

Session: “Fuel the Recovery, Fuel the Change: Effective Leadership Makes It Happen”

This lively lunchtime session showed attendees how to discover their talent for leadership and how to help their team power through the recovery. They also learned how to leverage their strengths as they become effective leaders and gained valuable insights to help their team achieve — and exceed — organizational objectives.

Presenter:

- *Jeffrey Hatchell, MBA, president and founder, J.D. Hatchell Enterprises, Inc. (dba Over the Top Coaching and Empower Management Solutions)*

Vision, Failure and Everything In Between

During his uplifting lunchtime keynote session, Jeffrey Hatchell spoke to attendees about the importance of having a “big vision” — of thinking beyond where they are, to where they want to be.

As an example, he cited President Barack Obama, who actually believed in presidential hope, even though Hatchell suspects his friends probably laughed. “It’s often like that,” he admitted. “But, once we have the audacity to hope and believe, they do, too.”

Next, Hatchell — who has lost his job before — addressed overcoming failure. At the beginning of his career, he worked for a major financial institution. Hatchell moved up the ladder quickly, fueled by leadership development books and a thirst for knowledge. Still, his goal was to be a corporate trainer, so he left his employer to work for a very small consultancy. Not long after, a new C-suite took over, and he was let go due to economic cutbacks. “In my mind, I thought, *How dare you! Don’t you know who I am?*” he laughed.

After that, Hatchell went to work for another major financial institution and pursued certification as an executive coach — “on the side this time,” he emphasized. Eventually, his passion for corporate coaching turned into a full-time position.

“You’ve got to perceive the best in every situation,” he told attendees, citing Muhammed Ali as an example. “He was a *talker*, but not the best boxer. Still, he made you believe he was. Optimism fuels opportunity.”

Hatchell also encouraged attendees to expect to receive. “See yourself in your ultimate, realized goal,” he urged. At this point in the session, a student attendee wanted to know how Hatchell differentiated between a mentality of entitlement (for which Generation Y is often criticized) and “expecting to receive.” Impressed by the question, Hatchell warned the student to expect to earn his advancement when his career began versus simply showing up. “It takes competence and confidence. You need both,” he advised. “Perform where you are first, and then *expect* to move up.”

Next, Hatchell addressed the concept of authentic leadership. To this end, he promoted the use of 360-degree assessments. “Devote equal attention to the positive and negative perceptions you uncover,” he said. “You’ve got to work on both.” In particular, he likes the DISC assessment because it recognizes what a person brings to the table, as well as how he or she is perceived. “People ‘buy’ based on perception,” he explained. “In other words, the smartest person doesn’t always get the job.”

Hatchell also believes that emulating leaders won’t necessarily guarantee growth. “The key is to capitalize on what differentiates you from the crowd,” he says. “Leaders do common things uncommonly well.”

Adaption versus adoption is another tenet by which Hatchell lives. “Adapt your style after a promotion or appointment into another group; don’t just blindly accept their culture,” he cautioned. “Add your own bits.” He painted a picture with line-dancing: “Everyone is doing the same thing, but certain people do it with flair.”

Status-quo performance is an approach Hatchell warned against. “It won’t get you to the next level,” he cautioned. “You’ve got to proactively take steps versus just feeling like you deserve to move up in the organization.”

On a proactive note, Hatchell encouraged self-advocacy. “Your career is *your* responsibility,” he urged. “Tell people what you want next. Let them know what you’re excited about. Really observe where you’d like to be.”

And, although brown-nosing rubs most people the wrong way, Hatchell is against rejecting it on principle. “Realize and remember that, yes, it is a game,” he explained. “We’ve got to put on our game faces if we want to win.”

Finally, he addressed why — although most people resist it — change is positive. “For one thing, it will set the foundation for rebuilding the economy,” he began. “Also, it happens, whether we like it or not.”

Specifically, Hatchell boils down the value of embracing change to a progression: Changed thinking leads to changed beliefs, which beget changed expectations, which lead to changed attitudes, habits, character and, finally, a changed destiny.

A big part of embracing change is to take an eagle’s-eye view of the situation, Hatchell concluded. “The eagle flies high, and it flies solo — but it also gives its young a push,” he explained. “Adopting its vantage point really puts setbacks into perspective.”

— Reporting by RaeAnn Slaybaugh