

INTRODUCTION: **SIMPLICITY, THE FORGOTTEN DISCIPLINE**

Bob Seger is an American singer-songwriter. I've never met him, but if I ever do, I'll tell him he expressed the essence of who I am and what I believe. 'Simplicity' is a word that articulates many of my favourite things: the idea of something being of humble origins, free of ostentation, uncomplicated, unrestricted, understandable, actionable and of having one main cause. In a nutshell, to me it means having the freedom and peace of mind to do *what* matters most *when* it matters most. When I keep things simple, I am able to make friends and influence people: I make others happy, and they feel in control because I help protect them against distraction and feeling overwhelmed.

When I decided to write this book, people told me that deciding on a title would be one of the most difficult parts of the process. Actually, I found it relatively straightforward – simple, in fact. And in many ways, that sums up my perspective on success in business. Keep it simple. What I call 'Radical Simplicity' is taking all the established wisdom and being almost manic in its execution. I will outline a framework called SELF Reflection that makes the concept so much more concise. In essence, it's all about stripping away

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anything that interferes with the things that matter, about guarding against the creep of bureaucracy, the lure of vanity and the avoidance of responsibility. It's about making sure that all our efforts serve our customers in a way that grows our business profitably. If I cannot say something simply, I know I probably don't understand it. And I know for sure that I can understand it when I'm able to explain to others what I mean in a way they can easily understand. I've loved my time working at DHL; I love what we've achieved and the difference we've made. And over the past 35 years I've discovered some simple rules for success, which I'm excited to share with you here.

I am a simple man in a complex world, but that doesn't mean I'm stupid or slow. In fact, it means I am able to WIN by focusing on What's Important Now. I look for the things that matter and invest my time in making them better – I simply have no time for anything else.

In the 50 years that I've been working, I've progressed from being a humble accounts clerk to a global CEO. DHL Express, the company I have had the privilege to run, is also turning 50 in 2019. So this is my simple story – and at its heart is a massively successful business turnaround, which was achieved mainly as a result of an emphasis on simplicity – radically applied. It's also the story of a mature disruptor who has come of age and has some lessons to share. It's a simple story, and some of what you read may well be blindingly obvious, because a lot of what we do in business seems to be common sense. But as my father always tells me, 'There is nothing common about common sense. Just as there is nothing basic about the basics.'

My journey charts what can happen when you make Radical Simplicity part of your daily practice. I hope you find it useful, practical and entertaining – and if you change just one thing about the way you run your business as a result of reading this, then this book will have done its job.