



Theories don't pay the bills. Only action pays the bills. Theories are like recipes. They offer ingredients but don't guarantee results. A cook can read a recipe just like a chef can. Why then do their results differ? How is a technician more credentialed than a mechanic? The answer is in the "method". Method is the interpretation of the ingredients. This includes innovation, creativity, personalisation, passion and a resolve that comes from discipline and a will to stand out. All of these are fine leadership qualities and highly entrepreneurial. What better way to introduce the first of my PROFILES IN EXCELLENCE segments? The people I profile over the next 12 or so issues of STUFF will be people I know and you may know them too. It's my pleasure to offer MR JOHN BLAINE to you as an example of a profile in excellence. I encourage you to watch our discussion on YouTube – the link is on the covering email. Last issue, I nominated discipline, standards, humility and vision as ingredients for excellence and leadership. Here are some snippets from my interview with John.

#### JOHN BLAINE AT A GLANCE

John is a retail sales manager for Ross Gray Motor City in Bundaberg Queensland Australia. He is 36 years old and was born near Katoomba in NSW. Professionally, he is passionate about the brand he represents (MITSUBISHI) the company he represents (ROSS GRAY) and his team. Personally, it's all about family. When I met him, he was the proprietor of The Alexandra Park Motel where I stayed whilst working for Ross Gray. One day he said to me, "The work you train Ross Gray's team to do.... could I do that work?" The rest as they say, is history. Much lauded and applauded, here now, is the essence of his "method".



- John speaks of morals, values and beliefs. He maintains that "remaining conscious" is the secret to maintaining standards that, if you preach these ingredients, allows you to live them. This ensures you'll hold yourself accountable when there's no boss to hold you accountable. NOTE: Being a commission-earner is as close to owning your own business as it gets without the overheads of actually owning the business. Consider that it's "You Pty Ltd" from now on.
- John nominates 'efficiency' as the difference between streamlining; something pros do without shortcutting (amateurs)
- MY NOTE: John has an intensity – you can see it in his eyes. What makes it work for him is a personal integrity which will not allow him to take anything he's learned or anyone in his sphere of influence to be forgotten or taken for granted.
- Note John's answer to my question, "what have you achieved?" If you need an example of the role humility plays in leadership, his answer was all about the people around him. Jim Collins wrote, "Great leaders look out the window to assign credit and in the mirror, to assign blame." A great ingredient but how many leaders apply it in their method?
- John believes that the best way to handle change is to cause it. It starts with the example you set – not the comparisons you make. From John; "It's the work you're prepared to do when no one is watching that helps you achieve the accolades when everyone is watching." That's gold. The proof of the pudding as they say, IS in the eating. Remember Nana's scones? Probably had similar ingredients to the ones from Woolworths. It was her method that made the difference.
- Regarding the profession, John's mantra was clear when we met. "Changing the motor trade – one customer at a time." This is the essence of 'guest centricity'. John sees that the effort here is required by agents and customers alike and when this happens, the purchase experience (important) becomes secondary to the ownership experience (critical)
- MY NOTE: Remember, discipline, standards, humility and Vision. These factors come across clearly in our discussion.

#### FINAL THOUGHT: (based totally on what I've observed about John Blaine and his team)

Discipline is something you shouldn't switch on just when you go to work. It should be on all the time. How you do anything is, when all is said and done, how you end up do everything. The intensity you see in John's eyes becomes focus on the customer to the exclusion of all else, the staff and the job at hand. Focus saves you time. The evidence is in his showroom, in his office and on the desks of his staff. It's in the shine on their shoes, the ironing creases in their pants and the display of the stock. It's the cleanliness of the meal room, the fragrances in the toilets and how neat the store room is. To true leaders and true champions, nothing is ever out of sight and therefore never out of mind. This efficiency leads to effectiveness. Processes need to be efficient but the affect they have on the customers (the life blood of the brand) needs to be personalised, transparent and consistently honest. This perfectly defines the subtle difference between affect and effect. Efficiency affects customer encounters and the methods applied effects the longevity of the relationship and ultimately the revenues and reputations earned.

THANK YOU TO EACH AND EVERYONE ONE OF YOU WHO'S WILLING TO WATCH MY YOUTUBE INTERVIEW WITH JOHN