

## ***Speed Reading – Decide One Thing***

Customers value lots of things ... price, quality, service, performance, features, selection, design, reliability, etc. When making purchase decisions, customers inevitably rank these values, rationalizing their purchase by deciding which one is most important. Intuitively, they know that they can't buy a Ferrari for the cost of a Honda. They know that they won't get Nordstrom service levels at Wal-Mart.

Similarly, when developing a strategy, high-performance organizations recognize that it is impossible to be great at everything. They can't be the low-cost supplier and provide five-star service. They also know that they can't be all things to all people. They can't target the el-cheapo price segment and the ultra-premium luxury segment with the same offering.

High-performance organizations apply the *Discipline of Differentiation* to decide which segments to target, and which "One Thing" will be their defining point of differentiation. They are good at many things ... but decide to become incredibly, fanatically great at One Thing.

Wal-Mart chose price as their One Thing. They have good service, good selection, good design, but "low prices, always." Wal-Mart's target is defined as "the family that lives paycheck to paycheck," and every day Wal-Mart focuses on lowering costs and passing along the savings, "helping their customers save money and live better."

Apple chose product design as their One Thing. They have limited selection, but "insanely great" design, which allows them to charge a premium. Every aspect of Apple's business reflects this commitment to "insanely great" design. Their stores are cool. Their packaging is cool. Their ads are cool. Even their power supplies are cool.

Amazon chose product selection. They have good service, good prices, but unbelievable "A to Z" selection. They started by applying web technology to books. Now they carry everything from toasters to TVs.

Nordstrom chose customer service. They have a very limited selection, but legendary service. No toasters or TV's, but company folklore tells of a service representative who honored their industry leading return policy by allowing a customer to return a set of tires, even though the company has never sold them.

BMW chose performance. They have good quality, good design, but incredible driving performance. They are "The Ultimate Driving Machine." They have interviews with suspension engineers on the web site. Their European Delivery program encourages a trip to the famous Nürburgring race track.

Lexus chose quality. No interviews with suspension engineers, just "The Relentless Pursuit of Perfection."

These high-performance organizations have a precisely defined target market, and decided on One Thing to be their defining point of differentiation.

Every single aspect of their organization is intentionally designed to deliver best-in-class performance in their One Thing, and they are disciplined enough to be just "good enough" in every other area. They invest disproportionately in innovation initiatives that "push the envelope" and extend leadership in the One Thing.

High-performance organizations are relentless, rigorous, uncompromising, fanatical, obsessive, and unwavering about One Thing ... and that's why they win. *So, what's the One Thing that you stand for?*

Decide One Thing. Drive One Direction. Develop the #One Team. Deliver Every Time. That's the Dashboard Way.

---