

'It is all about the mindset'

'The Visionary Leader' by Susan Bagyura was launched at the Turtle's Oman bookshop, Jawaharat Al Shatti, recently. AFTAB H. KOLA chats with the enterprising author

IN an era where we are witnessing crashing of businesses, the new book *The Visionary Leader: How to inspire success from top down* by Susan Bagyura offers some solace to the wearied entrepreneurs.

Susan has weaved a practical compendium directing business managers how to lead from the front in this era where business has become very competitive. With over 25 years of sales, marketing and entrepreneurial experience, Susan represents a viewpoint that encompasses several dimensions. She experienced corporate America, and has also lived and worked in Zimbabwe, Ireland, England and Austria.

Excerpts from the interview:

Are books the perfect medium for sending out messages?

I absolutely think so and for several reasons. First of all, the first rule of learning is constant, spaced repetition. We don't learn just reading or hearing something once. We need to hear it over and over again and many times in different ways. So with a book that is a learning tool, and I like to think that *The Visionary Leader* falls into this category, it should be studied, analyzed, and tested. A person will not get much value if they only read a book like this without a goal or a plan. At the end of each chapter, I included questions to get the reader involved and to help them take the information and apply it. I am a firm believer that writing causes thinking.

Has the book reading population diminished?

Excellent question! Yes, it has. More books are being written and sold everyday; but it is generally the same people buying the books. This is one of the main reasons why the gap is widening between the people that are achieving their greatness and the ones that aren't. We have all been blessed with



talents and gifts, but it is up to each one of us to discover and develop those gifts and talents. No one can do it for us; we must do it ourselves and books are a wonderful way to learn from others and to try things that others have successfully done. By imitating what other successful people have done, we can get to a higher level more quickly. The opposite is also true – if we follow people

that are losing, we will get those results too. If someone is going to follow another, make certain that they are getting the type of results that you want.

Has T.V. made inroads into book reading habits?

There are so many things that can capture our attention today – TV, movies, video games, etc. This can all be fun and entertaining but I think it should be in measured doses and also that people should be cautious and careful about what they are giving their attention to because everything has an impact on us. In other words, will this enhance them as a person and will it improve their lives. One of the things that I love about books is when I am reading, I am using my imagination which is my creative mental muscle. I am building pictures in my mind. I like to read things which are empowering.

You write, "Success in every area of business and personal life is all about the mindset". Could you elaborate on this?

We share the 5 senses with animals: see, hear, smell, taste and touch. Every person has been gifted with an intellect. We have 6 mental muscles: perception,



imagination, will, memory, reason and intuition. It is actually these faculties that separate us from the animal world. This is where our power is. The more we develop these faculties, the better our lives are. So going back to your question, you are actually referring to perception. Everything in life – what we call our reality – is all based on our perception of life.

There are the polar opposites to everything. So for example, you cannot have an 'in' without an 'out'. An 'up' without a 'down'. A 'left' without a 'right'. A 'good' without a 'bad'. We do have a choice. We can decide what we want to see or focus on. That decision alone will determine what we see in our lives. Try this, make a decision that you only want to see things that are red. Immediately everything that is red in colour will pop into your focus. It doesn't matter how big or small it is, it will capture your attention. What we are looking at, focusing on and speaking about; we will automatically bring things that match into our experience.

Right now around the world people are focusing on the economy in a certain way and they are creating more of what they are complaining about. At the very same time, there are now millionaires and billionaires being created. What is the difference? One group is seeing and focusing on opportunities; and the other is seeing and focusing on lack and limitation. These are mindsets.

How can one tap into one's creativity in business?

The very first thing to do is to make the decision; decide to tap into your creativity. Here's one of my favorite exercises: Find a quiet place, preferably in the morning, getting up early if possible, then take pen and paper and challenge yourself to write down 10 things that you could do today that would improve your service. Now we are all in the service industry whether people realise that or not. You can decide who your 'customer' is. Is it your boss? Is it your employees? Is it the customers of the company? Is it your readers?

The first couple of days, this will be relatively easy. But as you go along, it will



become more of a challenge and that's perfect. The pearls are down there. Keep exploring. You may not implement all of these, but if over the course of the week, you found 4 or 5 things that you could immediately do that are different and better, you are becoming more valuable. You are creating. You are greater than you were the week before.

I think every business can be doing better than they are. We haven't discovered the best way of doing anything yet. There is so much more that we can be doing. Let's look for it.

What has been the inspiration behind writing this book?

I have been coaching and consulting with businesses in Europe and the States over the past 8 years and I found that many of the problems that they were experiencing in their businesses were because of a lack of understanding some key concepts and their lack of leadership skills.

I decided that I wanted to write a how-to guide for leadership in today's economy. The rules for leadership have really changed. It used to be that everything was about the

leader and serving the leader. Today leadership is about serving the employees and the customers. The best question a leader can ask each day is "how can I serve my organisation, my employees and my customers today?" The focus shouldn't be on profits. If the focus is on service, the profits will follow.

Imagine this: a leader that knows and understands their customers' wants and goals; and then develops products and services to meet those needs. Now you may say "that's what happens". But I can tell you that there are many companies in trouble today because they don't know what their customers want and they are trying to sell and make profits from products and services that the market doesn't want.

I believe that any organisation is a reflection of the leader. If a leader wants to see something happening differently in the organisation, then the leader must be that first. The book shows the leader how to do that.

What do you want to convey through this book?

Hope because anyone can learn this as long as they have the desire. Understanding because there are some concepts in the book that may be new to people. And most importantly, a belief in oneself. As someone implements what they learn and sees successes, their belief in themselves will grow and then they will look for more ways to improve. The basic law of life is that we are either growing or disintegrating. I like to focus on growth.

What's your take on women entrepreneurship in Oman?

I have only been in this marvellous country for 6 months and am still learning. I have met some wonderful women here and have admiration for their spirit, their creativity and their willingness to learn.

I am just now joining the Ormani Women's Association and I look forward to collaborating with women here. I think there will be an excellent exchange from both sides.