

Being an “EXTREMIST” at Everything!

Mike Stickler

I have decided that I am going to work very hard at being an “Extremist” at everything that I think, say and do! Enough with the conventional wisdom of “everything in moderation”...that’s just plain boring!

I was asked to define extremism the other day...here is what I came up with. I defined extremism as... farthest away, excessive, inordinate, extravagant, outrageous, unreasonable, irrational, improper, preposterous, fanatical, exaggerated, monstrous, unrestrained, desperate, unconventional, unseemly, beyond control, radical and drastic! Sorry now that I think about it...I don’t think that these words are extreme enough!

Do you (can you) act like an extremist? Talk about a tough job! It’s hard to stay on the bleeding edge! It’s always easier to conform, to be one of the heard, to flock...

Business today, tomorrow... requires a totally different perspective. The days of more of the same, dooms you. In other words, you become extinct (think dinosaur) and you don’t even know it happened (think giant asteroid). Business today is changing at such a rapid rate that if we (collectively) don’t change our approach to EVERYTHING we do, we will be gone (a mere memory, if were lucky), before we know it!!! One of the very best definitions of insanity that I have come across is “doing more of the same and expecting different results”...In reality, doing more of the same...means that you will most probably, at best, get more of the same kinds of results. In other words, you will get what you have been getting, nothing more and potentially less. I believe that it’s insane to continue down the same boring well-worn path. By the way, so do your customers.

To be successful in business today requires doing things extremely different if you want to survive...thrive...and dominate.

It's time for **EXTREMIST ACTION**...you can't **think** yourself into acting differently; you can only **ACT** your way into thinking differently!

OK, so lets assume (think Felix Unger) you buy into the notion of **EXTREMISM**...how in the world do you start?

First, change you title, (for example, my title is "Professional Provoker", it's on my business card, it's what I do, thank you very much)... Pick a title that represents what you want to do...how you want to be perceived ("I am the Greatest"...don't need to tell you who that is...do I) in your business. Hint: there is a lot in a title. For example: how can you claim the title of "Professional Provoker" and not be one and do that? How can you claim, "I am the Greatest" and not be? Take some time and think about this...what messages do you want to send and what actions must be taken? Make sure your title send those messages and compels you to take the necessary actions.

Second, your role now must be to become the leader of **EXTREME ACTION**. Start acting like a leader. Leaders, lead from the front...they are the first one into the gap. They lead by example! They set the tone and establish the expected behaviors. They are the people that we look up to and follow. Be brave, the future of your business is at stake.

Third, you must do this...in your work, or department, or company, do something so different, so radical, that people think your crazy, that they think that you have gone over the edge...that you've lost it big time. Have fun with it! Hint: make sure that it is/has been perceived as impossible by the people in the know ("It's kind of fun to do the impossible" Walt Disney). Hint: If people don't tell you your crazy, that's impossible, it's not extreme enough!

Who knows you might create a breakthrough...smash the paradigms that keep you doing what you always have...remember

EXTREMIST ACTION takes no prisoners, no white flag, no truce, no quarter...you can never be satisfied, it can never

be extreme enough. **EXTREMIST ACTION is doing the impossible!**

Another thought, don't confuse "talking" about doing something different with actually doing something different. Talking is not doing!

Fourth, you must try different things...and you must keep trying, never give up, try again, and again and again. No one ever gets it right the first time, or the second or the third...Remember it took Thomas Edison twenty thousand try's over twenty years to change the way we see at night. How many people (when he was doing these experiments) thought he was crazy? Answer...just about every one.

One of my all time favorite quotes:

"Every really new idea looks crazy at first." Abraham H. Maslow

As part of trying different things, make sure that you are looking at other industries. Innovative ideas almost always come from outside your industry. The things that appear to be impossible in your job, department, company or industry may have already been accomplished in a different one. It's OK to copy other peoples ideas, be sure to give credit and don't violate any laws, but it's Ok. Also, make sure that you put your spin on it, that idea is only valuable when it's applied to your needs and solves your problems. In addition, don't overlook the power of getting pissed off (please see my observation, "It's Time to Get Pissed Off"). Pissed off people take action...they have to they can't take it anymore! Very few things in this world are as powerful as the brain of a pissed off person. Leverage that brainpower.

Fifth, think back...what were the really cool products or services that you EXPERIENCED in the recent past, how did they make you feel, did they move you, did they make you tingle all over, did they shake your world? Were you first thoughts...WOW; I wish that I had come up with that! That is what you are trying to do, that's what you are trying to create. In other words, you will know it when you FEEL it.

You're right, this is a fairly radical approach to business or life, but when you think about it, the really COOL stuff almost always happens at the bleeding edge. It almost always is the result of crazy people doing stuff, making the impossible real. A final quote, from the famous Jessie James (chopper builder extraordinaire from West Coast Choppers and of Monster Garage fame) "If I have to explain what's cool to you, you won't get it!"

EXTREMIST ACTION IS...

VERY COOL!

If you are a leader of your organization, at least have the guts to try something different. I always tell the people that we work with; I would rather be fired for trying different stuff than get laid off because I did more of the same.

This thinking will probably cost us some work with the faint of heart, but frankly, it's work that we probably don't want anyway. If you want help with EXTREMIST ACTION call us...we can help!