## **Knowledge Share**

# RECOMMENDED BY WARREN BUFFETT INVESTING BETWEEN THE LINES HOW TO MAKE SMARTER DECISIONS BY DECODING CEO COMMUNICATIONS L.J. RITTENHOUSE Author of BUFFEII'S BITES and IRUST

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## How to predict next







### **Washington Mutual** (Savings Bank)

#### 2004

"High performing that is driving superior returns..." Website

" depending on quarter results, mgmt guided analysts on future earnings..." Jason Zweig

**2008** Declared Bankruptcy

# **Expeditors International** (Global Logistics)

#### 2004

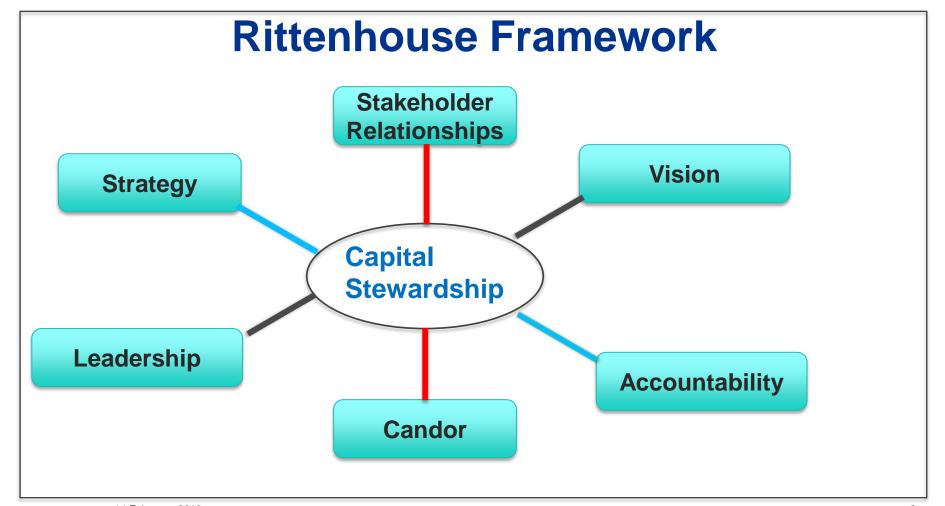
"We have our hands full with earning the profits..." Website

"The most frank share holder communication..." Jason Zweig

2008 Stock Appreciated 100% +

http://jasonzweig.com/a-tale-of-two-washingtons/

Analyzing words is as important as analysing numbers



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## Leadership

- Educate Readers
- Worlds View
- Dualistic Thinking

BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY INC.

Great, Good, Gruesome (2007, Warren Buffett)



"....Auto makers have to address the issue of co-existence with society particularly in relation to environmental Preservation and safety ..." (2005, Hiroshi Okuda)

Toyota launched Hybrid vehicle in 1997 (Japan), 2000 (USA). GM launched Hybrid in 2004

## Candor

### Being honest and straightforward

- Talented People
- Global Presence
- Financial Strength
- Leverage Competitive Advantage
- Significant value for our share holders



"....Significant progress in developing commercial fuel-cell vehicle that reduce carbon emission ..."
(2005, Wagoner)



Fact-deficient, obfuscating generalities (FOG)

## **Vision**

- Articulate purpose and mission
- Report innovative practices, ideas, results
- Write simple but not simplistic statements



(2003, Richard Kovacevich)

- "... Added spoken content to help visually impaired customers bank online ..."
- "... Traditionally asset size and return on assets are important. Today it is revenue growth and products per customer..."



(2000, Hank GreenBerg)

"... received a life insurance license from the government of Vietnam..."

"... Company is achieving faster growth than its original business plan..."

## **Strategy**

- Distill complex strategies
- Set Performance milestones
- Link Strategy and Capital discipline



(2006, Alan Mulally)

"...One Team, One Plan, One Goal ..."

- 1. Reduce Operating costs by \$5B in 2008
- 2. Shrink by 30 50%: time to get new products to market

" ... A company that is truly global .. In our mindset ..."

" ... Crisper product Execution, shorter life cycles, better quality ..."

2006, Wagoner



## **Accountability**

- Link goals with results
- Report consistent financial results
- Focus on bottom line





(2008 , Ken Powell)

- Meet High single digit growth (EPS grew 17%)
- Increase ROC by 50 basis points each year (We met our target)
- Return cash to share holders (Total Dividend \$1.57)

" ... New business will produce \$1b in net present value ..." 1996

"... Earnings growth from core business by 10%..." 1997

(Perishable goals)

(Ken Lay, Jeff skilling)

Stakeholder Relationships

- Build Ownership cultures
- Engage stakeholders
- Anticipate what customers want

(1996, Arthur Blank)

"...Customer service is the bottom line at The Home Depot ..."

"...Superior customer service builds the loyalty and trust ..."

"... I came to this company with respect for its past, a deep appreciation of its powerful culture..." 2000

(failed to look business from customers and employees perspective - Author)
(Fired on Jan 2007)

(2000, Robert Nardelli)

## **Capital Stewardship**

- Cash and Cash flow
- Operating and financial goals
- Capital discipline metrics

BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY INC.

#### (2010, Warren Buffett)

"...Leverage is addictive..."

"...We keep at least \$20B on hand so that we can both withstand unprecedented losses and quickly seize investment opportunities..."

"...That's what allowed us to invest \$15.6B in 25 days of panic (2008)..."

#### Goal Statements

### **Motherhood**

"... Most respected and most values company..."
AOL time warner, 2001

### **Serious**

"... our sixsigma goal of creating \$1.5B through waste reduction by 2003..."

Dow chemical, 2001

### **Superior**

Meaningful context around goal statements (FedEX)

