

“A Great and Worthy Purpose” An E-Guide For Mark Taylor’s Leadership Essential Practices



Mark Taylor is a retired CEO and Vistage Master Chair. Based in New York City, he knows the ins and outs of the business world, as a result of his work within his own organizations and with various other CEOs, key executives, and business owners. He has founded numerous successful companies, and has worked in the industry for 35 years. His NYC Vistage groups help business leaders enhance their skills and improve their effectiveness in the workplace.

He utilizes his experience spending over 1,000 hours a year speaking with CEOs and participating in over 200 workshops with Vistage expert speakers, and having studied with top leadership thinkers, like Patrick Lencioni, Jim Collins, Dr. Lee Thayer, Dr. Fernando Flores, Dave Logan, John King, and in various interviews with successful leaders – in order to share what other business leaders can do to grow their organizations.

Does the CEO have to create the great and worthy purpose?

Does the CEO have to be the one to come up with their great and worthy purpose? Similarly, what should a CEO do if they have inherited an organization that already has a purpose?

First off, it is crucial for the CEO to have a firm understanding of what they desire for their business. It is the role of the business leader to make sure that the organization is moving in the correct direction — the direction which aligns with its purpose.

This means that they may have to take a step back and reevaluate what it is their organization is working toward. Regardless of who it is that comes up with the purpose, it is key that the CEO ensures that everyone in the organization understands the cause and shares in the belief.

Furthermore, the CEO's role is to use the purpose to guide their thought processes, decisions, and behavior overall. A great and worthy purpose is a way in which to serve others, and should be treated as such. Rather than being a destination, one's great and worthy purpose is a journey. A CEO new to the concept of a great and worthy purpose should think of it as a verb, rather than as a noun.

Why do you need a great and worthy purpose?

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, renowned poet and author of *The Little Prince*, once wrote that “if you want to build a ship, don't drum up people together to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea.”

This quote exemplifies the importance of a great and worthy purpose. When members of an organization truly believe in a cause, they will be fully involved in the process of making it come to fruition. To have a great and worthy purpose means to have an active and engaged company culture.

Overall, once there is an established great and worthy purpose, there is no telling what an organization will be capable of. Once you've determined your purpose — the cause that you wish for your organization to work toward — don't hesitate to implement the changes necessary and make a difference.

What is a great and worthy purpose?

A great and worthy purpose is a leadership virtuoso's first priority — over profit, convenience, and comfort. It is defined as “a pronouncement of a future state that will bring about through its coordinated action.” Also known as a noble cause, a great and worthy purpose is larger than the individual, and requires the work of the entire organization.

According to Dr. Lee Thayer, a leadership expert with over 45 years of experience in the industry and author of the books *Leadership: Thinking, Being, Doing* and *Leadership Virtuosity*, a leadership virtuoso is someone who is dedicated for the good of the world. A leadership virtuoso does what they do, not for money or fame, but for a cause they believe in. In other words, they do it for their great and worthy purpose.

Through Mark Taylor's interviews with leadership virtuosos, he has found that they all have a few things in common. Most prominently, they all have a purpose that they are “had by.” Dr. Lee Thayer contextualizes this within *Leadership Virtuosity*, writing that these leaders are “driven by something that has them in a thrall. They do not ‘have’ lust. They are had by it — by the absolute necessity to achieve their aims in life” (pg. 192).

Thus, a great and worthy purpose is a cause bigger than any one person. It isn't something you can simply claim, but instead something which drives both you and your organization toward future success and goodness. A true great and worthy purpose is sincere and authentic, and makes for a better world.

How do you find your great and worthy purpose?

Knowing that a great and worthy purpose is something that you are “had by” rather than something you have, how do you find your own purpose?

Sometimes, your great and worthy purpose will find you. Other times, however, you will need to look inward. What do you believe in? What changes would you like to see in the world, and how can you work to achieve this? In other words, what is it all for?

According to Aaron Hurst, author of *The Purpose Economy: How Your Desire for Impact, Personal Growth, and Community is Changing the World*, “purpose comes when we know we have done something that we believe matters — to others, to society, and to ourselves” (pgs. 353-354).

A great and worthy purpose requires honesty and transparency. A business leader, in order to determine their purpose, must think deeply about what it is they care about. This can result from an epiphany, from past experiences, or from repeated, concentrated, and focused thought. Though it sometimes takes a little extra effort, a great and worthy purpose is always genuine.

Do you like what you're reading? Check out Mark Taylor's LinkedIn Newsletter or blog. Mark Taylor shares each way you can take what he's learned from his many years of experience and use it to become a more successful leader.

While Mark Taylor shares his wisdom in his articles, nothing beats learning face-to-face. If you are interested in improving your leadership skills, are struggling with a business-related challenge, or want to learn from experts in your field, consider joining Mark Taylor's NYC Vistage groups. These invaluable groups for CEOs, key executives, and business owners can provide you with wisdom, support, advice, and feedback from trained

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