

GROWERTALKS

Growers Talk Production

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True Leaders Admit When They're Wrong

Brian Groves



BRYAN GROVES

Failure is a harsh word, especially when you were the key decision maker that got your team to this point. I think all of us have different emotional reactions when events play out differently than intended.

On one hand, it's easy to focus in hindsight on the mistakes in judgment, the missed opportunities to ask the right questions to the right people and the overbearance on trust. We can all look back on our professional careers and wish we'd made different choices at times. Some of these had relatively little impact on overall business success and relationships, and others have massive impact.

I think the harder path is one of empathy, though. It takes courage to say that you made the right decision with the information you had at the time without spiraling into self-deprecation. It also takes courage to look teammates in the eye and apologize for the pain they endured when the project didn't work out.

As business leaders, when we set a course of action, there's the usual excitement about the journey ahead and the hope of things being significantly improved. During the project when things get tough, we have the choice to continue to buy in, to pull the plug or—worst of all—to let no active decision be made. True leaders make active decisions, charting a course for the future despite limited information.

As the doomed project evolves, though, there comes a point when the leader must be sober enough about the facts to comprehend and accept that the trajectory of the path is deviating ever further from the original promised land. It's easy to hold out hope that things will turn a corner shortly—which can be true at times—but also a dangerous mirage in the desert at other times.

Our industry is used to taking bets; we gamble crop timing, sizes, varieties and many more variables. We're used to the fact that most of these gambles pay off, but some of them end in the dump pile. The best horticulture businesses are able to clearly and rationally define how they make determinations on production planning and execution. They let data do the talking instead of emotions.

If only we could do the same for the more intangible one-off projects we're faced with—the times when we hire for a new role unsure about the ROI, the gamble on switching software, the pricing strategies we adopt in uncertain economic times.

Leaders stand by the decisions they make and they rationally reassess that decision as more facts arrive. There's a

time to stand firm in the storm and there's also a time to run to safety and admit that the wrong decision was made originally. That in and of itself is making the right decision. **GT**

Brian Groves is the second generation at Panoramic Farm. His background in engineering has proved beneficial as Panoramic recently added a greenhouse division to the existing nursery operations. Brian's main responsibilities are designing and overseeing expansion projects, implementing new technologies and process/IT improvements.