



How Disciplined is Your Leadership?

By Hal Johnson

As a leader in your business, how disciplined are you at staying the course once you have hammered out a business initiative? Do you and your leadership team regularly fulfill the commitments you have made to achieve certain goals or projects? Rather than plunge into a great new direction, do you get more disciplined, more empirical and more paranoid? If this is the kind of leadership you provide, you are going to love reading Jim Collins' (and his co-writer, Morten Hansen) new book, *GREAT BY CHOICE*.

Collins hit a home run 10 years ago with his immensely popular book, *GOOD TO GREAT*. While selling over four million copies of a well-researched business book, Collins hit on some of the more interesting elements of business success. His material, based on five years of research, brought us such insights as: *Level 5 Leadership* (not what we expected), *Hedgehog Concept* (simplicity and passionate), a *Culture of Discipline* (focus, focus...) and *Technology Accelerators* (different thinking about technology).

The new study

His latest tome is based on nine years of research. *GREAT BY CHOICE* distinguishes itself from Collins's prior work by its focus not just on performance, but also on the type of unstable environments faced by leaders today.

With a team of more than twenty researchers, Collins and Hansen studied companies that rose to greatness - beating their industry indexes by a minimum of ten times over fifteen years. The research team then contrasted these "10X companies" to a carefully selected set of comparison companies that failed to achieve greatness in similarly extreme environments.

The study results were full of interesting surprises. Such as:

The best leaders were not more risk taking, more visionary, and more creative than the comparisons; they were *more disciplined, more empirical, and more paranoid*.

Innovation by itself turns out not to be the best answer in a chaotic and uncertain world; more important is the ability to scale innovation, and, to blend creativity with discipline.

Further, the companies that achieved some level of greatness changed less in reaction to a radically changing world than the comparison companies. They focused on steady growth; staying the course with discipline (See the *20 Mile March* chapter)

Here's the bottom line -- those who outperform their competition develop processes that create major improvements in their operating business models *essentially through discipline*. This has to be driven by intentional leadership. By choice, as Collins and Hansen tell us. You have to choose to be great, and then follow it up with *disciplined* performance.

Helping mid-market companies apply best business practices, backed up by disciplined leadership, is at the heart of LeadershipOne's *Pathway to Prime* process. It's how we help you become GREAT BY CHOICE.

Call for a complementary presentation.

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