



VICTORIA

Treat Your Company
Like A

LADY

How to guide your company
by knowing her BASIC NEEDS

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“Victoria – Treat Your Company Like A Lady”, inspires you to think about your company as a being. A Victoria. A living and breathing organism. When you start thinking about your Victoria as a being, it opens up the door to also think about her needs. About how to satisfy those needs, and most importantly how to restore, maintain and build the careful balance between her needs.

It is Stefan's plea, that leaders, entrepreneurs and managers should take a closer look at the balance of the six needs within their Victoria before they take action. Be it a major strategic initiative, an operational improvement, an investment, the implementation of a new software system. All of these initiatives have an impact on Victoria's balance of her needs.

The ultimate need of a Victoria is to be able to “contribute” to the world, to society, to her offspring. Most leaders do not have the time however to think about **Contribution**. They are engulfed each day by the necessities, the problems and the opportunities of that day. When these leaders are able to organize their Victoria's and themselves in such a way that they can free up this time, that's when contribution can start to take real shape. Not just any contribution however, but the contribution that fits her DNA. Like setting up hospitals or schools.

At the other side of the spectrum, Victoria has a need for **Simplicity**. Not just making things simple for the sake of simplicity. No, the kind of simplicity that provides a foundation for others to build upon. Often times, the simplicity that can be found at the far side of complexity is not given the time to develop within a company. Often times, it's the quick “simple” fix that will solve the problem and people will move on from there. However, that quick fix is unstable, and as soon as people will try to build on it, it will break. Finding this simplicity, especially in today's fast paced world is a challenge as complexity, innovation and uncertainty have become the new constants.

Everyone is rushing every day to find ways to cope with it. However, building in the right level of simplicity, and investing the time to find the simplicity, in those areas that provide the foundation for further growth can be very rewarding. Not at first, but only later on when you realize how strong your foundation really has become.

Growth is on everyone's agenda. It is also a very particular need of Victoria. For if you don't grow, you die. Look at nature. Everything in nature is constantly evolving and growing. But growth for the sake of growth will not necessarily satisfy Victoria's needs. Growth comes in many forms and it can be lethal sometimes, as has been proven by many companies who have bitten off more than they can chew. Growth is often directly linked to **Adventure**, one of the other needs of Victoria. But that's exactly what makes it so dangerous. The adventure may become so appealing that many of the other needs of Victoria will be compromised, thus distorting the carefully established balance of all the six needs. Growth and Adventure are therefore 2 needs that need to be treated with the utmost care and with respect to the other needs.

The final two needs have everything to do with Victoria as a being. They are **Passion** and **Significance**. And they are very closely linked to the people that work for her. Attracting and retaining the right passionate people that fit her DNA makes her feel significant and will satisfy her need for being passionate about all she stands for. About her customers whom she wants to serve every single day in an even better way. About all the other stakeholders.

And so we have come full circle. If leaders are able to carefully select the levels of growth and adventure, based on a solid foundation of simplicity, Victoria will feel passionate and significant. And thus, will she be able to contribute to this world.

The principles laid out in his book will change the way you embark on a new initiative within your Victoria. Even if you just take a short moment to reflect on her needs before you take action.

Real Life – Transforming a Dying Company

Is the story of a Victoria as a monopolist in the industry that had gone to sleep in many respects.

Still making tons of money, there was no sense of urgency to change anything. Yet its fleet of vessels was aging and would last another 5 years, and with the oil price at record highs, competition from China was imminent.

\$600 million of replacement investment was needed, but no investor was willing to put up that amount. Targeted and carefully planned growth was needed to provide additional leverage on the investment. Leverage that would result in additional sources of revenue and profits.

By involving everyone, from top management to the janitor in a number of 3 day retreats, the sense of urgency was established. And with that the passion of its people. Things had become too simple and complexity needed to be added. Complexity in the form of Adventure and Growth.

Ultimately, the company grew its revenues fivefold and was able to develop a “Consider it Done!” attitude.



Real Life – Building a National Brand

Is the story of how focusing only on certain needs while not seeing the impact on the balance of ALL needs can go terribly wrong.

As a fresh entrepreneur, Robin just bought an existing chain of six flowershops. The goal was to build a national chain of flowershops. The goal was to allow the artists in the shops to be exactly that, artists. Not having to worry about all the logistics and marketing. And as a result have a much better work life balance.

With a tremendous amount of passion and sense of contribution present, all that was needed was scale. Robin drew up an ambitious growth plan by opening up an additional 20 stores quickly. He was able to convince the banks to follow along in his adventure, and if he succeeded, he would have been able to transform the industry.

Five of the six needs got all the attention that was needed. The sixth one, simplicity was forgotten. Until the adventure hit like a boomerang. Cash was draining left, right and center. The systems and processes were not fit to manage a nationwide chain. No control mechanisms were in place. And thus by the time, Robin noticed it, it was too late.

The dream was over, when Robin ultimately had to declare bankruptcy.