Fierce Leadership

Brief Introduction of Fierce Leadership

Fierce Leadership, published in 2009, is Susan Scott's second book about management skills. In a humorous and imaginative writing style, this book introduces a new model of leadership -- fierce leadership. The goal of this book is to help leaders to find out practices that hold them back and encourage them to use "fierce strategy" to improve their performance.

This book is divided into six chapters. Every chapter talks about a different theme business strategy. In general, those chapters concern about how to deal with the relationship with customers, how to motivate employees and how to achieve fierce leaders' requirement.

Every chapter follows a fixed writing pattern. That is, state the problem, use "squid eye" to inspect the disadvantages of this problem finally give a step-by-step learning course to become a fierce leader.
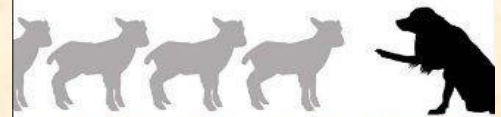
This poster will follow the writing pattern of every chapter, i.e. demonstrate the problem first then point out the mistakes finally set a step-by-step learning course.

Susan Scott (2009). *Fierce Leadership.* Broadway Business: New York

Student Name: Yifan Wang
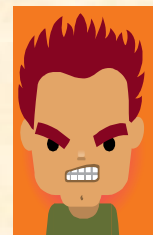
What is the Fierce Leadership

Do you have other ways to explain "Fierce Leadership"?

Basically, fierce leadership refers to a kind of leadership that is emotional capital. It requires that leaders should be highly connected with their customers and employees. In the relationship with customers and employees, leaders should show their deep respect, genuine affection, and the true desire to help to improve current performance. The key point to show leaders' concern is to tell the truth. Don't treat different people with different faces. Don't be afraid to become yourself even you words may embarrass others by pointing their mistakes. By using the fierce leadership strategy, the results of the company are meaningful, productive and authenticity. To some degree, fierce leadership is also a way of life. It instructs people how to treat people and carry on a relationship. The goal of fierce leadership is to increase the market share, enjoy work and develop a deeply, mutually connection with people.

Summary of the Fierce Leadership

The Author

Susan Scott an experienced consulter who offers advice to improve leaders' management skills.

Fierce Leadership is practical business skill book. It was recognized by *The Wall Street Journal* as *USA Today's Top 40 Business Book of 2002*". The book proposed a new business model --- fierce leadership. And in the six chapters of this book, Susan Scott, the author, described what is fierce leadership and how to become a fierce leader in details. Every chapter gives us tips to deal with different business problems, such as tips for searching for qualified future employees during interviews, tips for keeping good relationship with employees, tips for attracting more customers and so on. *Fierce Leadership* is a vital summary of Susan Scott's lifelong business training experience. She uses plenty of true stories to demonstrate vividly principles of fierce leadership. Besides, her senses of humor, imaginative writing skills make the book more worth reading.

The content of every chapter accords with logic. Every chapter starts with a story that the author had met to

Yahoo!, Starbucks, Cisco and other famous companies had been trained by her. She is the founder of Fierce, Inc. in 2002. During the past years, she was designing and delivering conversations with CEOs in 18 countries to instruct them how to manage their companies more effectively and efficiently. In 2002, her book *Fierce Conversations* was published. Soon the book become one of the bestsellers in the United States. In 2009, her second book about Fierce come out named *Fierce Leadership.* The book gives suggestion for the executives how to become a responsible, active and "fierce" leaders.

generalize a problem existing in business management. Then, the author pointed out the negative possibility if leaders act in a wrong way. After that, a comparative chart between normal leaders thinking and fierce thinking was presented, which can make the defects of normal leaders' action more visible and obvious. Finally, the author will tell the readers how to overcome those defects and become a real fierce leaders.

In my opinion, although the author quoted many examples about the "misbehavior" of leaders', there were lack of actual evidence to prove this behavior was wrong. For example, if the author said those leaders who drift apart from their employees are wrong, she should list quotations of employees' opinions or feelings towards a drifted boss to make her judgment right.
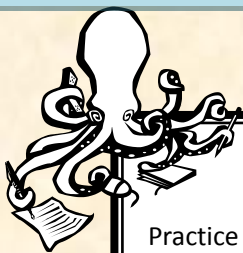
Practice Squid Eye

Practice Squid Eye means you can see the disadvantages that other people cannot see. It means you can find truth even in a blind spot. It means that you are good at collecting information.

What is more, I think leadership in business area should involve three kinds of people, the leaders, the customers and the employees. But *Fierce Leadership* concentrates too much on the leaders so it ignores the two other aspects. The author should add the feelings of customers and employees when the fierce strategies are conducted. It will make the fierce leadership more practical and real not just look like theoretical strategies in the author's mind. Another disadvantage I have to mention is

the content of some chapters, I think, are overlapped. For example, Chapter 1 is a part of Chapter 3 because they are talking about the same issue, that is, activating employees is important. Chapter 1 exemplify employees' feedback is vital for the development of companies. Chapter 3 is talking about leaders should listen advice from their employees. Obviously, those chapters are exactly the same. So why don't the author make Chapter 1 become a part of Chapter 3, which I think is better for the arrangement of the book.

Fierce leadership #1 :

From 360-Degree Anonymous Feedback to "365" Face-to-Face

Susan pointed out that the 360-Degree anonymous feedback, a popular way to gather employees' opinions in plenty of companies, always leads astray the leaders who try to fix defects of the companies. BECAUSE:

1. Most employees provide general evaluation instead of details or examples in case someone can identify them.

2. When the anonymous feedback comes at regular intervals(once or twice a year), it is hard for employers to catch up "what is going on **right now** in my company".

3. The anonymous feedback only states the drawbacks of employees. But they know more about their disadvantages than anyone does. What they really need is suggestion to improve and someone pushes them to correct themselves.

4. Anonymity is addictive and contagious. When employees get used to hiding our true feelings, they can hardly get rid of the bad habit. What is more, they can infect others.

> "Tell me tell me tell me tell me TELL ME"
> ---- The movie *Always*

> "Like all toxins, anonymity should be kept as close to zero as possible"
> ---- Kevin Kelly

> "Anonymous feedback rarely creates real or lasting impetus for change"
> ---- Susan Scott

> In what universe would anonymous feedback, anonymous anything, be considered a best practice?
> ----Susan Scott

TRY" 365 Face-to-Face"

Practice Squid Eye

Anonymous feedback isn't honest

You and Employees are not encouraged to do their best work

Relationships flatline and fails

The culture suffers side effects

Your company's long-term survival is at risk

You become invisible

Employees are failing to grow professionally and personally

Step 1 Prepare to have the conversation in person

Know the process of the whole conversation. In the beginning of the "365 Face-to-Face" feedback conversation, Susan suggests that you should clarify the intention of this conversation by clearly naming the issue you are going to talk about. Then you need to exemplify details that you want to change. Before moving to the next stage, you should express your true feelings about this issue and tell your employees what you did or are going to do to change this issue. Finally, invite your employees to respond to this issue. NO negative judgments to the respond of your employees.

Step 2 Prepare others

Ask your employees when he has time politely then choose time to meet him in person. If your employee asks about what you are going to talk about, don't tell him anything. Keep your topic as a secrete.

Step 3 Do it. Have the conversation

During your conversation, even your employee is uncomfortable with your issue, you have to keep the conversation focusing on the specific issue. Try to tell your employee you just want to fix the problem rather than prove you are right on this issue.

Step 4 Debrief

Say " Thank You For Your Time" to your employee.

Step 5 Do it again, only better

Fierce Leadership #2:

From Hiring for Smarts to Hiring for Smart + Heart

1. Provide products and services people want.
2. Continually win new customers and keep them.
3. Recruit and retain top talent.
4. Create a work environment in which all employees can thrive.
5. Innovate to stay ahead of the completion.
6. Good leaders.
7. Behave ethically.

Practice Squid eye

- Leaders suffer from excessive certitude
- Excessive use of jargon is a badge of honor
- The competition is surpassing you
- "Loyal" customers are leaving
- Your margins are shirking
- Implementation -- of almost anything -- is agonizingly slow, fraught with delays
- Competitors can poach your talent

WHAT ELSE

Hi, I am Dr. Smart Iceberg. Do you want to hire me?

You are looking for

Collaborative; Passionate; Solution oriented; Courageous; Professional; Authentic

Step 1 Prepare yourself

As a leader, when you are going to hire new employees for your company, you should design questions that will reveal whether a candidate possesses the attributes you are looking for. We believe past experience can predict the candidate's future behavior. So prepare yourself with "Tell me a time when your colleague gave you advice? " and the like.

Step 2 Do it. Interview candidates

It is correct to start with a phone screening interview. The first thing you should keep in mind during the interview is giving yourself enough time to know this candidate unless you can tell the candidate is definitely not your guy in ten minutes. Secondly, in order to gather more information about the candidate, you should share your experience with the candidate first and encourage him to do the same.

If the candidate passes the first-round interview, then you should conduct a team interview. During the group interview, you should begin with a general question, like "tell us more about yourself". Then ask the "past experience" questions, during which you should be sensitive to signs that show the candidate's personality. Thirdly, ask unexpected questions. Like books they read, their opinions about an artist. Finally, spare time for the candidate to rise up the questions for you.
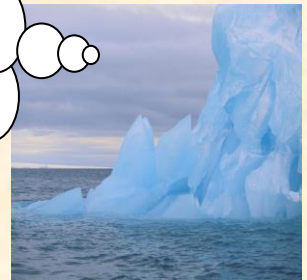
Step 3 Debrief

Gather all your groups members to talk about everyone's impression about the candidate and your future plan.

Step 4 Do it again. Only better

Attention!!

Don't hire someone because of your personal biases.

Don't say NO to candidates who are better than you.

Don't hire candidates because they only have outstanding resume.

Don't broadcast what qualities your company is looking for.

Why a team interview??

It sends a powerful message about the importance of collaboration.

It reveals who can really connect in challenging situations.

It makes authenticity tougher to fake.

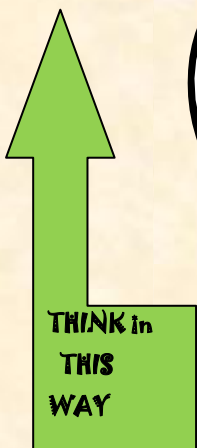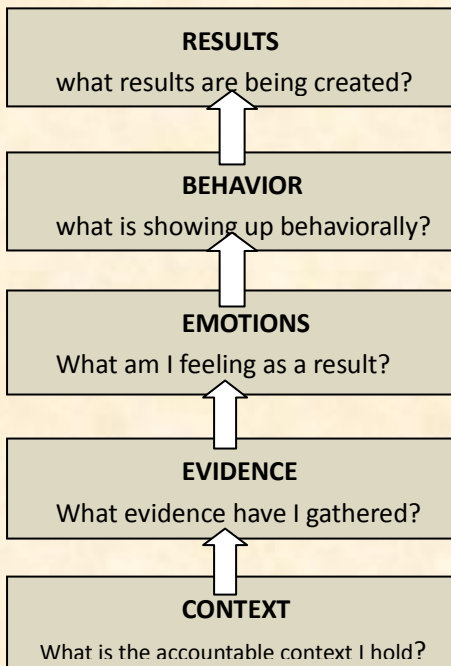Each of us picks up different things.

Fierce Practice #3

From Holding People Accountable to Modeling Accountability and Holding People able

The Sad Game
Blame
Keeps the sad game going,
It keeps stealing all your wealth,
Giving it to an imbecile with
No financial skills.
Dear one,
Wise
Up.

RESULTS
what results are being created?

↑

BEHAVIOR
what is showing up behaviorally?

↑

EMOTIONS
What am I feeling as a result?

↑

EVIDENCE
What evidence have I gathered?

↑

CONTEXT
What is the accountable context I hold?

THINK in THIS WAY

Blame Me!!

Recall the memory: when you, a leader, asked your employees: "I want to know who is accountable for this mistake", did anyone raise his hand instantly and say: "It is my fault! Blame me!". Or it is more likely that they pointed to others and said:"He or She is the one to blame". The latter option happened a lot. Because people associate accountability with blame, being wrong, salary reduction, even being fired. In fact, shirking responsibilities is natural reaction controlled by "human instinct" which people inherit from their ancestors. Our brain is controlled by two systems. One of them is called "System 1"(Daniel Kahneman, 2011) or "automatic system", which successfully helps anthropoids make quick right decisions to survive when the danger is around the corner. Thus, why your employees pointed to others is they want to avoid the punishment from the executives and stay their comfort zones.

But this behavior will do harm to your companies:

People playing not to lose instead of playing to win.
Lack of productivity.
Lack of clarity, lots of confusion.
Lack of enthusiasm.
Bitterness toward coworkers.
Unsustainability.

METHOD

WHO CAN FIX THE PROBLEMS
(in the world, in a company, in a family)

X

ATTACH SMALL MIRROR HERE

Fierce Practice #4

From Employees Engagement Program to Actually Engaging

Involvement and engagement are important for your company. If you draw a relationship map of your organization, you will surprisingly find that everyone is connected with everyone. So once one of your employees is isolated, the whole chain will break down. That is to say, you need to spare no effort to engage everyone in your company regardless of their gender, generation, nationalities and the like.

What should you do? Firstly, you should look your relationship map again, try to find out which chain you need to strengthen, who you need to contact with. The author thinks the more people know about others' personal life, the stronger engagement they will have. Thus, gather those people you need to involve with or your whole team members. Then, give every person a sheet of flip chart paper and a marker. Tell them to use the tools to draw their lifeline, marking their major highs and lows in their lives and labeling them on the chart. Ask a volunteer to present his lifeline after they finish. During the person's speech, encourage other people to ask questions and share their similar experience. When this activity is over, people in this room are far more emotion closer than they used to be. Another way to show your warmth welcome to employees from different culture background is to learn different languages. Greeting to your exotic employees in their own languages can show your respect to their culture and make you become a leader who focuses on diversity culture in your company.
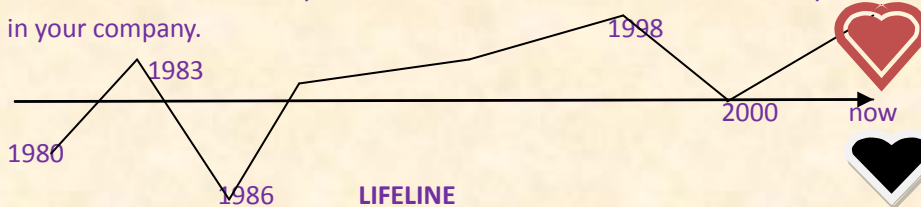
Practice Squid Eye

• You are a global company behaving like a local one.

• Leaders attempt to "engage" everyone in the same way.

• Employees-satisfaction surveys are anonymous.

• Employee feedback hasn't been translated into meaningful action.

Have you considered that making a Lifeline is forced by leaders and is a way to interfere with others' privarcy?

1980 1983 1986 1998 2000 now

LIFELINE

Fierce Practice #5

From Customer Centricity to customer Connectivity

"Customer Centricity" is usually connected with the thought that you persuade your customers to buy your products so your company can make money, grow profits, support your employees' salary and pay your own family's bills. But your customers are smart, too. They can sense how much you want to close the deal. They can use your eagerness to ask for the best

"It was because you were attempting to push a particular product that we didn't need or want. "

---- Customer

products with the lowest prices. And if you don't satisfy them, there are thousands of companies they can make choose from, which sell the exactly same products as you do. How can you keep your customers loyal to your company under such competitive environment? Susan in her book considered that you need more time to listen to your customers, follow their lead, sometimes give your sincere and suggestion to your customers' within your capacity. This is called "Customer Connectivity" If you **cannot** do this, you will:

· You will be providing poor customer service, a really lousy strategy.

• You will be underfunded. You are forced to shrink your company.

• Customers will leave, are leaving.

• Your former customers will spread the words which will ruin your company's reputation.

• You won't enjoy your work.

Credibility + Reliability + Intimacy
—————————————————
Self-orientation

Thus, your responsibility is not only increase your products' quality or your company's ability but also increase your closeness with your customers and think less about what you want to sell to your customers.

You also can do:

• Start your conversation by connection. Show your genuinely care about them.

• Talk about yourself, your family, vacations et cetera. Or you can send pictures about your family to your customers so that attach more connection with your customers.

• Slow the conversation down, way down. When you are in a rush to close the deal, accordingly your customers' trust to you is going down.

• Ditch the buzzwords, the jargon.

• Invite your customers to plan your conversation sessions. Focus on what your customers want to talk about.

• Acknowledge mistakes. When you are way from your customers' goals, admit it is your fault and show your care to fix it.

• Meet with customers in person.

"If the company had taken more up-front time to talk with us, to listen to us you would have discovered what we were actually looking for"
----- Customer

When I read the equation, I thought why companies need to decrease their self-orientation. Self-orientation is like human's personality. It should be various. The reason is that the aim of companies and human is different. Human's various personality is for pursing self-lifestyles. The companies' aim is to sell their products based on others' request.

Do you think that connecting with your customers by using your family on purpose implies that you are selling your family to your customers because of your career needs?

Credibility (20)+Reliability(20) +Intimacy(60)=100

—————————————————

Self-orientation(0)

Success

Fierce Leadership #6

From Legislated Optimism to Radical Transparency

Sometimes, I feel "absolute power" is more effective in carrying out an order than "group discussion". But to make sure the decision is right under "absolute power", the leader should take more responsiblities.

What is "Legislated Optimism "?

In Susan's book, she thinks optimism is not a problem. On the contrary, optimism is one of American's valuable contributions to the world. But "legislated" that we should worry about. Because when optimism is legislated, no one wants to tell you, the leader, about where are the problems in your company. Everyone is trying to paint lies to complement your organization or you. Or you, the leader, doesn't welcome reverse opinions because you think you are too knowledgeable to be wrong. In that situation, what you hear is applaud. Your employees stop thinking as they think their bosses are the best and will make decisions for them, which action will hinder companies' future welfare.

What is "Radical Transparency"

Wikipedia describes "Radical Transparency" as an management strategy that all decisions should be made publicly. But Susan considered "Radical Transparency" is more than an organization scheme. It is also an attitude towards life because its essence is human connectivity. In your company, only make the information "transparency" to everyone, you can possibly receive truth or sincere suggestion from your employees. Keeping disclosure open can make harmony exist in your family.
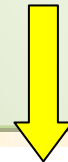
Practice Squid Eye

· The "corporate nod" is prevalent.

• There is a gap between "official truths" and "grounds truth".

• Everyone knows the problems but no one speaks out.

• There is a dearth of innovation.

• There is absence of accountability.

• Your are heading to the wrong direction.

• If your organization were a car, many of the warning lights would be flashing red.

How to Do It

Step 1 Prepare yourself

As a leader, you want to hear the truth. But truths may arrive unexpectedly from acquaintances in a rude way. So you need to prepare yourself all the time to accept unexpected advice.

Step 2 Prepare Others

You should explain the aftermath of your company when you cannot hear the truth. Also you need to acknowledge that you don't have all the answers and are willing to be corrected. In your meeting, don't act as the only one presenter but put your concerns on the table then ask others' ideas.

Step 3 Do It

In a meeting, you need to encourage your employees to ask questions, to think further and trust them as they know all the answers to your concerns.

Step 4 Debrief

At the end of the meeting, ask everyone to briefly comment on " How can we do better in the next meeting".

Step 5 Do It Again.