

Anne Pratt:

## “Entrepreneurs challenge the status quo”

**“E**ntrepreneurs are successful because they love challenges. They don’t like to follow a book of rules made up by someone else. They want to be guided by the market, not by another person’s rules.

“Real entrepreneurs are always looking for new ways to do things. They generally do not like titles and they do not like being bound by parameters. They do not want to be limited in any way. The successful entrepreneur – and the successful executive – needs determination, drive, high levels of energy and a strong ‘can-do’ attitude.

“A core belief in yourself and in the business you work in is vital. When you love something, are really devoted to it, it no longer feels like hard work. In my own business I don’t feel that I am making any sacrifices.

“Accountability is always a key factor. To be really successful in business you have to be accountable to all stakeholders. In our case, we hold ourselves accountable both to the client companies and to the individuals we seek to place. Both are important and our service has to satisfy both. We serve them with the same commitment.

“I believe in the Jack Welsh list of business priorities. First is customer satisfaction, then employee satisfaction and, finally, cash flow.

“There are personal issues too. To be successful in business you cannot allow yourself to stagnate. Personal renewal is vital. We have to be teachable, ready to reinvent ourselves. And this is not only a competency matter. We have to renew ourselves



emotionally, mentally, physically, even spiritually. Without continuous renewal we become stale. Our imaginations become blunted and we become arrogant, allowing ourselves to believe that we know it all.

“You dare not fall into that trap. You always have to be teachable. In our business we have an active process of continuous improvement. We know that we cannot afford to be complacent. We have to be continually looking for better ways

### The Anne Pratt approach to hiring key people

- 1) The company and the candidate must have a strong strategic understanding of the position.
- 2) The candidate must be competent for the post.
- 3) The candidate must offer references from the right people that check out every important measure.
- 4) There must be a comprehensive psychological fit for the job, including personality, personal value fit and outside interests.
- 5) The company must employ an attitude of cultural fairness in making the hiring decision and provide relevant executive support and development for high potential candidates
- 6) The company process should ensure they have a world class partner and candidates are treated in a world class manner by all parties, to compete for talent and attract the best.

of doing things. We look for honest, candid feedback from our corporate and candidate clients and act on it.

“The successful entrepreneur or executive needs supportive networks. You have to learn that you don’t have to have all the answers. It’s good to have others around you who know more about their sections of the business than you do. Any business that does not have people who are superior to the chief executive in their fields of expertise is not growing. The CEO is like the conductor of an orchestra, but he or she cannot play all the instruments. If you are the CEO you have to learn to let go in key areas. On the other hand, if you are a specialist manager you need to take responsibility for your section.

“And what applies in a business also applies in the sections within a business. The manager of a section needs specialists who offer support with their superior skills.

“But life is not all business and our personal lives affect our careers. We also need social support networks, people with whom we can share our hopes, goals and the issues in our lives. For entrepreneurs and senior executives who are always under stress this is especially important.

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“Today the business leader needs to think globally and align the business accordingly. He or she has to always be asking what impact global events and global competition are having on the business and where we can compete.

“Whatever your skills and the skills of the team around you, you cannot succeed in business unless you are emotionally robust. You have to be resilient. You must have the state of mind that when markets fall you see it as an opportunity. When catastrophe strikes you have to be looking for the gap it creates. You have to be asking yourself how you can use the new situation.

“An important attribute is self-discipline. You have to be focused and purposeful. Passion is vital for success, but passion without direction is pointless. For the entrepreneur, the state of mind that rushes out and buys the new BMW after the first big deal has been signed gets you nowhere. Succeeding in business takes a strong sense of purpose that rests more on a sense of accomplishment than on making money.

“Do what you love, love what you do and consistently deliver more than you promise.”