

**"You don't need to create a masterpiece every day.  
Some days you just need to paint."**

**»Vanessa Loya**

## Team Harmony



My wife and I recently were able to attend a milestone-type of event. Our oldest son sang in his first choir performance at his university.

I've long joked with friends that milestones start coming at you faster and faster as we get older.

These days, I sometimes feel like I'm in a meteor shower of them. They're zooming by my head.

This particular choir is a "select" group. Music students audition to be accepted into the course and to perform with this choir.

Then, the group meets and practices three days each week.

Sitting in the auditorium, I was struck by a few things. The amount of natural talent

## People Before Strategy



We're frequently told that Millennials, Gen Z, and whatever gens come next have entirely different

preferences than people my age who remember what an internet modem "connecting noise" sounded like.

I also remember yelling for everyone to stay off the phone while I had an internet connection.

That seems like one hundred years ago, but it was only about fifteen.

There has been a lifetime of technological advances over that time.

Most every industry imaginable, including banking, has had business models challenged and changed.

One of the points I make to bankers, however, is that the folks who have run the most successful operations over the past 10 years are the most likely to run

these young men and women have is impressive.

After a while of being around choirs (Who knew I'd be a choir dad?) your ears perk up when you hear something special.

There are folks who have great voices. Some have great technique.

When you have both, you might be on to something.

To be an impressive soloist requires a great deal of work.

To have a group of impressive soloists performing in one choir, taking on complimentary roles to produce a desired sound, is motivating when you pay attention to what is actually going on.

Having a home office on the same floor of my son's bedroom, I can attest that his voice carries through walls.

In his younger days, we could always pick him out of whatever choir he performed in.

These days, that only happens when it is supposed to.

He has learned that great choirs aren't about putting talented people on a stage together and telling them "You do you".

There are hours and days and weeks of practice that go into a group creating harmonies out of individual voices.

The same principles hold true for sports teams, surgical teams, military forces, flight crews, and, yes, businesses. Everyone has roles to play.

successful operations for the next 10 years.

The reason for this is not that their banks are, or have been, technology leaders.

Some have. Some haven't.

Many successful bank leaders I know have remained successful through the text pager, Motorola bag phone, Nokia brick phone, Blackberry, and iPhone eras.

The reason, I argue, is that our best leaders and business builders understand that it is their people who drive their success.

A business isn't strategy.

A business isn't technology.

A business is people using the tools and facilities at their disposal to serve customers.

Successful businesses build customer preference and loyalty through delivering on their promises.

Good bankers do not simply have customers.

They have customer relationships.

The technology their customers have on their desks, in their laps, and in the palms of their hands may provide information and facilitate transactions.

That technology does not form relationships, however.

The people on our teams do.

Some roles may be bigger, some more specialized, some more critical, some more basic.

Some roles, when performed properly, go unnoticed by all but those on the team.

If those roles aren't properly performed, however, the entire team's performance is affected.

Some days our role is to step out onto center stage and have the spotlight shine on us.

Some days, our role is to be the spotlight operator.

Whatever your role is today, act like the entire production is depending on you... because it is.

I believe now, more than ever, that our teams need to be reminded that portions of our industry are clearly transforming.

These changes are pretty easy to see and are well-reported.

What has not, and is not changing, is the fact that the companies with the most engaged and customer-focused teams will remain on top.

Our technology may change. Our purpose does not.

Our best leaders will continue to have the most productive teams, because they focus on what remains the center of their business - their people.

Strive to be that kind of leader.

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**"A person always doing his or her best becomes a natural leader, just by example."**

**»Joe DiMaggio**



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