

LEADERSHIP Excellence

Warren Bennis



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

July 2012



Barbara Kellerman

**Great
by Choice
Developing
Leaders
The End of
Leadership
At Least as We Know It**



"LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE IS AN EXCEPTIONAL WAY TO LEARN AND THEN APPLY THE BEST AND LATEST IDEAS IN THE FIELD OF LEADERSHIP."

—WARREN BENNIS, AUTHOR AND USC PROFESSOR OF MANAGEMENT

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LEADERSHIP *Warren Bennis* Excellence



THE MAGAZINE OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, MANAGERIAL EFFECTIVENESS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY
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End of Dragonian Leadership

Imagine this creature is the last surviving leader, telling his tales to a wizard, the keeper of all knowledge. The leader spins out his stories, a millennium of adventures, triumphs and sorrows as the wizard dutifully and diligently records them.

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Service Excellence

Win by keeping out of the woods.



by Ken Shelton

WHY DO WE PUBLISH *SALES and Service Excellence*, along with *Personal* and *Leadership Excellence* each month and deliver all three magazines to all members?

These three magazines represent the **three primary domains of development**—and *sales and service excellence* constitutes the *essence* of any great enterprise.

This truth was reinforced recently when my wife Pam and I spent a three-day weekend in Northern California, June 16-18.

Golf, Dining, Lodging Lessons

US Open. First stop was the Olympia Golf Club for the US Open where we saw Tiger fade from the leader board by spending too much time in the Woods. Announcer Johnny Miller said that “the golf course won” because most of the early leaders failed to adjust to the subtle differences in course and weather conditions (such as moisture and wind), day by day, shot by shot. No player finished under par.

• **Leadership Lesson:** The names and faces atop your *Leader Board* in the early rounds will likely change over time as the leaders face new pressures and conditions.

Carmel lodging. We then drove south along the coast on spectacular Highway 1 to Carmel and stayed at the third-generation family-owned and operated *Hofsas House* with a view from the room of Carmel Beach. Owner and GM *Carrie Theis*, granddaughter of the founder, personally greeted us, gave us a tour of the 38 one-of-a-kind guest rooms and meeting facility, and told us of area golf options. I noted that largely due to such personal attention to her guests, the “no vacancy” sign was out.

• **Leadership Lesson:** If you want to keep your business in the coveted “no vacancy” status, personally attend to your guests’ needs and interests.

Carmel area dining. While in the Carmel area, we dined at three superb restaurants:

• **Mundaka.** On a *postcard perfect* Saturday evening in Carmel, we enjoyed authentic Spanish cuisine at Mundaka at the invitation of *Marci Bracco*, complete with a waiter from Barcelona. Every delicious

bite reminded me of my travels in Spain.

• **Grasings** (Carmel): This cozy restaurant features the finest in California cuisine and a fabulous wine list. Owner and former chef *Kurt Grasings* greeted us at our table and talked about the menu, meeting options, the wine list, and his annual food and wine tour to Europe with his loyal patrons.

• **Fandango** (Pacific Grove). This world-class, *New York Times* reviewed restaurant features the French artistry of *Pierre Bain*, who after 20 years of hosting the Club XIX at Pebble Beach, opened his own place with the help of Al Shugart, CEO of Seagate Technology. Pierre greeted my wife and I and told us the story behind food and fun at Fandango. Our great waiter had worked there seven years.



Peter Drucker

• **Leadership Lesson:** have a competent chef in the kitchen (whoever makes your product) and great customer-facing service personnel who love being there.

Sight seeing. I put 300 miles on our “cool” rental car, a Mitsubishi Eclipse, to see Pebble Beach (17 mile drive), Carmel Beach, dozens

of other parks and beaches, Palo Alto, Stanford University, and back in San Francisco Fisherman’s Wharf, Ghirardelli Square, and Golden Gate Bridge.

In stark contrast to the service excellence that we experienced on this trip were the TSA “cattle corrals” for coach customers at the San Francisco airport.

• **Leadership Lesson: Deliver quality service.** “If I could put my finger on the one thing that Disney does best,” said George Kalogridis, president of Disneyland Resort, “it would be that *we exceed expectations* in our service delivery. If you’ve ever been to Disney Theme Park or Resort, you likely have a story to share about the Cast Member who made you feel special. That’s by design—a key part of everyone’s job is to treat each and every Guest with respect, to treat them as an individual and not just part of the crowd—to give them that feeling of being important.”

As the great *Peter Drucker* said, the key to *Leadership Excellence* (or *winning customers* or the *US Open*) is delivering *service excellence*, day by day, guest by guest, hole by hole. LE

Ken Shelton
Editor since 1984

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Great By Choice

Good is the enemy of the great.



by Jim Collins

SINCE GOOD IS THE *Enemy of great*, when leaders settle for *good*, they forfeit becoming *great*. I like to study contrasts to detect the difference between *good* and *great* leaders and teams, and 10X organizations—those that achieve 10X the industry standard on key performance measures.

This much I can assure you: you do not become great (and remain great) by *luck*. You become great by *choice* (*decisions*) and *discipline*—sustained greatness isn't a function of luck, happenstance, circumstance, or conditions.

In my research, I've tried to identify the *X-factor* of great leaders. It is *not* personality or charisma. Some great leaders have a *personality bypass*—others are very charismatic.

I find that great leaders have the *humility* to seek out people who are better and brighter than they are in their field. Yes, these leaders have ego, confidence and ambition, but they channel it outward—it is not about *them*: it is about the *cause* or *company*.

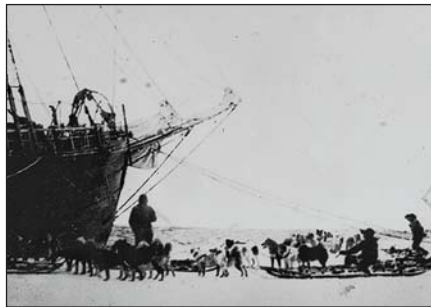
They're concerned first with the *Who*—getting the *right people* in the *right seats*, before they address the *Where* question. They pick the *right people*, with the *right skill* for the *right job* at the *right time*—then serve a higher purpose.

One study of the contrast between two leaders and teams that faced the same conditions but achieved dramatically different results involved the 1911-12 Terra Nova Expedition to the South Pole. The British team was led by Robert Scott, the Norwegian one by Roald Amundsen. All 25 members of the Scott team died just 11 miles away from a supply station; the team led by Amundsen achieved all their goals.

After studying this case, and others like it, I conclude that the big difference is always *the choices or decisions made by the leaders* and *the discipline to carry them out*. I find that 10X companies are those that are led by leaders like Amundsen. And to try to capture this leadership style, I created a *triangle* with *fanatic discipline* on one side, *productive paranoia* on the second side and *empirical creativity* on the third side.

- By *fanatic discipline*, I mean the discipline to make *the 20-mile march* daily. Amundsen set a goal of traveling 20 miles a day, regardless of conditions; Scott tended to travel only in good weather and tried to make up for lost time. As a result, he was overextended and lacked essential provisions. While many men on Amundsen's team complained about the daily 20-mile march, it was the key to their success.

- By *productive paranoia*, I mean considering every possible contingency and planning for it. For example Scott actually took motorized sleds, and when the engines froze, had to abandon them. His Plan B were ponies—not knowing that ponies sweat and in the Arctic sweat means death. So the men had to harness up and pull their own sleds. In contrast, Amundsen first



talked to natives, the Eskimos, to learn that dogs are really the only way to go in the arctic, and he acquired from them some top sled dog teams.

- By *empirical creativity*, I mean that *yes, you can be innovative and creative, but your creativity should be based on empirical evidence*. If you lack this cultural software of the three-sided triangle, your team tends to suffer from *chronic inconsistency*. All three parts of the triangle are necessary. I call it *the genius of the AND* (*not either/or, but both/and*). For example, without *productive paranoia*, you tend to make lethal mistakes. The only mistakes you learn from are the ones you survive.

Since some people contend that success is more a matter of luck, I studied the role of luck in the results leaders achieve. While it's true that some people benefit from good luck, *over time luck is not a factor*. It's really what you do with the luck you get. And I call that *return on luck*. You can even achieve a good return on bad luck by learning from

mistakes. Again, luck is not a cause of greatness, but bad luck without *productive paranoia* can mean the endgame.

I also studied the role of relationships. I discovered that the best leaders realize that *life is people*. They invest in key relationships, honor those relationships, and cherish the time they have with the people they love and work with. I learned this lesson, as many leaders do, the hard way when my wife had a double mastectomy. She's now 10 years free from cancer, but as I look back, I realize that it was an inflection point in our lives—our relationship was made stronger and better because of the choices we made in dealing with it.

Lately, I've been working with cadets at West Point to develop *leaders of character*—an entire generation of Level 5 leaders. I find that the essence, the fundamentals of leadership don't change over time, but great leadership is so fresh and rare that it always seems new.

Many people today complain about *uncertainty* and *turbulence* in our economy and society, but what I find abnormal is the 50-year period of post-WWII stability. When you study history, you find that *turbulence is the norm*, not the exception. Great leaders *assume that bad things can and will happen* and prepare for downturns. When the bad things happen, they have a shock absorber. The question is not *if* but *when*. They amass resources and reserves to absorb shocks. They also practice the *ying-yang principle of preserve the core values and stimulate progress*. The core principles remain constant, but the practices are adapted to culture, conditions, technologies, strategies, and economies.

For example, one common *core value* is *respect for the individual*, and yet this means different things in different cultures. For example, in Idaho, that value might mean *give me lots of space and leave me alone*. In China, it means almost the opposite. The core value doesn't change but the application does. It's why *leadership*, although it has common threads, is more of an *art form* than a science.

The world works poorly when those in power are motivated more by serving themselves than by seeking the welfare of those they lead.

Uncertainty, punctuated by episodes of chaos, characterize most of human history. Today, relentless technological disruption, the global nature of competition, and the instantaneous flow of information all contribute to instability. The good news is that the risks of uncertainty come with opportunity—*environments characterized by turbulent disruption can go hand-in-hand with extra-*

ordinary growth. There will be some big winners and lots of carnage along the way. We can't predict which companies will deliver astounding results in coming decades; but leaders can learn from the history of great companies, and increase the odds of *thriving in uncertainty*.

A mix of *creativity*, *discipline* and *paranoia* are needed to thrive. The 10X winners rarely out-innovate everyone else; they combine *creativity* with *discipline* so that the *discipline* amplifies the *creativity* rather than destroying it, while remaining *productively paranoid* to stay alive in the face of big, unexpected shocks.

During uncertainty / turmoil, leaders need to place *concentrated bets*, but only after gaining empirical validation that the bet will likely succeed. It's about first firing bullets to gain empirical validation, then firing a cannonball. This allows you to get the exponential results of concentrated bets, while limiting your risk. When you engage in risky activities, manage the risks, to achieve BHAGs (Big Hairy Audacious Goals) and to stay above the Death Line. Remember: *the only mistakes you can learn from are the ones you survive*.

The 10Xers recognize changes and threats early (due to their *productive paranoia*), then make rigorous decisions and take disciplined action. The key question is not *Should we go fast or slow?* but *How much time do we have before the risk profile changes?* They go slow when they can, fast when they must. If they have time, they let events unfold, while preparing to act decisively when the time comes. They keep an eye on the storm and prepare for it. Rather than react instantly, they watch events unfold before making deliberate decisions.

Try these 10 To-Do's:

1. Build a *pocket of greatness* (minibus).
2. Get the *right people* in the key seats.
3. Double *questions-to-statement* ratio.
4. Confront *brutal facts*—not *opinions*.
5. Find your personal *Hedgehog* (passion and drive) and focus on it.
6. Be disciplined with your *Hedgehog* principle (allocate time for it and do your *20-mile daily march*).
7. Get a high return on your next luck event and honor your best luck.
8. Have a *Stop Doing List* as well as a *To Do List* with *no more than three priorities*.
9. Create pockets of quietude in order to think and learn.
10. Set *personal visions* aligned to *lifetime core values* and purpose or 10-year BHAGs that you share with others. LE

Jim Collins is author of *Good To Great* and *Great by Choice: Uncertainty, Chaos, and Luck*. This article is adapted from his ASTD presentation/interview. Visit www.jimcollins.com.

ACTION: *Become great by choice.*

Peer Learning

Bring improvements home.



by Harry Hertz

ALL LEADERS HAVE A gap or challenge to address—an area where they could benefit from gathering different insights and perspectives from other senior leaders. What if to fill the gap or attack the challenge, they could learn from and share best practices with a cohort group and with CEOs from award-winning national role models—and have a senior executive as a coach? Graduates of the *Baldrige Executive Fellows Program* apply learning from networking, benchmarking, and sharing with other executives on a project of strategic significance in *their* firms. With *capstone projects* approved by their leaders, Fellows expand their markets, engage employees, and introduce new products—all based on learning received in the program.

As part of a collaborative year-long *learning experience*, Fellows share strategies and engage in dialogue with *senior executives* of Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award winners. The Fellows meet at Baldrige Award recipient sites, participating in tours and discussions focusing on the Baldrige systems perspective and key aspects of leadership. Fellows discuss topics that align with the *Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence* (leadership; strategic planning; customer focus; measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; workforce focus; operations focus; and results) but through the lens of leadership. And they gain insight into *best leadership practices* related to: setting directions, values, and expectations to balance stakeholder requirements, stimulate innovation, and ensure sustainability; managing for innovation and operational excellence; developing and executing strategy; ensuring *customer-driven excellence*; and valuing team members / partners.

Fellows follow a process that enables them to pose questions to each other and other senior executives and gain input on a project of strategic significance to their organizations. This process, repeated at each meeting,

results in benchmarking visits among Fellows' companies, comments on potential blind spots to explore, advice on approaches to pursue, and the hows and whys of leadership and planning.

Some of the take-aways include:

- **Culture trumps strategy;** you need to set culture first or strategy accomplishment will be severely hindered.
- **Visionary leaders are passionate and authentic;** they walk the talk and they have very different styles, but their sincerity and clarity of purpose are visible.
- **Visionary leaders set aggressive goals**—and it's amazing how often committed employees will achieve them.
- **Engage employees;** committed people are the lifeblood of organizations.
- **Focus and discipline are essential.** Leaders need to be relentless in making their *aims clear* and *messages consistent*.
- **Consumers/customers are wired, tired, and focused.** Delight them in a way that recognizes their situations and needs. They want honest relationships and supplier agility.
- **Your employees are constantly listening to you** for clues.
- **New employee orientation should touch the emotions in authentic ways.**

Gaining *emotional commitment* of people early speeds up learning by six months.

- **Communication between supervisors and employees and among employees needs to be worth-based and not hurt-based.** Too often words not chosen carefully lead to hurt rather than help when the goal is open communication to help a colleague

achieve high performance.

- **A framework for organizing thoughts and processes is critical.** Baldrige provides that framework.

From exposure to Baldrige Award winners and their executives, Fellows bring home added learning for their staffs, including how to: leverage core competencies; build on strategic advantages; address strategic challenges; make strategic use of the voice of the customer; segment data and use the analysis; focus on appropriate metrics—selection, use, alignment; improve communication; and see with a systems perspective in their culture.

The program puts leaders together and uses *peer learning* to work through the *Baldrige Criteria*, enabling organizations to become more effective / profitable. LE

Harry Hertz is Director of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program. Visit www.nist.gov/baldrige/fellows/index.cfm.

ACTION: *Design your learning experience.*



Developing Leaders

How are the people you lead doing?



by Noel Tichy

THE BIG CHALLENGE that organizations face today is growing and developing a strong pipeline of leadership talent for the future.

How are you doing as a leader? You can learn the answer by asking: How are the people you lead doing? Do they learn? Do they visit customers? Do they manage conflict and initiate change? Are they growing and being promoted? Is their performance better because of your interest in and dedication to their development?

Respected leaders of organizations that constantly outthink and outmaneuver their competitors build large pools of talent. They personally develop leaders at all levels. In their teaching sessions, they discuss the role of leaders in detecting trends and navigating turbulent shifts. They develop leaders who can spot trends and who have the courage to act. They encourage people to lead in their areas. They participate in their company's leadership development (LD) program—teaching their point of view (POV) on how to grow the business and asking participants to come up with ideas for growing their areas. They might ask, If you were CEO, what would you do? They orchestrate open and candid discussion. They talk informally with participants, as someone who has been where they are, to impress on them the leadership duties—the conduct, honor, and teamwork.

For the past decade, customers, employees, investors and boards have demanded such *leadership*. When they don't get it, they tend to overthrow leaders who fail to change ahead of the times and fail to reward their investors with rising share prices.

In winning organizations, top leaders develop *leaders at all levels* as a *priority*, pursued with the same *zeal* as new products, new customers, and competitive edge. In these organizations, leaders feel that it is their *duty* to develop others, and they do it personally instead of delegating the task to others.

Leaders are judged by sustained success not only in adding value for

stakeholders but in developing leaders who constantly sense change, excite others about change, and implement change faster.

The best way to get more leaders is to have leaders develop leaders.

Leaders pass on their experience to others, who are expected to use it and develop their own leadership styles.

To develop others effectively, leaders must have a teachable point of view (TPOV)—an opinion on what it takes to win in the business and what it takes to lead other people. Once they have a TPOV, they think of creative ways to find teaching and learning opportunities. They turn every interaction with their people into a learning and teaching event and often set aside time to teach leadership outside of scheduled activities.



Leaders create stories about the future of their organizations. A TPOV becomes the basis for leaders to present a dynamic, compelling *story* that creates a case for change, a vision of where the organization is going, and how to get there. Once leaders have a *story*, they take bold actions that bring about lasting change.

In today's global marketplace, pleasing customers and making a profit are functions of quick thinking and agile action. The only way to get *speed* is to have *trust* among leaders—people who are prepared to make smart decisions and implement them.

How can you best develop leaders at all levels? Winning organizations are known for preparing people to be effective leaders. Great leaders are great teachers. Organizations succeed over time not only because of their core competencies and use of modern technology and management tools, but also because they *continuously regenerate leadership at all levels*. Such leaders

reinvent cultures, competencies, and tools at critical times. Experienced managers are required to teach, and part of their bonus is based on how much and how well they do it. You can only learn certain critical things from people who have been there and done that.

A culture of leaders developing leaders isn't limited to senior leaders. All managers must see teaching and training as a big part of their job. The most powerful experience is when leaders teach their own POV. In our approach, participants benchmark other companies and leaders, examine their own experiences, then state their POV on leadership and how to win in their businesses. This approach helps leaders develop a TPOV in four leadership areas: ideas, values, edge, and energy.

- **Ideas.** A business starts with ideas about services/products in the marketplace. Those ideas lead the business to produce and deliver value to customers. Leaders must be able to explain to all stakeholders how the business succeeds in creating value.

- **Values.** Winning leaders articulate values and shape values that support business ideas. They avoid *abstract terms*, focusing instead on operational values that affect the business.

- **Edge.** Leadership is about making tough *yes-no* decisions. Winning leaders face reality, and make decisions about people, products, businesses, customers, and suppliers—even with imperfect data.

- **Energy.** Winning leaders are *motivated*, and they motivate others regarding change and transition. Leaders must teach people how to energize others, face-to-face and through large-scale organizational efforts.

Leaders with a TPOV have views about budgeting, planning, investing capital, and other things. Great leaders take a POV and use it as a springboard to action. A leader engages other people by translating his or her POV into a dynamic *story*. Most people think, recall, and communicate with *stories* that include a rise and fall, the overcoming of great odds, the upholding of principles despite the cost, questions of rivalry and succession. Leaders take the foundation of a POV and build stories about beating the competition, satisfying customers, and other successes.

We use the term *story* rather than *vision*. To stay ahead of the competition, organizations must act quickly and decisively. That means that leaders must offer more than a vision or static snapshot of where an organization

wants to be. They must also foster motivation and action. They do that best by creating stories.

Leaders' stories have these elements: 1) a case for change, 2) an idea where the organization is headed, and 3) how it will get there. Based on those stories, leaders take actions that transform their organizations.

At companies where leaders develop leaders, a key role of HRD is to help leaders craft their teaching approaches. That requires HR staff to collaborate with leaders to create a *culture* in which *leadership* and *teaching* are intertwined.

The agenda for LD has shifted drastically in the past decade. Most of what has been done in LD falls short. It has been too rote, too backward-looking, and too theoretical. It has rarely been tied to a business's needs nor prepared leaders for the challenges of the future. Companies that win now and develop leaders so they can win in the future take a different approach. Their leaders *personally* and *actively* develop leaders.

The challenge to have *leaders develop leaders* has profound implications for the heads of business, line managers, and HR professionals. A company's future is too important to outsource. Yet, when it comes to developing leaders, many companies rely on consultants or executive education programs. For *leaders to develop leaders*, executives and managers must take an active role in developing their TPOV and coaching people. That may involve running a program, writing books, teaching, using business forums as teaching events, or seizing teachable moments.

Executives, HRD people, and others have to link initiatives for developing leaders with their business priorities. That means committing personally to developing leaders, making that commitment public, and ensuring others are equally committed. It also means ensuring that LD programs provide a rapid ROI as measured in cost savings, revenue growth, and *positive momentum*.

For HRD professionals, there's an urgent message: *Your role in developing leaders must change.* You can no longer be the contractors who develop leaders for other people or the buyers of consulting services that do the same. Too often, these become *empty promises*. You create a tradition of *leaders developing leaders* by identifying key leaders to teach, helping them create a POV, and designing ways for them to teach. **LE**

Noel Tichy is Professor of Management & Organizations and Director of the Global Business Partnership, University of Michigan, and coauthor of *Judgment*. Visit www.noeltichy.com.

ACTION: *Ensure that your leaders develop leaders.*

Leadership Brand

Know your 'yes' then say 'no.'



by Susanne Biro

WHEN WAS THE LAST time you used this powerful two-letter word—*No*? I believe that you should say *no* more often—once you know your *yes* (the distinctive *brand* of your leadership, product, and organization).

I consider Seth Godin to be one of the great marketing minds of our time. Seth is a clear and poignant communicator of big, important ideas. Simply put, his messages matter not only to your ultimate professional success, but to the success of your industry overall.

Recently, Seth posted the following list of *no*'s on his blog: *No*. No, we don't take clients like that. No, that's not part of what we offer. No, that market is too hard for us to service properly. No, I won't bend on this principle. No, I'm sorry, I won't be able to have lunch with you. No, that's not good enough. Will you please do it again? No, I'm not willing to lose my focus, and no, I'm not willing to compromise.

A simple but effective reminder of how critical it is to know who you—and your brand—are, is served up in the power of a single word: *No*. The clearer you can be about who you are, the stronger and more valuable your offering and your brand will be. When you know who you are—what your values are, what you stand for, what you offer and how—the better you can set boundaries and say *no* to the many opportunities in which you could partake but probably shouldn't.

As the artisan baker Lionel Poilâne reiterated, "In business, it's very important to be able to say *no* when you feel like saying *yes* would mean losing your soul." Knowing who you are remains at the core of our decisions and is a powerful place to come from when so many don't know who they are or try to become too many things to too many people. When you know who you are, you can focus—and say: *No*.

I find it curious that many people feel they have to be dishonest to others when faced with a choice between making up a story or simply saying:

"No, I'm sorry I can't have lunch with you." Why should the reality be so difficult to say? Far too many people feel they have to come up with an excuse or reason as to why they cannot—or simply do not want—to do something that's not in their best interest personally or professionally.

The implications of this disempowered state—the avoidance of a simple *no*—is relevant to what occurs in more important professional matters. And, that is to say nothing of what it's like to be on the receiving end of disempowered people. For example, if I ask you for lunch and you claim you didn't get my voice message until too late, but when your story doesn't add up, the result is that *I no longer trust you*. The outcome you were hoping for—to not damage your relationship because you simply don't feel like lunching today—is exactly what results. It's sad so many talented people feel so vulnerable professionally that they don't yet know the success that can result when they finally stake claim as to who they really are.

In the words of the late Steve Jobs: "We say *no* to 1,000 things to make sure

we don't get on the wrong track or try to do too much. We're always thinking of new markets we could enter, but it's only by saying *no* that we can concentrate on the things that are really important." Many of us admire the contributions and brilliance of Steve Jobs and wish we could be more like him. We fail to recognize that the chance to be the kind of person worthy of our own admiration is always right in front of us. And it's summed up in a two-letter word, *no*.

Now, let's make this personal by answering these questions: What are your top five values? What is your ideal professional reputation? Write it down. Do your answers to the above align with your organization's brand? How well do your daily interactions deliver on your ideal professional reputation—your personal leadership brand? If I visited you and spoke with the people with whom you most interact, how many could recite your answer to questions 1 and 2? Given the above revelations, what is *the one thing* you most need to focus on in 2012?

Now, are you committed to saying *no* a bit more? I hope the answer is *yes*. **LE**

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ACTION: *Have a great yes, then say no.*



Leader Paradoxes

Try creating common ground.



by Ralph Jacobson

IS THIS YOU? YOU USE time management tools, and yet you struggle to balance your life. You and your team try trust-building, but your relationships remain strained. Your efforts to implement change are met with resistance—placing great risk on your ability to achieve strategic intent.

You seem to have few solid choices, few solutions. You wonder whether the issue is you, others around you, the job, or life itself. Seeing no options, you become frustrated. You want to spend more time on things important to you AND worried that if you do, you won't succeed professionally. You want to delegate responsibilities to others AND worry that you'll be held accountable if they don't perform. You are caught between the boss who wants you to think strategically AND direct reports who want you to focus on operations. You feel compelled to choose one side or the other AND sense that either choice will be wrong.

Problems have solutions—paradoxes do not. Paradoxes must be consistently balanced. To work through the issues, you have to change from the either/or formula to both/and. There must be: long term and short term; professional and personal time; stability and change; team and individual; me and us; centralization and decentralization!

A paradox is a conflict between two perspectives that appear incapable of simultaneously existing—yet they must. A paradox has at least two apparent options, called polarities (short and long term). The effective management of a paradox requires balancing polarities.

The issue is not whether to choose one or the other, but both polarities simultaneously. What keeps you from doing this? You hate uncertainty/anxiety and tend to avoid or reduce it. Paradoxes create conditions that bring out fight-or-flight impulses. You feel compelled to take quick action to reduce tensions. You may choose to take an either/or approach to ameliorate the situation. But if you treat a problem like a paradox, the problem never goes away; if you treat a paradox like a problem, the paradox gets worse.

Ask three questions to determine if the issue is a problem to be solved or a paradox to be balanced: Have you tried implementing solutions for a long time—and nothing seems to help? Do you see at least two viable alternatives? Is the issue important to you? If so, the issue is a paradox that must be balanced.

Most paradoxes have two polarities: long term/short term; right for me/right for us; invest/take profits; diverse points of view/efficient use of time. Which polarity is right? Which is wrong? In a paradox they are both right and wrong. In our predicament, we may not see this so objectively. Rather, we are likely to . . .

- Choose one polarity over the other by either advocating our solution or passively withdrawing participation, assuming the issue has an obvious solution. The danger is that our solu-



tion may create the next issue or deepen the current paradox. The winner in any argument over a paradox tends to be the individual or function with the most resources or political clout.

- Accommodate both sides with a compromise that reduces the short-term tension between those who hold different viewpoints but does little to balance the paradox over time. The effective management of paradox requires strong emphasis of both polarities simultaneously.

- Stubborn emphasis on both polarities. Each party feels that they are right and won't see the value of the other. The strain pulls the two sides further apart. A power struggle ensues, and if a winner emerges, the organization loses. The seeds of discord can survive far longer than the original issue.

By understanding paradox, individuals and functions that hold opposing points of view are more likely to both advocate their own perspective and see the potential value of the other's perspective. Each sees that the optimal path

forward may be to embrace totally opposite views. They leave their conversation with a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the positions, and with an agenda that includes possibilities that neither could have imagined at the start, and with mutual respect.

Drama of Unbalanced Paradox

Unmanaged and unbalanced paradoxes foster employee cynicism, wasted resources, and missed opportunities. Here are the predictable stages.

Stage 1: Dissatisfaction and fear. Unbalanced paradoxes reveal themselves in poor profits, high turnover, and in-fighting among functions. With the lack of a clear forward path, ambiguity and tension trigger employee awareness that the status quo is fraught with danger. Some employees cling to the past while others realize that their former responses are insufficient.

Stage 2: Advocacy. To ameliorate their anxieties, people believe that only one side can prevail. They lobby for that side to the exclusion of the other. Leaders must then referee internal battles or choose sides. However, their deciding in favor of one side hardens functional walls and prevents finding ways to harmonize opposing interests.

Stage 3: Sub-optimization. Choosing one side comes with costs, such as a focus on short-term gains rather than long-term profits, a concentration on a narrow customer set, or the dominance of one group over another. Well-intentioned choices sow the seeds of further dissatisfaction, sub-optimize the chance of finding a range of options, and limit the ability to respond effectively.

Stage 4: Negative consequences. Choosing one side over the other minimizes the ability to address present and future challenges. The same issues resurface as unnecessary turnover, reduced profits, lessened competitive strength, and a culture of cynicism. The drama continues as leaders seek to remedy the ills of the past by choosing the other side.

Managing paradoxes requires bringing together those who hold opposing viewpoints and establishing common ground based on careful listening. Wise leaders recognize the strengths in others' perspectives and the deficiencies in their own. They accommodate various viewpoints. They balance paradox to affect change. Bringing together opposing perspectives enables the creation of new and more powerful possibilities. LE

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ACTION: Manage paradox to create change.

End of Leadership

At least as we now know it.



by Barbara Kellerman

OUR FIXATION IS ON *leaders*. We assume that they have the keys to the kingdom, that they have most of the power, authority, and influence, and that they make the decisions that most matter. Wrong! Leaders are increasingly *vulnerable* to forces beyond their control—and followers are increasingly *entitled, emboldened, and empowered*. Leaders are in decline, followers are on the rise. Moreover, the context pertains in historically unprecedented ways.

My new book, *The End of Leadership*, looks at this phenomenon from a particular vantage point of someone, me, who's been a fellow traveler, nearly from the inception of the *leadership industry*—my catchall term for the now countless leadership centers, institutes, programs, courses, seminars, workshops, experiences, trainers, books, blogs, articles, websites, webinars, videos, conferences, consultants, and coaches claiming to teach people—usually for money—how to lead.

Being a leader has become a mantra. It's presumed a path to money and power; a medium for achievement; and a mechanism for creating change, not always for the common good.

And, there are other, parallel truths: that leaders of every sort are in dispute; that the tireless teaching of leadership has brought us no closer to leadership nirvana than we were previously; that we don't have much better an idea of how to grow good leaders, or of how to stop or at least slow bad leaders, than we did 100 or even 1,000 years ago; that the context is changing in ways leaders seem unwilling or unable fully to grasp; that followers are becoming on the one hand disappointed and disillusioned, and on the other entitled, emboldened, and empowered; and, lastly, that notwithstanding the enormous sums of money and time that have been poured into trying to teach people how to lead, over its roughly 40-year history *the leadership industry has not in any major, meaningful, measurable way improved the human condition.*

Here is the problem framed another way—visually. Imagine a graph with two trajectories. The first is that of the *leadership industry*, showing a nearly non-stop *rise* over the past 40 years. The second is that of *leaders*, showing a nearly non-stop *decline* over the same time. Leaders of every stripe are *far less respected and trusted* than they were when the *leadership industry* was in its infancy.

I'm neither proposing a one-to-one correlation or direct relationship nor denying that some individuals and institutions have benefited from their investment in the *leadership industry* (each year billions of dollars are poured into leadership training/development). Rather I am saying is that it has not had an obvious beneficial effect on society at large.

It's impossible to exaggerate the degree to which the word *leadership* and the imagined ideal of *becoming a leader* have infiltrated our collective consciousness. My place of employment, Harvard University, exemplifies the trend. Virtually *all* of its professional schools boast the words *leader* or *leadership* in its mission statement: the mission of the Harvard Law School is to “educate *leaders* who contribute to the development of justice and the well being of society.” The mission of the Harvard Medical School is to “create and nurture . . . the best people committed to *leadership* in alleviating suffering and disease.” The mission of the Harvard Divinity School is to “educate women and men for service as *leaders* in religious life and thought.” The missions of the Harvard Business School and the Harvard Kennedy School are more of the same—and other institutions of higher education share the fixation.

I think this *leadership lockstep* rather a pathetic manifestation of a fad or fashion of *mindless followership*. Why does the Harvard Law School insist it *educates leaders*? Does it no longer suffice to excel at what you do, to be a consummate professional, a lawyer, who chooses, for whatever reason, *not* to lead, but instead to hunker down to be, say, a legal scholar, or a local lawyer—

or even, heaven forefend, a *follower*?

To obsess about *leaders* at the expense or exclusion of *followers* is wrong-headed—as it is to obsess about leaders and followers at the expense or even exclusion of context—especially at this moment in history when *contextual intelligence* is of paramount importance.

The leadership industry is ahistorical. We do not make clear to our customers that followers have always been important, and that today they're more important than ever. In the last 40 years, the years during which the leadership industry came to pass, evolutionary changes in culture and revolutionary changes in technology, social media in particular, have greatly changed patterns of dominance and deference so as

to favor the ostensibly powerless over the apparently powerful. These changes are, moreover, transcendent—they affect each of the different sectors and every country and culture.

The End of Leadership, then, tells two tales. The first is about *leadership* and *change*—how followers (for example, political protesters

and shareholder activists) increasingly impact the course of human affairs; and about how leaders, no matter how highly positioned, increasingly are vulnerable to those lowlier than they. The second is about the *leadership industry*—about the problems associated both with leadership as a scholarly pursuit and as a pedagogy of practice. I ask: *how can, how should, leadership education and development be re-imagined, re-invented, and re-configured to be in keeping with the temper of the time?*

It is not an idle or idiosyncratic question. Even blatant bastions of *corporate conformity* such as *management consultancies* are looking for new ways of teaching leadership, drawing on fields such as philosophy, psychology, evolutionary biology and even neuroscience.

I would not recommend teaching how to be a good leader without teaching how to be a good follower. Nor would I support instruction on either leadership or followership without instruction on the immediate and distant *context*. But in the end this is not about my preferences; rather it is a *call to action* in response to the recognition that whatever the *leadership industry* is doing right at the micro level, at the macro level it still has a long way to go. LE

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ACTION: *Reimagine your leadership education.*



Reinventing Leadership

The end of LD, at least as we know it.



by Ken Shelton

AS OUR CONCEPTS OF leader and leadership evolve, our leadership development (LD) methods must evolve with them to match the new nature of work and organizations and to make these new leaders highly effective.

Some 25 years before Covey and I wrote about the habits of *highly effective people*, Drucker defined what *disciplines* made leaders (*executives*) effective. Today we need the same prescience. He once said, “I don’t predict—I just look out the window and see what’s visible but not yet seen.”

As I look out my window, I see that the nature of leadership is changing to suit the new nature and structure of work and organizations. This, in turn, is causing the best LD practitioners to redesign their LD programs/processes.

Since the *who, why, what, where* and *how* of work now change *by the year* (not *by the century* as in times past), internal LD practitioners are dancing as fast as they can to keep up (and external consultants are pitching a new LD package a day). Managers and leaders must now cope with employees who may . . . work at home or half a world away; work for more than one company; mix parallel careers with spouses; be motivated by knowledge, passion, and purpose as well as pay; act as *social entrepreneurs*; and play *money ball* with their organizations.

During the 1950s and 60s, Drucker was immersed in the *organizational mindset*. Starting in the 1970s, he became disenchanted with much of OB and its management practices.

For three decades, I’ve documented what Drucker almost single-handedly created, albeit unintentionally—the *leadership era*. Ironically, Drucker was not a *guru* looking for *groupees*; in fact he *repelled* or *expelled* them. Like his contemporary, Edwards Deming, Drucker worked alone. Isolation afforded him independent insight—the flash of brilliance that instantly illuminated the answer to the pert question *What’s wrong (or different) with this picture?*

Among other seedy aspects of management and leadership, Drucker decreed:

the separation of *elite* managers/leaders from their constituents; the attraction of most leaders to a cadre of social and political admirers; leaders divorced from line managers, front-line workers, and customers; leadership separated from *core principles* like *mutual responsibility, sustainability, stewardship, service, and shared sacrifice*; leaders divorced from nature and natural laws; leaders divorced from product innovation and from those who make and sell products and serve customers; leadership promotion/selection *based on appearances*.

His cries caused a host of adherents to reinvent management and leadership—and LD programs, priorities, principles, processes, and practices.

Reinventing Leadership and LD

Here are a few Drucker-inspired shifts in leadership and LD:

Old Leadership

Economy: Profitability
Character: Situational
Talent: Compliance
Position Power
Isolation/Separation
Protective Custody

New Leadership

Ecology: Sustainability
Integrity: Unconditional
Talent: Commitment
Influence Power
Connection/Cause
Interdependency.

Old LD

Semi-academic
Classes/content
Solo and site learning
Maps and charts
Teacher/consultant
Skillsets/mindsets
Dominance/deference
Draw from business
Focus on managers

New LD

Field performance
Experience/application
Social/mobile learning
Compass and context
Coach and mentor
Social/political savvy
Cooperation/synergy
Disparate fields
Focus on followers

10 Development Mismatches

Drucker debunked the *mythology* of management. Ironically, many of his salient lessons for leaders have no correlation to current development methodology! Here are 10 examples.

1. Creative abandonment. Drucker taught that leaders need to ask, *When do we stop pouring resources into former cash cows that no longer generate the income to justify their existence?* He asked leaders, “Don’t tell me what you’re doing—tell me what you *stopped* doing.” Most new leaders are trained to milk sacred cows—not kill or *abandon* them.

2. Hiring, developing, promoting,

and firing. Drucker talked about these as *life-and-death decisions*. He warned leaders to be well acquainted with the candidates and familiar with their strengths and values to ensure a good fit. Yet few emerging leaders practice making such *life-and-death* decisions.

3. Outside-in perspective. Drucker said that leaders must become *outside-in champions* who advocate initiatives that focus on the customers and other constituents—and help staff people to sell and service clients better. Few LD programs help leaders do this.

4. Marketing/sales. Drucker invited leaders to ask, *Who of our non-customers (missing customers) should we be doing business with?* Few LD programs venture into this vital area.

5. Nurture innovation. Drucker was aware of barriers that inhibit innovation. He believed that *every brain should be in the game*. Few LD programs prepare leaders to be *innovation champions*.

6. Collaboration with competitors. Drucker encouraged *collaboration* with firms that can perform the service better and cheaper (only marketing and innovation were seen as sacrosanct in-house activities). Few leaders practice forming such alliances.

7. Leader as conductor. Drucker compared *leaders to conductors* of an orchestra—*guiding* professional players as masters of their own domain. Few emerging leaders have experience as conductors of professional talent.

8. Decision-making. Drucker knew managers needed experience in *decision-making* to ensure they’re not afraid of failure, and know when no decision is required. Few new leaders see that a decision made, even if wrong, is usually better than no decision.

9. Strengths and priorities. Drucker coached leaders to ask, *What needs to be done?*, to limit priorities to two tasks at a time, to ask, *Of those things that would make a difference, which are right for me?* and to share purpose and priorities. Leaders must know their *style/strength*.

10. Engage in character development. When we speak of *executive development*, said Drucker, “we mostly talk about *developing people’s strength*. Character is not developed that way—it is developed *inside* and not *outside*.” Leaders must think *expansively* and *responsibly* about their *footprint in the world*, about their core values and commitments.

Eliminating such mismatches will improve LD programs. LE

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ACTION: Match LD with new roles of leaders.

Strategic Leaders

Develop a strategic mindset.



by Michael Miloff and Lois J. Zachary

AS THE WORLD BECOMES MORE COMPLEX and interconnected, strategic change must become multi-organizational and multidisciplinary. And yet, many leaders lack the strategic mindset and collaborative process skills and tools needed to drive strategic change.

Mentors play a key role in helping leaders to hone strategic leadership skills and harness the multi-organizational and disciplinary synergies that drive strategic change. By working with leaders one-on-one, mentors can help them become more strategic by having them reflect on their experiences and relationships, set stretch goals, try new behaviors, and gain and integrate feedback.

Seven Ways Mentors Can Help

We've discovered *seven strategic leadership components* that enable leaders to bring fresh thinking and perspectives to advance priority strategic initiatives. Here are seven ways mentors can help the evolving strategic leader develop in each area.

1. Gain self-awareness and manage emotions. To avoid making irrational decisions—especially under stress, time pressures, and information uncertainty—leaders need to quickly grasp the right action to take. Mentors can hold up a mirror and help leaders by facilitating their reflection about mistakes and successes in judgment; identifying their decision-making and behavioral patterns; and 3) asking questions that open up honest assessment of what they could have done differently.

2. Expand knowledge. It's difficult for leaders to capitalize on opportunities and respond to threats unless they grasp the technical and social domains and societal trends relevant to their business. In our knowledge-intensive but often siloed world, *breakthroughs come by applying insights and solutions from other spheres of work and life.* Mentors

can expose leaders to a broad range of perspectives, whether through reading, talking to experts and clients, exploring *the power of metaphor*, brainstorming, or extracting lessons from their customer experiences and lives.

3. Hone vision and focus on the right actions. Facing countless problems, effective leaders focus on the central opportunities, threats, and solutions to build a compelling vision and strategy. By saying *no* to seductive distractions, strategic leaders position themselves to say *yes* to the right actions. Mentors can help leaders avoid pursuing interesting, secondary, or easy issues, and focus on the central issues.

4. Empowerment and process management skills. Leaders create synergy. They energize, mobilize, and focus



participant intelligence, talent, creativity, and accountabilities. Mentors can help leaders build key relationships and exercise process leadership by: creating maps of problems and potential solutions, leading processes that generate strategic insight and focus, engaging key players by creating excitement, and building ownership.

5. Presence and entrepreneurialism. *Presence and credibility* are prerequisites to be taken seriously. *Entrepreneurialism* enables leaders to see and seize opportunity, develop and apply creative solutions, take risk, tenaciously pursue goals, and resiliently bounce back from defeat—valuable attributes in a competitive world that values innovation. Mentors can help leaders develop *presence and entrepreneurialism.*

6. Build and maintain personal networks. What people *think about a leader* shapes if and how they approach that leader and what they offer—whether it's with information, opportunities, or collaboration. To attract and capitalize

on the talents of others, strategic leaders need to have good networks and a reputation as someone trustworthy. Mentors can help leaders build their network, profile, and brand with other leaders, clients, partners, experts, and influencers by engaging these parties in dialogue that explores for synergy.

7. Pursue personal development.

Mentors collaborate with leaders they mentor in the design and implementation of their personal learning and development plan. It begins by focusing on the future and where that leader wants to be. Mentors help leaders integrate their career and personal aspirations and values.

Leaders must be learners and build their strategic leadership capabilities so they can inspire, mobilize, and create ownership for the future. Mentors play a key role in making this happen.

More Ways to Support SLD

Beyond mentoring, you can develop *strategic leadership skills* in five ways.

- **Use a competency model.** Using a *leadership framework*, define the knowledge, skill, attitude, and personal and network competencies for being a leader who can harness collaborative processes to create strategic change.

- **Concurrently address organizational strategy and personal capacity.** Ensure that any development process attends to both external situations and internal personal capacities. Turn *strategic initiatives* into *opportunities for reflection, feedback, and personal growth* and turn *professional growth* into *organizational benefit.*

- **Demand structure.** Build a demand structure for showcasing what mentees have learned and the practical implications. This adds excitement, engages senior leadership, and creates a healthy tension and *motivation* for development.

- **Deploy tools and templates.** Work with leaders to ensure they develop strategic management tools and customized templates. This helps each generation of leaders learn, apply the best techniques, and enhance the tools.

- **Support communities of practice (COP).** Facilitate COPs that promote personal development, network-building, cross-organizational learning, peer support, rapid diffusion of innovative practices, and a culture of collaboration.

Adapt these approaches to the leader's context, budget, and culture. **LE**

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ACTION: Develop your strategic leadership.

Political Roles

This comes with being the boss.



by Linda Hill and Kent Lineback

MANY MANAGERS UNDERSTAND THAT dealing with *political dynamics* is part of their jobs, but they're reluctant to *play the games*. They dislike conflict and competition and consider political give-and-take mostly an *ego-driven waste of time*. To them, it's all about coercing or manipulating others, a world where *who you know* matters more than *what you know*, where winners win because they're better connected, not because the business case is stronger.

So they tend to deal with others only when there's a problem or need. Otherwise, they focus on their group and its work. *Judge me by results, they think, not by how many people I know or backs I slap*. Many managers become disillusioned, even cynical, about the way organizations work. So they step back. That's a wrong-headed response. They can't do their jobs as managers without engaging the organization.

Consider your many political roles:

- **You troubleshoot for your group.** When you disagree with another group because you have different priorities, you must deal with them to *keep the work flowing smoothly*. If you don't confront them quickly, they might blow up in your face. If a dispute between your customer service group and the sales department festers, frustrated customers might shift to a competitor.

- **You act as information conduit between your group and the outside.** You're the *central clearing house* of information passing into and out of your group. Your people deal with others for day-to-day work, but most *non-routine info* passes through you. The new product in another division is failing. Not your problem? It will be when there are budget cuts. To get such info, you must be *plugged in* to the broader organization.

- **You negotiate for your group.** Do you think your bosses know what you and your group need or that they'll provide it if you merely ask? Resources

(like money, space, support, time, and information) are always scarce. You must negotiate with your bosses and colleagues for them. You also negotiate arrangements and expectations with others—what will be done, how, and when. If there's giving and taking to be done, you can decide what to ask for and what to give up and who can create and join coalitions of like-minded colleagues in support of *common interests*.

- **You speak for your group.** You are your group's *official spokesperson, champion, ambassador, lobbyist, advocate, and PR flack*. Your people and the organization expect you to play this role. How your group is perceived by outsiders depends largely on your efforts in *spreading the good news* and in personally explaining to other groups involved the cause of any problem and the solution! Only you can do this.

- **You protect your group.** You serve as a *buffer* between your group and outsiders, including senior management. Your people expect you to challenge *inappropriate or unrealistic directives* and protect them from *excessive bureaucracy*. You act as a *gate-keeper* for pressures and demands as you manage the sometimes



conflicting needs of your team/organization. A weak manager—one *without influence*—can only pass on others' demands.

Your job is to *integrate* your group and keep all parties working together. You stand with one foot *inside* your group, the other *outside*. This role comes with your formal authority, which puts you in charge and makes you the contact point for your group with outsiders. You must show competence in this role to win the trust of others.

Consequences of Nonperformance

You can't avoid the political side and still do your job. If you don't exercise influence effectively, if you hold yourself above the political push-and-pull, you limit your effectiveness and suffer *seven dire consequences*: 1) problems go unresolved between your group and others; 2) disagreements get resolved against your wishes; 3) your group and others operate on incomplete or inaccurate information; 4) others *misperceive* and *misunderstand* your group; 5) oth-

ers distract your people because no one negotiates, filters, or mediates outside pressures; 6) your people lack the resources they need; and 7) your people think you're letting them down—as a manager, you're both incompetent and lacking in character because you don't care enough about them and their work to provide what they need.

In *all organizations*, there are unprincipled game players who derive satisfaction not from the work they do or the purpose they serve but from plotting, scheming, and winning internal battles. And, sadly, poisonous political climates and cultures encourage such behavior. If you work in such a place, look for work somewhere else.

Yet, most organizations are political environments where decisions are made and conflicts resolved through influence. To succeed in them, you need influence.

And, to build and exercise influence, you must *manage the inevitable political dynamics*. You can't focus on your group alone, since no group can succeed in isolation. You must influence people over whom you have no formal control—to get what your group needs and to work for what's best and right. Your people count on you to do this so they can excel at their work; and the organization depends on voices like yours to keep it on the right track.

You develop influence by understanding how organizations actually work and embracing the political side. Do you see organizations as rational hierarchies in which information flows up the chain of command and directions come down? Do you believe influence should come from position or title, augmented by track record and expertise? Do you consider any effort to gain influence in other ways to be an egotistical drive for status or control to manipulate others or build empires? Do you believe that differences should be settled by a rational search for the *best* or *right* solution, which will be obvious to all intelligent, right-thinking people, all of whom share the desire to work together? Do you consider conflict a failure of management or organizational design?

Real organizations are more complicated because *they're composed of people*. Management is largely about negotiating paradoxes and trade-offs. Hence, *all managers* must recognize certain realities in order to deal with organizations as *they are*—not as they *should be*. **LE**

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ACTION: Perform your political role as leader.

Strategist-in-Chief

Take charge of your strategy.



by Cynthia A. Montgomery

WHY DO SO MANY strategies fail? In recent months we've seen sad stories unfold at Kodak, Hewlett Packard, Nokia, Yahoo, RIM, and Sony, to name a few. My answer is that *the strategies have not been dynamic*.

Many strategies—and many leaders—get stuck because they see *strategy as a problem to be solved and settled*; in fact, leaders need to think of it as an open, not closed, file; something that evolves and changes, not something that is static. Strategy needs constant, not periodic attention. That's why *leaders must be strategists*. No one else can shoulder the responsibility of setting its course and seeing the journey through. Who else understands the company fully in all of its parts, from its financial resources to its organizational capabilities and its leadership pipeline? Who else can draw all of your people into the process of creating a strategy and keeping it up-to-date and vital?

Only you can be the steward of your business's future. I learned this after my teaching shifted from MBA students to executive education, particularly a *five-year stint* in Harvard's flagship program for owner-managed companies. As I worked on strategic issues with these leaders, I saw how invested they were in making the right choices. Yet I saw too that much popular wisdom about strategy wasn't serving them well. Few, had a *long-run competitive advantage* that is the Holy Grail of strategy.

As strategist-in-chief, your aim is threefold:

1. Be clear about the company's purpose: Most leaders struggle to explain *why their companies exist*. They can tell me about their industries and products, but can't articulate the specific needs their businesses aim to fill, or the unique points that separate them from competitors. Nor have they thought concretely about where they want their companies to be in 10 years, and the internal and external forces that will get them there. Yet every concept of strategy—*sustainable competitive advantage, positioning, differentiation, added value*—flows from purpose.

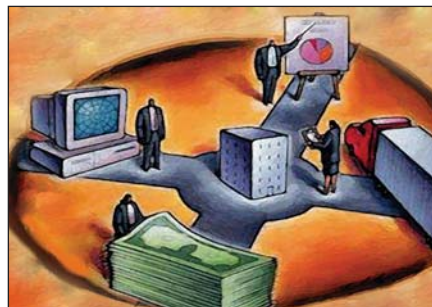
Nothing is more vital—*purpose* is what generates the *difference that matters*.

- *Sony* started with a clear purpose as a brilliant technological innovator. Then it decided to build an entertainment empire. Soon the company lost its *difference that mattered*; management of its engineering prowess fell between the stools of running the other businesses, and its innovative edge vanished.

- *Yahoo* sank into decline because it stuck with an outdated purpose.

- *Apple* had one, lost it, and narrowly escaped death before Steve Jobs returned to rebuild its purpose.

- *IKEA*, by contrast, has continued to prosper and expand because its founder, Ingvar Kamprad, had a powerful sense of purpose based on a deep comprehension of his customers and industry. Kamprad created a system of value



creation—a *clearly defined purpose* tightly backed by mutually reinforcing parts.

If leaders lack a clear idea about *what they want their business to be*, they can't create such systems because *they don't know what these should be designed to do*.

Your purpose has to answer four questions: *Who do we serve? With what sort of products or services? What we do that's different or better? and What are we doing today that enables us to thrive tomorrow?* A good purpose puts a stake in the ground. It says, "We do X, not Y." Companies that don't choose, risk ending up in no-man's land—being nothing of distinction to anyone.

2. Live with your strategy daily. Any strategy will eventually fail if leaders see it as a *finished product* or *solved problem*. Strategy is a journey of change and evolution that needs continuous leadership. Too often, managers zero in on one competitive advantage, expecting it to be sustainable; when it gets into trouble, they hunker down and protect the status quo instead of rising to meet the

needs of a new reality. But any one advantage, even a company's system of value creation, is only part of a bigger story, *one frame* in a motion picture. The need to manage across frames makes a leader's role in strategy vital.

Sustainable competitive advantages are rare. Whatever constitutes strategic advantage will eventually change, and defending one that has outlived its time will lock you into the past. As a leader/strategist, ensure that your company continues to add value.

3. Be the strategic leader of your team.

In setting the strategic direction and tone, you'll be *guiding* team members—deal them in. Your ability to connect with and motivate others is key. Managers in marketing, production, service, as well as C-suite executives must make decisions daily that should be based on a *shared sense of what the company is trying to be and do*. If they disagree about that or misunderstand it, how can they make consistent decisions that move the company forward?

The communication has to be two-way. You need the input of those at the top and on the front lines. You need the knowledge and insight of those who face the customers, grapple with the realities of production and logistics, and compete for the resources they need.

We discussed this in class recently. One leader said that *strategy* was properly *the exclusive province of a corporate elite*—20 or so people who had *the real picture* going to an offsite, from which wisdom would then trickle down (the old view). Later in the session another member suggested that we hear from a manager whose company had made a remarkable turnaround in a tough industry. He told his story: the idea was formed, and *everyone* was brought on board. I then asked, what did he mean by *everyone*? He said, "All 5,000."

Becoming a *strategist-in-chief* can transform your business. As strategist, you watch over the organization, guiding its course, making choices that bring it back to center day after day, even as you choose when the center—the purpose—should evolve. You must decide whether or not to *lean into the wind*, and whether your strategy can withstand the elements. Your *purpose* will change because the industry changes, tastes change, and your people change and bring new strengths and skills to the enterprise. Ultimately, it will change because you make the call to do so. LE

Cynthia A. Montgomery is author of The Strategist: Be the Leader Your Business Needs (HarperBusiness).

ACTION: *Become the strategist in chief.*

Management Culture

Learn to cope with three pressures.



by Denise Moreland

IMAGINE EVERYONE GOING to work every day to do only and exactly what they love! All the work gets done through the diversity of skills, interests and talents woven into a whole that is much greater than the sum of the parts!

For many people, doing work they love is only a dream. Frustration, power struggles, drama and dealing with difficult bosses are realities that impede engagement, making people dread Mondays and live for the weekends.

With excellent resources available to leaders on how to manage talent and inspire employees, why are so many people still unhappy at work?

The cause of most discontent at work is management culture—rules, beliefs, expectations, and language that pressure managers to behave in ways that undermine goals and the best thinking. Culture is the collective personality of a group. It guides behavior toward conformity, providing the principles people must follow to be accepted. At its best, culture reflects human connections based on shared values and identity. At its worst, culture reflects biases with the power of collective exclusion and judgment toward those deemed unacceptable. Since we want to belong, most of us follow cultural norms, even when they go against our values or conscience. Culture changes when individuals question prevailing rules, assumptions, beliefs and language, and offering alternative norms for a better future.

Management culture provides guidance about how bosses are supposed to behave. Sadly, rules and expectations placed on managers are based on outdated assumptions about human motivation. New thinking about how to engage employees gets layered on top of the old, putting managers in contradictory roles. Managers are expected to be hard-nosed and soft-hearted, advocates and disciplinarians, controllers and coaches, supervisors and leaders. They are expected to provide the big picture and know all of the details, to be experts in their fields and in the art of human relationships. They are often expected to do the impossible.

Three Categories of Concern

In 20 years in middle management, I realized that cultural pressures placed on managers most in need of questioning fall into three categories: *Ownership*, *Superiority*, and *Systems dynamics*.

1. Ownership matters. The common belief is that managers own everything about the work and the employees who do it. When employees feel no ownership of the work or the organization, it is difficult for them to invest in its quality or success. When they feel their time and talent belongs to management, they feel resentful and guarded about sharing their ideas. To engage the imagination and commitment of employees, ownership must be shared. Management must view employees as partners in the work and organizational goals.

2. Superiority tango. Management culture pressures leaders to view themselves as superior to those they manage. Bosses do have superior authority, but this does not mean that bosses are superior in other ways. They don't possess superior knowledge, intellect, insight, skills or judgment. Still, there is cultural pressure to pretend bosses know best what to do and how to do it. Don't question management, Do as you are told and Don't outshine the boss are unwritten rules in the culture of management that restrict employee engagement and rob organizations of vitality.

The superiority tango refers to the tension caused by the presumed superiority of bosses, and implied inferiority of employees. The most common tangos are coercion and compliance, control and resignation, domination and submission.

When managers are expected to have better judgment than employees, employees feel forced to follow every directive, idea and whim of the boss—even when it makes no sense, is a waste of time, or is blatantly wrong.

When leaders are perceived to possess superior knowledge, they often feel pressured to control. Micromanaging leaders create resignation in employees who then disengage their creativity.

When managers assume a posture of

superiority, they become the center of employee activity, dominating every aspect of the work, which requires employees to submit to management styles, preferences and personalities.

When management asserts superiority, most employees accept their inferior status. Those who rebel by refusing to comply with directives that don't make sense are cited for insubordination and punished to elicit more docile responses.

Instead, we should listen to them. Employees who refuse to follow the unwritten rules may be our best hope for transforming culture—for creating cultures of inclusion and creativity, where everyone is engaged, working from their strengths fueled by their passions.

3. Systematically speaking. Organizations are human systems that tend to mimic other familiar systems, such as families.

People often say they want to work somewhere where they feel like family (not property), but patterning work relationships after family relationships also has its drawbacks.

When managers act like parents, employees often act like children, creating a

vicious cycle that serves neither well. Managers must challenge behaviors and beliefs that feed parental instincts rather than treat adults as children.

Another model of management culture is to view organizations as well-oiled machines and managers as master engineers. But human elements such as creativity, innovation, passion, enthusiasm and commitment require more than an engineering model of management.

Democracy as a system of governance is gaining traction within management culture. The global democratization of information has put new expectation on leaders for greater access, transparency and accountability. We must embrace Democracy to move management culture forward to new levels of engagement, productivity, and collaboration.

Imagine a workplace where leaders lead with integrity, honesty and transparency, setting directions that make sense and making decisions that are broadly supported. Imagine employees trusting management, and management trusting employees. Imagine everyone going to work to do only and exactly what they love! Now, make it true! LE

Denise Moreland is the author of *Management Culture: Innovative & Bold Strategies to Engage Employees*. Visit www.mgmtculture.com.

ACTION: Challenge rules that don't make sense.

Seven Disciplines

of highly effective leaders.



by Jeff Wolf

TODAY, THERE IS GREAT demand for a new generation of *highly effective leaders* because of the competitive global marketplace and retiring senior leaders. Where will they come from? How can they be developed?

Highly effective leaders practice 7 *Disciplines* to achieve greatness:

D1. Alignment: They align their *motive and mission, purpose and passion, with a market need and business strategy.* To check alignment, seek feedback on how your behavior affects your boss, peers and direct reports to learn how others perceive you. Such feedback indicates areas for improving your relationships. Since *perception is reality*, to lead well, you must manage perceptions. By asking questions and seeking feedback, you open up a dialogue so you can receive feedback on your behavior. You also show humility and gain credibility as you ask: What can we do to make the organization, team, group or department better?

D2. Casting: They hire smart—hire the right people and put them in the right positions. They choose people for key positions as carefully as a casting director. Recruit, hire, and promote people who fit the culture and brand and empower them to act well their part. Only *the right people* (talent who do great work) are your *greatest assets*. Fire *the wrong people*, and take corrective measures with underperformers. Surround yourself with the best and brightest people you can find—people who are smarter and have better skills than you for their positions. Set high standards, and *never compromise them* in hiring. Hire people with *great attitudes and essential skills*—they will lift the skills and mindsets of those around them. Hire slowly, and fire fast. Leave a position open until you find *the right person* who is also *the right fit* for the job.

D3. Development: They train, motivate, build, empower, and retain an optimal high-performing, creative and innovative team. They invest wisely in people. Develop, recognize, reward and promote from within. Keep on board a

high performing team. Great leaders create more *leaders at all levels* by nurturing their development. They don't just delegate *work*—they delegate *decision-making powers*. When people have the authority to make certain decisions, they feel more responsible and loyal. So, *empower* your people. Don't *micro-manage* them—turn them loose to perform the jobs. Explain the task, tell them *what* needs to be done and *why*, but don't tell them *how* to do it. Then they'll take ownership, accept accountability, think creatively and offer ideas. When they feel you value their ideas, they'll find ways to boost performance.

D4. Delivery: They create a quality product, brand it, sell it well, and satisfy and retain customers and clients to deliver desired results. They seek to *continuously improve* their quality prod-



ucts/ services, have high employee engagement and customer satisfaction. They use their drive and ambition to make things happen, to make a difference daily. They're excited about their role, always seeking ways to improve and motivate and inspire their people. They get things done in ways that *maintain relationships* and *sustain results*. To boost their self-esteem, *catch people doing something right*. When people believe in themselves, they achieve amazing things. Inspire them to provide outstanding customer service. The happier your customers, the more they return.

D5. Communication/motivation: They listen with *empathy* and speak with *honesty* to gain and maintain trust with stakeholders. Make your communication count. The late Sam Walton, founder of Wal-Mart, said, "Communicate everything to your associates; the more they know the more they care. *Once they care, there is no stopping them.*" Today, many people feel vulnerable. Open the lines of communication; let

them know that you care about their personal lives as well as their work. Great *leaders* are great *listeners* who connect with people. Learn through listening—listen openly, ready to learn, as opposed to listening defensively, ready to rebut. Communicate a clear, compelling and inspiring vision: 1) here's where we're going; 2) here's why; 3) here's how we're going to get there; 4) here's your role; and 5) here's how we'll work together to get there.

People are motivated in two ways: intrinsically and extrinsically. *Extrinsic motivation* involves outside factors: money, power or position. *Intrinsic motivation* comes from within: the desire for pride, a passion for the work and the desire to do a great job. Learn what each person needs and provide it.

D6. Social/emotional/political intelligence: They network regularly, socialize to maintain core relationships with key stakeholders, and have some fun at work. They develop healthy lifestyle habits and patterns and guide people using their social/emotional/political intelligence. Working hard and having fun are not mutually exclusive. So, appoint two CFOs; the traditional *financial officer* and the *chief fun officer*, who creates ways for people to have fun at work. Fun breeds creativity, energy, productivity, innovation, and profitability. Humor helps people through tough times, reduces stress and absenteeism, and brings them closer together. When people are having fun, the brain produces *endorphins*, which help heal the body. People will take appropriate risks if they can *laugh at their mistakes*. When you laugh at yourself, your employees will find you more approachable.

D7. Sustainability: They avoid common *mistakes* and *sins* that often derail other leaders. They may be promoted for their technical know-how and job performance, but once in a management or leadership position, they gain the *soft people skills* required to sustain high performance. They maintain credibility and avoid pitfalls by being honest, forthright, and open—their values, allegiances and priorities are beyond reproach. Their strong character and integrity are manifest by their *walking the walk* and *talking the talk*. They create a climate of positivity, punctuated with frequent praise and recognition.

By utilizing these leadership skills, you can change attitudes and create a positive, nurturing culture. LE

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ACTION: Cultivate these seven disciplines.

Trust Required

Control is not an option.



by Don Peppers and Martha Rogers

MANAGERS ALWAYS ASSUME THERE IS a key to *managing* events and situations. Engineers solve problems with mathematical certainty, while financial analysts calculate values, tabulate costs, and predict sales trends with reasonable confidence. But as technology empowers social relationships, through social media platforms and smart-phone capabilities, the predictability of events and situations is diminishing, because social relationships depend on complex feedback loops that generate unpredictable outcomes.

This is difficult for many managers to accept. Traditional business is a *discipline*, not a social conversation. And the discipline of marketing is manageable. It could never reasonably be compared to the social dynamic at a cocktail party, or to a freewheeling discussion among many different participants. But social interactions involve each participant's awareness of and independent reaction to the behaviors of other participants, and these feedback loops subvert most efforts to impose control, or to manage or predict the behavior of the system.

While our *interconnected age* is characterized by more random fluctuations and complex-system oscillations, our brains are not equipped to deal with such unpredictability in a rational way. We prefer control and order. We crave it. When necessary, we lie to ourselves to preserve an *illusion of control*.

In the 1970s a man won the Spanish lottery with a ticket he'd chosen for its ending number of 48. Proud of his "strategy" for winning, he explained: "I dreamed of the number 7 for seven straight nights, and 7 times 7 is 48."

The *illusion of control* serves as "a powerful mechanism to immunize against harm." And since we believe we're in control even when we aren't, most managers believe the effects they generate through their actions are greater than they really are. For instance, 90

percent of chief marketing officers believe that customers trust their company's brand as much as or more than they trust competitors' brands! While we likely find this statistic less comical than the Spanish lottery winner's rationale, is it any different? *Randomness* and *unpredictability* characterize business more than ever—and leaders need to cope.

The most valuable asset that you can have, when dealing with random events and unpredictable trends, is trust. Enjoying the trust of customers is even more vital today. Trust is a *long-term* quality, conferring *long-term* financial benefits. When you focus on earning and keeping the trust of customers, you're focusing more on long-term value creation—so you'll be less likely to fall victim to the same self-serving, retrospectively obvious biases that afflict all



short-term management decisions. People are human. *You are human.* And yet you need to be aware of your own weaknesses.

In times of unpredictability, the most logical course of action is to *do the right thing and hope for the best.* You can't control what people say, but you *can* control what your company does. If you are trustworthy daily, you'll create *true customer advocates* over time. Then when one person whines about something or tries to make trouble, your best customers will drown out the negative voice.

Six Strategies to Succeed

To succeed in an unpredictable world, leaders need six strategies:

1. Use analytic techniques that don't require high accuracy. Simple statistical models are often more reliable for dealing with complex situations than more detailed models. This is good advice for marketing professionals. The problem in dealing with social networks and other complex systems is that a

sophisticated model is more likely to fit past data well but fail to predict the future, while a more basic model is less likely to fit past data, but more likely to anticipate possible future scenarios.

2. Prepare for multiple outcomes.

Don't try to make the *one right guess* as to what will most likely happen, make multiple guesses. Place many small bets on a variety of options. This is the way any innovative process works, and innovation is a good analogy for prediction. Don't bet the farm on the Edsel, without also having a Mustang or Thunderbird in your portfolio.

3. Find and rely on the predictable elements of the situation. You can't predict who the next *Super-User* will be for any social network, but you know that all networks have them. Likewise, you can't know how long it will be before technology makes it possible for a specific customer to find out you tricked him into paying more than necessary, but sooner or later technology *will* make it possible. Just because you don't know which particular day it will rain doesn't mean you should sell the umbrella.

4. Focus your evaluation of initiatives on the inputs, not just the outputs. Randomness will confound even the best efforts to produce results. But when you assess a project or initiative's effectiveness, evaluate the quality of the decision to undertake it. Don't rely solely on the *actual outcome* of the project (bad or good), but examine the quality of the *process* that went into its planning and execution. A bad leader might be elected despite the evidence, but as long as the election is fair, don't throw out the democratic process.

5. Remain agile, and strive to respond quickly. There's no substitute for awareness, listening, and detecting events as soon as they happen. Focus on "*sense and respond*" as an organization, and empower your people to act quickly and decisively. Have a social media *policy* that is strong on principle but flexible. And stage a social-media fire drill every so often.

6. Trust-proof your business. You have to be prepared for failure, success, and everything in between. *But if others know they can trust you, then you'll never be on your own.* As long as your focus is always on *doing the right thing*, then your customers, your employees, and your other stakeholders will all have an interest in seeing your company weather whatever unpredictable storm might come your way. LE

Don Peppers and Martha Rogers, Ph.D., are coauthors of *Extreme Trust: Honesty as a Competitive Advantage*.

ACTION: Practice these six strategies.

Measuring Productivity

Rethinking the old number's game.



by Brady Mick

IN BUSINESS, NUMBERS rule—for good reason: As a universal language, everyone understands numbers are ideal for measuring productivity. By calculating how much time and money is required to produce and sell products, numbers provide companies with clarity of expected employee efficiency and effective success. While this approach works for goods-producing industries, it often leaves service-based industries scratching their heads and wondering: “What is the gold standard for measuring success when the time-money-product equation is not complete? What replaces widgets?”

To redesign the time-money-product equation to reflect productivity in a shifting market, a change in mindset needs to occur. This begins by recognizing the surge in service-based industries. Only then can additional variables such as employee process, shared ideas, and innovation be considered viable components in determining success. Overall, a paradigm shift requires stepping outside the traditional measurement box and adopting a broader sense of the cognitive determination of how quality, value and social dynamics create the pictures and stories of successful outcomes.

Changing our business adherence from traditional measurement demands an intentional and concentrative refocus from *employee output* to *employee contribution*. Calculations become based on *people strengths* like problem-solving and collaboration, in addition to numbers on a clock, in a wallet, or from a production line. A transformation in the way businesses view success in the changing landscape of work requires the addition of quality, value, and social dynamics in equal measure to the time, money, and widget numeric model of productivity in existence.

Our Love Affair with Numbers

We are taught the value of numbers at an early age. In grade school, we learn the basic principle of number absoluteness through simple visuals.

In fact, show any first grader two red apples and two yellow ones and they'll say there are four apples. Over time, numbers come to signify rewards and recognition. From measurements such as outstanding report cards and sports scores, we develop a comfort level with their mechanics, trust their results, and rely on them for motivation.

But what if that first grader is shown four apples where one has a worm in it, and we ask *how many he would eat*. Now the child must form both a quantity and a value determination. Add *three hungry classmates* to the mix and the child must determine who gets the wormy apple; *social dynamics* come into play.

Regardless of how numbers are perceived, we tend to use them for measuring end-product success.

Several *schools of thought* have reinforced this idea. Statistician W. Edwards Deming's *14 Points for Management* has been used for 30 years as a tool designed to boost product manufacturing. Yet, as champion of the *quality measure* of business productivity, Deming's point 11 states, *Eliminate numerical goals*. Deming recognized that quality was derailed by reliance on numeric goals entirely. This phenomenon remains prevalent today.

Another example is Motorola's *Six Sigma Quality Process*, which stresses *improving product quality* to increase output. Six Sigma's focus on *removing defects* from any production process has propelled companies like General Electric to higher productivity. Yet, as businesses today seek to solve the complicated problems of people, they are realizing that innovative ideation actually relies on the existence of *defects* in the systems thinking process to have breakthrough moments. The process of people at work today is in conflict with the quality processes that defined the recent past.

Changing Workplace

To appreciate the need for updating the productivity equation for service-based businesses, it helps to understand the changing business landscape.

In 1959, Peter Drucker coined the

term *knowledge worker* to describe the shift from *physical* to *conceptual* labor. He fore-saw an emerging *service-based economy*. Today, we see a surge in service-based businesses, and employment in service jobs will increase 14 percent.

This shift from an *objective* (goods-producing) to *subjective* (service-performing) economy has altered many practices, including hiring. With *efficiency* no longer the only measurement of *employee productivity*, service-based companies are hiring people who are adept at *ideation, innovation, critical thinking, and collaborating* for team initiatives. With people relying more on each other's strengths, the traditional manager/employee (parent/child) relationship has become a barrier to service-performing productivity. With the lines between *employee* and *management* blurring, these new dynamics factor into the productivity equation.

Leaders must now create a balance between *hard numbers* and the *quality/value* social dynamics measures found in all creative and knowledge work, reflected in service-based markets.

The resulting *productivity matrix* combines *people-focused qualities* to provide a

complete portrayal of employee value and performance measurement.

Asking the right questions is central to adopting new behaviors toward balancing over reliance on pure numeric measurement. Businesses that measure productivity including people dynamics, are attuned to the resonance of the cultural impact on business results.

Service-based businesses need to re-evaluate their motivation for success. Clarifying people-based motivation is essential to future productivity gains.

When employees are valued and their strengths respected, they tend to work more diligently for the company. This leads to an affirming environment, which ultimately entices more qualified employees and reduces turnover. As a result, the company can offer people better service and products.

As companies continue to do more knowledge work and team innovation based on collaboration, the metrics must expand past the limitation of numbers. The way business redefines *success* will lead to more positive results and more realistic expectations of company value.

LE

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ACTION: Use new ways to measure productivity.



Lead Fearlessly

A lesson from the Zen leader.



by Ginny Whitelaw

THERE'S BUZZ TODAY around what Zen can bring to leaders, whether it's the secret lessons of Steve Jobs, or a popular meditation program. Can Zen bring us quiet amid the noise? Or calm in the thick of turbulence? Truly, Zen doesn't bring us anything. Rather, it strips away our stuck points, gets us out of our own way, whereby we realize the Zen leader in us.

Zen leadership is the freeing up of our boundless nature, beyond the fears of the ego. Getting out of our way is what moves us from *barely managing to leading fearlessly*. You get in your own way when you get stuck on an opinion; become volatile, anxious, or worried about pleasing; insist on being the center of attention; or any of the other ways leaders derail. It means *looking out for #1*, being short-sighted and selfish, thinking *only I can do this job, I need credit, I want this promotion, I am right*. It's all I, I, I.

When you introduce Zen into this picture, things improve markedly. You might think this is because *the core practice of Zen—meditation—reduces stress and improves agility, self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, positivity, cognitive performance, and conflict management*. But these are the *symptomatic reasons*. The way Zen really helps leaders is by cutting the grasp of ego (I), freeing you to lead fearlessly.

The ego and its fears are like a body and its shadow. We come with a hierarchy of needs (Maslow). It's natural for the ego to have fears around those needs not getting met, for example, not being safe, loved, powerful, or good enough. But if we get stuck in the fear, we act in ways to get our needs met, which makes it all about me. *Only I can do this. I'm right. I want credit. I want this person to like me. I'm not safe if I'm not making a million dollars*. Normally we deal with our fears by trying to ignore them, distracting ourselves, jumping into action (whether it's useful or not), blaming others, or



manipulating them to get what we want.

How can you be free of your fears?

By recognizing the needs that fuel them and meeting those needs *just enough*—just as you would temper eating to a healthy level. Greed can make you overdo it. Greed and fear are intertwined, for greed is just the fear that *I won't have, do, or be enough*. And the ego that has that fear is but a small subset of our whole, true self. If we're snagged by the fear, we mistake our self for that small being. But if we flip that around, *become* the fear—get so close to it that it loses its leverage—an instant sense of spaciousness opens up wherein we find the power to act.

You can do the flips of The Zen Leader by taking these three steps:

1. See into the mirror: when you feel stuck or a difficulty is happening *out there*—a difficult situation or relationship, for example, look inside to inquire what it is related to “in here.” How are you playing into it? When else in your life has something like this happened?

2. Find the root: Name the fear: What might happen? What might you not be enough? The fears listed above (e.g., not safe enough, loved enough, etc.) are a good starting place.

3. Claim your power: For each fear identified, move into it and meet the need that fuels it *just enough*. From that place, declare what value you can add. For example, if a difficult colleague relationship makes me fear that *I'm not likeable*, a standing-on-my-fear declaration might be, *“I have enough other people in my life who like me. I will help this person be successful, whether she ends up liking me or not.”* Or if my fear is not being good enough to handle a conflict, my statement might be, *“I am good just enough to be real and present in the conflict and let tempers fall where they may.”* By moving into the fear, not being greedy, and declaring what value you can add regardless, *you claim your power*.

As you practice these steps—one fear at a time—you experience freedom and see beyond the *edges of ego*. And when you free up your own fears, you can take away the fears of others. By getting out of your own way, you have much more energy for the visions you manifest and those whom you serve. LE

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ACTION: Practice these three steps.

Engaged Is a Verb

as well as an adjective.



by George Casey

WE OFTEN ASSUME a happy employee is an engaged employee

and that by conducting certain activities managers/leaders can produce more happy and engaged employees, using the word *engaged* as an adjective, describing the employee's response to the managers' actions. Many activities are identified by surveys that ask people to rate how engaged and happy they are and how often their boss does xyz activity or offers abc benefits. Items that correlate highly with satisfaction are assumed to cause the engagement.

Yes, sound management practices—*involvement in decision making, training, morale, open communications, meaningful recognition, equitable rewards, and rational procedures and policies*—contribute to a motivating culture, but they are not magic beans to be planted and watered to harvest engaged employees.

One reason the term *engaged* is so popular is that it means different things to different people. As an adjective, *engaged* can mean *involved in activity*. As a verb, it can mean *to attract and hold by influence or power* or *to pledge oneself; to promise or guarantee*.

What's missing is a sense that people engage with each other. *Leadership is a relationship between the leader and those who chose to follow*. Each leader defines engagement in a particular context, as does each employee, which contributes meaning to the relationship. Often the experiences and contexts differ. People may follow a leader in one context, but not in another.

If leaders see employees as engaged objects, they miss the point: *Leadership is all about relationship*. The leaders we need engage with employees to create productive, enduring, shared meaning and purpose that serve the common good.

Leaders who want employees to commit their whole self—head, heart, and hands—to the mission, must do the same. This is leadership of equity—encouraging self-expression, self-development, and accountability, and treating others with dignity. LE

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ACTION: Be engaged in leadership of equity.

Organizational Health

The last competitive advantage.



by Patrick Lencioni

ALL THE COMPETITIVE advantages—strategy, technology, finance, marketing—that we've pursued in the past are gone. The disciplines haven't disappeared, but they have lost their power as meaningful competitive advantages, as real differentiators that can set your company apart. Why? Virtually every organization has access to the best thinking and practices on those topics. As information has become ubiquitous, it's almost impossible to sustain an advantage based on intellectual ideas.

However, one *simple, reliable* and *virtually free* competitive advantage remains—*organizational health*.

Healthy organizations all but eliminate *politics* and *confusion* from their cultures. As a result, productivity and morale soar, and good people almost never leave. For those leaders who are a bit skeptical, rest assured that none of this is touchy-feely or soft. It is as tangible and practical as anything else—and even more important.

Even the smartest organization—one that masters *strategy, finance, marketing, and technology*—will eventually fail if it is unhealthy. But a healthy organization will find a way to succeed. Without politics and confusion, it will become smarter and tap into all of the *intelligence* and *talent* that it has.

So, why don't more companies embrace organizational health and reap the benefits? For one, it requires real work and discipline, maintained over time. And, it's not *sophisticated* or *sexy*—it doesn't excite executives who seek a quick fix. Moreover, it's *hard to measure in a precise, accurate way*. It impacts so many disparate areas of an enterprise that it's challenging to isolate it as a single variable and quantify its singular impact on the bottom line.

Creating *organizational health* also requires *courage*. Leaders must confront themselves, their peers, and the dysfunction within their organization with an uncommon honesty and persistence—and walk straight into uncomfortable situations and address issues that prevent them from realizing the potential that eludes them.

Four Disciplines

To get healthy, leaders need to take four simple, but difficult, steps:

1. Build a cohesive leadership team. Get the leaders of the organization to behave in a functional, cohesive way. If the people responsible for running a team, department, or organization are behaving in dysfunctional ways, then that dysfunction will cascade down and prevent organizational health. And yes, there are concrete steps a leadership team can take to prevent this.

2. Create clarity. Ensure that the members of that leadership team are intellectually aligned around six simple but critical questions. Leaders need to be clear on topics such as *why the organization exists* and *what is the most important priority for the next few months*, and eliminate any gaps between them. Then people who work one, two or three levels below have complete clarity about what they should do to make the organization successful.

3. Over-communicate clarity. After the first two steps (*behavioral* and *intellectual alignment*), leaders can take the third step: over-communicating the answers to the *six questions*. Leaders of healthy organizations *constantly* repeat themselves and reinforce what is true and important. They err on the side of saying too much, rather than too little.

4. Reinforce clarity. Leaders use simple human systems to reinforce clarity in answering *critical questions*. They design any *process* that involves people—from *hiring and firing* to *performance management* and *decision-making*—in a custom way to support and emphasize the uniqueness of the organization.

Healthy organizations get better at the one activity that underpins everything it does—meetings. Without making a few simple changes to the way meetings happen, a healthy organization will struggle to maintain its health.

Healthy organizations rarely fail. When *politics, ambiguity, dysfunction* and *confusion* are reduced to a minimum, people are empowered to design products, serve customers, solve problems and help one another. Healthy organizations recover from setbacks, attract the best people, repel the others, and create exciting opportunities.

Employees are happier, the bottom line is stronger, and executives are at peace when they know they've fulfilled their most important responsibility—creating a *culture of success*. LE

Pat Lencioni is author of *The Advantage and Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, and a top-rated keynote speaker. Contact The Table Group at 925-299-9700 or email speaking@tablegroup.com.

ACTION: Gain and maintain org health.

Bad to Worse

Management's dilemma.



by Jim Burkett

WHY IS MANAGEMENT success so elusive and ineffective management so prevalent? Why do 38,000 U.S. businesses go bankrupt each year, and many more struggle? In *turning around* underperforming companies, I observe that management allows the *wrong things* to happen—problems then fester, persist, and multiply. If they go unrecognized, unaddressed, or unresolved they erode competitiveness and erase profits, causing the business to fail.

Usually, the difficulty lies not in *solving problems* but in *recognizing them*. George Washington said: "Errors once discovered are more than half amended." Amending problems makes the right things happen. But first the problems must be identified.

Why don't managers identify and understand problems? The practice of management is made of *simple disciplines*; however, the practice of these disciplines is difficult. The difficulties accumulate and produce a friction or inertia causing them *not to be practiced*. Then managers stumble in frustration and failure as unidentified and unresolved problems persist.

Management disciplines must be learned and practiced. Management effectiveness is not innate—managers must acquire a practical knowledge of the disciplines so their skillful practice is made instinctive. This happens as managers *recognize what the disciplines are, know how to use them, and systematically employ them*. When practiced, the disciplines function as tools to extend management skill, allowing management to achieve more with them than they ever could do without them.

The management disciplines are not practiced for three reasons: 1) managers don't know or neglect the *seven learned disciplines of management effectiveness*; 2) they don't know how to skillfully use the disciplines and thus misuse them; and 3) the disciplines are not used systematically and practiced consistently.

Seven learned disciplines make up the practice of management.

1. Planning. Through this discipline, a *plan*, is born. The *plan* depicts the desired end or aim and specifies the

best means for achieving it.

2. Organizing. This discipline seeks to *optimally organize resources* to achieve the plan. This requires identifying all actions and activities and *organizing them* to maximize resources and results.

3. Measuring performance. This practice recognizes that *what gets measured gets managed and gets done*. This discipline measures how well activities are performed and signals management when they are poorly performed.

4. Executing. This means assigning all of the plan's activities to employees to perform (nothing is left to chance). This leads to attaining the plan; *executing expectantly* engages and empowers employees to ideally perform their assigned activities and holds them accountable when they don't.

5. Following-up. This practice generates actionable feedback, aligns *expected outcomes with actual performance*, instills cooperation and accountability, and reinforces *making right things happen*.

6. Real-time reporting. This takes collected feedback (timely, reliable and accurate performance data), shares it, and makes it readily available so managers can *take action to address problems*.

7. Problem-solving. This occurs when problems are identified, understood, addressed and monitored. This requires a system that provides quantitative and qualitative feedback with which to resolve problems and improve performance. This system ensures the constant use of the seven learned disciplines. Systems drive action, and these actions produce certain outcomes.

Effective managers practice each discipline, creating a *management system* that produces the feedback essential to *making the right things happen*. This feedback frees managers from *flying by the seat of their pants* and assists them in *creating a laudable performance record*.

The practice of management relies on feedback to measure performance, identify problems and take action to address them. *Sadly, many managers lack actionable feedback* because they don't practice the seven disciplines. Hence, they manage *by the seat of their pants*—relying on their intuition, instincts, feelings and opinions. Since these means are inadequate to manage effectively, performance goes from bad to worse.

Management effectiveness stems from the systematic practice of the seven disciplines to make the right things happen and experience *uncommon success*. LE

Jim Burkett is president of Corporate Turnaround Consulting and author of *The Learned Disciplines of Management, How to Make The Right Things Happen*. Email jebjr13@roadrunner.com.

ACTION: Practice these seven learned disciplines.

Lead with Honor

Do you have what it takes?



by Lee Ellis

ARE YOU ALARMED BY the frequent ethical scandals in recent years?

Ethical problems are just as prevalent on Main Street as Wall Street, as bookkeepers, purchasing agents, and owners *violate the trust* others place in them.

What is happening? Does anyone care about honorable leadership? What can you do about it? What have others done that might guide those of us who advocate character-based leadership?

Some of the best examples of leading with honor come from the POW camps of North Vietnam, an environment so hostile that we might expect to see many examples of *self-centered, self-serving leadership*. But when lives were on the line, these brave leaders chose *honor* rather than *comfort, humiliation* rather than *cooperation* with the enemy. Their courageous service shows us what is required to lead with honor. Let's look at four lessons:

• **Know yourself.** The POWs' leaders were experienced and strong yet compelled to be humble. The enemy used torture and isolation to try to break their will and force them to cooperate in making propaganda. They were vulnerable, stripped to their core; they could not pose or pretend they were something they were not. Fortunately, they were solid—healthy people with a strong character that enabled them to *lead with honor* through humiliation.

If you don't know yourself and have a peace about who you are, your *fears and insecurities* will take you out. Rather than pursuing your *passion and purpose* using your unique talents, style, and convictions, you'll constantly compare yourself to others and guide your life by someone else's ways and standards.

When you know and accept yourself, you can be authentic, leading from your own true north. Knowing your *strengths* gives you confidence, while awareness of your *weaknesses* gives you humility.

Like the POWs, you'll face situations that expose who you really are. Accept who you are, but realize *there's always room for growth*; work daily to build

yourself strong so you can lead authentically, from the inside out.

• **Clarify your values and standards and commit to them.** The POWs had a uniform code of conduct that everyone knew and followed. Like signs along the road, it gave direction and provided a framework for decisions, choices, and behaviors, helping them stay on the right path in a difficult situation.

Sadly, most people have only generic assumptions and a superficial understanding about their moral values and ethical commitments. *Jeb Magruder*, White House advisor who went to jail, said that he had been taught right but somewhere along the way he "lost his ethical compass." We are all cut from the same cloth as Magruder and without regularly clarifying our commitments, we will drift off course as well.

• **Confront your doubts and fears.** These take out more leaders than anything else, and they can be traced back to *your identity*—knowing who you are and being comfortable with yourself. Even the smartest, toughest, and best leaders face insecurities and fears.

The POW leaders were tough warriors. Commander *Jim Stockdale*

endured frequent physical abuse and *four years* in solitary confinement; naturally, there were fears, but *he did his duty and suffered the consequences*. Great leaders *lean into the pain of their fears* to do what they know is right. *Courage* does not mean that *you are not afraid*, but that *you do what is right when it feels scary or unnatural*.

• **Connect with your support team.** In your struggle to *lead with honor*, don't go it alone. That's why the enemy tried to isolate the POWs in North Vietnam and why the POWs risked everything to keep the communication lines open. They relied on the encouragement of teammates. You can't see every situation objectively. On tough choices, you need the perspective of a few key advisors to help you evaluate the situation and navigate treacherous waters ahead.

Our culture desperately needs men and women who will lead with honor. Guard your character. Know yourself, clarify your values and standards, confront your doubts and fears, and connect with your support team. Then you're ready to lead with honor. LE

Lee Ellis is president of Leadership Freedom, a leadership and team development consulting and coaching company, speaker and author of *Leading With Honor: Leadership Lessons from the Hanoi Hilton*. Visit www.leadingwithhonor.com.

ACTION: Lead with honor in your organization.

Charismatic Leaders

Harness the power to create change.



by M. Alexander Kuhn

AT SOME POINT, YOUR life is altered by a *Charismatic Leader*. This person makes you believe *anything is possible*. No matter your skill or experience, success is the only option and you go above and beyond to achieve the goal. Many consider *charisma* to be essential for leadership. Others believe that *charisma* is a gift that few possess. In fact, one dictionary uses the words *magic* and *divine* in describing *charisma*.

But what if *charisma* was not a gift or *innate ability*, but a *skill* to be developed and refined as part of a leader's repertoire. For *charisma* to be defined as a *skill*, there must be a step-by-step process to follow to improve *charisma*.

Charismatic leaders excel in three areas. By applying the *three steps* in each category, you'll improve your *charismatic leadership skills*.

Area 1: Articulation

A key function of *charismatic leadership* is to articulate the message. Each word and phrase must create impact and stick with the listener.

1. Create a powerful statement. At a seminar, you likely retain 5 to 10 percent of the speaker's information. So, you need to ensure your audience remembers a statement that is unique and powerful. Such statements tend to be *outcome focused*, *targeted* at the audience, and *short*. Jack Welch knew the power of a strong, short statement. "*Be number one or two in your market.*"

2. Apply a visual and detailed story. Everyone loves a great story. If you read a book before seeing the story in movie form, you likely enjoyed the book more. This is because *before* the movie, you painted a picture in your mind. As a *charismatic leader*, you use *stories to paint a picture of the statement in people's mind*. The story can be from your life, another person's experience, or even made up! The story must have a character we care about, a struggle they overcome, and a successful end that ties back to the original statement.

3. Use tone and inflection when speaking. You have your *statement* and *story*, now put emotion into each word by

changing your *tone* and *inflection*. You thus *engage the audience* to follow you along the ups and downs of your statement and story. We've all heard speakers say, "*This is exciting news.*" *Charismatic leaders* don't describe the emotion, the *inflection* and *tone* of their *voice* says it all. The best way to do this is to *change your facial expression* when speaking at that moment. If you are excited, your facial expression should be that of someone who is excited and happy.

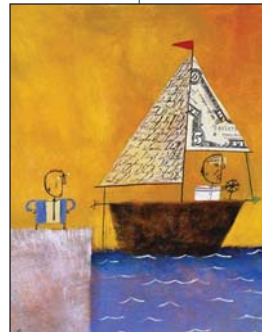
Area 2: Branding

When I see a green Starbucks label on the white cup, I know I am receiving a quality cup of coffee. By developing a physical brand that is consistent, you become *more recognizable* and *more charismatic* in the eyes of the listener.

1. Be consistent in your attire and appearance. The first step in branding is to match your attire and appearance to that of your target audience. If you are Donald Trump, you are wearing the most expensive suit and are proud to have a unique hairstyle. Steve Jobs wore a black turtleneck with blue jeans. Develop a look that is consistent and easily recognizable by those who do and do not know you.

2. Maintain a healthy lifestyle. Not all *charismatic leaders* are fit/healthy; however, the top ones *appear* to lead a healthy lifestyle. You need not be a fitness machine (except in certain industries). The goal is branding yourself, and by staying in a similar shape during your career; your brand will stay intact and consistent over time.

3. Create an image of being larger than life and aura of confidence. When you speak in a group, do you put your hands in your pocket or cross your legs? These physical changes make you look smaller and weaker in the eyes of your audience. To become *larger than life*, stand on a stage above or below your audience. When in the room with employees or guests, stand tall with good posture, maintain eye contact, and use small hand gestures. This may include a small clap after hearing a funny story, or a strong handshake.



Area 3: Affection

Being a *charismatic leader* is developing respect and admiration from everyone, whether they agree or disagree with your position. To improve your *charismatic leadership abilities*, you need to strongly believe in your message. As you do, you become more *charismatic* in the eyes of your audience.

1. Truly caring about your position. If you plan on selling the impossible, you first must ask *if you truly and deeply care about your position*. Whether you are religious, spiritual, or ethical, you must make a decision that is *100 percent devoted to the message you'll preach*. Most likely, you are already instilled with a value system that will help you make these decisions. When we think of *charismatic leaders*, we often think of priests/pastors. One reason they are *charismatic* is because they dedicate their lives to their religious beliefs.

When you truly care about your position, your words become genuine, which makes your message believable.

2. Truly caring about making a difference. Next, desire to make a difference. Many of us believe in the value of community service, yet, not everyone is an active member. Once you have a strong position, asking *three questions* will

help you determine if you care about making a difference. *Are you willing to give up your valuable time? Are you willing to sacrifice other areas of your life to achieve success? Are you confident your time will produce positive results?* The stronger you answer *yes* to these three questions; you not only become believable, but genuine.

3. Truly caring about others' perspective. With a *believable position* and *genuine decision* to make a difference, learn to understand and appreciate all perspectives. By truly caring about others, you ask meaningful questions and desire to understand their decisions. Whether they fall inline with you or not, your ability to understand and appreciate others enables you to develop connection. *Charismatic leaders* don't force their position on others—they connect so strongly and deeply that others desire to be on their side.

Practicing the skills of *charisma* will help you harness the power to create change and make you a better leader. LE

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ACTION: Excel in these three areas of charisma.

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