

Notes on Keynote Talk by Bill Campbell of Intuit **By Robert Sher**

Imagine a Superbowl for CEOs and you're on the team, in the locker room, huddled around the coach for that pep talk and strategy discussion. That's what it was like on December 5th when Bill Campbell, Chairman of Intuit came out again to speak to Alliance members at the Santa Clara Tech Mart. In his usual no BS direct manner, he told us that it is wartime now, and we have to act like a wartime general does.

That means that we have to be decisive, still listening to our teams, but speeding up the process to make fast conclusions and decisions. We have to be willing to break the tie, or to not allow our teams to chicken out when faced with a tough decision. He also spent some time talking about the need for top teams to support the CEO's decision, and to dismiss anyone who defies your decisions.

Real leaders emerge when they combine strong and rigorous management practices with the art of leadership. Being a leader isn't enough in wartime—you have to run the business too. And that means tight planning, follow up and keeping everyone accountable. Credibility for a CEO and their team is earned when you make your numbers. Ideally the top and bottom line, but if you can't make the top line, then make the bottom line. Excuses don't count.

Four management practices to pay attention to:

1. Focus. "Put more wood behind fewer arrows." In wartime, you need to have a high hit rate. Choose your battles carefully and focus on winning them.
2. Product Manager. What really wins in the long term is a great product. Great products make great sales. So make sure you have an ace product manager and take great care of him or her.
3. Don't do across the board salary cuts. You'll lose your best people. Treat the top performers well, even continue to give them raises. Treat the poor performers poorly and tell them why. They'll either work harder or leave, both good outcomes.
4. Open communications. Let them all know—the entire company—what is going on. Have no secrets. They'll find it out anyway, and waste tons of time over the water cooler. Be clear to the whole team what the realities are and what needs to be accomplished to succeed.