Holistic, democratic, and driven to create value,

NuFocus Strategic Group

thrives on its shared leadership approach to business.

Bestselling author and business guru Daniel H. Pink, in his book Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us, says for people to work creatively they need three things: autonomy (the desire to direct their own lives), mastery (the urge to get better and better at something that matters) and purpose (the desire to do what they do in the service of something larger than themselves.

His new formula for motivating people and businesses to achieve success reads like the mission statement for the Dieppe-based NuFocus Strategic Group.

"We're here to help people succeed in business and in life; that's what we do," explains Raymond Hébert, one of the group's founders. "So our focus is on helping people succeed first, and then we help their business succeed."

The company's approach is unfailingly holistic.

"It's not just a transfer of knowledge as people expect when they hire a consultant," explains Richard Thériault, who along with Suzanne Daigle and Raymond created the uniquely structured company. "It is a transfer of solutions customized to the client's culture, the size of their business, and their people."

Established in 2008, the group now has more than 20 "Partners in Growth" of all backgrounds and ages who bring with them a wide skill-set of service offerings. Though their headquarters are located at 30 Englehart Drive in Dieppe, they have partners working throughout north and south New Brunswick, Halifax, Toronto and Florida.

Their offerings to clients fall into seven service groups including strategy and innovation, human capital, finance, information systems, leadership structures, operations, and marketing. The names and full details of what each partner specializes in appears on the group's website, **www.nufocusgroup.com**.

The company's innovative strategies and unique structure has led business observers to suggest it is the new DNA for modern business models.

What NuFocus does not have is a hierarchy of management, manuals of policies and procedures, structured work hours, or performance reviews. What it does have is an equal partnership of skilled women and men bound together with a deep commitment to authentic democracy and mutual respect.

"Just because we are all equal doesn't mean we are all expected to be the same," cautions Suzanne. "What we are saying is that we want to work by limiting the limits, not limiting the diversity or contribution."

All of the partners agree that the road to an organization without hierarchy and true shared leadership isn't always smooth. Some partners have left, unable to work comfortably in the loose structure, and others flourish, delighted to achieve the autonomy they sought for so long.

Instead of work manuals, the company has simple accepted rules that define their mission and approach. The ultimate goal of all work is client satisfaction and partner success along with a collective pride in community. Business prosperity, usually the top objective in a corporation, is number four on the list based on the belief that if the top three goals are accomplished, the money will follow.

It has. Already more entrepreneurs are in the wings ready to join as partners, and client satisfaction is high. The repetition rate is extraordinary and the bulk of referrals come from happy clients. Partners are growing hand-in-hand with the business itself.

Partners make a modest investment to join the firm and return a percentage of their earnings to the communal pot for marketing and development. Some partners rent offices at the Dieppe headquarters; others work on site with their clients, and several work from home.

"Our business model is not only effective in coping with the challenges of the global market now, but there is a call for effective consultants in New Brunswick as businesses struggle to adapt to challenges in everything from international marketing to efficient production methods," Raymond says.

As 2010 ended, New Brunswick was the only province in Canada that experienced both a shrinking job market and a rising unemployment rate.

"It is a crucial time to be working to create shared value," Raymond says. He points to the January-February 2011 edition of Harvard Business Review which contains an article by business gurus Michael E. Porter and Mark R. Kramer called "The Big Idea: Creating Shared Value."

"The purpose of the corporation must be redefined as creating shared value, not just profit per se," Porter and Kramer write. "This will drive the next wave of innovation and productivity growth in the global economy. It will also reshape capitalism and its relationship to society."

The partners watch these business trends thoughtfully as they grow their new model for business. In what Richard calls their "simple rules" of business, they unanimously know that people must come first.

"Our clients are not dealing with an organization when they come to us," he says. "They are dealing with one or two people in it. And the quality of those individuals and their behaviour is crucial to the experience."

"We understand that we are engaged in building something bigger than ourselves," Suzanne adds. "By opening space and spending time together to create the future we want to see, we are building a strong culture, a close community, and a healthy bottom line."

How does the future of NuFocus Strategic Group look? The partners envision continued success.

"There will be change...the world has been changing and business cannot keep doing what it has been doing and expect to survive," Suzanne says. She cites Gary Hamel and Bill Breen's new business classic, The Future of Management (Harvard Business School Press) as an indication that others see the essential need for a different approach.

"Modern management has given much, but it has taken much in return, and it continues to take," Hamel writes. "... We must learn how to coordinate the efforts of thousands of individuals without creating a burdensome hierarchy of overseers; to keep a tight rein on costs without strangling human imagination; and to build organizations where discipline and freedom aren't mutually exclusive."

Richard says when people discover the unique structure and lack of hierarchy at NuFocus, they are at first puzzled, but then intrigued.

"We know it's an innovative approach, but it is working very effectively for our clients and our partners."

CORPORATE OFFICE
NuFocus Strategic Group
30 Englehart Drive, Suite A, Dieppe, NB E1A 8H3