LEADERSHIP

Excellence

Warren Bennis

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THE MAGAZINE OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, MANAGERIAL EFFECTIVENESS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY

APRIL 2011

Humble Inquiry

Why Leaders Fail

Collective Leadership
Unite Diverse Groups

Henrik Ekelund
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—Warren Bennis, author and USC professor of management

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VOL. 28 NO. 4 THE GLOBAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE APRIL 2011

Scenic Hazard

Most leaders who are standing in the tee box enjoy a telescopic vision or scenic vista, yet all they can see in the foreground is the pox of sand traps and ocean waves with many ways to fail and few safe places to drive business, save strokes, or make money.

E·D·I·T·O·R'S N·O·T·E

Principle-Centered

I feel that I've come full circle.

by Ken Shelton

IN MARCH *LEADERSHIP Excellence* co-sponsored the ***Principle-Centered Leadership Conference*** at Utah State University Huntsman School of Management, home of the Covey Center for Leadership.

In 1984, we started publishing *Leadership Excellence* under the banner of the ***Institute for Principle-Centered Leadership***—as a joint-venture alliance with the Covey Leadership Center. That same year, I started writing two books with ***Stephen R. Covey***: *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* and *Principle-Centered Leadership*. While *7 Habits* sold more copies (one of the top 20 best-selling nonfiction books of all-time), the idea of PCL may be more useful as a leadership development paradigm.

Linda Hartough

In a nutshell, PCL is based on the notion that ***Universal Principles ultimately govern in life and leadership***. As Covey has proven, when people seek to develop a value system, they identify the same basic values when four conditions are met: you get enough people interacting; there is a spirit of trust and openness; people are informed about the problems and issues; and they feel they can communicate freely and synergistically. And these universal values deal with four dimensions: physical or economic; social or relationship; mental, talent, or intelligence; spiritual or meaning.

"If leaders don't build their value systems on bedrock principles and try to live by them—acknowledging that they fail much of the time, but striving to get back in alignment—they'll have dysfunctional cultures," notes Covey.

"As leaders alienate themselves from *moral conscience* based on natural laws and correct principles, they are influenced more by the *social conscience* of political correctness, popularity, and public relations. In every great culture or organization, people speak up when they see *misalignments* between *principle* and *practice*, and try to close the gap. Leaders may know intuitively that they are off track, but lack an information system that tells them how far off track they are. They tend to under-correct with a superficial LD program, or over-correct by downsizing—harming the culture."

So, base your LD on bedrock principles.

Coming Full Circle

Also in March I visited the offices of ***The Full Circle Group***, aiming to deliver on the promise of ***effective leadership*** and ***business performance***. Developing effective leadership is now a strategic priority, says partner ***Bill Adams***. "Given the high impact that effective leadership has on performance, it is tempting to treat leadership development as an activity separate from running the business. Our unique approach engages organizations in *leader development* within the context of *business performance*. This integration is our governing principle, and when this principle is put into practice, it helps organizations develop *leadership as a competitive advantage*.

Again in March, I welcomed home a son, ***Chris***, who had been serving two years in Sweden, and (within two days) welcomed two granddaughters (***Kora*** and ***Zoey***) into the world. This, indeed, is coming full circle.

I selected the great golf art of ***Linda Hartough*** for the cover this month because all of us face a *hard, tough* situation like the ninth hole at Pebble Beach. Whether we are new-born or born again or coming full circle, the cycle of life and leadership presents challenges. The vision or vista may be appealing, but in the foreground we see nothing but rough traps.

Learning/LD Elite

Congratulations to CLO 2011 LearningElite Organizations: Accenture, Alexian Brothers Medical Center, Allied Barton Security Services, Almac Group, Amdocs, AT&T, Banner Health, Bristol-Myers Squibb, CA Technologies, Cerner., Defense Acquisition University, Deloitte, Department of Veterans Affairs, EMC., Emory University, Farmers Insurance Group, FedEx, Genentech, General Mills, Grant Thornton, IBM, InterContinental Hotels Group, J. C. Penney Co., Life Time Fitness, Loblaw Cos., Lowe's Cos., ManTech Intl., McDonald's, Nationwide Insurance, NetApp, New York Presbyterian Hospital, NIIT USA, Orkin, Procter & Gamble, Prescription Solutions/ UnitedHealth Group, Qualcomm, RWD Technologies, Scotiabank, Sidley Austin, Spectra Energy, St. Peter's Health Care Services, Vanguard, and Vi. **LE**

Ken Shelton

Editor since 1984

Volume 28 Issue 4

Leadership Excellence *(ISSN 8756-2308) is published monthly by Executive Excellence Publishing, LLC (dba Leadership Excellence), 1806 North 1120 West, Provo, UT 84604.*

Editorial Purpose:
Our mission is to promote personal and organizational leadership based on constructive values, sound ethics, and timeless principles.

Basic Annual Rate:
US $99 one year (12 issues))

Corporate Bulk Rates *(to same address)*
Ask about logo and custom editions and foreign bulk rates.

Article Reprints:
For reprints of 100 or more, please contact the editorial department at 801-375-4060 or email CustomerService@LeaderExcel.com. Permission PDF US: $75.

Internet Address: *www.LeaderExcel.com*

Submissions & Correspondence:
All correspondence, articles, letters, and requests to reprint articles should be sent to: Editorial Department, Executive Excellence, 1806 North 1120 West, Provo, Utah 84604; 801-375-4060, or editorial@LeaderExcel.com.

Customer Service/Circulation:
For information on products and services call 1-877-250-1983 or email: CustomerService@LeaderExcel.com.

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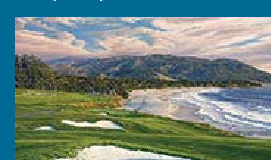
Full view of table of contents art.



Executive Excellence Publishing

Collective Leadership

Go from platitude to practice.

by James Quigley and Stephen Langton

COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP—THE ABILITY to unite diverse groups of people in a common purpose, to achieve teamwork on a grand scale—is the lifeblood of successful organizations. Every project, strategy, meta-goal or vision depends on effective teams, on collaboration. *A leader is nothing without followers*; no manager is an island.

Statements like these have been made and reprised in management books for decades. The idea that working together is *a good thing*, that it gets complex tasks done—and that it is necessary for both organizations and society—is as old as it's elementary.

But what does *collective leadership* look like? ***What are the models for effective leaders and followers?*** How can you ensure *the whole* will be greater than *the sum of the individual parts*? Here, things get blurry. Applying the theory of collective behavior to modern management is still a work in progress.

Three years ago, we started a major project to bring *collective leadership* beyond the platitudes into practice. We reviewed hundreds of perspectives on *collaboration* and *collective action* drawn from several disciplines and made case studies of 60 examples of *collective leadership* in diverse organizations across geographies. The result was *As One*, a new service offering to our clients.

Designed to help *minimize* and *manage* the intangible *people risks* of strategy execution, *As One* identifies and measures ***three conditions for collective leadership***: *1) Shared Identity*—people see themselves as *members*, not as outsiders; *2) Directional Intensity*—people feel impelled to do what's needed to achieve the organization goal; and *3) Common Interpretation*—people have *common mental models of how work will get done*.

All three factors are equally important. To fail to correct deficiencies in any one is to make the *strategic bet* less safe. It was, however, in the development of a measurement tool for the third that our efforts were most concentrated.

How do you track common interpretations of rather abstract mental models? How do you concretize *collective leadership*? To make the *As One* diagnostic robust, we had to find an answer. *Traditional leadership theory* wasn't helpful. The twin poles of *command-and-control* and *hierarchy* on the one hand and *collaboration* and *flat-and-fluid structure* on the other could not tell the whole story.

Eight Models or Archetypes

Using a *self-organizing map* (SOM), we drew out the relationships among our 60 case studies and compiled a set of ***eight distinct archetypes***:

1. Landlords and tenants. In this *command-and-control, top-down model*, leaders control access to valuable or scarce resources and dictate the terms for followers' participation. The landlords' power base grows with the number of tenants they attract and retain. At best, the relationship is mutually reinforcing: tenants commit to the rules; landlords ensure those rules are fair.

2. Community organizer and volunteers. Leaders bind the activities of followers together through an *inspirational story* and provide the rationale for the *cause*. Leaders don't, however, tell followers what to do. The decentralized organization functions more by *philosophy* than by rigid *rules and structures*.

3. Conductor and orchestra. Highly trained members perform, with care and precision, repetitive and scripted tasks. Protocol-driven, they're about doing essentially the same things but in new, better, and more efficient ways. The leader motivates the team by the promise of *helping them achieve their personal best*. There's little room for *improvisation*—but room for *excellence*.

4. Producer and creative team. In this archetype, the leader has the vision and the power to bring together a team of highly inventive and skilled independent individuals. Producers guide a project; their carefully selected teams make it happen. Ideas are developed through frequent meetings and interactions and an open culture of collaboration. Long-term success depends on constant innovation and reinvention.

5. General and soldiers. Soldiers focus on well-defined and scripted tasks, motivated by hierarchical structure and the prospects of promotion. Extensive training is needed for recruits to understand the culture and to learn specific skills. The generals' authority—their ability to command respect—is just as important as their mission. Without it, the organization disintegrates.

6. Architect and builders. Leaders need a team of skilled followers to bring their blueprint to life. Builders are master craftsmen and innovators capable of finding new solutions to technical and practical problems. Interdependent links in a project management chain, they strive to achieve milestones mapped to deliberate work cycles. As each link is completed, they're one step nearer to realizing the architect's grand design.

7. Captain and sports team. Once players, leaders know the rules of the game. They combine the *practical skills* of followers with the ability to *motivate and improvise*, often adapting to new challenges in real time. Members of the team have a strong sense of shared identity and see each other as equals. There is minimal hierarchy. Leaders, like followers, get their hands dirty.

8. Senator and citizens. This model is a *democracy*. The leader's style is *consensual*: problems are tackled through free and open debate. The *senator leader* is the guiding intelligence who oversees decision-making, but followers work independently. In return for their personal freedom, citizens willingly commit to the *constitution* and to responsibilities they owe to the collective.

Landlord and Tenants, Conductor and Orchestra, and General and Soldiers are variations on the command-and-control theme; the other five archetypes are more agile and adaptive. None is inherently weaker or stronger—but might be in certain situations. An organization intent on *continuous innovation* wouldn't operate well as *Conductor and Orchestra or General and Soldiers*.

The SOM provides a taxonomy for *collective leadership* and puts management in a practical, how-to context. LE

James Quigley is CEO of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, co-chairman of the Deloitte Center for Collective Leadership, and co-author of As One: Individual Action, Collective Power *(Portfolio). Stephen Langton is Managing Director of the Deloitte Center for Collective Leadership, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited. Visit www.deloitte.com/about.*

ACTION: Practice collective leadership.

Humble Inquiry

It's the key to helping.

by Edgar H. Schein

SINCE LEADERS ARE SUPposed to *set direction*, *display wisdom*, and *tell their followers what to do*, we've become obsessed with leadership competencies that emphasize action, direction, and charisma. That works in a simple world where leaders can figure out what to do. Alas, that is not the world of today.

In a world of complexity, globalism, multiculturalism, dispersion, and social responsibility, formal leaders won't know enough to be decisive, will depend more on the knowledge and skill of colleagues, will manage networks of people from different cultures, and will factor in new priorities in decision making. These requirements force us to focus anew on Greenleaf's concept of *servant leadership* and my concept of *the leader as a giver and receiver of help*.

Leaders can't give direction if they don't understand the complex realities of the situation, which means: 1) seeking help from many others to provide the information needed, 2) creating situations in which others are motivated to provide such information, and 3) helping others implement the desired courses of actions. Leaders need to seek, offer, provide and accept help—and often they are not very good at it.

Key to Successful Helping

Helping is complicated, since in most cultures being a *competent adult* means *not needing help*. To ask for help puts the person *one-down* and puts the potential helper temporarily *one-up*. To ask for help makes you vulnerable. To be asked for help makes you powerful. To offer help when it has not been asked for is displaying power. The situation is initially unbalanced. Normal social processes are balanced and equitable. We know our roles and the rules of tact insure that *most conversations are equitable in terms of the social economics*. When one person speaks, others *pay* attention! Asking for help or offering it when it is not asked for disrupts this process. And *for a leader to ask for help is a double disruption of leader/follower expectations*.

So what can go wrong? The person *asking for help* must trust the potential helper not to take advantage of the situation. The person *being asked for help* must be sensitive to the vulnerability of the help seeker and ensure that he or she does not make matters worse by belittling the seeker, giving premature advice, jumping to conclusions about what might be helpful, or reinforcing the *one downness* of the seeker. And, the seeker must be clear about what he or she needs, not asking something irrelevant just to *test* the potential helper. The biggest trap for the seeker is to *ask the wrong question*; the biggest trap for the giver is to *answer that wrong question*.

For *help* to be *helpful*, the leader seeking help must reveal *the real problem*, and those being asked to help must enable the leader to reveal the real problem. Hence, a relationship of trust must either exist or be built.

Humble inquiry is the most reliable way to test or build a relationship of trust. By *humble*, I mean that the helper must ask a question to which he or she does not already know the answer. If we are asking just to check our expectation or presupposition or assumption or hypothesis, we won't learn what the person seeking help needs or wants. If the seeker is the leader or boss, the subordinate or peer has to ask some humble questions. If the group member or subordinate comes to the boss for help, the leader or boss must humbly inquire what is really being asked.

By *inquiry* I mean that *the first steps in the helping process must be questions, especially by helpers*. Even if the seeker asks a question, if helpers do not engage in some humble inquiry, they won't know whether what was asked was *the real problem* on which help is needed. *Inquiry* does not have to be a set of questions. Showing an open attentive demeanor, encouraging the seeker by staying silent, or saying *tell me more* will reveal relevant information. If the seeker feels listened to, that equilibrates the social situation. It builds a momentary *helping relationship* in which both parties can more easily say what is on their minds.

Master Two New Skills

Two sets of skills are involved in developing helpful relationships:

1. Learning how to ask the right questions. Different questions have different impacts. Do we want respondents: a) to continue their story (humble inquiry), or b) to become more diagnostic by asking many "why" and "what did you do" questions, or c) do we want to confront them: "Have you thought about doing this?" (advice in the form of questions).

Knowing when to ask what type of question and assessing the impact of different questions requires practice. As leaders, we tend to use *confrontative questions*. We think that *being a leader* means *knowing what to do and offering guidance and advice*. In the new world, often formal leaders won't know the answer and need to create a helping situation in which they and others solve the problem together (mutual helping).

2. Learning what role to take in the helping situation. Do we want: a) to be the *expert* and provide information or a service, b) to be the *doctor* who will diagnose the problem and offer a prescription, or c) to enable the *client* to solve his/her own problem by being more of a *process consultant*.

If the seeker clearly wants information or a service, we provide it, but we must be sure that what the seeker asks for is, in fact, the problem to be solved. Often in building the helping relationship, we discover that since the situation is complicated we have to take on more of a doctor role. If human systems are involved, we also discover that we can never learn enough about the client's system to offer answers or advice, but we can become a process consultant, a role in which we focus on helping the client to solve his/her own problem. In this case, the helper and client become a team working together to diagnose and figure out what to do.

We often assume that the leader must give the answer or be the doctor; in the multicultural new world, leadership will require more of a *process consultation* role, since only the team members will have the knowledge and capacity to solve the problem. *Leadership will involve a constant shifting of roles as the task demands change*. All team members need to ask for and provide help as needed. *Leadership becomes a distributed function.* From this view, *teamwork* can then be seen as *perpetual mutual helping*, requiring each team member to engage in humble inquiry with other members.

Mutual helping is a critical leadership skill—and humble inquiry is the key to creating *mutual helping relationships*. **LE**

Edgar H. Schein is the author of Helping: How to Offer, Give and Receive Help *(Berrett-Koehler). Visit mitsloan.mit.edu.*

ACTION: Engage in humble inquiry.

Function Alignment

Align with the purpose and strategy.

by Mark Nyman

IN GOOD AND BAD ECONomies, functions such as HR, Finance, and IT are in a *continual cycle* of growing then shrinking and centralizing only to decentralize. They are reengineering, downsizing, outsourcing, or creating *shared service* organizations. One day they are asked to *increase responsiveness*, the next they're asked to *cut cost and improve efficiency*. Most change efforts focused on support functions have unintended negative results. For example, when the HR function makes what they feel are positive changes, line leaders often have a negative view. While they value the contribution of the HR people assigned to them, they don't value the contribution of the function. Why? *The changes HR makes to improve the function do not help the line leaders improve business results*.

When functions try to improve without aligning with the organization as the ***primary*** outcome, they tend to *hurt* rather than *help* business performance.

Five Types of Misalignment

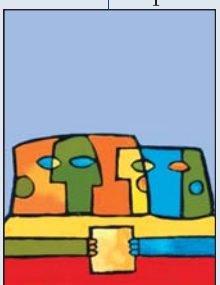
Five types of misalignments occur:

1. Optimizing the function. Often a function will implement changes that make their work more efficient or easier while making it harder for the organization to achieve its goals. Support functions must know *who they are connected to* and *how their actions and improvements will impact the core business*. When you are in a support role, most of the requirements need to flow *from the business needs out* rather than from the support organization to the business.

2. Standardization versus customization. *Standardization* is a common solution in cost-cutting initiatives and streamlining functions. When properly applied, it creates great value and cost savings. But when business drivers call for *customization*, standardization results in rework, shadow organizations, and other drains on people's time. The belief that work is scalable is not enough of a reason to standardize.

3. Utilization versus availability. Functional groups are often challenged to *be available whenever someone wants their services* but also *be lean enough that their people are being fully utilized*. As with technology tools, managing *utilization* versus *availability* often feels like a no-win situation. In fact, trying to do both is a no-win. Functions must be clear about the primary drivers of business success to determine where they apply *utilization* or *availability* as organizing principles. And support organizations need a clear method for prioritizing their work and who they respond to first to keep the business running.

4. Solutions looking for problems. Too many improvement efforts are *solutions looking for problems*. Many functions, in *being proactive* with good intentions, identify a concept that they find compelling, get management support, and implement the concept without understanding the relevance or application on day-to-day work. Creating work for others tends to create the biggest credibility gap between functions and those they serve. So, *always identify what business need you are meeting*. Otherwise, your leaders may see your work as an added burden or distraction from real work.



5. Accountability confusion. This occurs when functions police budgets, policies, and procedures that belong to the line and become accountable for issues that belong to the line. It's alarming how many functions desire this responsibility. It creates misalignment, victims out of those who are being policed, and becomes a rationale for the line not taking responsibility and accountability for results.

Solutions to misalignment involve *understanding requirements* (what effective support looks like) and determining *what responses drive the most value*. This includes looking at the work you are doing and understanding how to best position the work for the good of the business. ***The most lasting solution comes from understanding business purpose and strategy and aligning all functions to the same end result.*** Most leaders see *the need for alignment* but don't address *what is being aligned*. *Alignment* implies *direction* or a *reference point* to align everything else with.

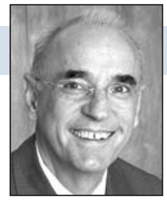
Support functions that are aligned to the business have clear priorities and those working in the function clearly see the role their work plays. LE

Mark Nyman is an expert on HR Transformation with Results Based Leadership. Call 801-492-6955 or visit www.rbl.net.

ACTION: Align functions with business strategy.

Money Makers

Do your leaders have it?



by E. Ted Prince

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPment approaches should include *business acumen* within their ambit, and these approaches need models with the power to predict *leadership acumen*.

Do your executives have what it takes to create capital? My goal is to *assess the business acumen of managers and leaders*; predict their impact on the financial outcomes; predict the financial impact of teams; predict financial impact using metrics that appear in financial statements; and translate these into predictions of *valuation impact*.

My work is a part of the emerging discipline of ***behavioral finance***. This shows how cognitive biases impact decision-making. We enable the prediction of financial impact by identifying how the cognitive biases of managers impact financial outcomes.

Business acumen can be measured—and its impact predicted. One aspect of our work shows *what behaviors characterize managers with exceptional capabilities for creating capital*—the personalities of people who excel at making money.

We've developed ***three core psychometric assessment instruments***:

- *Financial Outcome Assessment* (FOA) measures the *financial signature* of managers—their *propensity to create capital*.
- *Executive Outcome Assessment* (EXOA) measures the behavioral characteristics that lead to specific outcomes—how a manager's behavior impacts financial outcomes in practice in his situation.
- *Corporate Financial Outcome Assessment* (CFOA) measures the financial mission based on behavioral data. This enables us to evaluate alignment and measure competitive prowess from a behavioral perspective.

Since many executives have experienced these assessments, we can now look at the behaviors associated with capital creation and financial impact and correlate the financial signatures of managers with leadership outcomes.

Exceptional Money-Makers Are Rare

We focus on the most exceptional types of propensity for capital creation. *Most managers do not create capital*—they *consume* it *(only 12 percent create capital)*.

Four personality types have exceptional capabilities in creating capital (yet even within these groups, only a small subset excel in creating capital):

• ***Alchemists*** are *introverted* and *streetwise*, meaning they distrust logic. They invariably create a new high-value product that creates new market segments. To qualify for this characteristic, the person is usually *intensely* introverted and streetwise. Usually the company founded by this person does well, even though the founder is highly introverted, because the product is revolutionary enough that it attracts more market interest and sales support that the founder himself can't attract.

• ***Visionaries*** are extremely forward looking and strongly oriented to giving up the present for a far-off future. If they are too altruistic or too individualistic, they will fail to generate revenue. They can be only *mildly altruistic* or *mildly individualist*; however, being mildly visionary is insufficient—the psychological impulse to look forward must be intense; otherwise, the person will not show exceptional money-making and capital creation propensity.

• ***Customer analysts*** are strongly sales oriented, rather than product oriented. However, if they are too strongly sales-oriented, they won't have a high propensity to create capital. They are also strongly financially oriented. This does not mean that they will have financial qualifications; in fact, usually they will not. Rather their zone of psychological comfort is exceptionally strong in dealings with finances.

• ***Generals*** are disciplined planners, but *if they are too strongly planning oriented, they are too slow in adapting to market conditions* and thus lose market opportunities. In addition, these managers can't be extremely consensual or command-oriented in their styles. If they become too strong in these areas, they lose the propensity to create capital.

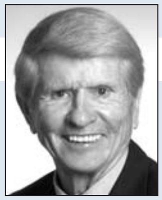
Where a manager or leader falls on the money propensity scale depends on their behavioral characteristics and their intensity. You can use the results of these assessments to boost your self-awareness so that you can improve your financial and valuation impact—and thus align better with the financial mission of the organization and with its valuation goals. ***Seek training in business acumen.*** Complete the assessments, link your behaviors to business outcomes, and create self-awareness as to how this can improve your impact. **LE**

E. Ted Prince, Ph.D., is CEO of the Perth Leadership Institute. Call 352-333-3768 or visit www.perthleadership.org.

ACTION: Boost your money-making capability.

Leader's Job One

Align strategy, structure and culture.



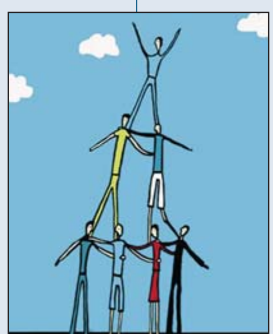
by Larry Senn

CEOs AND SENIOR TEAMS have a lot—usually too much—on their plates, especially today. So, what are the blue chips, the highest value things for CEOs to focus on? We believe there are three powerful drivers of performance that deserve their attention.

1. Purpose and direction—connecting people at all levels to the mission and their declared strategy for fulfilling that mission.

2. Structure and enabling processes—creating the best organization structure and supporting system to drive that strategy.

3. An enabling culture—ensuring the behaviors in the organization are the specific ones needed to make the structure and strategy work.



While this appears to be a reasonable agenda, several factors make this difficult to do. First, these drivers are vital but not time urgent, and culture is the hardest to shift into alignment. Most CEOs and their top teams can effectively adjust their strategies. They're also good at devising new organizational structures. But as Ed Schein, one of the pioneers in culture, said, "An organization's culture is its response to the way things used to be."

In other words, the culture lags and can become the anchor out the back of the boat. We call this the ***Jaws of Culture***. We all encounter those jaws at one time or another when we go to implement a change and it doesn't go easily.

Culture represents *the collective norms and behaviors in the organization*. Most companies have solid core values and cultural traits that have made them great. They also have historic habits that haven't changed with the times. Those habits can get in the way, especially when strategy or structure/process changes or when higher levels of performance are needed. If not systematically addressed, these cultural barriers act like jaws in the culture that can chew up strategies and initiatives.

In terms of cultural traits, this shows up in several ways. Cultural traits we commonly see that create barriers to change include turf issues, trust issues or people working in silos. These all get in the way when changes require collaboration across the enterprise. There is also a need for more agility and innovation than ever before.

Acquisitions are a part of the growth strategy for many companies and it is well known that the biggest reason for shortfall in acquisitions and mergers is "cultural clash". So, if that is the strategy, creating an acquisition friendly and aware culture is an imperative. Other companies are seeking to change their structure, such as moving from a holding company or decentralized model to a "one company" shared business model. In both situations, the cultural traits that need strengthening are trust and collaboration for the greater good.

To eliminate the Jaws of Culture, we advise CEOs to focus on the culture to support the strategy, beginning at the senior team because those leaders set the example for the rest of the organization. One CEO who did this to great success is Zappos CEO Tony Hsieh. He regularly points out that he had to get the culture right to succeed at creating the best customer experience. Why? Because it is the behaviors of employees that affect the experience customers have. Hsieh is an example of a CEO who focused on culture to support his service strategy and by doing so created a distinctive competitive advantage.

In order to make their culture a launching pad for success, CEOs and their teams should define or revisit their organizations' cultural definitions. Do the value statements cover the kinds of behaviors the company needs to win at this moment in time? If not, they need to be adjusted. If the cultural definitions are fine but the behaviors don't match, CEOs need to first find ways to ensure the team at the top is living and modeling the desired behaviors. This is because organizations become shadows of their leaders. Special training processes and reinforcement systems can be used to bring the desired culture to all levels in the organization. **LE**

Larry Senn, Ph.D., is Chairman of Senn Delaney, shaping cultures that enhance spirit and performance. Call 562-426-5400, email lsenn@senndelaney.com or visit www.senndelaney.com. This article is adapted from his interview in The CEO Forum.

ACTION: Align strategy, structure, and culture.

Beyond Perception

Perception becomes reality.

by Gary D. Burnison

CONSIDER THIS STORY: A group of settlers in a remote village of Outpost were preparing for winter. The group's leader, unschooled in the old ways, guessed that the winter would be cold and that people should gather firewood. One day, he traveled to the nearest town and called the National Weather Service, which confirmed his suspicion: the winter was indeed going to be cold. The leader ordered more firewood to be collected, and checked in with the NWS again a week later, which amended its forecast—not only for a cold winter, but a very cold winter. So the people of Outpost gathered even more wood.

When the leader checked in with the NWS a third time, the prediction was now for a very, very cold winter. Finally, having asked for every branch and twig to be gathered, the leader asked the NWS how they could be so sure. The answer: "The people of Outpost are gathering a lot of firewood."

In a directionless economy, it is very easy for perceptions to become reality. The levers of growth are not as apparent as they were in the days of conspicuous consumption and fast credit.

Myopically focusing on the decline in Western consumer sentiment, you will undoubtedly perceive an economy that, while officially out of the great recession, is barely growing. If so, you are probably preparing for a long cold winter of anemic growth.

Not every leader, however, sees things the same way. This past summer, I spent much of my time on the road in Europe, talking to leaders from Paul Bulcke, CEO of Nestlé, to former Prime Minister of Hungary Gordon Bajnai. My mission was twofold: to be with employees and clients outside of the United States and to engage in discussions with other leaders on what they see, hear, and experience.

In every conversation, I was struck by the bifurcation in perceptions. For those who lead global enterprises, the proverbial glass is half full and continuing to fill. They are investing and hiring and expanding because they see opportunities for growth. Others are innovating to capture consumer interest in global markets. And, it's not just technological innovation. I think of Nestlé, which launched its first floating supermarket on the Brazilian Amazon, a retail barge that extends its reach to more than 800,000 customers.

This global view contrasts sharply with the perception of those who have relied more on Western economies for growth. Those CEOs are more subdued. As they wait for consumers to crank up their spending again, the cup is not only half empty, but leaking steadily.

So who's right and who's wrong? It depends upon your perception. In this case, however, throw away perception—the classical lens of West versus East or developed versus emerging has blurred. The world's axis has tilted and the compass spins in all directions.

Leadership, however, is timeless and can't wait for clarity. It is about *making and seizing opportunity*—not by sitting home consumed by pundits and prognosticators, but by leaders listening and learning from those who matter most: customers and employees.

Some months ago, on the eve of her retirement as chairwoman of Xerox, I met with ***Anne Mulcahy***. She recalled her early days as CEO of Xerox when the company teetered on the brink of bankruptcy. As the new CEO in those days, Mulcahy was pulled in countless directions until she received some sage advice from Warren Buffett: "There is only *one way* you are going to get results, and that's by *keeping your customers loyal* and *your people engaged and motivated*. Get everything else out of the way."

By focusing on *customers* and *employees*—Mulcahy accomplished the near-impossible: saving Xerox.

The mission for leaders today is no different. In a directionless economy in which the signs are faint, ***leaders must get close to customers and employees to separate perception from reality***.

Although it sounds simple, it can be difficult to do. Leaders who have spent their careers climbing a pyramid to reach the pinnacle can become insulated and even isolated if they don't separate who they are from what they do. They often become engrossed in the *inverted pyramid* that suddenly appears above them—layers of constituencies, including the media, special interest groups, stockholders, financial analysts, and so on. At the intersection of the two pyramids is the CEO, who must not only look over the horizon, but relentlessly execute today, for that determines the starting point for tomorrow.

That means being connected to what matters the most. This is what Mulcahy called "logging the miles," traveling to meet with employees and customers in person. It's a high-touch style of leadership that allows not just communication from the leader, but dialogue with the people who are the closest to the marketplace. As she observed, "I don't think people can get the sense of the leadership dynamic of the company without the ability to touch and see and interact on a personal basis."

Her comments bring to mind the observation by ***Muhtar Kent***, CEO of The Coca-Cola Company. His first task in changing the culture into one of connection was to visit major and minor markets and to meet customers. It was the same tactic he used when he was in charge of Asia for Coca-Cola. "The first thing I did was to go to every country (39). Back then, most of our people didn't even know the names of our biggest customers," Kent recalled.

The experiences of Kent and Mulcahy should serve as a *wake-up call* for CEOs and other leaders to ***consider where they are spending most of their time***. If they dwell at the intersection of the pyramid tips, they will be squeezed. If they overly rely on perceptions, it undoubtedly will be myopic and certainly will be filtered. If that happens, they shouldn't be surprised if they spend most of their time hunkering down for a long, cold winter.

Those who empower others while venturing out themselves to listen and learn will discover astonishing new levers of growth. For them, there will be pockets of spring where potential blooms and opportunity grows. **LE**

Gary D. Burnison is CEO of KornFerry International and author of No Fear of Failure. *Visit www.kornferry.com.*

ACTION: Focus on customers and employees.

Cultivate Innovation

It all requires bold leadership.

by Chip R. Bell and John R. Patterson

In today's innovation-deprived economy, proactive leaders adopt the proverb: "Fortune favors the bold but abandons the timid."

Once we consulted with a financial services company as their leaders considered launching a change management effort that would foster a more innovative approach to their marketplace. Every meeting, phone call and email was painted the color of timidity. "Why the extreme caution?" we asked them at the end of another do-nothing-but-talk meeting? The COO replied, "We've been in a *bunker mindset* so long we've forgotten that chutzpah has been the key to our success."

A steady diet of cut-backs, layoffs, and budget crunches has introduced *an abundance of caution* into most leaders. The Great Recession trimmed their wings—turning them into *activity-seekers* instead of *results-makers*.

Now's the time for leadership boldness. The key to progress and growth is *innovation*—and innovation is *never* spawned in a culture of reticence. "Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it," wrote Scottish explorer W.H. Murray. "Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, and always ineffectiveness."

Innovation is *counter cultural*, against the grain, and unconventional. It is sometimes cut from unfamiliar cloth. While the specific output of innovation might not be that controversial, it springs from a restless, unsettled place that today's leaders must occupy if they are to inspire innovation. It is the habitat of ground-breaking pioneers and norm-breaking entrepreneurs. Inventors and artists of all types reside there as well. And, the company or country that leads the innovation space corners the marketplace.

Leading boldness is not about something leaders add as much as something they remove. Boldness resides in us all. Helen Keller wrote: "Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature. *Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure*. Life is either a daring adventure or nothing."

The *remove rather than add* approach means leaders focus on eliminating all that exists in the work world that fuels the opposite of boldness—timidity, hesitance, doubt, and reserve.

Boldness is borne of purpose. Stoking the flames of boldness begins with a wide-eyed focus on a dream or purpose rather than a squint-eyed look at the task or job. Caution comes from being mired in day-to-day activity. As the trees block your forest vista, you are soon left blind to aspirations and dreams. "I came to my last job," said one retired leader, "with a great sense of purpose. But, I got so enmeshed in

what I had to do that I soon forgot *what I had hoped to be*. It was not until I was ready to retire that I realized I had gotten more defensive and less daring."

Boldness is a choice based on a commitment to a future state. It's not a *reaction* but *deliberate action*. It is *pro-action* at its finest—a step toward the light. It is borne of a noble reach beyond the mediocre of the moment and the ordinariness of the status quo. Daring without recklessness requires awareness of a purpose or vision and a desire to move in the direction of that future. Bold leaders have a valued dream that serves as the compass for their courage and an inspiration to associates.

Bold leaders, intent on fostering innovation, talk often about *mission* and *vision*. They focus on what they want a unit or organization to *BE*, not just *DO*. Such leaders communicate the *whys* when making assignments, not just the *whats* and *whens*. They affirm heroes by *telling their stories*—especially the details of their accomplishments that represent examples of the vision and purpose. And, they make certain *their actions* are consistent with the vision and purpose.

Boldness happens when employees do not fear error. Boldness would not be daring were there not potential for error. Leaders foster a healthy attitude toward failure. When Thomas Edison was asked about failure associated with his quest for invention he said: "I never failed once. It just happened to be a 2,000-step process." Edison held over 1,000 patents. How you deal with error can communicate volumes about your commitment to fostering innovation. When you meet error with rebuke, you send a different message than when you see error as an opportunity for learning and problem-solving.

As part of encouraging bold leadership, recognize that *employees don't resist change as much as they resist the prediction of pain over which they have no control*. Helping employees view change as opportunity not threat requires candid communication as well as an atmosphere of inclusion. The more employees are in the know and find their fingerprints on change initiatives, the more they will replace fear with fervor.

Without risk, there's no creativity. However with risk come honest mistakes. It is easier to gently rein in an overzealous, go-the-extra-mile employee than to find one with an enthusiastic attitude in the first place. Fostering daring is a manifestation of trust—*the greater the trust, the greater the freedom*. But, with freedom comes with responsibility. The bold leader's job is to coach employees to feel more comfortable with more and more responsibility.

Examine policies and procedures. Are employees clear on what is a *thou shalt not law* versus an *it would be better if you didn't guideline*? Are *rules of thumb* and *rules of law* treated the same? Are metrics so abusive that employees feel that leaders are *pulling plants out of the dirt to determine if they are growing?* Are employees publicly given the benefit of the doubt? Do they get more coaching or more critiquing? How many times do employees get praised for excellent efforts that failed to work? Are employees commended for seeking assistance from others, including other leaders?

Responsible Freedom

People need *guidelines*, not *unlimited license*. The leader who says, "Just go do whatever you think is best," is demonstrating abdication, not encouraging boldness. But guidelines need elbow room for people to adapt to the situation. *Risk taking is not a blank check to be foolhardy and reckless*. Sensible risk taking comes from knowing how to balance *great performance* with *responsible stewardship*. It is "owner-thinking." If employees are to make front-line decisions like owners, they need the benefit of owner-type information.

"A lot of us think that success is about the boldness of the gamble," says Harvard Business School professor Nancy Koehn. "Success is about understanding *what's bold about the boldness*, about knowing how to keep the risk from coming back to bite you, and about knowing what your organization will get from taking such a big step."

Boldness does not mean the absence of fear. People who are daredevils think they are invincible. Their arrogance causes them to miss seeing the signals and cues needed as guidance to success. Sometimes hotdogs get lucky; in time, they crash and burn. *Innovation-focused leaders help associates respect fear and channel it*. They provide outlets for people to talk about their apprehensions and deliver support and encouragement when people have doubts.

Examine your reward and recognition practices. Which is more valued: *creativity* or *compliance*? Being *resourceful* or *being always right*? Who gets *praised* or *promoted*—and for what? Former 3M CEO Lew Lehr said: "If you place too many fences around people they can easily become pastures of sheep. How many patents are assigned to sheep?"

Surround your unit with bold people. Seek the council of others who exhibit daring. Invite card-carrying mavericks to your meetings. Read biographies of pioneers who overcame personal limitations to achieve greatness. Visit organizations famous for breakthrough thinking—R&D facilities, art studios, and culinary institutes. While your approach needs to be relevant to your unit, *others can offer insightful suggestions*.

As an old expression notes: *Only dead fish swim with the current*. Smart fish swim in all directions, but the pull of the current does not influence their choice. Innovation never comes from following the herd. Bold leaders bent on cultivating innovation live the vision, drive fear out, and encourage employees to think and feel like owners. The byproduct is the assurance of business creativity that brings *the best and brightest* to the marketplace leading to valued progress and consistent growth. **LE**

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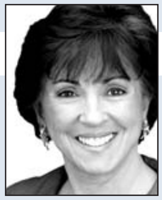
ACTION: Exercise bold leadership in innovation.

LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES

Effective Leadership

Three strategies for tough times.



by Sheila Murray Bethel

IT IS NEVER EASY TO LEAD, and in these turbulent times it is harder than ever before. The big question is, what can you do *today* to be a more effective leader? How can you help your people through these tough economic times?

Here are ***three actions you can take*** to relieve employee stress, increase productivity, and enhance your leadership authenticity.

1. Focus on A priorities. We are all bombarded daily by bad news that affects our self-confidence, attitude and work product. One of your most important leadership skills is to help people stay focused on the tasks that are the anchor of your business. These are the basics and almost always bring the highest results. Help your team emphasize best practices and the most valuable processes and procedures in their job description.

A recent client asked me to help improve company morale. The first thing we did was gather the various teams together. Each team had a leader that guided them through a short exercise in which each person listed the most productive and important things they do in their job. They then evaluated the least effective activities and quickly saw where to put their energies and effort. As they cleared away less important tasks, and focused on basics they felt more assured and much of their stress was relieved as they got to work on their "A" list of jobs.

• ***Leadership Lesson:*** *Help your people focus on A priorities, all else can wait for better times. Get back to the basics and results will follow.*

2. Train Train Train. As they say in sports, "go deep on the bench". Which translates into: train, retrain and cross-train your followers so that they have a broader depth of appreciation for all parts of your business. You will be building a strong team of players who understand not only their jobs but those of their fellow workers.

The benefit is that everyone becomes more aware and sensitive to how their part fits into the whole. You also have people who can step in and help, in a variety of areas, when needed. Deep training is one of the best uses of your times while business is slow. Also, as the economy turns around you will have a competitive edge and reap the benefits of having highly trained staff.

• ***Leadership Lesson:*** *The sense of shared responsibility is the end product of training in tough times.*

3. Be a hope giver. Here is where your ability to use *aspirational language* comes to the forefront. Your words can inspire or discourage, hurt or help, divide or connect, cause fear or give hope.

Once again, gather your teams together and reassure them that it may not be easy, but pulling together is the only way to survive in these tough times. Have a discussion about why your enterprise exists and have the group clarify your statement of purpose. Ask each person to share ideas about how you benefit your customers. Ask them to define what they believe brings you all together in a shared sense of purpose.

American Express lost 11 employees on 9/11. On 9/12 Kenneth Chennault, CEO, knew that he would need to communicate a strong dose of hope in the face of such an overwhelming tragedy. Nine days later he brought the entire New York City staff to Madison Square Garden for a team meeting. He told them that it would take courage and hard work, but he was confident that they would all pull through together. His calm demeanor, quiet grace, and words of hope, gave his followers the confidence they needed to carry on.

• ***Leadership Lesson:*** *Feelings of optimism and expectation are greatly enhanced by your ability to help followers step outside of themselves and serve a higher purpose.*

Yes, times are tough. It takes exceptional leadership to move your team forward. If you help everyone keep a better perspective on which to focus priorities, train them to support one another, and use aspirational language to uplift and give hope, you are using three of the most powerful 21st century leadership skills. **LE**

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ACTION: Adopt these three priorities.

Glass Walls

Challenge assumptions.

by Dana C. Ackley

CARL IS A HIGH-POTENTial leader. He is smart, good looking, and has a cheerful personality that draws people to him. He is well regarded at work. Some think *he has it all together*.

I know better. I've spent 40 years working with highly successful people. I hear about their successes, and about where they get stuck. And they ***all get stuck at some point***. What gets in their way? Paradoxically, it's often the one thing that's made them so successful.

Here's how it works: *Behaviors that help you get what you want get repeated*. With enough success and repetition, these behaviors become habits. When a behavior becomes habitual, it falls out of your awareness. You do it *automatically*, without thinking whether you should or not. You ***assume*** it is the right thing to do. For example, you might assume that in order to become successful, you need to work hard.

Assumptions bring order out of chaos, enabling you to narrow the countless choices available to you every time you act, without forcing you to examine each possibility every time. They bring predictability and efficiency. Questioning assumptions every time you make a choice about how to act would defeat their purpose.

But as circumstances change, the assumptions you hold may no longer be valid. Yet, your outdated assumptions continue to guide your behavior—off course, functionally barring you from getting where you want to go. Unseen yet powerful, they have literally become ***glass walls***.

Carl's Glass Walls

Although he seemed to have everything going for him, Carl was actually struggling. He *worked overtime to succeed*, but felt that he *wasn't measuring up*.

In our work together, we discovered two glass walls:

First, Carl assumed that the solution to any problem was to work harder. Over a series of promotions, he had accumulated increasing responsibilities that exceeded what any one person could do. His drive to work hard blinded him to the need to develop his staff. Once he identified his assumption, he could see that to handle his current demands he needed to develop the talent that reported to him. Carl asked a promising direct to take over some of his duties. And it paid off! The man stepped up to the plate with enthusiasm and effectiveness, delighted with the trust that Carl placed in him.

Second, Carl assumed his cheerfulness would win the day. Since cheerfulness had brought him so much success, he worried when he wasn't cheerful. When he was upset with underperformers, for example, he tried to deny his feelings. This strategy created problems. When a direct report was under-performing, Carl needed to notice his feelings of displeasure so that he could take appropriate developmental action, hopefully while the situation was still salvageable. When lost in his cheerfulness, Carl let poor performance go too long. His job also required him to deal with tough personalities. Sometimes

his cheerfulness diffused the situation; at other times, Carl needed to be tough himself. Showing resolve, perhaps with a splash of annoyance, would be more useful. But Carl hated to feel annoyed, since feeling annoyed created a sense of failure. Breaking through this glass wall involved *learning to recognize that annoyance—even anger—could promote needed outcomes*, such as not letting a bully intimidate him or others.

What about you? *What are your glass walls?* You can let them *control your behavior*, or *you can take control*, changing assumptions that were once valid, but no longer serve you well. Identifying assumptions that create glass walls isn't easy (they're invisible—outside awareness); nor is it for the faint of heart.

Talking with an executive coach or other trusted advisor is one approach. Your organization might provide leadership skill development (including an executive coach) to enable you to learn about your glass walls. Once you learn about them, you are empowered to make a choice about how to handle them. Then you can begin building skills that you didn't need when you relied on old strengths—like hard work and cheerfulness—alone. Breaking down your glass walls gives you access to more of your performance potential.

Try Self-Coaching

If you don't have a coach, try this:

First, ask yourself some questions: *What do I admire most in others? Who are my heroes? When have I been proudest of myself?* The answers will tell you something about your espoused beliefs and values. These are the thoughts you have that you would like to believe guide your behavior. ("I'm a no-nonsense guy. I tell it like it is. You always know where you stand with me.")

Next, consider your behavior over the past week. Take a hard look at discrepancies between your stated beliefs and your behavior. For example, maybe you value courage, but avoid necessary conflict. Maybe you compliment someone you should be taking to task.

Note the times that you don't behave in alignment with your stated values. These times signal the presence of hidden assumptions (glass walls) that are channeling your behavior in unintended directions, blocking you from reaching the results you're seeking. These *hidden assumptions*, not your *stated values*, are guiding your behavior. (Maybe you really think that people aren't strong enough to take what you have to say. Ask yourself what might be making you believe that. Or you may worry that someone might not like you if you told them what you think, and believe *being liked at all times is crucial to success*.)

Ask what might be compelling you to act as you do when a behavior conflicts with your espoused values. This question can bring *your hidden assumptions* to light. These are your glass walls.

Give yourself permission to be imperfect. Taking a close look at yourself isn't easy. Accepting your imperfections will free you up to work on them.

Your past success doesn't guarantee your future success. As you progress, you will confront new situations that require changed responses. The hardest part of change is identifying limiting assumptions, or glass walls. Once you achieve that, learning new skills and responses becomes much more manageable. As you do so, you'll break through to a brighter future, perhaps with a key to the executive wash room. **LE**

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ACTION: Challenge your assumptions.

Turn Vision into Reality

Use the L3 'State of Being' approach.


by Marc Michaelson and John Anderson

WE INVITE YOU TO ENVISION YOUR organization as *a best place to work*, with a highly engaged and productive workforce. Envision leaders and managers aligning to the vision, mission, and values. Envision leaders, managers, employees, partners, and customers building collaborative advantage. Envision *all employees* engaged and motivated to reach their potential. Envision a place where people lead themselves well, build high performance teams, and create the very best place to work.

Now, use the ***L3 Leadership Model*** to turn *vision* into *reality*. The *model* explores ***three integrated attributes*** that determine *how you lead* and *who will follow*:

L1 Leading Self: Total life leadership, personal mastery, and work/life integration (You Inc.). L1 is grounded in your personal values and reflects your authenticity, integrity and balance. It is how you conduct your life—the harmonious blending of all facets of your life: body, mind and spirit, family, social, career, and financial. It begins with an internal sense of self-confidence, emotional intelligence, and balance that cultivates an authentic leadership presence. This *quiet confidence* effortlessly engages followers who will support you by offering trust, passion, calculated risk, emotional intelligence, and other supportive attributes that provide high performance and productivity. It is more about who you are than your position, training, or personality traits.

Personal leadership is a state of being—it is who you are, what you believe, and how you behave. It's the sum total of your attitudes and beliefs, actions, and values. The greater your *self-mastery*, the greater your success. Leadership doesn't depend on pay or position, but on character, integrity, authenticity, and belief in yourself. Life and work are interrelated—you not only *work to live* but, given the right conditions and opportunities, will *live to work*. Your work can be—*ought to be*—activity that expresses your values, gives meaning to your life, and brings you satisfaction.

You, Inc. is headed by your ***top management team***—*Physical Health and Energy*, *Emotional Intelligence*, *Values and Beliefs* areas—that make up your "natural resources." If this team isn't operating effectively, you suffer from lack of drive, motivation, productivity, and energy. ***Five departments*** report to *You, Inc.*: Learning, Family, Social, Career, and Financial. If any department is underperforming, you won't operate smoothly or optimally. To manage the multiple demands, you need a *Personal Life Plan*, or *Total Life Leadership Plan* that addresses every aspect of your life. The *wheel of life* is made up of an inner *hub* and an outer *ring*. In the hub are *Physical* (Body), *Psychological* (Mind) and *Values* (Spirit). These are your natural resources. How well you maintain these resources determines what you achieve.

Here are *four keys* to L1, the ***Four P's*** of self-leadership: ***Purpose:*** Know what is important to you and where you are going. ***Performance:*** Understanding how you are performing in all departments of work and life. ***Planning:*** Map out a direction to improve, maintain, and lead all areas of work and life. ***Problem Solving:*** Use your resources and skills to make needed changes.

Think about what you value most, how satisfied you are, and how you are performing. This enables you to formulate an L1 Leadership POV (Point of View)—a Vision, Mission, and Plan.

L2 Leading with others: Cultivating and sustaining collaborative advantage. Your position in L2 reflects the foundation of L1 and frees you to work with individuals and teams from a position of *mutual self-interest*. When you manage well in the L1 portion of your life, you can forge productive relationships in all aspects. When you approach an interaction from a position of *creating possibilities*, you give permission for others to follow. *Collaboration* becomes the way you live in relation to others.

Today's networks of relationships mandate a new level of cooperation and collaboration. People are being asked to achieve results in cultures where the hierarchical structure no longer applies—by influencing others, often across boundaries with no direct line control of resources. The drumbeat of *do more with less* is now complicated by the need to form alliances.

Any kind of achievement requires the crossing of boundaries*, often bringing improbable partners together for an exchange of knowledge, skills and resources across disciplines, cultures, and units*. Examine your current experience with collaboration. Think about how things are going, what you could do to improve, and actions that have the best chances for creating impact and improvement.

Seven different partnerships require maintenance. *Three inside* your firm: Direct Reports, Co-workers and Other leaders and managers. And *four outside*: Customers, Suppliers, Competitors and Consultants. The challenge of leadership is growth, and building partnerships is the key. Sharing costs, risks and credit for successes rather than competing internally is the *formula for success*.

Of these seven Partnerships, choose one from inside and one from outside and characterize where the relationship is today, where you would like it to be and what specific actions you could take to move it in the desired direction.

L3 Leading Others: Creating the Best Place to Work culture of high engagement, retention, performance and productivity. L3 becomes the *culture* of the work team, department, division or company. ***L3 Leadership Power*** is not position power or influence power, but rather ***Regenerative Power***. Engaging, mobilizing, and motivating others to realize their own *L3 Leadership Power* fuels the leadership engine. This power creates a culture of self-responsibility, trust, and risk-taking based on people who lead themselves well. These people make stronger leaders, who create stronger teams, and together build high-performance organizations.

Great managers are key to the selection and retention of talented and engaged employees. Their ability to select for, clarify expectations around, deploy with an eye for peak performance, and develop staff to emphasize natural talents leads to an engaged staff that produces bottom-line results.

In a *best place to work*, how people are treated adds to *competitive advan-*

tages. Such workplaces receive more qualified applications, experience a lower turnover, reduce health care costs, enjoy higher customer satisfaction and loyalty, foster greater innovation, creativity and risk-taking, outperform competition, and have higher sustained profits.

When you invest in your people, you invest in your success. We see a positive relationship between training, motivating, and empowering employees and gains in productivity, employee satisfaction and financial performance.

Leaders can create a *Best Place to Work Culture* by first ***creating a culture of trust***. In the L3 model, trust is composed of three dimensions: Credibility, Respect, and Fairness. *Credibility* means managers regularly communicate with employees about direction and plans—and solicit their ideas. It involves coordinating people and resources. It's the integrity management brings: *words* are followed by appropriate *actions*. *Respect* involves providing employees with the equipment, resources, and training they need, and appreciating good work and extra effort. It includes making partners of employees, fostering a spirit of collaboration. *Fairness* suggests sharing economic success and recognition equitably. Decisions on hiring and promotions are made impartially, and the workplace seeks to free itself of discrimination, with clear processes for appealing and adjudicating disputes.

As companies become great, the *workplace becomes a community*. Employees take pride in their job, their team, and company. People take pleasure in their work—and in the people they work with—in a deep, lasting way.

Leadership Legacy—L1, 2 and 3

Whatever your position, if you influence change in the lives of those around you, you are engaged in an act of leadership. And you are creating a *leadership legacy*—the sum total of the difference you make in people's lives.

When you honor the tenants of *L1* and *L2*, you create *L3 Leadership Capacity*, the basic elements being: *Integrity*—the quality or condition of being whole or undivided, complete; *Authenticity*—being authentic, trustworthy, genuine; *Balance*—a harmonious or satisfying arrangement or proportion of parts or elements.

By acting with *integrity* and *authenticity* and modeling *total life integration*, you set the tone for *peak performance*. LE

Marc Michaelson and John Anderson are principals of Glowan Consulting Group. Marc is a consultant, trainer, executive coach, and author. John has served as a GM, CEO, and is author of Running the Corporate Rapids. *Visit www.glowan.com.*

ACTION: Create a leadership legacy.

Employee Bill of Rights

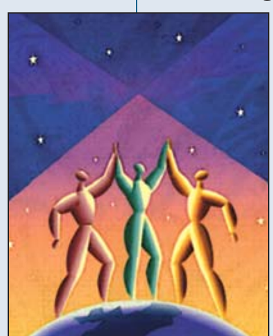
It's every leader's responsibility.

by Steve Arneson

EVERY LEADER IS UNIQUE. Leaders bring different experiences to their roles, motivate differently, and have their own style. There is no *one way* to lead. In fact, one challenge of working for different leaders is adapting to their mannerisms or approaches.

It's good that *leaders are unique*. But *unique* is one thing; *ineffective* is another. We all know managers who are *useless*, if not *counter-productive*, as leaders. They don't inspire or develop their people; worse, they alienate and *de-motivate* good employees. No one deserves a bad manager, yet they are everywhere. But what if we could change that?

What we need is a set of leadership standards—and a mandate that *all leaders* must follow them. What if there were a *set of universal rules, principles or behaviors* for leading others? What if leaders were held accountable to them? What if employees had *universal expectations* for their leaders? Having a set of *universal rights* and *accountabilities* might make for some interesting behavior change, help us identify bad managers, and have *standard consequences* for bad behavior: ignore one employee right, and you're reprimanded; break two, and you lose your bonus; break three, you're fired. *That would get leaders' attention*!



Employee Bill of Rights

Here are ***10 rights*** that *every employee* should expect from their leaders:

1. Clear and compelling vision. *Every employee* deserves a sense of purpose and a chance to "sign up" for something meaningful and inspiring. Leaders need to paint a clear picture of *why* the team exists. Those who can't explain the purpose shouldn't be leading the group.

2. Opportunity to participate in setting strategy. Every employee gets a say in how the vision will be realized. *Strategy equals how*, and leaders must figure out *how to solicit and listen to input about the strategy*. After all, employees doing the work have a sense of how it can best be done. Leaders need to open the strategy process and involve people.

3. Timely and useful performance feedback. Everyone deserves feedback. Employees have a right to know how they're doing, and how they can get better. Leaders need to conduct performance reviews in a way that's honest, fair and robust. This alone would cause a lot of leaders to step up their game!

4. Opportunity to contribute ideas and innovation. All employees have the right to offer suggestions and ideas. Leaders must create a safe environment where employees feel comfortable challenging the status quo. Leaders must solicit ideas and listen to them.

5. Frequent, honest communication. Leaders must tell employees *what they know, when they know it*. Communication must be clear, frequent, and candid. Leaders who can't or won't communicate honestly *won't be tolerated*.

6. Empowerment—everyone deserves to be empowered. Leaders should set high (but fair) expectations and give employees the resources and time to do great things. Employees must be allowed to *do it their way* as much as possible; an *empowered team* is an engaged team.

7. Recognition for great performance. All employees like to be recognized for hard work. Leaders must praise people when they do great things and recognize team accomplishments (people respond well to *positive reinforcement*).

8. Career development. People want to learn, grow and move their careers forward. Leaders must help people stretch, grow and move up, even if it means exporting talent across the company. Leaders can't hoard talent or keep people in the same role for years.

9. A mature, professional workplace. Everyone wants to work in a first-class firm where *everything is done with strong values and a high degree of excellence*. Leaders must value diversity, lead by example, and do the right thing.

10. Respect as an individual. No harassment or stupid rules. Employees deserve to be treated respectfully, and valued for their talents. Leaders will say "thank you" (a lot), and work hard to bring out the best in everyone.

All leaders are obliged to advance the art of the craft. Ensuring these ***10 rights*** is a good place to start. LE

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ACTION: Set your own bill of rights.

Practice Makes Perfect

Getting the company on course.

by Henrik Ekelund

UNVEILING A NEW strategy? Everyone knows the drill—cue the town hall meeting. Create a big splash at the annual conference. Send out emails, webcasts, brochures, even logoed shirts with the strategy boiled down to a pithy statement.

There's a *better, faster way* to achieve *genuine employee alignment* and effective execution of that strategy. Savvy leaders are now focusing on strategy *execution* as well as strategy development, knowing that practice is the key.

While having the right strategy in place is mission-critical, poor execution can sink a company and a CEO's career. In the end, execution is everything, and CEOs have less time than ever to get it right.

Senior leaders have identified *strategic alignment* and *speed of execution* as the most pressing challenges. CEOs are rarely fired because they lack a strategy, but because *they fail to effectively engage people in its execution*. This starts with building agreement among the leadership team members—getting everyone on the same page. As Jack Welch said, "Getting every employee's mind into the game is a huge part of what the CEO's job is all about."

Those top managers often internalize the strategy in different ways, which influences the implementation. The differences can lead to inconsistent execution, lackadaisical implementation, conflict, and turf wars. Without alignment at the top, a strategy can splinter into a million pieces.

How can leaders motivate people for success when strategic change is often synonymous with fear, uncertainty, and doubt? "Why should I adopt the new strategy?" is a question that every CEO must answer crisply and convincingly. Senior executives and frontline managers need to understand ***six points***: why the new strategy is necessary; the impacts of the new strategy and how they apply to daily work; changes required for the organization and the leader's department or division; how they may have to shift as leaders; what strong execution looks like; and how to build skills and motivate others moving forward.

Case In Point: Sodexo

A $20 billion on-site services and employee motivation solutions company with more than 380,000 employees, Sodexo serves 50 million people daily. When Michel Landel took over as CEO in 2005, Sodexo was primarily known for food services, despite being the third largest outsourcing company with expertise in such disparate areas as medical equipment maintenance, defense, senior care, and education. Landel introduced a strategy to better reflect current demand from Sodexo customers and capture market opportunities. He engaged top Sodexo leaders in the strategy, pushing them beyond their food-services comfort zone to envision themselves as part of a valued service provider for all non-core client services.

In March 2009, the Sodexo Management Institute was tasked with engaging 940 managers and VPs in the new strategy. They launched the CLIMB (*Change, Leadership, IMplementation, Behaviors*) program. CLIMB incorporates online learning, face-to-face sessions, and a customized, competitive simulation developed with BTS. The goal: *Get 940 managers living and experiencing the new strategy*.

After being organized into groups of 100, CLIMB participants complete a four-month online/virtual preparation process and then participate in *VirtuoSo*, the heart of the program, featuring a virtual as well as a three-day onsite simulation. Teams are formed to serve as the Senior Leadership Team, then guide the three-year simulated lifecycle of an enterprise based on Sodexo.

Managers are convinced of its effectiveness, and employees are hooked. Simulations provide rapid alignment, build confidence in the strategy's success, and help CEOs drive better results faster.

"The*VirtuoSo simulation*, provides a safe environment for risk taking, enables participants to see real-time impacts of their decisions, and offers a competitive environment that gets our people involved and committed," said Elisabeth Carpentier, VP of HR. A new wave of participants is already scheduled to attend the CLIMB program. LE

Henrik Ekelund is CEO of BTS. Visit www.bts.com.

ACTION: Improve execution through simulation.

Effective Simulations

Who, what, when, where and why.

by Jonas Akerman

SUPPOSE YOU ARE BUCKling in for a flight in a new Boeing 777. The pilot announces: "Our flight time today will be six hours at an altitude of 33,000 feet. By the way, this is the first time I've ever flown a 777. Wish me luck."

Before setting foot in the real world, pilots, military personnel, and disaster response teams use *intense simulations* to learn how to respond to challenges. Given the risks and costs, why would we place leaders and teams in situations without enabling them to *try things out*?

A *custom simulation* of an enterprise, unit or process, using real-world competitive dynamics, places leaders in a context where they step out of their normal roles and gain exposure to the big picture. Participants make decisions *in a risk-free environment*, enabling them to experience *critical interdependencies*, best practices for execution, and levers to optimize performance indicators.

Increasingly leaders turn to simulations to build strategic alignment and execution capability when faced with: implementing a new strategy and key performance objectives; accelerating strategy execution and innovation; improving business acumen and financial decision making; transforming sales teams into business results accelerators; developing leaders who are focused on front-line execution; implementing a culture change aligned to strategy; integrating merged companies; and modeling complex value chains for collaborative cost elimination.

Once placed in a simulation, users are soon grappling with issues and decisions that they must make now. A year gets compressed into a day or less. Competition among teams spurs engagement, invention and discovery.

The more customized the simulation, the more experience participants can bring back to the job. With customization, you can accelerate specific results, especially when you ***leverage 10 key elements*** of effective simulation: 1) *highly realistic* with points of realism targeted to drive experiential learning; 2) *dynamically competitive* with decisions and results impacted by peers' decisions in an intense, yet fun, environment; 3) *illustrative*, not prescriptive or deterministic; focused on new ways of thinking; 4) *catalyzes discussion of critical issues* with learning coming from discussion within teams and among individuals; 5) *business-relevant feedback*, to relate the simulation experience to key strategic priorities; 6) *delivered with excellence,* including group discussion, humor, coaching and competition that make the experience interactive, intriguing, emotional, fun, and satisfying; 7) *user driven*: progress is controlled by participants and accommodates many learning and work styles; 8) *designed for a specific target audience*, level and business need; 9) *outcome focused*, so changes in mindset lead to concrete actions; and 10) *builds community*: networks are created and extended through chat rooms, threaded discussions, and issue-focused e-mail groups.

Simulations are even more powerful in combination. Comprehensive *simulation* and *experiential learning programs* combine live and online experiences. The deepest alignment, mindset shift, and capability-building occurs over time through a series of well-designed activities. Maximize impact by involving leadership and linking *engagement* and *skill building* to organizational goals.

Well-designed simulations accelerate the time to value of initiatives. A new strategy can be delivered to a global workforce and execution capability can be developed quickly, consistently, and cost-effectively. Back on the job, participants own the new strategy and share their enthusiasm and commitment.

Use simulations to align vision, execute strategy, and accelerate to results. In July 2008, when Paul Maritz became CEO of VMware, he realized that to ignite growth, VMware needed to lead the industry through the anticipated IT transformation. Maritz and Tod Nielsen, Co-President, Applications Platform, VMware, worked with BTS on a custom simulation that provided a high-impact, experiential program for building *alignment and execution capability*.

Simulations drive strategic alignment, business acumen, leadership development and sales force transformation. An *experiential learning program* cements strategic alignment and builds execution capability. Results can be measured in company alignment, team effectiveness, revenue growth, and share price.

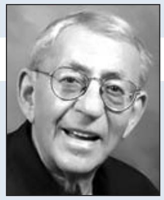
You don't need to fly blind. You can sit back and relax, knowing your pilot honed his flight skills in simulation. LE

Jonas Akerman is President of BTS. Visit www.bts.com.

ACTION: Use simulations to drive desired results.

Why Leaders Fail

Avoid these 10 dead-ends.



by Irving Buchen

MANAGING FAILURE has become a required leadership talent. Instead of focusing on *how we are doing*, we now ask *what can go wrong*. In place of standard progress reports, we recalibrate our metrics to detect slippage. Instead of focusing on what our competition is up to, we want to know what is coming out of left field. In place of hiring only American MBAs, we seek graduates who speak Mandarin, Hindi, or Portuguese.

In the process, two disturbing patterns surface. The first profiles the structural lapses of companies and what has not worked well. The second identifies leaders whose executive decisions have led us down the garden path. Although ideally interfacing both would be mutually defining, the issue of leadership steals the spotlight.

What then are the 10 most dead-end directions of failed leaders?

1. Limiting the range of competition to the near and the known. CEOs favor and monitor a world they know. Familiar ground is their comfort zone. They seldom look overseas or acknowledge wild cards. They inhabit a mental Maginot line. They have not assigned anyone to track patents or monitor the new hires of competitors. In their search for the new and experimental, they read the same journals, attend the same conferences. Few are members of the World Future Society or Copenhagen Future Studies Group. The ivory tower has few windows at the top and never a 360-degree view.

2. Allowing fear, insecurity and bossism to rule the culture. With productivity in the driver's seat and downsizing its accelerator, company loyalty has virtually disappeared. Trying to motivate and appeal to such maternal or paternal commitments falls on deaf ears. People work hard because they have to. They do not want be victims of the faceless, unfeeling statistics of productivity. Unemployment remains high because managers have found ways not to need people at all—not just now but never. When such a grim work environment is managed in brutal fashion by lousy bosses, we regress to the workhouse world of Charles Dickens who called them "bullies of humility." To this day, we have not heeded one of Deming's laws: *drive fear from the workplace*.

3. Speaking only English. A bi-lingual culture, resisted for decades in America, was only reluctantly accepted recently when we discovered that many of our customers and voters are Hispanic. Because of our insistence on speaking and writing English, we inadvertently strip from language its function of being a culture carrier and lost access to multi-cultural sources at work. How to rescue linguistic variety as part of our embrace of diversity has remained an obstacle to creating a multi-cultural workplace. We need to reclaim the mosaic that is distinctly American, support English as a world language, and recover and value all the languages of workers as our global grass roots. CEOs have to lead the charge by learning a new language and by providing language instruction.

4. Clinging to tried-and-true best practices. Often what gets us out of the box becomes the new box. Whatever value best practices offer as a model, its emulation is offset by having them often serve prematurely and inadvertently as a ceiling of how far we can go. At best it is a temporary state of perfection. But it needs tracking. Each best practice should be given a date when it first was elevated to fame as well as its departmental or divisional source. That would serve to *benchmark excellence*, to measure how long we have been coasting, and to ask those sources what they have done for us lately. The CEO has to use best practices as pressure points not to meet but to exceed.

5. Remaining vanilla. Many university classrooms are known by elaborate signage—bearing the name of a corporation who has endowed or *bought* that room as a way of a acknowledging the alumni they've hired for years. Often, the contributions are extended to endowed chairs. Tenure is now doubled, as such professors are also tenured in that chair for their academic life. Such a cozy mutual admiration society dramatizes the extent to which organizations hire from the same universities, often from the CEO's alma mater. If leaders value diversifying their teams and perspectives, they can't keep returning to the same old watering trough. The MBA, for all its accreditation standardization, is not the same from one university to another. So diversifying hiring broadly enables companies to offer many flavors—not just vanilla.

6. Planning only for familiar and favorable futures. Bad planning gets leaders in greater trouble than not planning at all. CEOs need not one but two executive teams: the conventional group of VPs; and the strategic planning group. The timelines of each are different but overlap. The first is short term: one year with focus on quarterly reports for stockholders. The second is mid to long term: minimally five years. The former deals with mission, the latter with vision. These two forecasts need to be aligned, requiring *vigilant coordination* by the CEO. Since planning has become so slippery, requiring so much guess work, *all planning has become contingency planning*—a world of best guesses and estimates. Intuition has ascended as forecasting has become more art than science and the CEO has been reinvested with the greater fallibility of being a visionary.

7. Not teaming everything. Team performance is one area of unqualified success, often compensating for lapses at the top. Leaders, companies and individuals may fail, but teams rarely do. Somehow they overcome or mute diversity conflicts; and identify and eliminate unproductive slippage between divisions. Teams increase company use of various talent assessment tools and create a rare environment for workers to apply those talents in ways that reinforce the differences of others. Teams are also a leadership incubator, often training leaders better than the official LD program, as theory is made to function in reality and leadership roles are rotated.

8. The CEO as Savior. Charisma imparts an aura of being naturally endowed—being born to the task and role—hailed as a calling. It is reserved for leaders because it inspires loyal support, sanctions a cause of salvation, and is selfless. Followers certify the power of those leaders to command, that their causes or missions are noble and unique; leaders return the favor by conferring upon loyal supporters a shared halo of charisma. In the past, such halos were reserved for pioneers of business and giants of industry who brought about miracles. That was followed by adopting a paternalistic image of *father knows best*—of a caring parent or benevolent overseer. But such overlords had clay feet, their charismatic golden wings were made of tin or wax, they were found to have their hands in the cookie jar, they betrayed trust and lofty causes, they alienated and lost followers—in short they made mistakes, they were not infallible, and they tarnished charisma perhaps forever as an infallible sign of authentic leadership. Disillusioned followers, however, saved the day. In effect, they developed a new leadership code and guidelines as conditions of followship, such as a new insistence on knowing what CEOs know. Bad or dumb decisions led to challenging the executive monopoly on information, followed by a critique of the entire decision-making process. Transparency and access were called for. Equal access to information marked the end of uncritical charismatic leadership and accelerated efforts to get rid of such hangover rulers from the past.

9. Not experimenting with different leadership models. The egos of CEOs and the hero worship they encourage lead them to conclude that they are equal to all tasks. But no leader is 360 or that good; to believe so is the ultimate blind spot of hubris. One obvious corrective is *rotational leadership* of CEOs and their teams. Such rotation would serve not only as a systematic ongoing internal chain of command, but also as a succession plan in the event of the CEO's departure. The general shift in leadership models is directional—from vertical to horizontal, from a Pharaoh holding all the cards to power sharing, from a monopoly at the top to differentiated, distributed and dispersed leadership. There is not one but many leaders, all aligned to goals, all first among equals, all carrying the company flag. The principle of experimental leadership models is enabling the company to make as many decisions as it can. The correctives of *checks and balances* are built into the process.

10. Failing to communicate, embrace, and manage the new world order. All American leaders face a hard sell. On the one hand, their basic task is to survive—to be productive and profitable in a more competitive global market. On the other hand, they're asked to be statesmen and alert their employees and customers to the condition of a precarious planet which, like their own company, struggles to remain viable. In many cases, CEOs offer sustainability as a token contribution. But to others it has become a more integrated goal. Leadership now requires raising the ante of competition, adjusting to a global economy and accepting a world in which they are no longer top dog and their standing is not assured or respected. But the second task is harder. It requires a new mode—collaboration—and the acceptance of being a member of an international collective that confesses they are both responsible for the problem, often innocently, but now charged with the solution. The first executive step is to expand and factor into the parameters of individual companies the plight of the planet earth; to raise moral consciousness and explain what that means to the future of all those who inhabit the earth; and to inculcate a new work ethic of *coopetition*.

If these 10 failures were used to evaluate current leaders, few would survive. Evaluate your leaders against this list and describe how CEOs could be pried away from playing it safe; requiring always a level playing field; not firing all the lousy bosses; shaping a multilingual acceptable Tower of Babel; questioning its infallible problem-solving tool kits and best practices; hiring look-alikes and me-tooers; practicing safe forecasting; knee-jerking with technology; humoring the egos of hubris and narcissism; failing to experiment with rotational leadership, hybrid amalgams, and cyborgs of the singularity; and failing to call for a new moral ecological commitment.

Cleaning house may not appear to be so drastic. The worry is *allowing the momentum of failure to continue* and to shape the next crop of dead-enders. What is needed is not just a *wake-up call* across the board but also an historical jolt from the future that their days of leading business as usual are numbered. We have to get off the merry-go-round, stop going up a down escalator, and develop succession plans for professionals to take over. Their debt to current CEOs would be basically negative. Their legacy would be enshrining their dead-ends into the *Ten Commandments of Failure*. **LE**

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ACTION: Evaluate your leaders on the 10 points.

Personal Leader Brand

Go beyond having a leadership POV.

by Dave Ulrich and Norm Smallwood

ONE WAY WE HELP GOOD LEADERS GET better is by inviting them to prepare a statement that reflects their personal *point of view* (POV) on leadership, considering such issues as what leaders believe, how they aspire to behave, and who they are and want to become.

We've enabled individuals to reflect on their leadership in several ways: we've shown film clips of inspiring leaders who articulate their dreams, and then invite the individual to craft a personal vision; we've asked them to do a time log and probe the extent to which their actions reflect their intentions; we've given them feedback assessments that identify their predispositions and style, then helped them create a personal position statement and a career development plan; and we've coached them to be more authentic and true to whom they want to become. These efforts have been rewarding for leaders as they define who they are, what matters most to them, and where they are going—resulting in leadership visions, missions, aspirations, and POVs.

Lately, we've recognized that these efforts complete only half of a successful leadership journey. Self-aware leaders may have personal insight and intensity, but unless it is directed in the right ways, it won't have sustainable impact. *A leadership POV needs to become a personal leader brand (PLB).*

Building a Leader Brand

A PLB has four characteristics:

1. Brand focuses outside first, then on the inside. Most leadership development starts by looking inside. Most POVs begin with "I" statements: *I believe, I aspire to, I want, I hope, I will . . .* These statements have passion, inspiration, and purpose. But they're incomplete. *A brand metaphor focuses on the outside, not inside*. Brand value shows up in the mind of the customer. The pizzazz of Apple, the experience of Disney, the place of Starbucks, the easyness of Staples, the low price of Walmart are *brand identities* that communicate to customers and investors. Brand power comes from the outside/in.

A leadership POV is internally focused—it's about *who I am as a leader*. A personal leader brand is outside/in and focuses on *how my leadership impacts others*. When a crisis hits, a leader with a personal POV focuses inside to get grounded on values, strengths, and style. This leader has authenticity and emotional intelligence to handle the crisis. But the leader with a personal leader brand perspective asks *how the crisis will affect others*—employees, customers, investors, and communities? This leader's job is to ensure that the response to the crisis serves these stake-

holders. The outside focus determines what is the right thing to do; the inside perspective is about having the character and energy to do the right thing the right way. Both inside and outside perspectives matter, but the sequence must be *first outside, then inside*.

By focusing outside first, leaders ensure that their POV will benefit someone else. Sometimes leaders may have a POV founded on their strengths, but unless they strengthen others, they won't be as valuable or as sustainable. In the movie, "The Bucket List" we learn that the Egyptians believed that the gatekeepers of heaven ask new arrivals two questions about their lives: Did you find joy? Did you bring joy to others? The first question is about building on your strengths to find joy—it is about the self, not others. The second question shifts the focus to helping others find joy. In leadership, this means turning a POV into a brand that serves others.

We recently asked leaders to write their personal POV. Most statements were consistent with our criteria. But, one stood out as reflective of a PLB:

As a leader, I'm here to serve others and serve a meaningful purpose. I am inspired by the risks we take to deliver greater transparency and value to our customers, to shift the accepted ethical boundaries of the financial services industry. I believe there is always a better way to do business, and superior returns will come with our customers' interests at heart. I hope to be recognized as a leader with courage, who puts the interests of her team and the organization before her own. I strive to make the decisions that are right.

Note that she focuses less on herself and more on the service she provides. Her identity is not from the inside/out but from the outside/in.

Leaders may acquire strengths like authenticity, judgment, emotional intelligence, credibility; however, *until they apply their strengths in ways that create value for others, they won't develop a PLB*.

2. Brand is carried through narrative and story. A leadership POV offers insights and perspectives on what the leader needs to know and do. A PLB offers a story that captures not only *what is known and done*, but also *the emotion and feeling behind it*. Brand has an emotional pull that signals what matters. We wear branded clothing to send a message about who we are. We drive a branded car to communicate our identity. A brand has a personal and public narrative and story.

Leaders who shift from a POV to a brand do more than discuss *what they should know and do* to *what they feel and value* and ultimately *who they are*. Their PLB offers a narrative about *their identity*.

In helping companies craft a brand that reflects its culture, we often ask, *What are the top three things your company wants to be known for by your best customers in the future?* The responses shift strategy, mission, and vision statements into firm brand and culture. Likewise, we ask leaders, *What are the top three things you as a leader want to be known for?* This question isn't just about what the leader knows and does, but *the identity the leader hopes to create*. This identity forms the leadership story that shapes a personal brand narrative.

3. Brand elicits trust that customers pay for. A hotel we frequent changed its ownership to a different and more respected lodging brand. When we returned after the name change, we paid a 25 percent premium for basically the same room, services, and location. Branded food in malls, airports, and stadiums nets an increase of 20 to 25 percent revenue per square foot.

Branded clothes, pens, shoes, and cars sell for more. Brand also creates intangible market value as investors have more confidence in future prospects.

Leaders who focus on their *brand* elicit *greater productivity* from employees, *more confidence* from customers, and *increased security* for investors. Employees who work for leaders with a strong PLB know more clearly what is expected from them and how to meet the leader's expectations. One leader was known for his passion for innovation and creativity; his employees were willing to take risk, offer new ideas, and challenge the status quo to respond to their leader's brand.

Another leader, known to her customers for her dedication to service, spends much of her time directly with customers, reads and responds to customer concerns, and shops as a *hidden shopper* to have a customer experience.

Brand implies a *partnership* between the firm and its customers. Leaders who coach, collaborate, and communicate are partners with those they lead. They co-create an *agenda for the future* and co-deliver on the shared agenda.

4. Brand is sustainable. Brands have impact beyond any time period, product, or ad campaign. Lasting brands endure because they are patterns, not events. These brands do not emerge merely by rhetoric or design, but by consistent actions over time that communicate and embed a brand promise. Brand recall comes when the brand endures over time and place.

Too many leadership POVs are more rhetoric than resolve, more aspiration than action, and more hopeful than real. Brand promises without results are not sustained. Leadership wish lists need to be replaced with leadership vows. When we ask leaders to prepare their PLB, they commit to *what they have to do to sustain their brand in the eyes of those they serve*. A *brand focus* builds ***leadership sustainability***. *Noble ideas* are linked to *daily behaviors* (*simple actions influence long-term results*). *Personal passion* is coupled with *interpersonal awareness* and a *commitment to constant learning*. Personal values create value for others, and endure over time.

We challenge those who develop leaders, and those who want to be better leaders, to move beyond a leadership POV to build their *PLB*. We make leadership sustainable when we focus outside/in, create stories based on creating value for others, and build trust. LE

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ACTION: Create a Personal Leadership Brand.

Sudden Leader Loss

Most firms are left unprepared.

by Sandi Edwards

THE MUCH PUBLICIZED departure of Apple CEO Steve Jobs demonstrates that while such news can send charges through the stock market, Apple was prepared for such a change. As Jobs goes out on medical leave, COO Tim Cook steps in to handle operations.

When we surveyed more than 1,000 senior managers, we found that *only one in five organizations is prepared to deal with the sudden loss of key leaders* (14 percent are *well prepared*, 61 percent are *somewhat prepared*). More than half of respondents said their companies implement succession management at the senior executive level, *fewer than 40 percent include mid-level managers and skilled professionals in succession planning*. Only 11 percent include first-line supervisors, and just 12 percent of SM programs are integrated with TM programs such as performance management and employee development.

The findings point to a looming management succession crisis. Few firms are ready to manage a top-level succession in an emergency, meaning *most companies are taking huge risks by failing to address their bench*. With every senior departure, the external brand perception is jeopardized—with a negative impact on stock values. Immediate and inherent financial costs accrue to the business as a result of *sudden* or *unplanned* employee exits.

Most firms fail to plan for succession at management layers below the top rank. When unplanned changes occur, internal chaos results—a lack of continuity with product innovation, inconsistent customer service, customer defections, and the lengthy ramp up before a new hire becomes effective and contributes positively. Morale and engagement take a hit, and the malaise impacts creativity, productivity, and performance.

Scarcely half believe their company's bench strength is *adequate*, and merely 10 percent think it's *robust*. The most common *merely adequate* succession planning is when senior managers pay only lip service to the program and are not committed to developing and promoting from within the ranks—or when planning is geared only to executives.

Managing succession requires mobilizing all employees to reach goals. Employees need to have a clear understanding of the direction, strategy, and how their roles contribute to success. Today's younger generation expect opportunities to learn, grow, and contribute; they need to understand where and how their talents fit. SM provides the platform to ensure people are *focused on targets that enhance performance*.

Planning for a smooth management succession is vital: And yet getting top leaders to focus on SM is a challenge: even great leaders may not want to consider a worst-case scenario, and finding, growing and retaining leaders in waiting isn't easy. For the past two years, managers have focused on cost cutting and survival. Now it's time for investment in sustainability and competitive advantage, based on the effective use of talent—having the best people in pivotal leadership roles, prepared to step in. Many executives are reconsidering retirement, having seen their savings drop during the recession. So, it's challenging to know which leaders are planning to retire in the near term.

To create a sound succession plan, take nine steps: 1) create and articulate current and future SM strategy; 2) ensure that the senior management team champions, communicates, sponsors and actively participates in the program; 3) ensure that all employees see regular, performance-based examples of promotion from within the firm to show that the SM plan is real and that the strategy does work; 4) inform employees of their vital role; 5) assess the talent pool objectively against both the needs of the business today and the needs projected for the future; 6) ensure that development plans reflect required competencies and align with clearly stated values; 7) continually validate your belief in your people and develop them for success; and 8) make development integral to the culture—an ongoing journey with measures and expectations; and 9) target all development efforts toward the business requisites and strategy.

Take these steps and *an effective succession management program will follow*. LE

Sandi Edwards is SVP of AMA/Corporate Learning Solutions. Email sedwards@amanet.org.

ACTION: Prepare for the sudden loss of a leader.

Employee Commitment

The grass is not always greener.

by Joe Folkman

In reviewing our 2010 employee commitment data, we noticed a small but interesting shift—a small increase in the percent (.7) of *uncommitted/unsatisfied employees*. This was not unexpected. Last year was difficult. The struggling economy created job losses, translating into bigger workloads with fewer rewards. And while in good years *dissatisfied employees* could quit and go to work for another company, the poor job market has forced dissatisfied employees to "quit and stay," resulting in a higher percentage of unsatisfied workforce.

The most surprising shift, however, was a 4.2 percent increase in the percent of *highly committed* employees. Why, in a tough year, would this increase occur? We studied this closely in a client that increased their employee satisfaction/commitment by 13 percentile points during the recession. In years when the job market was robust, many employees were quick to leave this company. *The grass always seemed greener somewhere else*. Then times got tough, job opportunities dried up, and employees started to notice how green the grass was where they were standing.

A big part of the *greener grass* were the improvements this company made that led to the positive shift in engagement. When the recession ends, they want to be positioned to take advantage of the recovery. *They stuck to their values and found ways to help their employees see the advantage of working for them*. The recession has created a great opportunity for many organizations to help their employees realize the value of staying with their current employer.

Here are the top 10 items that, when improved, have the greatest impact on creating a positive shift in employee engagement and satisfaction.

1. Improve collaboration and cooperation between departments. This can be a big hurdle. Groups hoard resources, compete for talent and duplicate information which makes everyone's job harder. One CEO said, "All of our profits are in the cracks between the various businesses or functions."

2. Make sure your company is a leader in protecting the environment, social responsibility and making a positive difference. People want to be proud of their employer. No one wants to work for a *ruthless polluter with no conscience*. Since the business of many companies is in not saving the whales or cleaning up the environment, organizations need to look for opportunities where they can give back. Even small efforts can have a big positive impact.

3. Empower employees to do more. Employees want to contribute; they want to do more, not less. People want to be treated like responsible adults who can make good decisions. When organizations push responsibility down, the result is productivity that flows up.

4. Be a great, inspiring boss. Poor leaders make life miserable, create dissatisfaction, reduce productivity, and increase turnover. But people want more than a good boss; *they want a great boss,* and organizations need to help leaders step up. Poor leaders produce *uncommitted/unsatisfied* employees; great leaders create more *satisfied/highly committed* employees. The behavior that separates leaders with *highly satisfied/committed* employees is the ability to inspire and motivate others. The knee-jerk reaction of many leaders when they encounter difficulty is to drive harder for results. The leaders who increase the number of highly committed employees *push* but they also *pull*, they inspire and motivate.

5. Create an efficient organization. *People hate to wait, can't stand lines, and delays drive them crazy*. Everyone feels that way. Inefficient organizations not only destroy their profitability, they crush satisfaction and commitment.

6. Give employees a clear set of priorities. Many employees feel that they are batted back and forth from one priority to another without knowing why they are asked to shift in a different direction. The whip-lash effect of constantly changing priorities erodes satisfaction and commitment.

7. Openly listen to employee concerns and frustrations. Many managers don't want to hear about the frustrations of their employees. Opening the channels, listening and then responding to those things we can change will have a positive impact. While some concerns might be categorized as whining, most will have an impact on the productivity and profitability of the organization.

8. Improve communications. The most common recommendation for improvement on our employee opinion surveys is to improve communication. Too often leaders avoid holding open discussions with employees. Getting regular and frequent updates is easy for an organization to do, but often goes overlooked. Few leaders communicate too much, but often rationalize they have sent the message once and *once is enough*. All of us need to hear messages many times to understand their importance.

9. Have the right number of people to do the critical work. Most organizations in the recession have downsized; hence, the scope of many jobs increased. People don't mind carrying a bigger load to help out in tough times, but *some work loads are so heavy that they crush employee satisfaction, engagement and productivity*. Organizations need to get the right amount of manpower on the critical work assignments. When people feel overburdened, their productivity and results suffer along with their engagement. Leaders need to have the courage to *push hard for needed resources*.

10. Grow and develop employees. For many companies, the first thing to be cut in a tough economy is training and development. They rationalize this by telling employees *they are being developed on the job*. Having the same experience, over and over again, is *not* developmental. Employees are valuable assets and investing in their development can pay back substantially.

With low turnover and reasonable productivity, many leaders don't see the need to improve the engagement and commitment. As the job market returns, turnover will follow (30 percent are thinking about quitting). We may be looking at *the perfect storm*. Pent-up frustrations, inability to fulfill career aspirations, boredom and feeling stuck may send your best people, your top performers, out the door. So pay attention to these 10 items that impact employee engagement and satisfaction. **LE**

Joe Folkman is President of Zenger-Folkman. Visit www.Zenger-Folkman.com.

ACTION: Engage in these 10 practices.

Courageous Followers

Should we stand up to or for leaders?

by Ira Chaleff

WHEN SENIOR MILITARY officers enter a room, subordinates stand. So do members of the press and cabinet officers when the President enters. We stand when the presiding judge enters the courtroom. Other cultures follow this norm. Is it healthy?

When we bestow formal authority on an office, we need that office—president, governor, general, judge, CEO or chairman—to function and to lead difficult initiatives. Positions confer certain powers, and shrewd officeholders acquire additional power. But ultimately the power of the office always rests on the agreement of those over whom it exerts authority.

Consider tribal leadership. Perhaps at its dawn, leadership went to the strongest individual or fiercest warrior. Soon social skills, strategic skills, and communication skills were important. When the tribe elevated a more multifaceted leader, some members would still be stronger, and others could form factions and counter or undermine the leader, keeping the tribe in turmoil and weakening its capacity to thrive.

To manage these forces, symbols, narratives, and customs emerged that protected the tribe from continuous conflict, enabling leaders to exercise what power the form of governance bestowed. Today, the president, judge, general or CEO enjoys similar predictability of support, *provided they do not egregiously violate the trust placed in them*. Standing up when they enter is a way of reinforcing the order of things.

Most leaders like this custom, as the group continually reaffirms the power bestowed on the position. It is further reinforced by conventions such as addressing the head figure by title, rank, or salutation. The deference that is shown helps get things done. But, *is it healthy for the group or the office holder, given the human tendency to abuse power?*

I find that it depends on variables, such as the divergence of opinion tolerated or encouraged, or the processes in place for decision making that invite diverse voices to be heard. But *the practice is fraught with potential danger*.

Behavior tends to change in the face of authority. Those lower in the hierarchy often self-censor or comply with orders, even those they feel are operationally or morally questionable. In the Milgram experiments, subjects complied with orders to inflict pain on others despite their discomfort—and the only trappings of authority were a lab coat and clip board! How much more do medals, robes, titles, and corner offices affect behavior? Should we further reinforce the social distance and power differential with the habit of standing each time the office holder enters?

Ultimately, the outward display of etiquette is not the problem—it's what occurs inwardly, in how the leader with these trappings of authority, and those near him or her, interact with each other. How can we honor the merits of standing when the leader enters the room without exacerbating *the tendency of hierarchy to distort relationships and communication*?

Courageous followers stand up to and for their leaders. We need to stand up *for* our leaders—they need and usually deserve our support. If in our culture we literally stand up *for* the leader, we can use this act as a silent reminder of our *dual duty* to also stand up *to* our leaders.

Leaders need candor, and candor requires courage. We can use the convention of standing when the leader enters to remind ourselves that we need to stand *in both postures* if we are to serve the leader and organization well. Especially when either the culture or style of the leader requires formal acts of deference, we need to remember *the equal importance of respectful divergence*.

When we are in the authority role, we can consider to what degree it serves us to relax these conventions. We can even imbue the custom of standing *for* a leader with a dual meaning that retains respect for authority without producing the *hyper-deference that is the downfall of leaders*. We stand up *for* the leader and, when necessary, *to* the leader, in service of our purpose and values.

If you are frustrated in trying to influence senior leaders whose style impedes growth, productivity or morale—what can you do? If you dare to question the leader, you are quickly earmarked as someone who needs to go; hence, silence (intimidation) reigns.

Those who work closely with the leader, (*senior followers*) need to assume responsibility for keeping their relationship honest, authentic and courageous. Yet, we don't honor courageous followers. We talk pejoratively of followers being weak. And we don't train people how to be strong followers who are not only capable of brilliantly supporting their leaders, but can also effectively *stand up to them when necessary*.

Optimum performance requires that both leaders and followers place the organization's welfare at least on par with protecting their personal interests. Where authoritarian relationships prevail, team members tend to conform, rather than risk the conversations that are needed to address leadership's contributions to mediocrity. Smart leaders create cultures where honest communication is the norm and rewarded. But, human nature conspires against this, and few speak truth to power. If they do so, and get rebuffed, they don't do it again.

If you are in a follower role with a leader who is abusing power, why risk your job by standing up to him? It is a better way to live. *Win or lose, you carry yourself with integrity and self-respect*. And, if you aspire to leadership positions yourself, you'd better learn to take risks. People who can't risk, can't lead.

Ask yourself: Am I holding back my contribution. Am I willing to take risks? Do I need to take more initiative? Do the perceived risks require courage to act? If so, what sources of courage can I draw on? Have I earned the leader's trust? What power do I have in this situation? Do I have the skills to effectively confront the leader?

If you tolerate the leader's counterproductive or dysfunctional behavior, *you pay a steep price*—and you place the leader at risk. So, in the leader's self-interest, learn how to help the leader be more receptive to making changes.

When we're receptive to both receiving and initiating honest and respectful feedback, and having difficult but necessary conversations, we can break unproductive followship patterns. *We can then stand up for our leader with pride.* **LE**

Ira Chaleff is president of Executive Coaching and Consulting Associates and author of The Courageous Follower. *Visit www.courageousfollower.com.*

ACTION: Stand up for and to your leaders.

Coaching for Engagement

Tap into your employees' discretionary energy and efforts.

by Beverly Kaye and Beverly Crowell

COMPANIES SPEND MILLIONS ASKING employees how they feel about work. *Are you satisfied? Does your boss communicate with you daily? Do you support the company mission and values?*

Sadly, many companies compile the data, report back, and check *engagement* off the *to do list* without changing how employee's feel about their work, their boss, or the company. Engagement and retention require a sustained one-on-one effort by everyone who manages people to get at the heart of what really matters to employees.

Organizations spend big money on surveys, and then build processes and procedures to sustain employee engagement. These plans create new programs, policies and some short-term victories, but rarely *change leader's behaviors*.

For example, one company heard from employees that *lack of career development opportunities* is a key dissatisfier. A team was assembled to address the problem, and an *employee career resource center* was created. Great news, except for the employee who asked his boss if he could go to the center and heard, "You don't have time for that. You need to get the work done at your desk."

For such leaders, *engagement* and *retention* are defined as the annual satisfaction survey and the *tedious action plan* that has to be created as a result. All the best plans will fall short if they aren't supported. That's where *coaching for engagement and retention* can create a sustained and measurable difference.

Disengaged workers, those who *quit but stay*, cost organizations *billions of dollars annually* in lost productivity, turnover, and reduced quality and safety. The task of re-engaging them falls on the leadership team. While many leaders know the importance of engaging their talent, the "how" and "all that soft, fuzzy stuff" are often left up to the HR team. After all, isn't that their job?

Coaching *leaders* on engagement and retention reduces the risk and empowers leaders to tap into their employee's discretionary effort and bring that energy to work. When coaching is directed at these issues, it helps leaders find meaningful ways to engage their talent beyond the everyday distractions.

Skilled engagement coaches understand the *unique employee engagement and retention challenges* of each leader. Surveys provide a great place to begin analysis since leaders can learn about the engagement needs of their team; however, true value comes from frequent conversations. *Surveys set the tone, but conversations set the direction*.

Leaders have a big impact in retaining and engaging people. Employees want this relationship. They feel *engaged* by their work and *cared for* by their leaders when they have open, honest, two-way conversations about their ideas, careers, motivations, and challenges. They need leaders who listen (more than once a year) to their perspectives, offer their own points of view, and provide encouragement, guidance and opportunities. When individuals *feel understood and valued* by their leader, they commit more of their energy and enthusiasm.

Engagement builds or diminishes in every interaction between leaders and employees. *Purposeful engagement is the ability to focus on employee talent in every interaction with employees.* You don't necessarily have to *do more* to engage your employees, but you need to *commit to specific actions that meet the engagement needs of each employee*.

Once a leader accepts this responsibility, the engagement coach can serve as a resource to generate ideas and provide questions that can be asked so that leaders learn more about what matters to their employees. The coach also works with the leader to explore the difference between *engagement* and *performance*. Leaders and employees tend to talk about *performance*—but what *engages* us is different and personal. Engagement conversations get to the true motivations of each employee.

If an employee wants more options to learn and grow, try this:

- *Conduct a career conversation* to learn more about their unique skills, interests, and values. Offer your perspective, discuss trends and options, and co-design a career action plan.
- *Link people to others* who can help them achieve their professional goals.
- *Take time to mentor your employees.* Share your success stories and failures. Teach organizational realities and let employees mentor you too.

If an employee doesn't feel valued, build loyalty by trying the following:

- *Recognize employees* for a job well done. Offer praise that is specific, purposeful, and tailored to each person.
- *Notice your employees*. As you walk the halls, say hello to them by name.
- *Get honest feedback*. Get a clear picture of how you look to others. Do you have any high-risk behaviors that may be getting in the way of your efforts?

If your employees want to work in a place they love, try these ideas:

- *Have fun at work*. Do something new or different, or create a culture where it's okay to laugh and smile.
- *Show enthusiasm for what you do* (it will enthuse others). Disengaged leaders won't engage their people.
- *Align your values with your work.* You will then find it meaningful, purposeful and important.

Much of *coaching for engagement* revolves around *common sense approaches* to good leadership. One approach, the *stay interview* (before the dreaded *exit interview),* asks "what can I do to keep you?" providing data managers need.

Beyond providing insight to leaders, the coaching partnership can motivate leaders need to do what they know should be done. Leaders with engagement coaches often remark that the coaching reminds them to put these common-sense strategies into practice.

Success happens when leaders assume the role of *engagement coaches*. While leaders can be *catalysts* for engagement and retention, employees must step up to identify what actions they can take to find more satisfaction at work.

The *coaching relationship* goes beyond what a coach can do to grow the leader to what the coach can do to grow the organization. Done well, coaching for engagement and retention creates leaders who think of their talent first and employees who commit to bringing the best of their capabilities to work. **LE**

Beverly Kaye is CEO of Career Systems International and author of Up Is Not The Only Way; *Beverly Crowell is Senior Consultant with CSI and Principal Consultant of Crowell Consulting. Visit www.crowellconsultants.com.*

ACTION: Start coaching for engagement.

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