With

Lead with questions, 'Good To Great', (extract) – Collins, (2001) p74

"Leading from good to great does not mean coming up with the answers and then motivating everyone to follow your messianic vision. It means having the humility to grasp the fact that you do not yet understand enough to have the answers and then to ask the questions that will lead to the best possible insights."

In 1973, one year after he assumed CEO responsibility from his father, Alan Wurtzel's company stood at the brink of bankruptcy, dangerously close to violation of its loan agreements. At the time, the company was a hodgepodge of appliance and hi-fi stores with no unifying concept. Over the next ten years, Wurtzell and his team not only turned the company around, but also created the Circuit City concept and laid the foundations for a stunning record of results, beating the market twenty two times from its transition date in 1982 to January 1, 2000.

When Alan Wurtzel started the traverse from near bankruptcy to these stellar results, he began with a remarkable answer to the question of where to take the company: I don't know... Wurtzel resisted the urge to walk in with "the answer." Instead, once he put the right people on the bus, ***he began not with anwers, but with questions.***

He used the same approach with his executive team, constantly pushing and probing and prodding with questions. Each step along the way, Wurtzel would keep asking questions until he had ***a clear picture of reality*** and its implications.

... Like Wurtzel, leaders in each of the good-to-great transitions operated with a somewhat Socratic style. Furthermore, they used questions for one and only one reason: to gain understanding... with questions like:

- "So, what's on your mind?"
- "Can you tell me about that?"
- "Can you help me understand?"
- "What should we be worried about?"