

Are you listening to truth?

We want to find truth – especially truth about the future. Yet, very few people want to speak truth to power. People have trouble telling the truth because we filter events through our beliefs and often will believe lies. We need to listen to truth to be on the right side of events. Leaders who listen to lies take the organization down the wrong path.

If you have money or power, you can always find someone who will tell you the lie you want to believe. From Andrew Fastow at Enron to Bernie Madoff, people will gladly tell you lies in exchange for some of your money or power. Only to leave you holding the empty bag.

Many people claim they are speaking the truth when they are only giving their opinions. After the fact, it is easy to see which people got it right and who didn't. The trouble with most opinions is that our preconceived ideas and beliefs color what we want to accept as fact. We can't tell the truth when we filter the facts through those beliefs.

Because so many people only speak their opinions, it is extremely difficult to have a successive set of accurate predictions. Most people who have tried to be predictors of the future have very few real predictions. We tend to remember and brag about only the predictions we got right.

Over the centuries, competing beliefs have fought wars over what was truth. Human beings are great at coming to believe different things. Often it takes a large "outside" event (like a drought or

pandemic) to change people's beliefs.

But a business leader who listens to lies will take the company down the wrong path. The market might support that path for a while and then suddenly turn. In the meantime, an organization built on lies often causes a lot of harm – to those who work there and to the general public.

In many companies because of how much money and status is at stake, sales forecast meetings, development meetings, and other status meetings are often full of lies. At these companies, a culture of deception has taken root. Unfortunately, such deception works for a while, but it will always fail at some point.

Lies Will Destroy The Organization

It takes several people to perpetuate a culture of lying. It takes not just the ones doing the lying, but also those who accept the lying as truth and those who know that it is a lie but say nothing. Unless there are rewards for exposing lies and consequences for lying, a culture of lying will slowly take over. (This is a form of Gresham's Law where the currency is truth.)

One of the ways to prevent a culture of lying is having a consistent strategy and clarity in communicating that strategy. When everybody knows what the company stands for and what its purpose is, people are more likely to speak truthfully to that purpose and speak up when others are violating that purpose.

Often, a leader has to go outside the organizational structure to find people who will speak the truth. It takes work to find them.

Are you listening to truth?

Never Stop Learning

This year made it clear that our markets are constantly changing. What our customers need changes every year, but this year has been more dramatic. While many have called for a return to yesterday, we can't go back. Companies that have tried to hold on to the old ways are going under.

One positive change this year is that a number of businesses are reporting that it is a lot easier to get clients on a video call to talk over their concerns and needs. In the past, we often had to travel to their location and hope that no sudden emergency had pulled away the people we needed to talk to. For some, it is easier to find out what the customers are thinking.

But the hard part is connecting with new customers. This is where a commitment to learning comes in. It is so easy to assume that new customers will have the same needs and reactions as existing customers. This year, we have to do an extra effort to connect with prospects and new customers.

To be able to pivot to a new market, we have to take risks on a lot less information than we might have been able to get in the past. We have to get something out there fast and find out prospect's reactions to this new offering. Then, we get to change it.

We always need to ask deeper questions of our customers. Many times, they will ask for something when they need something slightly different. Even in computers, people ask for data when they really need information – the right data at the right time in the right format. Giving people just what they ask for often means that we don't really satisfy their need.

Never stop listening to the client's real need.

A View from the Prairie is published by
Prairie Trail Software, Inc.,

**Making Information
from Streams of Data**

1-972-618-4199

www.prairietrail.com
copyright© Prairie Trail Software, Inc.
All rights reserved

Risky World

The play, Lieutenant Kije, is a fictional story where a Russian Army officer is created out of a bureaucracy error that gets up to the Emperor. Since nobody is willing to speak the truth to the Emperor, the fictional officer gets promoted, gets married, and finally pronounced dead (so that he doesn't have to show up for a state occasion).

Prairie Trail Software, Inc



3821 Beaumont Lane
Plano, TX 75023

Address Service Requested

Prairie Trail Software, Inc.

Making *Information* from Streams of Data

We Solve Business Problems

Fractional Time CIO

Custom Software Solutions

To Business Problems

Generating More Profit

By Automating Processes,

Simplifying Communications,

And Reducing Errors

**We pull the whole system together
- or just the parts you need**

Business Intelligence Dashboards

Database Design and Management

Cloud Services and Applications

Web Services and Servers

Custom solutions to meet your needs

**Call 972-618-4199
www.prairietrail.com**