how did you make a difference for other people? We lose our perspectives around the gravity and the chaos and the friction of this life. I know that I didn't choose to be born. I've been afflicted with what I've heard called, the plight of life. So as people go through this plight, this journey, we need to rely on other people. We need to be able to operate as a community.

V – The core of the trust message that I talk about is that trust is our ability to rely on people, on organizations, and on the products and services that we use to deliver an outcome to us. But I think what happens is that we get so used to not being able to rely on people and people letting us down in one form or another, largely because we haven't properly communicated about what we're relying on them for, and we haven't had that trust discussion that we need to have. When that happens, I think people become more and more centered on themselves and actually block out everyone else. I've seen organizations that are often filled with lots and lots of individuals doing their own thing and not coming together as a team and losing that sense of common purpose, and so failing on what we're actually all here to do.

C – Back to the concept of needs, everybody has these needs. Everybody has expectations. You have to watch out for what you expect and everybody makes these promises. There's that ENP that you articulate so well in your book. I love the metaphor of the egg that you use. It's very fragile. As we embark on this journey to create a new work around business, around giving people new perspectives on staying on the right path, fulfilling their ideals and going in the right direction, it's a relatively delicate dynamic but at the same time it is power, strength, assertiveness and confidence. Those words have an energy of

assertiveness. Back to my marine days, I have this metaphor of battle. Not necessarily a war but a challenge. As we embark on this wonderful challenge we need to make sure we are heading in the right direction as we are fulfilling our ideals and we become great, powerful business people. It is a very delicate, fragile dynamic with trust.

V - Let's use the ENPs in terms of what can readers of this book and listeners to this audio expect from what we're about to put together for them?

C – What I like is how the book is structured around eight chapters; around the word BUSINESS. For me the concept of business is a relatively sacred dynamic because it encompasses everything that I am. I run my life like a business. I tell that to some people and they're like, "What about your personal life? What about your family?" Well, business doesn't always have to be that assertive, aggressive, battle metaphorical type dynamic. But I like the fact that we've structured it into eight chapters and used the acronym of BUSINESS.

In Chapter One we're going to be talking about BEING. We know that BE is the active word for AM, the two most powerful words in the English language. I am. So once you declare yourself, what are you? We're all in the business of business. So as we are, how optimal are we performing? It ebbs and flows with the gravity and the friction of the day, the morning, the afternoon, the evening. Even the seasons, the winter, the spring, the summer and the fall ebbs and flows. Each one of those words resonates and each one of those words serves as an acronym but it's the ebbing and the flowing and the cycles. We're human beings. We're not human doings, caught up in the *do* of things. We have to be as optimal as we can be and that's one of the first things we're going to cover off.

V – So stepping from that into the next Chapter - UNIQUE. Why is it important to be unique in business? Even if you've got a fairly standard product or you're an organization that is like many other organizations there still needs to be something that is unique about you. Then we move into the concept of SERVING in Chapter 3.

C – A lot of people hear you say, ‘The United State’s Marine Corps’ and they think it’s a tough dynamic. It’s military *service*. I’ll never forget my father telling me as I was getting ready to sign up and go away to officer candidate school, he said, “Chris, you can serve the world in many different ways. It doesn’t have to be through the military service. It can be through your business, your community or the church. It can be anything that you believe in.” So as we differentiate ourselves as unique human beings, how are we going to serve and then contribute? That’s what I am. I know I’m a servant in the community so if you’re in business and you’re leading a business, how are you serving that business? Because ultimately your power of service will enable you to be served back. And once again, what are we serving? We’re serving our constituents and we’re serving our interests. I know we’re going to be talking about INTERESTS, so what type of interests do you feel that you’re serving these days?

V – I think the term INTERESTS in Chapter 4 will be interesting for us to explore and looking also at the concept of a conflict of interest. Is it possible, or should there even be, the term, ‘conflict of interest’ in an organization when it is serving a common interest and everyone is clear about who we are as an organization and what purpose we are serving? If we’re all aligned to that, I don’t think there should be a conflict of interest. Then we’re going to be moving on to NEEDS in Chapter 5.

C – We’re all into fulfilling our needs. As an individual human being, I’m holding one finger right now and as I look at that finger, that is one thing that we all have in common. We are all individual, unique beings. How do we serve our needs? How are we serving the needs of our communities? I know I need but also I need to be aware of what my constituents need. What do my competitors need? There’s a gravity that runs around that word, competition. What are the needs of you to be able to be affluent and to be profitable in business? Then, what are the EXPECTATIONS which is a concept that you use so well in your book *The truth about trust in business*, and we’re covering here in Chapter 6.

V – We will talk about EXPECTATIONS and where they come from, understanding that people have expectations of you in your business that may

or may not have anything to do with you but everything to do about previous experiences that they might have had with organizations that are like you. So we're going to be looking at this whole concept and understanding expectations and the importance of meeting the expectations of the stakeholders or at least managing them. We'll also be looking at it from the perspective of all the STAKEHOLDERS, which is Chapter 7.

C – I mentioned the word constituents earlier and the constituents are our STAKEHOLDERS in business. They're the people that in essence you're serving. So when it comes to stakeholders, what resonates with me is that I think of a large public company of shareholders. Well, they all have a stake in the business and one of the things that we'll talk about in chapter 7 is going to be, what kind of a stake do the stakeholders actually have? There are passive activities and there are active activities. So with you as a business leader, you're going to have to ask yourself, 'how responsible am I for those results?' How responsible are you for serving your stakeholders and what are the stakeholders that you're serving as well. They include your employees, your customers, your business partners – all have some stake in the business and its success. You look today that we live on a planet that has resources that are being depleted and at the same time we need to foster sustainability for our stakeholders and for our community. SUSTAINABILITY is actually going to be the last chapter.

V – Recognize that businesses do go through ebbs and flows. There are peaks and there are lows and that's part of being in business. But the question is how do we manage that? How do we manage ourselves appropriately in the highs and also preparing ourselves for sustainability in the lows? We also will be looking at sustainability of the business as a whole and its contribution to the planet.

Chris, what are some of the promises you would say our readers and listeners are going to get out of this book?

C – The promise that I'm making to the readers is that you're going to be challenged as you embark on this journey of unpacking the 8 concepts of

BUSINESS. I'll challenge you in the spirit of that challenge, to go ahead and be up for it. I promise you that if you perturb your system and challenge your system and focus on breaking through your status quo and be oriented to the possibilities, I promise you that you'll walk away from this experience a more broad-minded, intellectually broadened leader and you'll be able to lead your teams much more effectively.

V – The promise from me, and the thing that we're actually branding my business, entente, around, is this whole idea of Enlightening, Enabling and Enriching people. One of the promises that I'll make, is that you'll be enlightened. You'll see things in a way that maybe you haven't seen before and understand things in your business that maybe you haven't been exposed to before. We'll be putting strategies in this book as well. It's not just a collection of thoughts. There will be things for you to actually do and to practically apply in your business to get the results that you want. I also promise for it to be an enriching process. I promise that you will get something from this that you can use not only in your business life but also in your personal life.

We will work together in the creation of this book and audio to keep those promises.

Let's go!