



Board and Team Development

Take a Day On to STRETCH!

by **Peter Bailey**
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In last year's Q4 newsletter, I wrote an article about finding a way to refresh ourselves on the job and look for ways to take a Day On rather than take a day off. We looked at David Whyte's poetry, Jenny Evans' ten-minute heart-rate regimen, and Simon Sinek's passion for finding the "Why" in what we do. The response from our readers was astounding! Many of you wrote, called, and loved the concept – thus an idea is born.

The Prouty Project is exploring a new way for individuals and teams to take a Day On in their work week to work, play, laugh, bond, learn, grow, STRETCH, create, restore, invent, discuss, discover, align, strategize, feel, think, and do!

While previous generations had the notable distinction of being experience rich and information poor. Today, we find ourselves being just the opposite: Information rich and experience poor. To counter this dilemma, we are engaging our clients in mini-STRETCHES as an exciting way for people in corporations, non-profit organizations, and boards of directors to get the benefit of our annual STRETCH Expeditions.

Day On is about you and your team getting away from the office and rejuvenating through an instructionally designed, purposeful adventure program that is custom crafted to assist with Leadership Development, Change Management Skill Development, Innovation and Creativity Immersions, Visioning and Team Alignment, or Global Communication Skills.

Here are some of the ways we have already taken our STRETCH Expedition and packed it into a short, "carry-on size" time frame:

- Innovation and creativity workshops on the Guthrie Main Stage with senior leaders.
- Equine-facilitation with regional sales managers.
- Learn to play in an Indonesian gamelan music ensemble for team development.



Rowing in an 8-person shell: the ultimate alignment experience.

- Half-day ropes course for challenge and group support.
- Improvisational dance with leadership teams for team bonding.
- Half-day adventure race for problem-solving skills.
- Facilitated service projects in the Twin Cities for giving back.
- Half-day complexity challenges to gel strategic thinking and execution skills.
- World-class Iron Chef cooking competitions for communication and time management.
- Labyrinth walk facilitation for storytelling and reflection.
- Global communication skills to change the way you operate with global counterparts.
- Stock car racing around a quarter mile track for the thrill of controlling self-talk.
- Shell crewing on Bryant Lake for communication and team alignment.
- Random acts of kindness urban immersion for giving back.

Life is too short to live for a day off. Contact us to create an experience that puts more STRETCH in your business strategy. Email or call me at 952-229-8969.

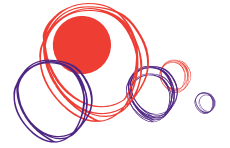
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5 Tweet-Like Messages 4 a Big Q3 Kickoff

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2nd Annual Big Brothers Big Sisters Night at Raceway Park: Hosted by the Prouty Project, please join us on Sunday evening, August 18, from 5:00 – 9:00 p.m. at NASCAR Raceway Park in Shakopee. Cost is \$10 / adult, \$4 / junior (5-12), and 4 and under are free for admission at the door. Food and drinks are provided, and donations to BBBS will be accepted at the event. Space is limited, RSVP to jayna.wallace@proutyproject.com by Friday, August 9.

Prouty Press: There was a wonderful article about our firm in the Minneapolis Star Tribune business section. Thank you, Todd Nelson, for capturing the essence of our firm beautifully. Check it out at: www.proutyproject.com/prouty-in-the-news.

Alignment: "Focus 1% on vision and 99% on alignment," said noted business author Jim Collins. Think about including an "alignment segment" in your next strategy session. How? By putting your senior team and / or board of directors in 8-person rowing shells on Bryant Lake.

Last year, three client teams tried it, loved it, and everyone stayed relatively dry.

STRETCH 2013: As this newsletter is landing in your mailbox, 24 business leaders are immersed in an adventure sailing experience in the British Virgin Islands. Watch our Facebook page for photos and more!

STRETCH 2014: We're excited to announce STRETCH 2014, An Arabian Journey: Care, Teach, Share – A Week in Morocco, which will take place April 25 – May 4, 2014. If you would like to learn more, please join us on Thursday, October 17, 2013 for an informational kickoff meeting. RSVP to jayna.wallace@proutyproject.com to hold a spot for the meeting.

Have a stretchtacular 3rd quarter,



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"C" NOTE QUOTE:

"It's the little things citizens do. That's what will make the difference. My little thing is planting trees."

Know the quote?

If you know who said this quote, please send an email to: briana.cain@proutyproject.com or call 952.942.2922 by **Monday, August 5**; one guess per individual. If we have more than one correct answer, we throw those names into a hat and draw the winner of a \$100 gift card.

Last issue's "C" Note Quote winner is...

Scott Russell, National Alzheimer's Association.

Scott knew that Oprah Winfrey, media proprietor, producer, and philanthropist, said the following:

"The idea of doing something unexpected, something unpredictable – daring myself to tune in to another way of seeing and feeling things – intrigues me."

Congratulations, Scott!

Scott says, "I am donating the gift card to the Alzheimer's Association Minnesota-North Dakota Chapter which has been providing services, information, and advocacy for more than 30 years to people with dementia, their families, and health care providers."



Scott Russell



Organization Development

A Courageous Leader

by **Grayce Belvedere Young**
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Breaking Free, Inc. was established in October 1996 as a non-profit organization serving women and girls involved in systems of abuse and commercial sexual exploitation. Over the last 16 years, Breaking Free has served more than 5,000 clients and reached over 22,000 individuals via street outreach while systematically growing its programming to embrace a full continuum of care. I recently sat down with Breaking Free Founder and Executive Director, Vednita Carter, to talk about her incredible work:

Do you fear for your life?

Not really; although, I do have to watch my back. In the early years, I received threats, usually phone calls, but these have mostly gone away. The pimps aren't happy when Breaking Free stops a revenue stream for them.

You do have to have courage. I keep telling myself that this work must be done and someone has to do it. That someone is me. There are too many women, girls, and boys in our community who are being exploited by the pimps.

People in our community must understand how violent this "business" is and that it harms all women.

How do you help educate people on the issue of sex trafficking?

You have used the right word – educate. If we can help men and women truly understand that sex trafficking is another form of violence, I think people will realize that we must stop this.

We run a John's School in partnership with the St. Paul police. Offenders are required to go through the program and understand that the women they are soliciting are someone's daughter, sister, and mother. These women (and girls and boys) are humans as well. For incredibly complex and violent reasons, they are in over their heads and can't find a safe way to break out of "the life." We are also seeking to toughen the laws for offenders.

We must address the demand side of human trafficking. In early May, we held a weekend event called The DEMAND

Change Project. The event was attended by over 700 people who came to hear speakers and panelists share specific strategies to stop the demand. We held a walk in downtown Minneapolis to point out the "gentleman's clubs" that many people think are harmless. What they don't realize is that stripping is a slippery slope to prostitution. Our event ended with the most beautiful night – a Victory Benefit concert that featured performances by survivors who have been helped by Breaking Free.

How do we help the women?

The most important factor to end trafficking is to ensure the women have a safe place to live with services that can address their mental and physical health. Breaking Free provides safe housing to break the cycle. We opened our first 12-unit apartment in 1997. Naturally, the neighbors didn't want us. They thought we would bring more violence and crime to the neighborhood. We went to council meetings. We held neighborhood meetings. We persevered because we knew that housing was a vital step.

After a few months of living in the apartment, neighbors started to call us and tell us that crime had actually decreased and the neighborhood was calmer. When we outgrew our space and needed to find a new location, the neighbors asked us not to leave. We had changed people's perception in that neighborhood. And we have an impact on the women and girls. We help to set them free.



Vednita Carter



Here are resources to learn more about Breaking Free and the issues of human trafficking: www.BreakingFree.net, www.mngirlsnotforsale.org, *Girls Like Us* by Rachel Lloyd, and *Not For Sale* by Christine Stark.



Strategic Planning

Verne Harnish: The Greatest Business Decisions of All Time

by **Briana Cain**
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Verne Harnish is the founder of the Entrepreneurs' Organization (EO) and the Founder and CEO of Gazelles, a global executive education and coaching company. He has 31 years of experience educating entrepreneurial teams, writes for Fortune magazine, and has authored several books. In this interview, Verne talks about his latest book, *The Greatest Business Decisions of All Time* and some of the key habits to great decision-making.

How did you decide to write your book?

Steve Jobs' passing was really the impetus. I was with my partner in India when the word came that Steve passed away. I was talking about how sad I was, but also what an amazing decision it had been for the board of directors at Apple to bring Steve back 10 years after he was fired. Steve then ends up doing, what he quoted as "the greatest work of his life," ultimately leading to the most valuable company in the world.

We began discussing what some of the other greatest decisions were and wrote them down. We realized that this might make an interesting historical book. Most professions know their own history, and I thought business executives should have some historical insight into their own field. It all led to pulling together the 18 greatest business decisions of all time.

How did you determine the 18 greatest decisions?

This book was not meant to be the definitive list; we just wanted to get the conversation started. When looking at the decisions we asked ourselves: Was it counterintuitive? Has it really stood the test of time? Is it something other people have replicated? Was it really new and different?

What can we learn from the greatest decisions?

Jim Collins did the foreword to the book and he emphasizes the theme that cut across most of the decisions: The importance of investing in people – which doesn't have a hard ROI. These are decisions that have long-term impact. Whether it was Henry Ford doubling wages; Samsung spending \$100,000 per young employee to experience life in a different country; or my favorite example –

Jack Welch at General Electric deciding to invest \$50 million into Crotonville – these were all decisions whose impact played out over 10 to 25 years, not 12 months. At the end of the day, you can try to gather all the evidence one way or the other on a decision, but at some point, you have to take a strong stance and go with your gut.

What habits or strategies can we apply to improve our decision-making?

Your strategy is really about looking at what you are spending your time doing. The big thing Steve Jobs learned at Pixar was to have

everybody focused on just one thing – every dollar and every hour focused on one thing. When he returned to Apple, he did the same thing. He divided the company into four teams and told them, "we're just going to get one thing done."

People had this sense that Steve was a person who isolated himself from the market, struck a

"magical Zen pose," and was able to divine these brilliant ideas. In fact, it was quite the opposite. He had a very strict routine. Steve put his time where his focus was. He decided that if design was key, he was going to have lunch with the head of design every day. He would spend his afternoons interacting with customers. He would call customers that were having issues, and follow their problem through the company. Steve was intimately connected to the realities of the marketplace.

It's important to remember that you can be creative, but you cannot be disconnected to the realities of your markets. You need quick market intelligence; you need to know what is going on every day. Watch your watch instead of the calendar. To succeed, companies need to be willing to put that heavy dose of heavy discipline into whatever brilliant team they have.

Thank you Verne for your words of wisdom! Be sure to look out for Verne Harnish's next book being released in October 2013.



Verne Harnish



Strategic Planning

Are you "Reddy" for a Red Team?

by **Robyn Waters, President, RW Trend, LLC; and Prouty Partner**

Businesses large and small often pay lip service to innovation,

but a genuine commitment to creative problem solving is a big challenge in today's quarterly results-driven business environment. Too often innovation is pursued with either desperate, random acts, or dreaded, structured "brainstorm" sessions. What passes for a resulting new strategy is oftentimes so incremental or predictable that it isn't really innovative at all.

I admire leaders who understand the importance of planting new forests while tending their potted plants. They know that in order to solve the big hairy problems, or innovate unique "blue ocean" strategies, they need to S-T-R-E-T-C-H themselves to proactively engage in some Creative Think Tank time outside the normal business parameters.

I know the perfect way and place to do just that. The Prouty Project offers a unique Red Team process to clients of all types and sizes. I've had the pleasure of serving as a Red Shirt for many of the 23 Red Team events facilitated by the Prouty Project over the years.

For those not familiar with Red Teams, the concept is borrowed from the US Army. Red Teams are carefully curated, independent groups that seek to challenge an organization in order to improve its effectiveness. As a Red Shirt participant, I'm brought in as an outside expert—creative catalyst, thought leader, hired gun visionary—all creative handles to describe someone with a deep, rich business background, years of proven success, and a propensity for creative thinking. Red Shirts bring wisdom, insights, and a fresh perspective to the table.

Typically, a Red Team event lasts a half day. Some are planned for an entire day, and some big thinkers are currently contemplating a week of Red Team events for long-term strategy development. Red Teams are comprised of several leaders from the client side, 3 or 4 Red Shirts (like me) with various unique backgrounds, and

a couple of Prouty Project consultants, with one designated as a facilitator. Most events take place in the Creative Think Tank at Prouty headquarters, but some are taken off-site.

The process is quick, fun, and effective. Red Teams accelerate new thinking by gathering people from different perspectives together in a focused environment. As a Red Shirt, my job is to apply different filters based on my experience and creative intelligence to the identified company issues, in order to help the client to rethink just about everything.

This is especially critical today because we live in a world of Big Data.

Management has zillions of bytes of information at their fingertips; pretty soon there won't be anything they don't know about their business, their customers, and the marketplace. That's partly why many of today's business leaders often end up prioritizing knowing over thinking.

If you're looking for that spark to stimulate thinking beyond what you already know and do, consider a Red Team process for your business. Breakthroughs occur when ideas are allowed to serendipitously connect and recombine with other ideas. When you're ready to roll out the red carpet and take creativity as seriously as you treat capital, labor, Big Data, and IT, bring on the Red Shirts. We'll help you tackle the BHAGs and embrace red-hot new ideas.

Robyn Waters is an author, speaker, creative catalyst, and the Former VP of Trend, Design, and Product Development for Target. www.rwtrend.com

If you would like to create Red Team #24, please email jeff.prouty@proutyproject.com.