

Moving From Good to Great: Facing the Brutal Facts (Ch. 4)

What shortcomings, obstacles or problems exist with in your building that preventing it from moving from good to great?

Lack of monetary resources

Administrator required to wear too many hats, i.e.: curriculum director, disciplinarian, supervisor, development, public relations/ communication, etc.

Teachers need to assume more responsibility. Administrator fails to delegate more fully and some cases are reluctant to give up authority or ownership. We need to empower teachers to a far greater extent.

Perceptions in the community that other private schools offer a better education. We must do a better, more detailed job in marketing Christian schools and enumerating their distinctives.

School, in general, must become more involved in the life of the school. They require more training relative to their responsibilities and oriented regarding the time commitment expected.

Must differentiate between being compassionate (a big brother and sister in Christ) vs. the business or decision maker in the school setting. It is frequently difficult to strike this balance.

What measures or measurements do you utilize to assess the success of a school year?

Parent surveys done at frequent intervals – some every other year, others every five years

Student evaluation of staff and school

Test results, standardized and comparisons from year to year.

Assessment relative to whether vision or mission of the school has been achieved. Frequently there is a lack of shared vision relative to the goals and vision of the school amongst our constituents.

***The Centrality of Mission to the Christian School:
The Hedgehog Concept (Ch. 5)***

"The hedgehog is probably Collins' most intriguing and colorful good-to-great concept. The hedgehog concept, when applied to a company, organization, or school, is the ability to find the one thing it does best." - Frost

Driving questions in determining this concept for your school:

1. What can you be the best at?
2. What are you deeply passionate about?
3. What drives your economic engine?

According to Collins, almost any enterprise can be measured by how well it blends one's expertise, passion, and the ability to generate income. This place of overlap or intersection is the "hedgehog" concept. *"It's not a goal to be the best, a strategy to be the best, an intention to be the best, a plan to be the best. It is an **understanding** of what you can be the best at. The distinction is absolutely crucial."* - Collins

Adapting the Hedgehog model to the great Christian school

I. Passion – The Clear Statement of Mission

- The Christian school's passion must be centered on its mission.
- Great schools were able to condense their mission into a short statement or paragraph and most employees knew it from memory.
- Passion was the strongest measure of the schools identified in the study.

II. Being the Best – People and Programs

- Each of the schools had produced a desire for excellence that grew out of the mission.
- Each school had identified programs, people, projects, and practices that would reflect excellence and had the potential to put the school in the category of "the best" in a particular dimension.

III. Resources – Money Management

- Like a business, the school has customers (*students/parents*) and collects business revenue (*tuition*). The school must compete for customers and for the disposable income the customers will spend on the school (*donations*).
- Great schools balanced their budgets using three primary resources:
 1. Tuition – operating budgets separate from campaign budgets
 2. Charitable giving – a professional approach to financial dev.
 3. Extended services – summer school, camps, sports, music, drama...

"A continual focus on the overlap of passion, excellence, and revenue management has proved to be a formula for success in the Growing Greatness schools studied." - Frost

Unexpected findings from Collins' study worth noting here:

1. The good-to-great companies are more like hedgehogs – simple, dowdy creatures that know “one big thing” and stick with it. The comparison companies are more like foxes – crafty, cunning, creatures that know many things yet lack consistency.
2. It took four years on average for the good-to-great companies to get a Hedgehog Concept.
3. Strategy per se did not separate the good-to-great companies from the comparison companies. Both sets had strategies, and there is no evidence that the good-to-great companies spent more time on strategic planning than the comparison companies.
4. You absolutely do not need to be in a great industry to produce sustained great results. No matter how bad the industry, every good-to-great company figured out how to produce truly superior economic returns.

<p style="text-align: center;">Group Discussion on Chapter 7: The Power of Doing the Right Things the Right Way over Time</p>
--

“Collins points out that a culture of disciplined application of the good-to-great principles will lead to a cycle of continuous improvement and accomplishment. Collins depicts this process of pushing a giant flywheel into motion. While it takes extraordinary effort to get the flywheel moving that first inch, the same principle of inertia will make it virtually unstoppable once it’s rolling” p.55.

A flywheel is a simple rotating wheel used to store energy or stabilize something. The energy it stores is equal to its moment of inertia. Flywheels help stabilize drive shafts subject to alternating pressures, such as piston engines or piston pumps. The stabilizing effect comes from the flywheel resisting changes in its rotational speed.

SUMMARY OF OUR DISCUSSION:

Getting the flywheel going . . .

- II Timothy 2:1-2 ~ teach faithful men
- It is important to get the people involved in the startup on board for the project first!
 - Develop and tap into existing leaders, passion, giftedness
 - Develop a “team” effort
- Know your staff- are they willing? Capable? Overloaded?
- Utilize collaboration and shared thinking

Choosing the flywheels . . .

- We’ve inherited some flywheels; some we’ll start; many we’ll oversee/maintain
- Parents often put pressure on us to start up new flywheels
- Consider not only passion but sustainability!
- Evaluate people carefully; sometimes God providentially provides them!
- Consider your mission before you decide
- Maintain overall balance
- Consider it as part of a Strategic Plan: ask yourself “What are you going to quit doing in order to do the new thing??”

Keeping the flywheels rolling . . .

- PROMOTING what you’re doing often strengthens the flywheel and those doing it (PR, communication, tell the stories)
 - Document how it works and who does what; that will help keep it running smoothly
 - Reflect periodically to evaluate and improve it.
 - Take care of your people!
-

Sheryl's Pre-prepared Questions:

"Some processes that require monumental effort at the outset, once in place, seem to create monumental positive results (Frost, p.55)

1. What processes in your educational environment have you struggled with in the past to get started and have them gain momentum? How have you been able to get the "flywheel" moving? What positive results are you seeing?
2. What educational "flywheel" would you like to see start turning and gain momentum in your educational environment? What are the challenges? What suggestions do others have to encourage the process?
3. What about student discipline and the power of positive peer pressure? What struggles do you face related to student discipline and your current system? What suggestions can the group share that may help "smooth out the delivery" of student discipline?
4. How can expectations energize student achievement? What are some of the written and unwritten expectations you have found helpful in your school?
5. What about "service learning?" What types of service learning projects have your school tried? What are the results? Have there been unexpected benefits?

Dale's Pre-prepared questions:

[1] Can you give an example of something new that has been started at your school that took great energy to start, but its continuation has gotten easier and brought steady improvement? **>How do strong programs perpetuate themselves in a great school?<**

[2] Student discipline was one area observed in the schools. Some moved from law to grace/rules to responsibility/demerits to responsibility. Is your school's discipline rule based or responsibility based? Is it possible to get students more involved in the disciplinary system program, utilizing "positive peer pressure?" How can strengthening relationships improve discipline?

>How is student behavior managed through relationships in a great school?<

[3] Developing student leadership was another area observed in the schools. How are student leaders developed in your school? Programs? People?

>How can developing student leaders perpetuate improvement in a great school?<

[4] Encouraging service was the third area discussed that was observed in the schools. How do students serve in your school? Do students have input into the kinds or organization of service projects?

>How can encouraging perpetuate improvement in a great school?<

[5] What activities help the flywheel continue moving and not lose momentum in a school? How do you keep from things growing "stale?"

[6] What are your thoughts/reactions to the "flywheel" (Doing the Right Things the Right Way over Time) concept?