



The Green Lantern Business Theory

by Tank

Business in the New Age of Prosperity

I wrote this with you in mind. You know who you are. You're the newly inexperienced at being wealthy, the Sudden Wealth Syndrome sufferers — and the luckiest investors on the planet. Mostly you are the believers, listeners, seers, thinkers, and feelers. You've suffered through the ridicule to finally usher in a new age of prosperity, and you are at the forefront of change.

With this immense responsibility comes the incredible benefit of finally being capable to pursue any creative endeavor you ever wanted to pursue but couldn't. And that includes business.

For many of you, being a business owner will be a brand new experience. Even for the veteran business owner, I dare say this will be the first time you'll ever have had a chance to be an owner with the ability to measure your success by the impact you have on the people you serve, and the first time you'll be able to execute your mission without compromise because of financial limitations.

The Green Lantern Business Theory is a Big Idea for business in the new age of prosperity. It redefines our goals and our methods to align with a new reality, a distinctly different and liberating reality from what we've been programmed to believe in.

Old Paradigm Companies

In our current social structures, a vast majority of "successful" businesses measure themselves by statistical comparisons of rates of return on investments, quarterly growth, sales, eyeballs, clients, reach,

&c. All of these factors are essentially based on money and how much the company can make.

Even personally, we've been acculturated as employees to believe we need money to survive or we won't be able to feed our kids. Money becomes the only objective of both the company and us.

We're pushed to hit sales goals with performance-based remuneration counter-balanced by threats of demotions or dismissal. We're motivated with contest awards, trinkets, plaques, gold watches, titles, and trips. We're promoted based on our ability to win these awards. We're valued almost solely on how much we improve the bottom line — and how little we detract from it with our pay.

Profile of an Idealist

I am an idealist — and I'm a business owner. Business owners rarely succeed if they are also idealists. Idealists don't make money. We all know this. Many have learned it in the school of hard knocks (an institution that's soon to bite the dust).

Here are a few illustrations of my personal brand of idealism. I pick the Tar Heels to win the Championship in every bracket I play because I can't bet against "my" team. I overinvest my time and energy to help others even when failure seems inevitable. I'm genuinely surprised when I don't win Powerball. And I really think there are amazing things to be learned from everyone and everything, if I just take the time to listen.

A traditional business model isn't friendly to these ideals. From the way success is measured monetarily to the manner in which companies communicate, the idealist is a misfit in these organizations.

The Green Lantern Ideal Is Born

The Green Lantern Theory is an idealist business concept. It's more in line with an Eastern set of standards than what a traditional American business owner would be comfortable with. You may think it's a deep metaphor for Paul Revere; but it's actually referring to The Green Lantern comic book character. Allow me to explain.

My seven-year-old twin boys and I started this little company to create functional artwork from salvaged goods. I wasn't overly concerned about making money with it, but rather I wanted something where my sons and I could build something together. Superheroes were an emerging fascination of theirs and a life long obsession of my own. So we decided to include superhero elements in all of our creations.

We undertook extensive research, which consisted of me and my sons watching superhero movies and cartoons, reading as many comic books together as we could, and scouring flea markets for various machine parts that looked like a super villain might use them.

We finished some really amazing pieces, got published in a magazine, and even sold some work. Most importantly, we spent quality time together, growing something of value that has the potential to be whatever we want it to be. The business started out as a venture to build stronger bonds and teach valuable lessons to my sons. I was fortunate to have learned a lot in the process myself.

The New Secret Sauce

Seven-year-old "business minds" require a really good story to turn them on. One day in the car, we were watching a Green Lantern cartoon. It was then I discovered the founding principle upon which I will forever base every business I own. The Green Lantern said:

Green Lanterns are powered by the Green Light of Will, the first cause of all creation and the driving force behind the manifestation of any new idea. It is the strongest force in the universe and it unites us all.

Then I discovered that the arch nemeses of the Green Lantern were Yellow Lanterns. The Yellow Lanterns were powered by the yellow light of fear. This force is equally powerful to the Green Lantern but in the negative, utilizing fear, worry, division, and doubt to control and create outcomes.

After considering these two principles, I realized that businesses use both of these techniques to motivate people, maintain employee loyalty, and drive results.

Essentially, it is a fear-based business model, versus a purpose-based business model. I coined the phrase ***The Green Lantern Business Theory***. The idea is simple:

1. Build a business from the ground up with people of like mind that have a common will or purpose.
2. Measure results by the impact your business has on your employees and the people you serve.
3. Generate passive income for everyone who contributes to the substance of that company.

The Old Bottom Line

You've heard it in movies, in meetings, and in arguments with your spouse. The famous discussion ending: "The bottom line is . . ."

It's a statement of confidence and swagger that defines what you are trying to say without all the fluff and details of how you got there. The bottom line is the summary of everything that's been done, and the current state of where you are in the progress of getting where you want to go.

Usually when businesses refer to the bottom line they are discussing return on investment, sales goals, or some other measurable data that allows an owner to look at the skybox view of their company's success and make recommendations based on what they see.

Positive measurements equal survival in this business model. The business model motivated by fear and scarcity. The business model of survival of the fittest. The business model that doesn't shy away from ruthlessness to win.

Traditional working environments hire people who can be worked to the bone and who, as a result, generally hate their jobs. Money is the key motivator and often gets employees and business owners away from their initial motivation for starting the business in the first place.

So the question is, has something changed in the way we practice business based on the transition from scarcity to abundance? I'd say it definitely has. And, as the newly wealthy it stands to reason that you'll want to start your own company at some point. So how do you keep your company from becoming a Yellow Lantern?

The New Bottom Line

The new bottom line is your first impression and your last hoorah, the first thing people notice as you enter a room, and the last thing you say before you leave. For some, it's confidence; for others it's integrity. It's the intangible "it" factor that leaders emanate, and good men follow into battle.

You'll notice a kind of inner strength in inspired individuals who've lost everything, built it back up, and held onto their vision in the process. (See Howard Hughes in "Aviator.") The only way to keep your story from losing its integrity and preventing your dream business from becoming a job is to start it off as if you're already where you want to be.

As the newly wealthy — and like Howard Hughes or a generously financed little startup like Twitter, Apple, or Facebook — you'll have the deep pockets to give you staying power during the early and growth phases of your business.

Then you have the freedom and the privilege to execute using the same principles and integrity as you grow, and never sell interest in the company until those values are so rooted in your success that no one would ever want to change it.

Green Lantern Business Theory

From the very beginning, a Green Lantern business has to be clear about what it stands for. This is the guiding principle that will spawn everything.

Utilizing three basics principles, a Green Lantern business is able to maintain its integrity and vision at any stage.

- Develop products that are in line with your mission.
- Hire people who believe in your vision.
- Measure your success based on the impact you have on your employees and the lives you serve.

People like seven-year-olds, relate to stories, but they rarely remember statistics. Yet as most businesses grow and mature, they forget their initial story and build their businesses based on the data and shooting for the money.

The only way to really take a Big Idea and create exactly what you envisioned it to be is to measure your success in new ways that reflect the impact you want to have. To do this, you have to start with a great product.

Product Development

Whether your product is a flying car or athletic training, make sure whatever you do is *unique, exceptional, and exactly what you envisioned*. In this new era you'll be able to conduct the research without financial restrictions to create the exact method, product, or service that enables your Big Idea to come to life.

Develop your plan with professionals who know more about what you want to do than you do. Humility is essential to create something truly excellent. Stay poised for correction and ideas that enhance your own. If someone tells you all the reasons why you can't do something, just work with someone else. You cannot compromise here because this is the basis for everything else you do.

Hire People Who See Your Vision

Don't worry about training, experience, or education as the sole elements of hiring great people. At my company we use the following system to interview. First, we share our vision of the company and discuss the potential role the individual can play. Then give them a chance to present their own ideas. Their presentation has to answer one question and convince us that it's true: "How will you make us better?" (As opposed to, "How can you increase our revenues?")

If we like their concept, we give them three months to bring it to life with all the resources and backing they need to do it the right way. They work for us for free during this time period. And, every single employee has worked for us for free before they were ever hired. In the end, you have dedicated loyal employees who feel that they are part of the company because they have literally helped build it.

People aren't always successful, but we're able to see how they'll respond to obstacles, failures, and people. These same people end up being some of our best employees. More than anything, we know that they have a common will, purpose, and vision, because our vision has expanded to incorporate theirs.

Measuring impact not profits

Every business needs to be sustainable, but profits should only be a part of how you measure success. We strive to establish accounts that make enough passive income to pay for salaries, equipment, computers, and whatever costs are associated with the Big Idea. That being said, it's very important to try and measure employee happiness, customer satisfaction, excellent program execution, and whatever human measurement fits into your vision.

You aren't going to start a business just to make money; you're starting a business to *have an impact*. Maintaining this vision and sustaining that kind of energy in a work place enables everyone to thrive and for you to live out your dream.

Summary

The Green Lantern Business Theory is an idealistic business framework that concentrates our most powerful assets with a common will. When you have large groups of people who believe in what it is you're doing, you eliminate water cooler workplace negativity. This is a practical, simplistic method of building a business that will be easy for any new business owner. For the veteran business owner it may be an attack on their previous reality, but it's probably in line with your original mission.

Our initial mission statement is always the idealistic version of the company we want to build and just becomes watered down over time. My advice and encouragement as we go into this new age of prosperity is to maintain your ideals, stand for your values, and build your business with the same integrity.