

Good to Great

A book, an award and a winning philosophy

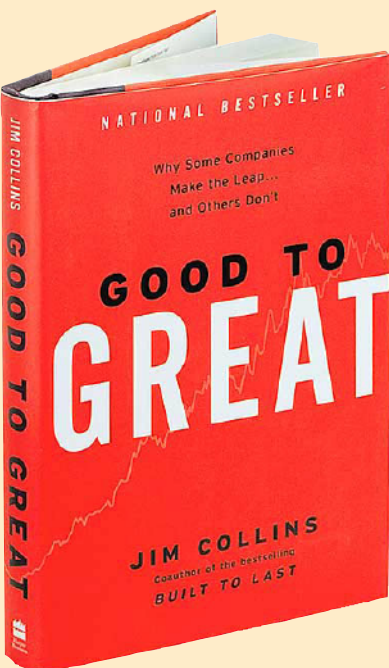
Good to Great is the famous book by Jim Collins that has had a long run on best seller lists. And, it is also the name of a new award given by the tri-county chambers of commerce of Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach. The award recognizes those businesses that are committed to the excellence that Collins writes about. The inaugural winner in the medium size business category (firms with 100-500 employees) was Berger Singerman, the Florida business law firm.

Here, co-CEO Paul S. Singerman talks about the award and what it means for his firm and the firm's clients.

What did being selected as the inaugural winner of this award mean to your firm?

Obviously, it was quite an honor in view of the number of businesses in the tri-county area and the fact it was the first year of the award. Coming on top of our selection as co-winner of Law Firm of the Year last year by the South Florida Business Journal, it is a sign that the diligent efforts by all of our team members to create a very special law firm is getting noticed by the business community.

To what do you attribute these awards?



Paul Steven Singerman
Co-CEO
Berger Singerman

Our clients and our colleagues. Our clients because without them nothing would be possible. And our colleagues, for they are the ones making the special effort to provide passionate client service and extraordinary results for our clients that distinguishes the firm.

Understand that the business of providing legal services is one of the most competitive in the country. That is particularly true in South Florida, where there are so many fine law firms. To be repeatedly singled out and recognized among such fine firms is truly an honor.

What can a CEO learn from the success of your firm?

Far be it from me to be preaching what other CEOs should do. I still am learning from them. I am a student of what makes other businesses, of all kinds, successful. At Berger Singerman, we have incorporated the best practices that we have observed not only from our friends at other law firms, but from all kinds of other businesses, too. Part of our success comes from the passion my co-CEO, James Berger, and I share for continuous improvement. Such a passion is one of the attributes that Jim Collins cites in his book as contributing to a business transitioning from good to great.

Change is often challenging for employees. How do you rally your employees around continuous improvement, which — by definition — necessitates change?

Our team members, lawyers and non-lawyers, too, are committed to being meaningfully different in providing legal services. For us, it all starts back at recruiting. We screen for professionals with a strong service ethos and with a willingness to be challenged to take our service to ever higher levels. Then, once onboard, we invest significant dollars and energy in training both our professionals and our support staff in listening and being attuned to the needs of our clients.

So how does this translate into a unique client experience?

Our expectation is that our clients will get not only very responsive service but also a focus on creating real value for them. In the hyper-competitive world in which our clients operate, their clients, or customers, are demanding they provide real value. As such, our clients need us to help them create value in their business. Whether, for example, it be finding a way to get a transaction back on track or introducing them to a new client or partner, we are committed to finding ways to help our clients grow and prosper. All of our colleagues understand that the success of our firm is a direct function of the success of our clients.

What final words of advice on this subject would you give to a business executive?

One of my roles is making sure that all of us at Berger Singerman stay focused on helping each of our clients to experience success that earns us the honor of continuing to be their trusted adviser. As Jim Collins would say, that is a major challenge, and one that keeps me very busy, especially in view of the clients I personally serve.

PAUL STEVEN SINGERMAN is co-CEO of Berger Singerman. Berger Singerman has local offices in Boca Raton, Fort Lauderdale and Miami, as well as in Tallahassee. Read more about the firm's commitment to excellence online at www.bergersingerman.com.