



Doing What Matters

How Leaders Help Individuals and Organizations Thrive!

AUTHOR Q&A WITH JOHN JANCLAES



“Consistent success in business and personal pursuits flows from a systematic approach to Doing What Matters.”

John Janclaes

Why did you write this book?

In my tenth anniversary year leading Partners Federal Credit Union, which serves employees of The Walt Disney Company, as its President/CEO, a trade journal editor asked me, “Which accomplishment are you most proud of during your tenure?” Looking back over that decade, I realized that our credit union had transformed itself from a good organization into a thriving enterprise by *Doing What Matters*.

Putting that realization into words motivated me to harvest some of the lessons learned during my nearly 25 years of professional work experience. I had learned and accomplished a great deal over those years, all with the support of family, friends, and business colleagues. My aim has been to understand what enduring principles I might share with current and future business leaders, specifically regarding the responsibility of leaders to champion the personal and professional development of the people in their organizations. Toward that end, I’m donating proceeds from sales of the book toward scholarships for leadership development for up-and-coming executives.

Who is *Doing What Matters* for?

Leaders of businesses and organizations of all sizes. This book is written as a business fable set in a regional insurance agency, but the principles illustrated as the story unfolds could be applied in major corporations and small businesses alike.

What is the central message?

An organization that learns together grows together. When business leaders foster the development of their managers and staff by providing the resources and environment in which people are encouraged to learn, grow, and realize their full capacity for achievement, everyone benefits. Side by side with this emphasis on learning and progressing is a focus on what the organization can do to serve its customers better and grow its business. By maintaining this dual focus, employees are rewarded with opportunities for advancement, monetary gains, and recognition for their contributions, and the enterprise and its customers benefit from their combined, continuing advances. Sustaining this dynamic requires that executives, who are the stewards of capital, including human capital, embrace their responsibility for building communities in which personal development is an expectation that is fostered and rewarded.

LEARNING LOOP



What is the Learning Loop?

The Learning Loop is a practical framework to guide organizations through a recursive, continual process of monitoring what is going on in the business, staying grounded in what really matters, considering all options for growing the business, carefully planning and implementing the best course, and learning from those experiences to continue to pick up speed. Calling this framework a *loop* underscores the iterative nature of the process of planning, doing, and then reviewing the planning and implementation for possible improvements before the next round begins. It's also structured like a flywheel to convey that the more people work together to move the organization forward in the same direction, the more power they can generate.

How can business leaders best apply the Learning Loop?

I look on this model as a kind of touchstone to help leaders and their organizations stay grounded in what matters most to customers, employees, and other stakeholders. That's why the organization's vision, mission, and core values are in the center of the loop—not hanging on the wall in the lobby, but leading efforts to continually monitor and improve performance in the context of the current business environment. By sharing this approach with managers and modeling its use, business leaders keep the focus on what matters most. And if the organization begins to lose speed, this model can function as a guide to help people get back on track and moving in the same direction. As one of the characters in the book says, “When everyone believes—and acts on their belief—that everyone contributes, then everyone wins. We know this in our heads, in our hearts, and in our guts. This is the highest expression of Doing What Matters.”

What are some first steps readers can take to apply the concepts you've laid out?

Doing What Matters is designed to be practical and accessible. Near the end of the book, readers will find an organizational assessment, a worksheet they can use to guide how well their organization is currently performing some of the key aspects of the Learning Loop model. Charting their responses on the worksheet can help business executives identify possible starting points, areas where their organizations might see the biggest impact from focusing efforts for improvement.

I also invite readers to join us at The CEO Corner (www.theceocorner.com), an online forum that offers insights on successful leadership through C-Suite interviews, featuring podcasts, blogs, and other content from executives across the business spectrum. *Doing What Matters* illustrates the gains that are possible when business leaders champion the development of their people. Well, leaders need champions, too—and The CEO Corner is one place where they can go to find that kind of support and camaraderie.



About the Author

John Janclaes is President/CEO of Partners Federal Credit Union and founder of The CEO Corner, an online forum to help business leaders and their organizations thrive.

He has more than 30 years of experience in the financial services industry, spanning retail banking, brokerage, and insurance.

www.theceocorner.com