

The D'Artagnan Way

Introduction

Whether companies continue to fight through the economic downturn or emerge triumphant into another round of boom times, one question remains crucial for business leaders: How can we inspire our workforce and bring out the best in our employees and in ourselves?

Motivating employees and ourselves to be passionate about and committed to our work and our personal lives is a key strategy for achieving success in many organizations; inspired workers and leaders can achieve greatness. Companies and organizations need to create a team of committed, passionate, and inspired players if they are going to not only survive, but thrive in future years.

This book is written specifically for business leaders that depend on teamwork, passion, and inspiration to outperform their competitors and achieve organizational goals and, perhaps, even greatness.

Leaders and employees who are masters of their own motivation and who are able to "keep their eyes on the prize" regardless of the vagaries of their industry or the nation's economic conditions will consistently outperform their peers. Across the country, business leaders know this and invest millions of dollars in motivational training for themselves and for their employees.

However, almost everyone agrees that the effects of motivational training are usually short-lived. Leaders and employees need more than just motivational training - they need inspiration, inspiration that can be tapped into beyond the classroom or auditorium setting, in the privacy of their own hearts and minds. An enduring aspiration to greatness does not spring from gimmicky programs with toys and doodads tossed to training participants as if they were seals performing for fish. This aspiration feeds on a deep well of understanding that allows them to say, "I belong to a purpose greater than myself, and I am not alone in this journey. I can draw from the support, talent, and expertise of my closest circle."

Much emphasis has been placed upon motivation as a catalyst for success in organization performance, but there is little discussion of the inspiration that drives business leaders and employees - unless that inspiration has come from religious messages, which have a variety of obvious drawbacks in the corporate setting.

Still, the use of an allegory in religious messages has long been recognized as a powerful way to influence and shift thinking toward a loftier vision of what is possible. The D'Artagnan Way - A Tale of Purpose, Passion, and Team Commitment, is a non-religious allegory that updates the noble principles of a different kind of inspiring saga: *The Three Musketeers*. It is presented in the spirit of *Who Moved My Cheese*, *The Go-Getter*, *The One-Minute Manager*, and numerous other successful business allegories which serve as influential agents of change inside organizations.

Set in the modern day upscale (and fictional) coastal village of Esperanza, The D'Artagnan Way introduces us to the transforming powers of a famous principle: "All for One, One for All." Esperanza serves as a metaphor for all companies and organizations in American business striving to survive the economic turmoil of the last several years while keeping their vision for the future alive and relevant.

As the story opens, Esperanza is about to fall on hard times, causing the community of long-time friends to estrange themselves from each other, competing for whatever bit of opportunity might come their way. In the midst of these bad times they are presented with an unexpected challenge that requires them to pull together and trust one another in order to bring about success. They make progress only when they set aside their competitiveness and become a committed team united by their goal.

The catalyst for this change is a young stranger named Jim D'Artagnan (dar-tanion), modeled after the passionate, idealistic fourth Musketeer in "The Three Musketeers," written by French author Alexandre Dumas more than two centuries ago. Beloved for generations for the exuberant rallying cry: "All for one, one for all!" the Dumas story dramatizes and celebrates the heroic virtues of that era: teamwork; devotion to excellence; sacrifice; trust; generosity of heart and spirit; and the most powerful virtue of all - firm dedication to a cause greater than oneself. We call these noble, team-oriented principles "The D'Artagnan Way."

Young Jim D'Artagnan carries his name proudly and draws inspiration from this family gift, even in the modern day world. Unlike the 18th century D'Artagnan, Jim has no royalty to protect, but his 21st century cause is even greater: the environment, especially the graceful dolphins that play up and down the U.S. shores. As his story unfolds, Jim D'Artagnan and the townspeople of Esperanza are inspired to follow the principles of The D' Artagnan Way, serving a goal far greater than their individual needs and concerns.

In the challenging world we confront each day, many uncertainties impact each of us. How we choose to deal with these circumstances - and the people involved - creates the world we live in and the successes that result. Choosing to be involved is personal; choosing to involve others is critical. Whether dealing with difficulties in the face of terrorism, or the challenge of saving an animal, the choices we make drive our inner being and can provide compelling examples for others to follow.

WHAT IS THE D' ARTAGNAN WAY?

The D' Artagnan Way is the inspired practice of unselfish teamwork and collaboration, based on a foundation of truth, honor, and integrity.

To put the D'Artagnan Way into action, we must visualize belonging to a purpose greater than ourselves. We must believe we are not alone in our career and life's journey. And we must put aside self-interest and commit to self-sacrifice and teamwork for a larger cause - a greater mission.

The principles of the Musketeer motto, "All for One, One for All," are the key lessons of our story. They are presented at the end of this book as teachable principles.

PRINCIPLES OF THE D'ARTAGNAN WAY

- Commit to a Shared Dream
- Create Strategic Alliances
- Respect Each Other's Differences
- Maintain a Positive Attitude
- Choose to Trust
- Do the Right Thing
- Celebrate Success



The D'Artagnan Way is designed to show business leaders how to create and sustain inspired individuals and teams dedicated to unselfish collaboration and to causes greater than self-interests.

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