

LEADERSHIP Excellence

Warren Bennis



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

January 2013



Steven Snyder
Consultant



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LEADERSHIP *Warren Bennis* Excellence



THE MAGAZINE OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, MANAGERIAL EFFECTIVENESS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY
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**DAVE ULRICH AND
 NORM SMALLWOOD**

Leadership Sustainability
 You must develop seven
 integrated disciplines. . . . 3

GARY HAMEL

Attract Top Talent
 Be a passion multiplier . . . 4

DAVID HORSAGER

Employee Trust
 People trust the clear. . . . 5

**JIM BONEAU AND
 GREGG THOMPSON**

Leadership 4.0
 Get first to the future. . . . 6

JOHN KOTTER

Change Leadership
 Accelerate the results. . . . 6

ACHIM NOWAK

Leadership Presence
 How can we get it? 7

**ADRIAN GOSTICK
 AND CHESTER ELTON**

Orange Revolution
 Transform your firm. . . . 8

CASSANDRA FRANGOS

Engage Your People
 Achieve breakthroughs. . . 9

EDWARD T. REILLY

Influential Leaders
 Follow five steps. 10

STEVEN SNYDER

Leadership Struggle
 Engage in three practices. . 11



Leadership Sustainability

These two Alpha wolves survive by their wit and intelligence in a hostile natural environment, in a symbiotic social and hunting kinship with the opportunistic raven. What will ensure your survival and sustainability?

**JACK ZENGER
 AND JOE FOLKMAN**

Develop Strengths
 And one fatal flaw. . . . 12

MOE GLENNER

Leading Change
 Use the Success Chain. . 12

JOSH BERSIN

Great Leaders
 Why are they effective?. . 13

PETER FRIEDMAN

Social Leadership
 It's a networked world. . 14

JOHN BALDONI

Front and Center
 Leaders belong there. . . 15

ALAN WURTZEL

Habits of Mind
 They make or break you. . 16

**SHARON HADARY A
 ND LAURA HENDERSON**

Lead Boldly!
 Lead like a woman!. . . 16

**BRIAN DONOVAN AND
 BRIDGET STALLKAMP**

Strategic Results
 Note performance trends. . 17

DAVID BROOKMIRE

True Leaders. 18

ELAINA GENSER

Hiring Leaders. 19

DAVID HEENAN

Leaving on Top. 20

Leadership Sustainability

How can leaders sustain their changes?



by Ken Shelton

RECENTLY I WAS ASKED TO preview and endorse a book by Dave Ulrich and Norm Smallwood, *Leadership Sustainability*. It goes beyond *Why* leadership matters and *What* makes effective leadership to address *How* leaders can sustain desired changes. The authors propose *seven disciplines* to help leaders finish what they start and deliver what they promise.

This invitation immediately invoked a memory. Some three years ago, I was seated in a large conference room with at least 1,000 other people, listening to Dave Ulrich. Suddenly he spotted me and asked, "Ken, what do you consider to be *the single most important issue* in leadership today?" My answer: *leadership sustainability*.

Later, Dave and his partner Norm Smallwood at the LD firm Results-Based Leadership not only addressed this mega-issue but nailed it. Hence, my endorsement: "This is the *definitive work* on the matter and an *instant classic* in the field."

Why do I consider *leadership sustainability* to be *the single most important issue* in leadership today? Because otherwise *leadership* becomes a short-term (one-term) show. Leaders (like President Obama) who win a second term must use that time to prove themselves as *leaders of sustainability*. This requires making tough decisions in a culture of truth and transparency.

Companies Not So Transparent

While organizations have become more open about their HR practices, they tend to remain tight-lipped about the criteria for high-potential or leadership development (LD) programs, according to AMA Enterprise. "Companies are twice as open about their business strategy or results of an employee survey than they are about their selective leadership programs—and *the secrecy is often counterproductive*," said *Sandi Edwards*, SVP for AMA Enterprise. "Such opportunities and criteria should be clear, well-defined, and communicated widely with a shared sense of openness and fairness. Leaders should make a genuine effort to inform everyone about the program criteria and leave open the possibility that oth-

ers might be selected at a future date (this is key to keeping top talent, since if they don't make the cut for a program, they know they'll have another chance)."

Keeping selection criteria confidential can make the LD process seem unfair or political. Companies that set the pace in LD are transparent, and make sure the process is fair. "There are periodic management talent reviews, assessments and performance reviews, and problem-solving task forces aligned with strategic initiatives in order to gauge the high-potential leadership pipeline. Depending on future corporate needs, the individuals selected should be prepared in a variety of ways to enhance these skills and opportunities for progression within the company."



Dave Ulrich

Seven Trends Influence LD

According to Edwards, the LD sector will be shaped by *seven trends* this year: 1) organizations will become more transparent and open about performance review criteria, changes in strategy, career advancement opportunities, high potential program selection, and management succession; 2) coaching will draw greater scrutiny—there will be fewer blank checks as organizations expect to see clear success criteria as part of any engagement to get real ROI in development; 3) demand for training in the basics will re-emerge—expect to see renewed demand to build communications skills, critical thinking, collaboration and creativity to improve employee productivity; 4) globalization will shape more LD programs—companies can't afford to lose ground in an integrated and competitive global marketplace; 5) companies will turn to training to build employee loyalty—management will use development as a means to improve retention and engagement; 6) the process of selecting candidates for high potential programs will become more open and ambitious individuals will enthusiastically volunteer for any LD offering; 7) learning will go mobile: Blended learning approaches will integrate the best of Web 2.0 learning programs and social media—accessible via both web and mobile devices—making LD opportunities highly flexible for the end user. Visit www.amanet.org.

LE
Ken Shelton
Editor since 1984

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Leadership Sustainability

Develop seven integrated disciplines.



by Dave Ulrich and Norm Smallwood

MOST GOOD LEADERS TRY TO BECOME better. Thousands of leaders: attend leadership training; receive performance reviews; get individual development plans; receive coaching with ideas on how to change their behavior and deliver better results; and complete a 360-degree feedback process with data on how they are seen by others. At the end, most leaders resolve to use their new insights and be more effective. Unfortunately, few implement these good intentions.

Leaders do not always finish what they start. At the end of every improvement effort, participants need *the discipline to do what they desire* and to *turn their aspirations into actions*.

Our purpose is to help leaders sustain the changes that they know they should make—that is, to support *leadership sustainability (LS)*. LS suggests shaping a culture and all its actions to enhance its reputation as a responsible member of its community and wise custodian of resources. LS has to show up in a leader's intentions and observable behaviors (actions).

We still see a gap between *what people know they should do* and *what gets done*. It's easy to become confused about what really works, and this *concept clutter* isn't helpful to leaders seeking to improve. So, we try to synthesize research from multiple fields into an integrated set of disciplines that can make the difference between *good intentions* and *effective action*.

Develop Seven Disciplines

Developing *leadership capability* (the capability to build future leaders) matters even more than developing individual competence. We find that LS depends on *seven disciplines*:

- **Simplicity**—focusing on the key behaviors that will make the most difference on key issues. Most leaders create to-do lists of things they should change—but they get overwhelmed when they

try to change them all at once. LS requires finding simplicity in the face of complexity and replacing concept clutter with simple resolve. It entails prioritizing the behaviors that matter most, shifting from analytics with data to action with determination, framing complex phenomena into simple patterns, and sequencing change.

- **Time**—*passing the calendar test by wisely allocating days, hours, moments*. Most leaders can tell us their priorities, but when we ask them to review their calendar for the last 30 to 90 days and show us how much time they spent on these priorities, we often see unnerving gaps between intention and reality. Effective leaders build their desired behaviors into their calendar. People attend to what they see leaders do far more than to what they hear them say.



LS shows up in who we spend time with, what issues we spend time on, where we spend our time, and how we spend our time. When leaders invest their time as carefully as their money, they're likely to make change happen.

- **Accountability**—*accepting responsibility; holding yourself (and others) accountable for keeping promises*. Cynicism occurs when leaders announce wonderful aspirations (vision, mission, and strategy statements), but fail to deliver. Over time, this cynicism breaks down trust and erodes commitment. LS requires leaders to take personal responsibility for *doing what they say*. Accountability increases when leaders expect and accept *personal commitments* from others and follow up on them. Leadership is sustainable when the leader's agenda becomes the personal agenda of others.

- **Resources**—*specific intangible resources that leaders enlist to support their desired changes and build an infrastructure of sustainability*. Self-coaching, expert-coaching, peer-coaching, and boss-coaching can

be woven together to create sustained change. Selection, promotion, career development, succession planning, performance review, and communication policies can be aligned with organization design to support leadership change.

- **Tracking**—*you get what you inspect, not what you expect; you do what you are rewarded for (and so does everyone else); and you shouldn't reward one thing while hoping for something different*. Leaders must measure their behavior and results in specific ways. Unless desired leadership behaviors and changes are translated into specific actions, quantified, and tracked, they're not likely to get done. Metrics for leadership behavior need to be transparent, easy to measure, timely, and tied to consequences. LS can be woven into scorecards (and become its own scorecard) to ensure that leaders monitor how they're doing.

- **Melioration**—*a complex of actions and attitudes designed to make things better*. Leaders *meliorate* when they improve by learning from mistakes and failures and demonstrate resilience. Progress is not linear. We try, fail (or succeed), try again, fail again. When we learn from each attempt, the outcomes we intend will eventually happen. LS requires that leaders master the principles of learning: to experiment frequently, to reflect always, to become resilient, to face failure, to not be calloused to success, and to improvise continually.

- **Emotion**—*a personal passion for the changes that need to be made*. Sustained change is a matter of the heart as well as the head; it needs a strong emotional agenda and not simply an intellectual agenda, however logical and cogent it may be. Action without passion will not long endure, nor will passion without action. Leaders ensure emotion by drawing on their deeper values and finding meaning in the work they do. LS occurs when leaders not only know but feel what they should do to improve. This passion increases when leaders see their desired changes as part of their personal identity and purpose, when their changes will shape their relationships with others, and when their changes will shift the culture of their work setting.

We introduce an *application audit* to apply to these disciplines to sustain your progress. To change your behavior or the behavior of others, use this audit to ensure that *desired changes* are introduced—and then stick. LE

Dave Ulrich and Norm Smallwood are partners in RBL Group and coauthors of Sustainability Leadership. Visit www.RBLGroup.com.

ACTION: *Develop these seven disciplines.*

Attract Top Talent

Become a passion multiplier.



by Gary Hamel

THE INVENTORS OF modern management, born in the 19th century, would be surprised to learn that their inventions (*workflow optimization, variance analysis, capital budgeting, functional specialization, divisionalization, and project management*), are still cornerstones of 21st century management. Organizations still try to strap rancorous, free-thinking people into *the straitjacket of institutionalized conformity*. Now, we're on the verge of a *management revolution*.

Three discontinuities will end management as we know it: 1) dramatic changes—ultra low-cost competitors, commoditization of knowledge, more customer power, new social demands—emphasize *innovation over optimization and change over continuity*; 2) web-based collaboration tools and networks—an alternative to formal hierarchy; 3) the new expectations that *Generation Facebook* will bring to work (they see the Web as the *ubiquitous operating system* of their lives, the means by which they learn, play, share, and connect).

12 Post-Bureaucracy Realities

Gen F expects the *social environment* of their work to reflect the *social context* of the Web. They'll use 12 realities to determine if your company is *with it*.

1. All ideas compete on an equal footing. On the Web, every idea has the chance to gain a following. No one has the power to kill a subversive idea or squelch an embarrassing debate. Ideas gain traction based on their *perceived merits*, not on the political power of their proponents. By disassociating *share of voice* and *share of power*, the Web undermines the ability of the elites to *control the conversation* or *set the agenda*.

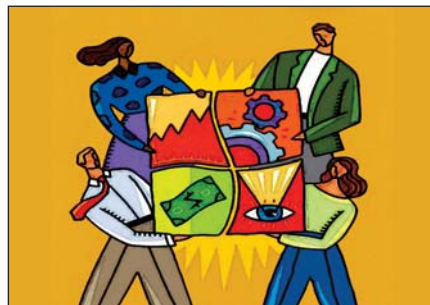
2. Contribution counts for more than credentials. When you post a video to YouTube, no one asks you if you went to film school. When you write a blog, no one cares if you have a journalism degree. Position, title, and academic degrees—the usual status differentiators—don't carry much weight online. On the Web, what counts is not your resume, but what you can contribute.

3. Hierarchies are built bottom-up. In

any Web forum, some individuals command more respect and attention, and thus have more influence. However, they aren't appointed by some higher authority. Their clout reflects the freely given approbation of their peers. On the Web, *authority trickles up*, not down.

4. Leaders serve rather than preside. On the Web, every leader is a servant leader; no one has the power to command or sanction. Credible arguments, demonstrated expertise, and selfless behavior are the only levers for getting things done. Forget this online, and your followers will soon *desert you*.

5. Tasks are chosen, not assigned. The Web is an opt-in economy. Whether contributing to a blog, working on an open source project, or sharing advice in a forum, people choose to work on the things that interest them. Everyone



is an independent contractor and everyone scratches their own itch.

6. Groups are self-defining and self-organizing. On the Web, *you choose your compatriots*. In an online community, you can link up with some individuals and ignore the rest, share deeply with some folks and not at all with others. No one can assign you a boring task, or force you to work with dimwits.

7. Resources get attracted, not allocated. In organizations, resources get allocated top-down, in a politicized, budget wrangle. On the Web, human effort flows toward ideas and projects that are attractive (and fun) and away from those that aren't. Individuals decide, moment by moment, how to spend their time and attention.

8. Power comes from sharing, not hoarding. The Web is also a gift economy. To gain influence and status, you have to give away your expertise and content, quickly; if you don't, someone else will beat you to the punch and garner the credit. Online, there are many

incentives to share and few to hoard.

9. Mediocrity gets exposed. In organizations, employees don't get to rate much of anything. As a result, we often find a *conspiracy of the mediocre*: "I won't question your decisions or effectiveness, if you don't question mine." On the Web, if you're inadequate *you'll be found out*, as disgruntled customers have a *global soap box*. Few companies seem eager to give employees an internal platform for challenging decisions and policies.

10. Dissidents can join forces. In a hierarchy, it takes great courage to *speak up*, and it's hard to know whether anyone else has a similarly rebellious mind. Individuals who feel isolated and vulnerable are unlikely to protest. The Web makes it easy to find and connect with individuals who share your dissenting point of view. Agitators who might have been marginalized in a top-down organization can rapidly mobilize like-minded confederates in the Web's densely-connected *thoughtocracy*.

11. Users can veto most policy decisions. Online users are opinionated and vociferous, and they'll quickly attack a decision or policy change that seems contrary to the community's interests. Only by giving users a say in key decisions can you keep them loyal. Since *users own the online community*, policies have to be socially constructed.

12. Intrinsic rewards matter most. The Web is a testament to the power of *intrinsic rewards*. Think of all the articles contributed to Wikipedia, all the open source software created, all the advice freely given, all the photos submitted to Flickr. Add up the hours of *volunteer time* and it's obvious that *people will give generously of themselves when they can contribute to something they care about*.

To attract creative young workers, you need to reinvent your management practices to align with these expectations. We're enamored with the Web because it's a *passion multiplier*. **Online:** *No one can kill a good idea. Everyone can pitch in. Anyone can lead. No one can dictate. You get to choose your cause. You can easily build on top of what others have done. You don't have to put up with bullies and tyrants. Agitators don't get marginalized. Excellence wins over mediocrity. Passion-killing policies get reversed. Great contributions get recognized and celebrated.*

How many of these things can be said of your firm? Only by exemplifying all the passion-boosting attributes of the Web can you create organizations that *magnify human passions*. LE

Gary Hamel is LE's #1 rated consultant and author of *What Matters Now* (Wiley). Visit www.garyhamel.com.

ACTION: *Reinvent your management practices.*

Employee Trust

Strategic planning can kill it.



by David Horsager

TRUST IS THE FOUNDATION of effective and authentic leadership.

Without trust, leaders lose teams through attrition, or dangerously low engagement. Among the many qualities of trusted leaders, clarity is key: *People trust the clear and mistrust the ambiguous.* So, leaders who earn employee trust provide transparency around goals, plans and expectations.

Sadly, one widely-used leadership tool puts leaders at risk for destroying clarity and trust—the annual strategic planning session. If you ever want to put your team to sleep, just say these two words: *strategic planning.* While I agree that “*without a plan, you plan to fail,*” many employees have developed knee-jerk skepticism toward *annual planning sessions.* Why? Most have taken days at off-site retreats and hours of analysis without doing much differently afterward. Few strategic planning sessions provide clarity around the specific actions and changes required to achieve the intended goals. Without a clear plan, employees are confused and become ineffective—leading to fear, frustration, and a lack of focus. And with every ambiguous strategic plan, trust in leadership erodes. We can't have faith in a leader who has fuzzy plans or unclear expectations.

How can leaders create a strategic planning framework that builds clarity? One way is to practice *quicker planning more often*—one hour every 90 days—with a bias for action. While long-term strategic planning can assist certain functions, the world is moving too fast for *long-range plans* to stay relevant.

Quick Planning: Four Questions

Instead of an *annual planning session*, try *90-Day Quick Planning (90DQP)*. It gives leaders and their teams an *actionable framework* that provides clarity for participants, and leads to tangible results. Simply pick one to three areas of your business you'd like to address, then ask and answer *four questions.* It should take less than one hour to complete the process, performed every 90 days. I've used this same process for

my company, for my family, and for losing 50 pounds of weight.

Question 1: Where are we? If you do not know *where you are today*, you can't know *where you would like to be in the future.* Many leaders like to use SWOT analysis, which is fine—but only give yourself *20 minutes* to complete it. Most teams can identify their *strengths, weaknesses, opportunities* and *threats* quickly. For my weight loss, I could easily see that I was 50 pounds overweight.

Question 2: Where are we going? Ask, in 90 days, where would you like to be? Would you like to be back to your high school weight, like I did, or double sales, or reach 100 more customers? Write a clear, *quantifiable* (numerical) goal of where you want to be.

Question 3: Why are we going? If the *why* is strong enough, the plan does



not need to be perfect. If a building is burning and my kids are in it, I don't need to know every detail—I'm going in because my *why* is so strong. When your team has a motivating and unifying *why*, they'll do the little things differently. They'll stay passionate and focused, and they'll finish. Recently I was with journalist Larry King, when a friend of mine asked him, “What is your favorite question to ask?” He said that his favorite question is *Why?* because the *why* motivates people. He said he can conduct an entire interview by simply asking “*why did you do that?*” Why did I want to lose the weight? I wanted to look and feel better. But I realized that I also wanted to have integrity. In my work, I talk about *doing the little things that make a big difference.* But when I looked in the mirror, I felt like I was not living out that principle in this area of my own life. With a more compelling *why*, I increased my commitment to my goal.

Question 4: How are we going to get there? Why? may be Larry King's favorite question, but mine is *how?*—*how are we going to get there?*

I recently worked with a group of health care executives. After a day of training and consulting, they decided the issue they needed to address most urgently was clarity. Their brilliant minds discussed what they would do to be more clear. Their first answer was: “We will communicate more.” I wondered what exactly that meant. So I asked, *how?* They huddled and then responded, “We will hold each accountable.” I've heard that before and seen few results, so I asked them again, *how?* They huddled once again. Finally, they came up with something specific they would do every meeting to build clarity. Keep asking *how?* until your team commits to taking specific actions. If people do not start doing something differently *right now*, the plan does not matter.

Asking myself *how*—over and over—was the key to losing 50 pounds of weight. When it comes to slimming down, everyone knows *what to do.* Eat less and exercise more. But that wasn't working for me. I had to ask *how?* until I could pinpoint *something specific* that I would do differently. I came up with *15 specific hows* that led to me losing 33 pounds in 90 days, and 50 pounds in six months. For example, a doctor told me that most men in America would lose 30 to 50 pounds in a year if they simply would stop drinking their calories (8 oz. of orange juice has 110 calories). So I achieved clarity on how to drink less calories by asking myself *how?* until I devised a list of things not to drink—and what to drink instead. I knew that if I picked up a glass of water or Fresca, I could drink it. If the glass contained soda or orange juice, I wouldn't. I was clear on the *how*, and so were the results of my efforts.

Instead of laborious strategic planning once a year, **try this 90-day challenge.** Every 90 days go through the *Quick Planning* process for three areas of your business. Instead of approaching it skeptically or wanting to fall asleep, your team will find focus, energy, and motivation. With greater clarity around your 90-day plan and vision, you will gain the trust of your team—and bottom-line results will follow. **LE**

David Horsager, MA, CSP, is a speaker, author, producer, strategist and author of The Trust Edge: How Top Leaders Gain Faster Results, Deeper Relationships, and a Stronger Bottom Line (Free Press). Visit www.DavidHorsager.com and www.TheTrustEdge.com.

ACTION: Engage in 90-Day Quick Planning.

Leadership 4.0

It's a brave new approach.



by Jim Boneau and Gregg Thompson

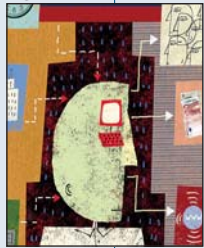
FOR LEADERS, EXPERIENCE IS THE BEST teacher. It teaches how to adhere to core values, coach and mentor others, encourage creativity and innovation and inspire diverse populations. Unfortunately, this same experience is an untrustworthy guide for the future. To have a real impact, leaders must *peer into the past to understand the future.*

The global, digital economy is dismantling and recreating social and financial frameworks. Markets are becoming more volatile, and organizations are flattening, being turned upside down and losing their boundaries. This frenetic pace of change will continue unabated, and a new chapter in leadership will begin: Leadership 4.0.

Evolving Leadership

To understand the future of leadership, we need to look back at the evolving nature of organizations and resulting demands on their leaders.

• **Leadership 1.0: The Production Systems Leader (1900-1980).** Before 1900, leadership was seen as primarily a political, religious and military matter. Enterprises were small and organized around a *craftsman* or *owner*. In the early 1900s, three shifts in technology led to a new way of organizing and leading: 1) In 1901, Marconi transmitted the first trans-Atlantic radio message; 2) in 1903 the Wright brothers made the first powered flight; and 3) in 1908 Henry Ford started mass-producing the Model T. These advances in communication, travel and automation were a tipping point. Now larger organizations were created, and the prime concern of their leaders was the *efficient operation of repetitive production systems* to satisfy a growing demand for products and services. Organizations tended to be highly structured and pyramidal, and employees usually remained in the same organization or vocation for



their careers. Order, predictability, and constancy were watchwords of the day.

• **Leadership 2.0: The Quality Performance Leader (1980-2000).** In the early 1980s, intense international competition, primarily from Japan, spurred a shift toward quality. The prime concern of leaders was to create products and services at the top end of the measurement scale—to produce the best, least expensive, fastest, strongest or most attractive version of their product or service. Waste, defects, delays and inefficiencies were targeted for elimination. Organizations became highly matrixed, and most employees had a process improvement element in their job. Downsizing irreversibly altered the employee-employer relationship.

• **Leadership 3.0: Opportunistic Enterprises (2000-to present).** Productivity improvement tools (*Internet, email, and social media*) gave us *unprecedented access* to information and networks and *unprecedented penetration* of their work into their personal lives. Opportunities abounded. The prime concern of these leaders was to capitalize on the huge shifts in technology, connection capability and commerce. Organizations became more fluid and spawned ad hoc teams to pursue emerging opportunities. Booms and busts were equally common.

• **Leadership 4.0: Leaders face four big challenges (today into foreseeable future).** 1. *Talent acquisition and development will be the top competitive advantage—leaders need to rely on their talent to be competitive.* The value of creativity and innovation will increase the productivity gap (top performers may be 10 times more productive). 2. *Communication will no longer be seen as a competency but become synonymous with leadership.* The leader's role will be providing meaning and purpose to get people to think differently and act in concert. 3. *Innovation will be everyone's business.* Everyone will need to generate new products, improve service, identify unconventional revenue streams, and bring their creative talents to work. 4. *Leading change will become everyday work.* Change will be a constant state of operation, as leaders create pathways, share expertise, and coach others.

Leaders must get to the future first. They need to be scouts, prophets and pathfinders—go there, discover what it is like, and return to teach others. **LE**

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ACTION: Get to the future first.

Change Leadership

How can you accelerate results?



by John Kotter

MANAGEMENT methods that developed enterprises in the 20th century are insufficient. Driving results today requires *a new kind of leadership.*

Management is about coping with complexity. Good management brings order and consistency to key dimensions like the *quality* and *profitability* of products. Management makes systems of people and technology work well.

Leadership is about coping with change: faster technology, greater international competition, deregulation of markets, overcapacity in capital-intensive industries, an unstable oil cartel, and changing demographics. Doing what was done yesterday, or doing it 5 percent better, isn't a formula for success. Major changes are needed to compete effectively. *More change* always demands *more leadership.* Leadership creates the systems that managers manage and changes them in basic ways to take advantage of opportunities and to avoid hazards.

When organizations have high competencies in management *and* leadership, they can meet challenges today and tomorrow. However, most organizations usually lack one or the other. When *management* exists without *leadership*, the company is often unable to change. And when *leadership* exists without *management*, the company is only as strong as its charismatic leader. Organizations are often overstaffed with managers, but lack enough leadership to deal with constant change.

When formed, organizations are *long on leadership, short on management.* Savvy organizations add management capabilities over time while preserving the spark of leadership that led them to rapid growth. But over time, the most passionate leaders move on, while layers of management build up in their place. Organizations gradually transition to a complacent mentality, where management reigns supreme and leadership is in short supply.

Most organizations today are *over-managed* and *underled.* They need to develop their capacity to exercise leadership. Successful enterprises don't wait for leaders to come along. They

seek people with leadership potential and expose them to career experiences designed to develop that potential. But while improving their ability to lead, remember that strong leadership with weak management is no better.

The Real Challenge Today

The challenge is to *combine strong leadership and strong management*, use each to balance the other, address the right problems, and accelerate results! If you *don't know what you don't know*, you'll apply the same *business-as-usual* solutions that are ineffective because the problem has evolved. The march into a better future starts with the correct answer to the *problem* question.

Every leader faces the challenge of staying competitive amid constant turbulence and disruption. Any company that makes it past the start-up stage is optimized for *efficiency* rather than for *strategic agility*—the ability to capitalize on opportunities and dodge threats with speed and assurance.

Many leaders recognize the need for a *big strategic move* but can't do it. Facing a threat or seeing a new opportunity, they try and fail to cram through a major transformation using a process that worked in the past. But these old ways are failing. Hierarchical structures and processes can thwart attempts to compete in a marketplace where discontinuities are frequent. Any company that isn't rethinking its direction every few years, adjusting to changing contexts, and quickly making operational changes is at risk.

The tension between *needing to stay ahead of competition* and *needing to deliver this year's results* can be overwhelming. Traditional hierarchies and managerial processes can still handle the daily demands of running a company. What they don't do well is identify key hazards and opportunities early, formulate creative strategic initiatives nimbly, and implement them fast enough.

Hence, you need a *second operating system*, devoted to the design and implementation of strategy, that uses an agile, network-like structure and different processes. The new *operating system* continually assesses the business, industry, and organization, and reacts with greater agility, speed, and creativity. By complementing the traditional hierarchy, it enables it to do what it's optimized to do. It makes enterprises easier to run and accelerates strategic change. LE

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ACTION: Accelerate strategic change.

Leadership Presence

What is it, and how do we get it?



by Achim Nowak

WHEN SOMEONE ASKS me to help them with leadership presence, I worry that this term is code for several things that are hard to quantify—confidence, authority, enthusiasm, gravitas. The traditional fix is a bit of *presentation skills* coaching: clean up the body language, sharpen the eye contact, elevate verbal messages, learn to be more anchored. This helps, but it's cosmetic.

Here is what folks are afraid to say about the leader: He doesn't resonate with people. He doesn't connect. Folks don't like him. Or, he doesn't feel comfortable in his own skin.

In their research, Sandy Pentland and Dan Olguin at MIT's *Human Dynamics Lab* monitored five executives' *social signals*—tone of voice, gesticulation, proximity to others, and personal energy—before they presented a business plan to judges. Without hearing their pitches, Pentland and Olguin could forecast accurately who would present the winning plan by their *energy* signals.

I invite you to consider my *4 Levels of Connection*:

- **Level 1: Talk.** It's drilled into us that *listening is more important than talking*, but at some point in any situation we need to *say something*. What we say hopefully shows that we've heard the other person—and advances the conversation. Here are five principles that help us do that: 1) *Use language that invites*—being efficient in our use of language is great for writing an email, but it doesn't foster *connection* in a conversation; 2) *Demonstrate curiosity*—each conversation is a rapid-fire barrage of cues, and each cue is a door that can be opened (so notice the cues and open the doors); 3) *Own your point of view*. Have a point of view, know how to state it compellingly, and let those with another point of view off the hook; 4) *Tell stories well*. Since stories foster connection because of their emotional impact, understand emotional cueing and embrace the power of the emotional cue word; and 5) *Reframe your conversations*. Reframing is shaping the flow of a conversation; done well,

it's invisible and unfolds with grace.

- **Level 2: Power.** Great connectors have a helpful relationship with their own power. They also play well with the power of others. They enjoy power rather than fear it. If we don't know how to invoke our personal power, our connection with others is impaired. We show up with a diminished self, which diminishes the potential connection with anyone else. If we don't alter ego of the diminished self (grandiosity), the outcome will be the same. Power models make the notion of power accessible. I propose a model that ascribes the experience of power to *five power plugs*: position power, relationship power, knowledge power, body power, and charisma power. As we better understand these sources of power, we learn how to best plug into them—and how to effectively relate to these powers in another person.

- **Level 3: Intent.** The *impact* we have in our relationships is powerfully shaped by *three core intents*: 1) *We create the impact we desire*. As we articulate clear action intents, we heighten the impact we have. 2) *We create the tone we desire*.

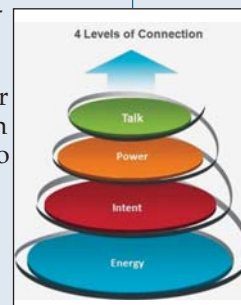
As we better understand tonal polarities, we can shape the tone of our conversations. 3) *We choose the social roles we play*. As we decode the social blueprints that tell us how to *act professional*, we make more enlightened choices about how we show up.

- **Level 4: Energy.** Energy is the *heart and soul* level where *connections happen*. Without *personal energy* that viscerally touches others, our ability to connect is constrained. Carl Jung suggested that *introverts* tend to derive energy from ideas, and *extroverts* derive it from people. *Personal energy*, however, transcends this model. The Hindus call energy *prana*, the Japanese *ki*, the Chinese *qi* or *chi* (*life force*). Leaders need to access this energy so they can send it to others.

We lavish most attention on the *Talk* level; however, the *Power*, *Intent*, and *Energy* levels address the *unspoken levels* on which connections happen (the root causes of a lack of *leadership presence*), and *Energy* is the key differentiator. By making connections at *unspoken levels*, leaders make smarter choices about how they show up, are more comfortable in their own skin, and radiate more *leadership presence!* LE

Achim Nowak is president of Influens and author of *Infectious: How to Connect Deeply and Unleash the Energetic Leader Within* (Allworth Press). Visit www.influens.com.

ACTION: Master unspoken levels of a connection.



Orange Revolution

One great team can transform an organization.



by Adrian Gostick and Chester Elton

WE NATURALLY ORGANIZE OURSELVES into teams to attain objectives. Teams enable us to accomplish goals we could not achieve alone. Great teams exploit the strengths of their participants and compensate for their team members' deficiencies.

Teams won't function well if their members are confused about group objectives. Great teams don't just have goals—they share *dreams*. And they're confident they'll achieve them. People that work in teams gain more satisfaction than those who do not. In teams we can leverage personal strengths and compensate for personal deficiencies. Therefore, the team provides the group with extended and expansive opportunities that individual members could not secure on their own.

Motivational *carrots* (as opposed to *tough-love sticks*) characterize *great teams*. We use the term *orange* as a catchall for *breakthrough teams* whose members: demonstrate personal competency; expand their competency by enhancing goal setting, trust, communication, and accountability; recognize their colleagues when they do well; and visualize and focus on the group's goal or its inspirational *common cause*.

In great teams, members largely lead themselves; however, team leaders play vital roles: recruit the best people, explain the strategy, provide necessary rules and standards, and champion a recognition culture. Once they develop exemplary teams, leaders strive to keep those teams intact.

Apply the Rule of 3

Implement **3 Rules** of great teams: 1) *deliver wow* by striving for world-class performance; 2) *clearly communicate* internally to *avoid surprises*; and 3) *cheer* the success of team members:

1. Wow. Great teams all have competent members, but each teammate doesn't have to be an exceptional, brilliant performer. Indeed, the members

of many great teams aren't *stars*, but great backup players. It's not *who* comprises the teams, but instead *what* the individuals do that make for superior teams. Such groups engage in *six vital activities*: 1) *Dream*—don't just have goals, share dreams and bona fide game-changing visions without limits; 2) *Believe*—no matter the obstacles, be fully confident that you'll achieve your objectives; 3) *Risk*—put all your money on the table and take a shot on *winning* the entire pot; 4) *Measure*—use metrics to show *where you are* and *where you want to be*; 5) *Persevere*—never quit; and 6) *Tell stories*—use narratives to breathe life, drama and energy into your work.

2. No Surprises. The Blue Angels jet acrobatics team has performed for more than 450 million spectators since



1946. Blue Angels pilots guide their jets in close formation, thrilling audiences with their precise, acrobatic flying techniques. Potential disaster is always just a wingtip away; to avoid a mid-air crash, all Blue Angels pilots must know exactly what their teammates are doing second-by-second. The last thing they need is a *surprise*.

Scott Beare, a Blue Angel, explains how the pilots synchronize their amazing flying moves. "We hold a brief before each event to discuss every maneuver in detail." The Blue Angels insist on open and detailed communication. Their lives depend on it.

While the lives of your teammates rarely hang in the balance, clear communications are essential at all times. Otherwise, expect unwelcome and potentially damaging *surprises*.

3. Cheer. Dysfunctional teams have members who often *undermine*, *oppose* and *disrespect* teammates. They assign blame when things don't go well, fight each other at every turn, and scheme

against one another. Members of great teams *cheer* when teammates do well.

At Zappos, the online shoe retailer, one tradition is "SNAPS: *Super Nifty and Positive Stuff*." During Zappos team "*zuddles*" (huddles), team members read aloud notes that staffers contribute, applauding things they did that was cool—and then snap fingers. Employ this approach to recognition during your team meetings. Gather together often to *celebrate achievements*.

Micro Ideas to Build Great Teams

The *Rule of 3* is a *macro* approach to developing effective teams. You can also put several quick, useful *micro* ideas to work in team-building. These suggestions fall into 11 categories:

1. Shared experiences. Monthly, get the CEO or other executive to address your team informally during breakfast.

2. Shared symbols. Team mascots unite together. Select one for your team.

3. Shared challenges. Establish a *five-minute rule* for all team members: They will seek help if a problem stumps them for more than five minutes.

4. Shared rewards and recognition. Sound a gong when the team accomplishes something special.

5. Personal balance. Bond with colleagues in enjoyable group activities (you might train for a sporting event or do volunteer work together).

6. Shared voice. Every Monday, call the team together and request that each member share what he or she plans to achieve that week.

7. Shared knowledge and skills. Reserve 30 minutes daily for people to focus on independent *work-related study*.

8. Shared competitors. Set up a company sports league of work teams.

9. Shared fun. Organize a social outing for the team.

10. Shared environment. Democratize the culture. Get rid of executive privileges like special parking spaces.

11. Shared relationships. Organize a special fund available to team members who may, one day, be in personal need.

The Orange Revolution begins with you. Recognize the contributions of others. Champion the concept that *great teams can accomplish any objective they set for themselves*. Make these words by Margaret Mead your teamwork standard: "A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." **LE**

Adrian Gostick is author of several books, including the best-seller *The Carrot Principle*, which he co-wrote with Chester Elton, a motivation and recognition expert. They are authors of *The Orange Revolution* (Free Press). Visit www.carrots.com.

ACTION: Create a great performance team.

Engage Your People

Achieve performance breakthroughs.



by Cassandra Frangos

THE LINK BETWEEN high employee engagement and low turnover

is well documented. In recent balanced scorecard research, on average, a 20 percent improvement in engagement yields a 50 percent reduction in turnover. This suggests that leaders have a powerful opportunity to achieve strategic benefits by more proactively engaging their people.

Leaders can engage their workforce by aligning employees with the strategy and thereby boosting their strategic performance. Such interventions center on the learning and growth perspective of the *Balanced Scorecard*. This perspective is critical for gaining strategic traction because it focuses leaders on leveraging talent and teamwork.

Use Five Interventions

Weave *five interventions* together in an integrated approach to engagement.

1. Communicate strategy. Let people know the strategy by developing or sharing a strategy map and scorecard with them. Seek to tell the strategy story *seven times in seven ways*—deliver the message repeatedly, and in various forms. This approach makes it clear to employees that the strategy is important—to everyone. Successful communication campaigns also help people see how their work directly contributes to turning the enterprise strategy into measurable business results. Most high-performing companies have a formal process for communicating strategy to their employees. *Understanding strategy* is prerequisite to *executing strategy*. People can't make *informed judgments* about how to carry out their work with customers, partners, and peers unless they understand the strategy and their role within it. And if they can't make such judgments, their engagement slips. Simply by communicating the strategy broadly, leaders often see a spike in employee engagement and reductions in turnover.

The most effective strategic communication is adapted to different types of employees. For example, engineers want to *hear* the plan for executing the

strategy; otherwise, they'll be skeptical of high-level statements about the strategy. They want to know the team incentive for driving the strategic initiative. By contrast, general managers want *the big picture*; they are motivated most by aspirational targets. They also want to know how they'll be compensated if they achieve the target. With social networking, communicating strategy has become more complex. The need for immediate information and further detail from different generations is putting pressure on leaders to develop a clear communication plan. If the organization has a communication-rich culture, leaders need creative tactics for capturing employees' attention.

2. Drive cultural change. As strategy evolves, culture may need to change. For example, if the strategy calls for



bringing new products to market more quickly, the organization will benefit by fostering a *culture of innovation*. If the strategy centers on growing the core business and deepening existing customer relationships, then the culture should revolve around *putting the customer first*. Clarifying the cultural shifts needed to support execution of the strategy enhances engagement, because it gives people confidence that they are focusing their efforts effectively.

Since employees today are *free agents* and switch companies more often, defining the culture needed to support the strategy has become more critical.

3. Develop strategic leadership and develop talent. An enterprise shouldn't leave its leadership and talent strategies solely to the HR function, since these strategies are key to achieving the competitive strategy. Effective organizations begin developing their *leadership and talent strategies* by focusing on the top. They define leadership expectations, accountability, and required

competencies. They can then apply some of these same concepts to the entire workforce.

To craft an effective, comprehensive talent management and development strategy, leaders must find unique ways to invest in high-potentials and to develop and retain talent. For example, at JPMorgan Chase, CEO Jamie Dimon and the head of HR spearheaded "ascension plans" to chart possible career paths for future innovators. They did this in concert with the innovators. Says Dimon, "it's foolish to think there's only one possible, ideal career path for our high-potential managers, those most likely to one day orchestrate large-scale innovations." If the right position does not exist for one of JPMC's innovators, Dimon or another executive team member creates it. This CEO sees the development of breakthrough innovators as one of his key responsibilities, and one in which his board is highly interested.

Another approach to managing talent is by identifying *strategic job families and competencies* needed to execute the strategy. *Strategic jobs* are those exerting a direct or big impact on the strategy. For example, at Autogrill (a European restaurant chain), store managers are the employees who most immediately influence product and service quality; they can make or break a store's success and therefore have major impact on the company's customers—and its bottom line. Autogrill store managers really can change the results. If we move successful store managers from one store to another, good results go with them. So, we need to focus on training and on succession development for this group of job families.

4. Manage employee performance, and align rewards to strategy. Most organizations have systems in place to manage performance and allocate rewards. But most such systems are not aligned with the strategy. Once leaders introduce a strategy map, balanced scorecard, or framework for strategy execution, they must address a new set of alignment decisions. For instance, *Should the strategy cascade to the level of the individual—or only to the department, team, or job family? How much autonomy do we want individual employees to have in deciding how to achieve strategic objectives? If individual objectives and behaviors are aligned with strategy, what should our incentive and compensation schemes look like?*

Consider an engineer who is thinking about leaving her organization. She may rethink her decision if she's excited about her employer's strategic direction,

can see how she can make an impact, and knows that she will likely be rewarded for that impact. She may be further motivated to stay if she sees the company investing in the talent around her and believes in the leadership.

Providing all of this requires a comprehensive approach to managing performance and aligning rewards to the strategy. One organization that excels at this is the Brazilian financial services firm Unibanco. To kick off the new strategy, Unibanco's core strategy team enlisted the help of the Schurmann family, renowned in Brazil for sailing around the world twice. The family gave lectures to Unibanco executives on the virtues of teamwork and cooperation, specifically on the role of the individual in meeting a common goal. Executives then adopted the *Balanced Scorecard* management model and used it to communicate the importance of individual alignment and teamwork to employees. They also used internal publications to provide updates on the strategy, execution of the strategy, and individual achievements related to the strategy. Through TV Unibanco, a company news show delivered every two months, the team highlights initiatives for each strategic theme. The corporate portal, a widely used knowledge-sharing forum, also disseminates strategy and BSC information to engage people.

You can achieve impressive results by changing your performance and compensation practices to align with your strategy. Find innovative ways to reward employees for achieving both financial and nonfinancial results. And your performance management efforts can help to ensure that successors are in place when a valued employee moves on to a more demanding role.

5. Enable HR processes with technology. Leaders must decide whether a technology solution is needed for managing HR processes such as talent management, performance evaluation, and compensation planning. However, they should not count on leading with technology when it comes to these processes. It's more effective to design these HR interventions, then determine if technology can make them more effective.

This sequence of interventions is designed to enhance employee engagement. However, since each organization has a unique history and set of capabilities, leaders should customize an approach to leverage enterprise strengths. **LE**

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ACTION: Enhance employee engagement.

Influential Leaders

They follow five proven steps.



by Edward T. Reilly

INFLUENCE AND POWER are energizing forces that get things going and get things done. They are the *indispensable tools* of leaders. Leaders must use their power to energize people into action. Different people need different amounts of energizing to get going and get things done. Some folks need just a few words. Others need more than that. A leader's use of power must fit the situation. However, a leader must use influence when the direct use of power is impossible or inappropriate. This is especially important when dealing with peers and partners.

When you want other people to do something for you but those people do not report to you directly, you need to exercise influence, not power. To do that, follow these five steps:

1. Set your goals, currencies, and strategy before trying to present your ideas.

Determine your goals—exactly what you want to achieve. Establish what you want the other person to know, accept, feel, and do. In addition, identify your currencies—what you can give in exchange that others might want. You might be able to offer resources such as people, money, supplies, equipment, or facilities, as well as information or simple intangible rewards like goodwill, respect, supportiveness, and understanding. Also, know your going-in strategy. Are you prepared to take a hard or soft stance, an open or closed approach?

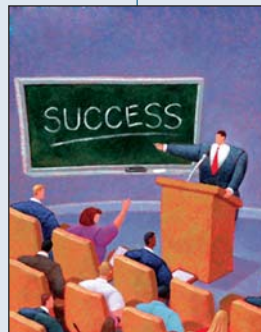
2. When you speak with the people you want to influence, probe first for information. Avoid launching right into a discussion of what you want. Take it slow and easy; use probing questions to determine what they need, want, or expect. As they respond, listen carefully to assess their readiness, willingness, and ability to understand or accept your request, recommendation, or proposal. And do something that is essential to building rapport: Find common ground. Discuss shared experiences.

3. Present your request persuasively, but only after you let others speak. Show

how your request, recommendation, or proposal has *unique strengths and advantages*, and how it can benefit them. Use positive, rather than negative, associations and comparisons and weave in facts, statistics, evidence, and illustrations to prove your point. Appeal to people's sense of reason and goodwill, or to their emotions or curiosity.

4. After making your presentation, get commitment for what you want. Remain firm and assertive, but avoid power plays as you explain what you want other people to accept, believe, do, or feel. Ask them directly for approval, acceptance, belief, or action. Link the value and positive outcomes of their decision to the costs.

5. Use stories, examples, and comparisons to help other people visualize the success associated with your ideas or request. The more you do this the more they will get excited about your proposal. For example, the head of a European subsidiary of an American toy company had a big problem. The company had been losing money for years. The company sold games and puzzles, but lacked a new product that could create buzz. Someone sent the



CEO a funny-looking plastic extrusion with a happy face and multicolored stubby hair. The CEO instinctively loved it. The sales director and other senior directors nearly laughed him out of the room when he advocated producing it. The CEO decided to launch the product, despite their comments. Then the CEO

devised a *storytelling strategy*, which helped him launch the product and get the company excited about the project. He engaged a creative team in developing a backstory for the ugly dolls. They lived in a forest, where they sang songs and danced all day. Each doll had a playful name, loved life, and wanted nothing more than to be in the company of a happy little girl.

Many happy little girls went wild over the prototypes. They cuddled the oddly shaped and colored *monsters*. The senior staff now had proof that the CEO was right, and when they needed to energize their skeptical employees about the new toy, all they had to do was tell the story of how much the children loved the dolls. Sales quickly ran in the multimillions. **LE**

Edward T. Reilly is President/CEO of American Management Association Intl. and editor of AMA Business Boot Camp (AMACOM). Visit www.amacombooks.org.

ACTION: Follow these steps to boost influence.

Leadership Struggle

It's an art to be mastered.



by Steven Snyder

LEADERSHIP IS OFTEN A *struggle*, as it implies navigating and leading people through adversity. Cultural images abound of happy, confident leaders expertly steering their followers through dark times into the warm sunlight of victory. External adversity, however, often generates *internal struggles* in leaders, a hazard of leadership our culture rarely acknowledges.

Rare are leaders who talk openly and honestly about their struggles for fear of being perceived as weak, ineffective, and incompetent. Most leaders buy into the notion that *being a good leader* means having all the answers and never stumbling when it counts.

The best leaders learn to sidestep these unrealistic expectations by accepting themselves for who they are today while striving to be better tomorrow. They accept that *struggle is a natural part of leadership*; in fact, it often paves the way for the greatest growth. Instead of denying the struggle or feeling diminished by it, they come to embrace it as *an art to be mastered* and develop skills that help them thrive amid challenge and adversity.

Inevitably, every leader stumbles. But great leaders use *failure* as a *wake-up call*. Instead of blaming others, they turn their attention inward for reflection and introspection. They study how their behaviors contribute to substandard outcomes and resolve to learn and grow from the experience.

One Powerful Story

In my research on *leadership struggle*, Joe Dowling, artistic director of the Guthrie Theater, shared with me his *powerful story of struggle and redemption*. His story is a classic case of how new pathways for growth and development can emerge when a leader deals openly and honestly with his struggle.

At the age of 28, Dowling became the youngest artistic director in the history of the Abbey Theatre, the National Theatre of Ireland. Almost immediately, he found himself clashing with the board of directors. Dowling's fiery passion for executing

his creative vision was at odds with the board's hands-on management style. After several years, a reluctant and divided board granted Dowling the authority he desired. A few years later, however, when the board issued a moratorium on guest artists in the wake of financial difficulties, tensions erupted once again. Dowling demanded that the restriction be rescinded. When the board refused, Dowling's relationship with some of the directors became so acrimonious and stressful that he felt he had no choice but to abruptly and publicly resign, which placed his entire career in jeopardy.

After spending a decade in commercial theater, Dowling returned to the nonprofit world by accepting the position at the Guthrie, a regional theater renowned for its artistic and cultural aspirations. However, his relationship with the board soon became contentious, echoing the pattern of conflict at the Abbey. Fortunately, an interaction with Guthrie board chair Margaret Wurtele triggered an epiphany. During a heated exchange, recalls Dowling, "Margaret looked at me and said, 'You do know, of course, that everybody on the board wants you to succeed.'" Dowling was stunned. In a flash, he realized that his confrontational style might have obscured a blind spot—something he was not aware of or did not recognize as a problem—that had made his years at the Abbey unduly combative and was already threatening his relationships at the Guthrie.

Today, Dowling acknowledges how he could have avoided some of the headaches and heartache that were the hallmark of his tenure at the Abbey. In retrospect, he sees that Abbey board members were not enemies but rather imperfect people like himself who were seeking to express their closely held values in difficult circumstances. "If I had sat down individually with each board member and explained my position more cogently and clearly—if I had developed a majority by persuasion and conversation as opposed to

confrontation—I probably could have gotten through that period," he said.

Dowling's recognition of his blind spot transformed his leadership. With more self-awareness and humility, he became a collaborative leader, more respectful of the visions of others. Viewing *struggle* as a doorway to personal growth enabled him to tap more fully into his leadership potential.

Three Core Practices

You don't need Joe Dowling's artistic sensibilities to master *the art of struggle*. You can learn to channel your energies through *three core practices*:

1. Become grounded by regaining

your balance. Struggle involves some change, resulting in natural tensions that can throw a leader off balance. If you feel anxious or scattered, engage in reflective activities to calm and center your mind and body and give you an accurate reading of your circumstances. Seek advice and support from trusted col-

leagues. Remind yourself that *struggle is a natural part of leadership* and you can learn much from it.

2. Explore new leadership pathways.

You may need to reimagine your situation or reinvent yourself by cultivating skills that will help you adapt to the struggle. Consider conducting a self-assessment to uncover and remedy blind spots. Embracing your struggle can elicit fresh insights about yourself, your values and your life's purpose.

3. *Deepen and enrich your adaptive energy (cultivated in steps 1 and 2).* As you emerge from your struggle, you will be better equipped to walk into the promising future that awaits you. You will foster constructive new habits that support and enrich this new way of being, be more likely to notice and celebrate precious moments with family and friends, and be more attuned to the *people and things* that matter most.

Summon the courage to confront your story, reconstruct your leadership narrative, and forge ahead. Out of your discomfort will flow a new ease, a self-assuredness that is both calming and energizing, and the rewarding blend of command and confidence that only mastery can bestow. LE

Steven Snyder is founder of Snyder Leadership Group and author of *Leadership and the Art of Struggle: How Great Leaders Grow Through Challenge and Adversity* (Berrett-Koehler). Visit www.snyderleadership.com.

ACTION: Try these three practices.



Develop Strengths

And work on a potential fatal flaw.



by Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman

BUILDING ON STRENGTHS MAKES LEADERS more effective, and yet many development programs still focus on correcting weaknesses.

In recent years, we've seen a dramatic shift, a giant pendulum swing, in leadership development. The traditional approach was to help people discover their weaknesses and then work on the worst of them. The logic was simple: Since weaknesses tend to pull managers down, if leaders correct their weakness, they would be likely to rise upward.

Lately, a different approach to helping a leader succeed has emerged. Instead of focusing on the negative side of a leader's behavior, the focus has swung to analyzing what they do well and how they can improve by building on their strengths.

While this idea was often addressed by Peter Drucker, it did not take hold, until recently, as several other researchers and practitioners have supported such thinking: Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (*Flow*), Don Clifton (*Soar With Your Strengths*), and Martin Seligman (*Authentic Happiness* and *Flourish*), among others.

Our Research Confirms It

Our research on 24,657 leaders who had participated in 360-degree feedback assessments shows that regardless of how much effort they expend on correcting weaknesses, their efforts only bring them to the midpoint on measures of effectiveness. Correcting weaknesses brings those at the lower end of the bell-shaped curve up to the middle, but never propels them to the upper half of the curve. Similarly, being good on many competencies doesn't place someone in the top half of the distribution. But when someone excels (being at the 90th percentile or above)

at three to five competencies, they are likely to be a top-tier leader.

Our research also confirms that those working on strengths have twice the gain as those working on weaknesses—and such gains extend to other competencies—proving that when leaders focus on building a strength, they tend to increase their effectiveness in other areas as well.

Building muscle. Employee surveys and assessments are commonly designed and used to identify leaders' problems and weaknesses and possible ways to fix them—not to capitalize on their greatest strengths to create the most leverage and value for the organization. Most leaders would rather try to expand a strength than work on a weakness, since a weakness is likely something that they do poorly and don't enjoy. Strengths are more fun to pursue; hence, the motivation is vastly increased.

Still Work on your Worst Weakness

As more leaders shift their development to this strength-based approach, we still advise them to work on a major weakness when it is so apparent that it has a devastatingly negative impact on their effectiveness.

The good news is that since they are starting from such a low base, they can show dramatic gains in overcoming a potential *fatal flaw*.

Again, despite the encouragement to work on strengths, many leaders still work on a weakness. We find that when people receive 360 feedback, most first read the comments about their weakness or perceived potential fatal flaws. This habit impedes them from improving as much as those who work on strengths.

Our research finds that 70 percent of participants drift back to working on a weakness, even when less than 30 percent possess a *fatal flaw* (only 28 percent of leaders have a fatal flaw, suggesting that 72 percent of leaders should focus on building their strengths).

By not building on their strengths, they fail to benefit from the advantages of the building-on-strengths approach. Their LD efforts may still have an impact, but their effort will be greatly sub-optimized. **LE**

Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman are co-founders of Zenger-Folkman, a strengths-based leadership development firm, and co-authors of *How to Be Exceptional: Drive Leadership Success by Magnifying Your Strengths* and a new book on *Inspiring Leadership*. Visit www.zfco.com.

ACTION: Build on strengths in your LD program.

Leading Change

Use the change success chain.



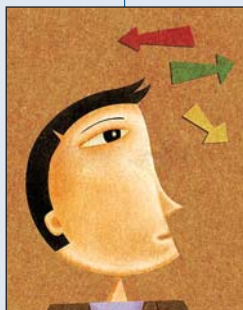
by Moe Glenner

SUCCESSFUL CHANGE initiatives don't occur in a vacuum nor are they isolated events. An enduring and successful change initiative is the result of linked steps and events, with each link building momentum that ultimately leads to the desired objective. These *Chains of Change* can lead to an initiative's failure (*Change Failure Chain*) or success (*Change Success Chain*). In both cases, if we break a link, by doing something differently, we likely affect the final outcome. Naturally, we want to break the links in a potential *Change Failure Chain* and strengthen the links for a *Change Success Chain*.

For example, the transportation division of a metals processing company owes most of its business to serving the larger organization. Through a series of poor-to-average managers and lack of initiative, this division consistently posts losses. A new Director of Transportation is placed with the hope that his experience and initiative will help transform it into a profitable division. At this moment, the team is overworked and disillusioned.

- **Communication.** The new director met with each team member to better understand what they did, their self-perception of their role, their goals and drivers, and their opinions on how to make things better. He wanted to bring in a new technology platform to make the team more responsive. This initiative would drastically change the operating procedures and increase the workload until fully implemented. Instead of researching and then proceeding without soliciting comment, he courted advance opinion and kept the team informed through every step. He over-communicated to his team so that there would be no confusion as to the initiative and its objectives.

- **Interest (passive/active).** The result was a team of *empowered contributors*. Morale quickly improved, suggestions were encouraged, objections addressed, and buy-in to the new initiative achieved. The director knew that people want to be heard and contribute. Team members had these *personal ROIs* on their investment of *time, emotion,*



and *aggravation* coincident with implementing a new initiative. With most of the team now interested in the initiative, there were still a few holdouts. While they weren't going to oppose the change, they also weren't going to actively support it yet. The new director continued to communicate with these *holdouts*, but considered even cursory interest as positive interest.

- **Enthusiasm/excitement.** The new initiative started producing tangible results: carriers were being efficiently dealt with, bids and quotes were automated, less time was needed to manage, new technology enabled robust competition for traffic, facilitating rate reductions. The team was *energized and excited* about the results and potential results. After three months, the division posted *slight profits*, which only increased the *enthusiasm and excitement*.

- **Results.** After one year of the new technology platform initiative, the division posted a big profit. Absences and late arrivals were greatly reduced without managerial *crackdowns*. Team members were *excited* to come to work and felt that an unexcused absence or late arrival would hurt the team's performance. Executives noticed, and publicly recognized and lauded members of the team (both occurrences were firsts for the transportation division).

With the big gain in credibility, new projects were green-lighted with full budgetary and management support. Year 2 doubled the profit from the previous year and Year 3 is on pace to increase three-fold. The team is operating efficiently, smartly and with full motivation to improve even further.

Next steps. With the success of the project, more time was available to be proactive on more fronts. *Success breeds confidence, and confidence breeds continued improvement and better results.* With the successes, senior management confidently approved additional projects. The early results are encouraging, and the team's motivation continues to feed off these continuing successes.

Six lessons learned: 1) communicate, communicate, communicate; 2) the key to buy-in is to understand and deliver on personal drivers; 3) even passive interest is good interest; 4) publicly recognize achievers; 5) encourage enthusiasm and excitement in the project and objectives; and 6) continue to build on the *Change Success Chains* for even greater achievements and successes. LE

Moe Glenner is President of PURElogistics, LLC, a leading change management, logistics and supply chain consulting firm. Visit www.purelogistics.com.

ACTION: Use the *Change Success Chain*.

Great Leaders

What makes them effective?



by Josh Bersin

OUR RESEARCH SHOWS that 21st century leadership competencies are different, but at its core leadership has not changed—it's just hard.

Eight Core Leadership Competencies:

- 1) *Integrity/ethics*—you must tell the truth and do the right thing;
- 2) *Vision/strategy*—leaders need to point the way and develop compelling plans;
- 3) *Results focus*—leaders have a bias for action and are relentless about getting things done;
- 4) *Judgment*—a great differentiator, it seems you either have it or you do not;
- 5) *Passion/optimism*—Effective leaders exude positive energy;
- 6) *Team building*—great leaders surround themselves with great talent;
- 7) *People development*—People flock to leaders who have a reputation for growing talent;
- 8) *Accountability*—leaders have to accept and create a culture of accountability.

Five 21st Century Leadership Capabilities: 1) *Innovation*—Leaders must think creatively, while taking initiative and calculated risks, have vision beyond the immediate situation, explore and integrate diverse perspectives, and recognize unexpected opportunities; 2) *Agility*—Visionary, collaborative, creative and proactive learning from experiences enables leaders to direct sustained success; 3) *Global Acumen*—Leaders must have world views and perspectives and global people leadership and business knowledge; 4) *Emotional Intelligence (EI)*—Leaders must recognize and understand emotions, and manage performance using this awareness; 5) *Management of Diverse Workforces*—Leaders use their EI in their interactions, communication, adaptability and change management.

Today's leaders make faster decisions, innovate, and stay close to customers. They understand their people well and bring diverse groups together.

Six Things That Matter

Underlying these competencies are six things that really matter:

1. **Great leaders have common sense.** What makes you a leader? People fol-

low you (because you have common sense). When problems arise, you have an uncanny ability to see the right direction. Common sense comes from experience, judgment, and understanding how problems are solved.

2. **Great Leaders are Learners.** Great leaders are constantly learning (learning agility). They study their market, customers, discipline, and organization. They never stop learning. Are you a person who reads a lot, questions your own thinking, and always tries to learn from mistakes? Or are you the one telling others what they need to learn? If you are the former, chances are you're a great leader (or becoming one). If you're the latter, you need to find *the right place to fit*, because once conditions change you'll fail.

3. **Great leaders are realists, but also optimistic.** Great leaders see reality. They don't wear rose-colored glasses. But they do have an *optimistic outlook*. They always see a way out of a problem. They see the future in a way that others can understand.

4. **Great leaders are hands-on.** They understand in detail what their people are doing and can add value in their daily work. They come from the business, and understand the domain. They're no longer just great general managers. GE, for example, has reduced its management rotation process (as have many other companies), to force managers and leaders to get to know the business you're in. Their newest leadership program asks rising executives to spend at least 7 years in the same business area.

5. **Great leaders have high energy.** Great leaders have *high physical energy*. As a leader, you'll be asked to work long hours, travel, and endure difficult situations. Without *high physical energy*, you'll find this difficult. Great leaders like Steve Jobs (Apple), Marissa Mayer (Yahoo), Ginni Rometty (IBM) are *energetic leaders* who rapidly bring people together in our borderless workplace.

6. **Great leaders develop other leaders.** You can predict the performance of a business by looking at the leadership culture and leadership development strategy. CEOs come and go, but companies which continuously build new talent survive. Leadership isn't easy, but for those who step up, the rewards can be tremendous. LE

Josh Bersin is author of the Training Measurement Book. Visit www.bersein.com.

ACTION: Cultivate competencies that matter.



Social Leadership

Leading in a networked world.



by Peter Friedman

LEADERSHIP IS CLASSICALLY defined as the function of a leader—one who guides, influences, or directs a group. But in a social media world of empowered consumers and employees, does the leader direct the group, or does the group guide the leader? Who leads whom?

Social media changes the leadership equation. Traditionally, leadership is deployed in the context of hierarchies, reinforced from and communicated through chain-of-command authority models. Even those who have risen to leadership through personal initiative and working around an organization generally have created or land in the point role of such a vertical structure. The leader has the power of voice. The followers are on the listening end.

Social media breaks this apart by empowering individuals and groups to communicate horizontally at higher velocity and greater momentum than a hierarchical model can keep up with. We call this leveling the playing field of voice. Leaders (people or companies) that continue to rely on vertical structures are increasingly eclipsed by the horizontal communications flow in social media. At the same time, social media, having connected almost everyone to everyone else, opens up new opportunities for leadership, although with a different framework.

What's a leader to do? The key principle of leadership today is to empower the group rather than tell it what to do. Stimulate groups to lead your goals for you, rather than do it yourself. To influence, you must listen. To lead, you must learn to follow. One is accountable for demonstrating leadership, not for having organizational authority. This means fostering a context in which people can interconnect, leverage each other, and move forward together.

In this new model, leaders create nurturing cultures that inspire people toward goals. They listen carefully and adjust the culture based on what they learn from the team. That is, they set the context for the group and then follow the group as it pursues goals. If

this sounds like management by walking around or agile development, that's because the core concepts are the same—just applied universally rather than at the edges of an organization.

New Model for Leadership

We can look to social media key success factors to better understand the new leadership model. At LiveWorld, we've developed a social media framework: Culture + Brand Participation + Marketing Integration, all supported by Trust—with the new model for leadership playing a role across all of these.

- **Culture:** Fostering an environment means defining the cultural model in which a group will exist, communicate, and interoperate. From the leader's perspective, defining the cultural tone



is the foundation of influence; for it is here that the values, aspirations, and emotional resonance of the group are set. What is the social currency of the group: sharing, storytelling, contributing expertise, or something else? What gives this group its sense of identity?

- **Brand participation:** Even though a brand or individual leader can't command the group, it's still critical to participate—to be part of it. First, one must be accepted to the group by doing a good job of setting the cultural model and then listening to the group. Look at participation not as a matter of talking to the group, but fostering dialogue and relationships among the group. Done well, the group will invite the leader to participate with them.

- **Marketing integration:** Help the team connect or integrate with other parts of the organization and the channels, groups, and venues it must work with.

- **Trust:** The horizontal, democratized nature of social media means the truth will always come out. A leader then

suggests, insists on, and practices transparency and authenticity. Success and mistakes are acknowledged. Groups are empowered and more effective when they embrace reality and can trust each other to work together.

When things go well a leader follows these approaches to amplify the success and highlight the group members who are good role models for the culture. Instead of being vertical leaders based on organizational authority, these people emerge as horizontal leaders and positive advocates based on supporting the cultural values leadership has set.

When things go wrong, as in a social media crisis, stick to these concepts. Too often when leaders (brands or individuals)—even if well practiced in social media—face a crisis, they revert to control models. For example, a brand that tries to delete critical comments on its Facebook Page. Or a leader who tries to quiet group members who object to a program. It simply doesn't work. Like a game of whack-a-mole, the more you try to control or delete your detractors, the more they pop up elsewhere. The social network world has endless venues for detractors to pop up, fueled in anger by your attempts to squelch them.

How does a leader handle such problems? Before a crisis, foster a culture that builds advocates for you while still allowing criticism. It's hard to build the relationships amid crisis. Brand advocates need to be in place ahead of time. When the voice of critics rises, don't try to shut it down; instead foster dialogue and relationships. Provide guidance, not control. This will diffuse issues while enabling advocates to defend the brand or leader. This is leadership through horizontal communications, relationship-building, and context-setting rather than vertical control. Group members value the transparency and authenticity. Handling a crisis this way builds loyalty, support, trust and moves toward goals.

Leadership revisited (and reversed). Dale Carnegie's recipe of leadership begins with *How to win friends and influence people*. A traditional leadership model would follow with *how to build a hierarchical organization (friends) and thereby influence them*. In the new socially networked world of friends, likes, and leveled playing fields of voice, leadership reverses. By learning to first influence people with social media, you can win more friends—and then empower them to meet their goals, together. LE

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ACTION: Evolve to a new model of leadership.

Front and Center

It's where all leaders belong.



by John Baldoni

LEADERS NEED TO BE seen, be heard, and *be there*. That means taking center stage. *Being there* can be interpreted both literally as being physically present, since people want to see and hear their leaders and know they are available, and figuratively as doing what the organization needs him to do to help the organization to succeed.

Center stage is the leadership domain. It is where leaders belong, a place of high visibility. While some leaders live for it, others are reticent, partly due to shyness—they don't like to call attention to themselves. This willingness to *hold back* is integral to their leadership persona (in fact, Jim Collins identifies this *humility* as a trait of *Level 5 leadership*). Jim Guest, CEO of Consumers Union, is such a leader who likes to share decision-making with his team. He invites multiple voices in strategic decisions and gives decision makers ownership and responsibility.

However, when things aren't going well, leaders belong *front and center*. When facing a crisis, we seek strong leaders who look and act as if they are in command to reassure us that things will be okay. So, leaders today need not be *authoritarian*, but *authoritative*; to be *in control*, but not *controlling*. This balance sets them apart as leaders who know *how to use power appropriately* to get things done right. When leaders use power coercively, followers disengage. This isolates the leader and increases the management *burden*.

Inherent in the idea of *center stage* is the sense of theatricality. Some leaders *make a show of it*; they enjoy being in charge. **Ronald Reagan** viewed the presidency as a *great acting role*. He was comfortable being visible and acting as if he enjoyed it. One of Reagan's attributes was his *storytelling* where his *Irish charm* shown through. We learn from stories. There is great power in storytelling since it is a wonderful teaching tool (do not preach but illuminate).

Leaders may tell stories to share credit, recognize achievement, and reward people for a job well done. Such stories renew the spirit.

Center stage then is the leaders' rightful place, but they must occupy it knowing that it is not theirs to own exclusively, but to share inclusively.

How to Think and Act Strategically

Leaders who achieve tactical success in management positions often struggle to think and act strategically, since this requires taking the long view, of thinking and doing what is necessary to attain profitable growth over time. When you're challenged to *be strategic*, you need to step back from tactics (doing what got you recognized and promoted). Pull back from *reality* to *possibility*, from *what is* to *what might be*.

You can prepare to think and act



strategically by asking three questions:

1) What does my boss need me to do? Examine the challenges your boss is facing. Consider how you can be more of an asset to his/her ability to lead more effectively. You want to be proactive while continuing to be a go-to resource, fully capable of doing all that is asked of you and more. **2) What does my team need me to do?** You want to challenge your people. Delegate more authority and responsibility to trustworthy associates so they can develop their skills. Spend time coaching and developing your people, helping them solve problems and stretch their abilities. **3) What can I do to help my boss and team win?** As you are *leading up* with your boss, you still need to be available to your team. You need to pitch in and help with heavy workloads while you assist your boss. You *think strategically*, but also *act tactically*.

These questions help you develop self-awareness and self-knowledge to lead others and make positive changes.

Ask Nine Big Questions

I ask questions to prompt leaders to explore and explain their challenges. In

answering them, leaders gain greater clarity. Here are nine big questions:

1. What is happening? Consider what is going on inside and outside. Assess the situation—*what you are doing, how you're doing it, and how what you do relates to the team and organization*. Awareness is key to knowing where you stand now and where you must go from here.

2. What is not happening? Identify discordant elements that hinder performance. For example, your team may be making its goals, but stress is high, morale is low, and people aren't happy.

3. What can I do to influence outcome? This positions *responsibility for action* where it belongs—on your shoulders. Consider what actions you'll take. You may need to find more resources to help your team—or stand back and let the team solve issues for themselves.

4. What do I need to help my team understand the big picture? This question prompts you to link *strategic imperatives* to *tactical decisions and tasks*. Too often teams do their jobs but do not know why and as a result can't contribute more. Linking *work* to *purpose* frees people to think for themselves.

5. How can I scale resources to the task? When resources are limited, you can't just ask people to *work harder* or *do more with less*. You need them to *work effectively*—and often that means *scaling the task*. Trim unnecessary things to optimize productivity on what is most important. Weed out *make-work jobs* to focus on *must-do jobs*.

6. Does my team have the talent and skills to succeed? Ask this question when you tackle new opportunities. Provide strategic vision and support those who execute the mission to keep current in new technology / tactics through training and job experience.

7. How do I support my boss to achieve his objectives? Put yourself in *his shoes*, *walk her path*. Help your boss *anticipate challenges and opportunities*, then offer suggestions and support.

8. What can I do to support the work of my colleagues? Being a *good teammate* positions you as one who supports the contributions of others. You are available to give advice and resources and volunteer such help when appropriate.

9. What do I need to do to provide value to my team? How can you unite people for a common purpose—be it an idea, process, or product. Set and reinforce the direction, and ensure that everyone pulls together. LE

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ACTION: Ask yourself these questions.

Habits of Mind

For strategic planning.



by Alan Wurtzel

I WAS INVOLVED WITH Circuit City Stores for 34 years of its 60-year history (1949 to 2009), including 13 as CEO and 14 as a non-management board member. In these capacities, I was preoccupied with the *strategy* as the company climbed from *Good to Great*. Circuit City was *the best performing company*, out of 1,435, on the Fortune 500 for any 15-years between 1965 and 1995. Then in 2009, nine years after I left the board, it died and was buried in a Chapter 7 bankruptcy.

Circuit City's long arc from cradle to grave was an exciting ride. With 20/20 hindsight, I can identify *smart* and *not-so-smart moves* we made. But developing rules for judging decisions in advance is difficult for several reasons. One, *all strategic planning is done in a specific context*: framed by the economy, competition, available products and technology, and ever-elusive consumer attitudes. The reason companies do strategic plans every two to four years is because the landscape is constantly changing. Two, *all strategic plans are made by people*. Each person has preconceived ways of thinking. Pessimists see the world differently from optimists. Curious people see problems and opportunities differently than know-it-alls, gamblers, and the paranoid. So, strategic planning does not lend itself to *formulas* and *generalities*.

I see *four principles* for the *process* of strategic planning: 1) The CEO should be deeply involved—you may utilize staff for research and writing, but it needs to be *your* plan, and *you* need to own the strategic vision and details; 2) start the planning with a review of the last plan and an honest assessment *where it went off track and why*; 3) the plan needs to confront the brutal facts by looking deeply at problems and opportunities; and 4) management needs to understand the market, the competitors and their strategies, with as much sensitivity and clairvoyance as possible, considering worst possibilities.

Even an excellent process can lead



to bad planning decisions since strategy makers bring *habits of mind* that lead them to ignore the evidence or wish the problem away. Here are eight *Habits of Mind* for successful strategic planning.

- **Be humble, run scared.** Continuously doubt your understanding of things. Success contains the seeds of its own destruction. Worry about *what the competition knows that you do not*. As Andy Grove said: Only the paranoid survive.

- **Curiosity sustains the cat.** Be open and curious and learn from others. Seek to understand the market and changing economic, demographic and other relevant forces that impact you. Study your competitors—they may have *insights* and *practices* worth copying or refining.

- **Confront the brutal facts.** The worst person to fool is yourself. Ignoring or denying reality does not help it go away. Once you understand the issues, be bold enough to take decisive action.

- **Chase the impossible dream.** Don't be limited by the *tyranny of the or*. Embrace *the genius of the and*. Two goals that seem mutually exclusive can inspire *ordinary* people to achieve *extraordinary* results.

- **Maintain a current roadmap.** If you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there. Regular strategic planning based on how the company relates to its environment (the economy, competition and customer), is essential to success.

- **Mind the culture.** Create a caring and ethical culture where people can make mistakes without fear. Beware of employees who are more concerned about their success than that of the business. Understand, exemplify, and reinforce the company's positive history and culture.

- **Encourage debate, learn from dissent.** Involve senior staff and the Board in an *open process* to find the best answer. Create a board that will raise thought-provoking questions and challenge management to justify its plans.

- **Focus on the future.** Manage for the long term. Don't let short-term earnings swings divert a long-term strategy. Ignore the skeptics and market swings. If things go well, the value of your company will respond over time.

You can develop the right *Habits of Mind* for strategic planning. Circuit City's success reflects healthy *Habits of Mind*. Its demise can be traced to its failure to practice these principles. LE

Alan Wurtzel is the son of the founder, CEO, and finally Board member of Circuit City. He is author of *Good to Great to Gone* (Diversion Books). Visit www.circuitcitythebook.com.

ACTION: Cultivate healthy habits of mind.

Lead Boldly!

Lead like a woman!



by Sharon Hadary and Laura Henderson

FOR YEARS, WE'VE KNOWN INTUITIVELY that *female leaders drive superior performance*. Today, research documents the positive impact: organizations with more female leaders have up to 65 percent higher financial results; the only high predictor of a group's creativity and effectiveness is the number of women in the group; peers, bosses, direct reports, and associates rate executive women up to 10 percent better as leaders; and companies with women on their boards outperform those without.

Clearly, female leaders produce positive outcomes, but what is it women leaders do that is so effective?

One of our goals was to describe *how women lead* and *why their style is so successful*. Our research identifies *six characteristics* that define the leadership strengths of women:

1. **Women are values-based.** Values are the foundation of women's leadership style. Highly successful women define their values and live by them consistently. Their values are the lens through which they view decisions and determine the right action to take. They have the moral courage to apply their values in daily decisions and when confronted with the big choices.

2. **Women view the world holistically.** Their perspective is multi-faceted. When they define success for themselves, they include career, family, community, and personal aspects. They bring this holistic view into business operations. In problem solving, they go beyond the facts and numbers and take into account values, vision, culture, and relationships. As a result, they are likely to identify opportunities, risks, and gaps men may not have recognized.

3. **Women are inclusive and collaborative.** Women build strong, productive relationships with employees, peers, leaders, customers and vendors. They encourage everyone to contribute to discussions, and focus on synthesizing all ideas into a stronger, more creative common solution. They are non-hierarchical in their inclusiveness and their

evaluation of ideas. They judge ideas on *merit* rather than on *who* contributes the suggestion. For women, the goal is not to get their idea adopted but to generate the best decision. Can women be collaborative, consultative, and inclusive while demanding results and making the tough decisions? “Absolutely,” report high achieving women, who characterize their leadership styles as “energetic, collaborative, results-oriented, and decisive.”

4. Women invest time in consultation.

Women consult with others when making decisions. They pull together those who’ll be affected by the decision and those who must implement the solution—employees, colleagues, customers, and vendors. Women are open to alternatives and adapt their concepts to effectively achieve the objective. This consultative process results in better decisions and buy-in that can dramatically reduce *time to implementation*.

5. Women create shared vision, values, and goals. Women bring to leadership a *commitment to a purpose greater than themselves*. They place a high priority on defining shared *values, vision, and goals* and communicating them to teams. They help people understand how each can contribute to the success of the team and company. They set *high goals* and recognize achievements. They create a *culture* where achieving shared goals also contributes to achieving personal aspirations and goals. This boosts commitment and motivation to go the extra mile to achieve company goals.

6. Women generate trust. Women realize *people do not park their personal goals and responsibilities at the door when they come to work*. They get to know their people, see their potential, and help them develop that potential. People believe women leaders are more likely to understand their challenges. This trust reinforces people’s commitment to the success of the business.

Male and female leaders can learn from each other. They are not *hard wired* in their styles—each can learn from the other. Women’s leadership style has a positive impact on financial success and creates an attractive culture. The discussion no longer is *which style is better*, but how to *combine both styles* to create a more profitable and nimble organization. The message to all women is to *lead boldly—lead like a woman!* LE

Sharon Hadary and Laura Henderson are authors of *How Women Lead* (McGraw-Hill). Hadary is former director of the Center for Women’s Business Research. Henderson is former CEO of Prospect Associates, a biomedical research firm. Visit www.HowSuccessfulWomenLead.com.

ACTION: Lead boldly, like a woman.

Strategic Results

Six high-performance trends.



by Brian Donovan and Bridget Stallkamp

LEADERS ARE ADOPTING SIX TRENDS TO ensure the success of a strategy or initiative. Our year-long analysis of engagement routines focused on identifying the inhibitors and accelerators to strategy adoption and success. The trends point out high-performing approaches to help leadership teams, managers, and individual contributors more quickly transform change and deliver results that support the strategic direction of the company.

Regardless of the organization or marketplace conditions, these six approaches can be leveraged by leaders to ensure their strategy will be successful. Strategies can be complex, and they require every person—regardless of level and role—to understand, adopt, internalize, personalize, and evangelize that strategy to bring it to life. That can be a daunting task, but by zeroing in on these *six key areas*, leaders increase their odds of implementing and sustaining a high-performing strategy.

• **Nurture a strategy, don’t launch it.** Successful companies don’t launch strategies—they nurture strategies. Learning, trial and error, and small wins are celebrated as new capabilities that drive results are developed. Organizations and strategists need to challenge, support, and be openly curious about each step of the strategy rollout to continue to hone and evolve the strategy over time.

• **Hardware the last 100 yards.** Strategy must relate to the work individuals do to be successful. However, we found that it rarely does. The most common refrain from people asked to engage with a new strategy is, “I don’t understand what I am supposed to do differently.” Organizations need to ensure that every level of the business, from leaders, to managers, to individual contributors, can directly connect their roles



to delivering the strategy.

• **The great paradox of accountability.** Successful companies have solved this paradox of accountability and ownership of results by making co-ownership and accountability complementary, not a contradiction. Encourage co-accountability by using common metrics to track performance across complementary functions. Cross-functional collaboration creates a spirit of peer-to-peer accountability that allows companies to respond to new market conditions and solve problems with quality results, requiring less top-down intervention.

• **Return receipt required.** Most strategies are passed to people with minimal interest in whether or not the receiver gets it. The lack of a feedback loop from the employee to leader is interpreted in two powerful ways: The sender doesn’t really care if the person or function gets it, and the sender lacks interest in hearing what is clear, understandable, and actionable and what is not. Successful execution through people has a constant return-receipt process.

• **Not lost in translation.** Senior leaders spend months toiling over a strategy, immersed in the data and surrounded by a unique context, but then they tend to expect their people to view the final PowerPoint deck and understand what they have to do in a matter of minutes. Great strategists take the time to translate the strategy from the language of the expert to the language of the user and not view it as a “one-and-done” approach.

• **Why it matters more than you think.** When people understand the *whys*, the *whats* and *hows* of a strategy, it instantly makes a lot more sense. In successful companies, employees at all levels are able to articulate where their company ranks in the industry and what makes them unique among their competitors. This awareness of the competition improves the quality of the hundreds of tiny decisions employees make every day because they are informed by marketplace realities.

We used interviews, focus groups, and ethnography to uncover the engagement routines and human behaviors of high performance that support the adoption and successful execution of strategies. LE

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ACTION: Sustain a high-performance strategy.

True Leaders

They possess five traits.



by David Brookmire

CAN ANYBODY BECOME a leader with the right training, or are some people meant to lead (and others meant to follow)? Is leadership an intrinsic trait—some people are just *born leaders*—or is it a skill that can be learned? Many exceptional leaders have natural instincts and abilities, but others learn by doing. Either way, the right training, experience, and coaching can greatly improve leadership skills and performance.

There are *professionally trained* leaders, perhaps born with the necessary traits for success, and then provided training, coaching and experiences. They are exposed to great role models, attend top business schools, had mentors, and progress through challenging assignments.

- **Clarence Otis**, Darden Restaurants CEO, is one example. He started his career in law, spent time in banking, and joined Darden Restaurants in a financial role. He was born with some intrinsic leadership traits—intelligence, drive, and ambition—mentored by Joe Lee, his predecessor, and given opportunities to learn and grow.

- **Anne Mulcahy**, Former Xerox CEO, was also born with some leadership traits, but she rose through the ranks at Xerox partly because of the company's outstanding training and development programs.

- **Mark Zuckerberg**, CEO of Facebook, by contrast, was born with many qualities needed to succeed, but hasn't embraced training, coaching or development. While he is clearly bright, innovative and tenacious, his missteps demonstrate that he's learning on a global stage (unfortunately for shareholders, he hasn't had the benefit of training and experience before assuming Facebook's top job).

After working with many leaders with various abilities, I find that *most leaders possess five major leadership traits*: 1) cognitive abilities (vision and strategic agility); 2) self-confidence; 3) results-orientation (unparalleled drive and determination); 4) integrity;

and 5) sociability. People who aren't *intelligent* can't provide a compelling vision. If they lack *self-confidence*, they're afraid to try. People who aren't *results-oriented* can get passed over, and those *lacking integrity* often self-destruct. *Social skills* are key to connect with people and rally support.

Many leaders have inherent leadership traits, intuition and confidence, but they need the right training, education and experience to excel.

Being a leader goes beyond running an organization. It's a 24/7 job, making work-life balance difficult. And, it's a lifetime commitment to high standards. Most people are either ethical or they're not—it's hard to teach ethical behavior.

True leaders are self-motivated, taking the initiative to grow, learn and



evolve, without relying on outside motivators (management directives, financial compensation). They're *self-aware* enough to know where they're weakest and when they need help, and *wise* enough to surround themselves with coaches, mentors and other trusted advisors.

The best leaders can strike a balance, knowing when to listen and when to talk, manage without micro-managing and be firm yet fair.

Leaders with different skills and personalities can be equally effective and impactful. Two respected leaders—Steve Jobs and Mother Theresa—have very different leadership styles, but are both viewed as brilliant, visionary, and inspirational leaders.

Seven Best Practices

So, how can you best identify, select, develop and retain great leaders? Ensure that you have an effective talent management function (TM) with

capable HR leadership. To establish a robust leadership pipeline, great companies have these best practices:

- **Put in place an on-going, enterprise-wide human capital assessment and planning process.** This helps the company anticipate the future business and company needs, and forecast the types of leaders they will need. Put the strategy through the talent filter to determine what competencies will be required in the future and the types of TM systems needed to support the company's direction.

- **Manage leaders rigorously, in terms of performance of functions and talent.** Establish a *culture of accountability* so that expectations for leadership are clearly communicated and the rewards are aligned to promote performance. Make it difficult to get through the talent pipeline by having high standards and a challenging formal development process in place.

- **Know what great leadership looks like.** Be trained in selection and behavioral interviewing techniques, and hire for one or two jobs beyond the current open positions so you build capacity in leadership talent pools for growth.

- **Recruit continually to identify potential hires**—even when there are no short-term openings.

- **Practice leadership development (LD) consistently.** Use assessments to help leaders recognize and deal with blind spots. Have development plans for high potentials and monitor progress. Place leaders in assignments designed to help them gain the experiences needed to complement their inherent qualities. Promote leaders based, in part, on their talent development track records.

- **Form a culture of talent development where leaders seek assignments outside their unit**, and where cross-functional moves are normal, not unusual. Champion talent and rotate high potentials every 24 months or so.

- **Spend time on TM.** CEOs should lead talent reviews, meet with high potentials, mentor key talent, teach in leadership classes, and actively recruit new talent.

Identifying leaders with the inherent qualities and potential and having a well designed TM system facilitates successful LD. Adopt the premise that leaders are born *and* made so that all TM systems are in place to drive performance. LE

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ACTION: *Cultivates these traits and practices.*

Hiring Leaders

Search right for the right ones.



by Elaina Genser

AS AN EXECUTIVE search consultant, I speak with executives daily about finding the next, and right, leaders—whether they come from *within* their own ranks or from *outside*. When resources are limited, organizations often choose to conduct searches themselves and seek my advice rather than my professional services. So, I often counsel executives in charge of hiring (as well as their internal recruiters) about how an efficient and fruitful search should be conducted.

As an observer to these searches, I have a unique vantage point on what works. Here are *best practices* I see from hiring executives who succeed in finding the right leaders.

Before You Search

- **Get on the same page as your internal recruiter.** As the executive in charge of the hire, be as open as possible with your lead internal recruiter about the position: What does your organization need? What type of person are you looking for? What skills are *critical* and which are *nice-to-haves*? Inform your recruiter to do the job well and stay in close contact as the search progresses.

- **Craft a position profile.** What are the prerequisites, responsibilities, reporting requirements, compensation structure? Work with key stakeholders to get the position profile just right. A well crafted job description boosts the odds that *suitable candidates* will apply.

- **Review your succession planning.** Don't start a leader search until you have a succession plan—a blueprint from which an organization anticipates eventual leadership transitions. Identify which types of leaders and leadership competencies the organization needs and values. A succession plan provides a template for conducting a leadership search.

- **View each hire as part of a process.** You may be hiring one person for one position, but each new leader should be a piece of a larger puzzle. *Succession planning* helps organizations take the long view on methodically assembling the type of leadership team that best

suits their needs and values. Review talent development programs. What are you doing to develop your best and brightest? Do you have a leadership academy, skills development program, or *stretch* assignments? Do you give internal candidates meaningful opportunities to rise within your leadership?

- **Know the market.** Work with your internal recruiter, HR leaders, and firms that specialize in executive compensation to assess market realities. What does the market expect for the position and do your expectations deviate from those expectations? Listen to what your internal recruiter and others are telling you about the market's response as you begin your search. Are you compensating correctly? Are your job parameters appropriate? If not, you might rethink the *position description*.

When You Search

- **Reach out to qualified internal candidates.** Some open leadership positions should be filled through internal promotion. You may want or require a comprehensive search with a mix of both internal and external candidates. However, first look within to see if any high potentials are ready. If so, encourage them to apply. If your talent recruitment is working in concert with your senior management team, they ought to know these people. Consider this a professional courtesy to your up-and-coming leaders, who will appreciate knowing they're considered serious candidates before they apply.

- **Cast a wide net.** Implore your internal recruiters to get the word out. While many internal searches are subject to finite resources, there are ample means for getting the word out—company contact lists, social media, press release services, industry associations.

- **Avoid the post-and-pray approach.** Once a position is announced, be proactive and persistent in tracking down great candidates. Rely upon your network of professional contacts and ask around about potential *nontraditional candidates* (from other industries) who might bring fresh ideas to your leadership mix. Also look inside. Hidden *leadership gems* can often be mined from different departments or distant offices.

- **Keep the application process simple.** Most companies maintain sophisticated databases of potential hires and have elaborate application processes. This may create an undue burden on strong (and busy) candidates. Rather,

make it easy for good people to apply. In some cases, an emailed résumé can be enough. You may be losing top candidates if you ask them to jump through too many hoops just to apply.

- **Screen résumés.** Use *consistent* screening criteria and evaluation methods that align with the position description. While it's important to cast a wide net, you need to narrow the pool of candidates to those who can legitimately fulfill the needs of the position.

- **Screen references.** As you build rapport with candidates and start interviewing, ask for names of supervisors. As the reference process progresses, tell the candidates who you'd like to speak with to ensure you get the information you need. While you must respect a candidate's parameters for confidentiality, you can find and consult with references who really know candidates, not just the ones candidates initially

want to give you.

- **Optimize the candidate experience.** Roll out the red carpet. Play the role of gracious ambassador. Be timely and professional. Communicate regularly and clearly during the search, and provide finalists with *constructive feedback* on their strengths and weaknesses. Leaders

who aren't hired this time may be right the next time—and will look favorably upon a future opportunity.

Before You Hire

- **Revisit your needs and position description.** Are any candidates truly right for the job? If not, don't hire. The costs of hiring the wrong person for critical leadership positions are huge.

- **Ask for help.** If qualified candidates are few, expand your search; ask your trusted contacts or competitors for sources for new candidates. If your search is bogged down, consult with or call in a professional search firm.

- **Follow protocol in making a final decision.** Reach a consensus and follow predetermined steps in communicating your decision to finalists before making any public announcements. A good search process goes bad quickly when unofficial information leaks out early.

There is always some luck in any successful recruitment, but also a great deal of preparedness, pragmatism, and rigor—qualities that leadership candidates will expect and appreciate. LE

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ACTION: Find and hire good leaders.

Leaving on Top

Make a graceful exit as the leader.



by David Heenan

WHAT COULD Marissa Mayer, the 37-year-old CEO of Yahoo!, learn from Anne Mulcahy about *leaving on top*? Anne became CEO of Xerox at 49, and eight years later—after grooming her handpicked successor, Ursula Burns—she gracefully stepped aside with her legacy intact. Her farewell looked effortless and drama-free, but moving on is seldom that simple for high-profile achievers.

“I loved every minute of being CEO,” Mulcahy said. “The biggest surprise is how hard it is to give it up. I see why so many successions go badly. It’s really, really hard to give up power.”

Marissa Mayer would be wise to learn from Mulcahy’s example. If and when Mayer moves on from her new role, she ought to do it with the same preparation and dignity.

As an ex-Marine and former corporate executive, I know about *exiting gracefully* from a profession—I’ve done it several times. In fact, I have been scrutinizing dozens of traumatic, life-altering *sayonaras*—and how men and women of every stripe confront them. Some handle this basic human fear with dignity and candor; others don’t.

Here are *three keys to exiting gracefully*:

1. Check your ego at the door. CEOs should think of themselves as *temporary stewards*, not lifelong rulers of the kingdom. In today’s often star-struck society, savvy leaders are abandoning the notion that the credit for every achievement is solely attributable to the person at the top. They see that those fortunate enough to star or command are not gods, but as *the first among many contributors*. Egoless people like Bill Gates and Warren Buffett foster first-rate co-leaders, including their replacements, at every level. To them, egalitarianism isn’t just a matter of style—it’s a question of survival.

In addition to muffling hubris, graceful exiters function as talent spotters, always on the lookout for able individuals who can become outstanding members of the team. As a result, trust flourished in Microsoft and

Berkshire Hathaway. With everyone busy advancing the organization’s goals, there’s little time for the constant intrigue that breeds mistrust and undermines the transition process.

Outstanding mentors also make sure that good work is recognized and find ways to remove impediments to organizational effectiveness. In the process, they develop deep cadres of potential successors that make the prospects of stepping down possible.

2. Stage your exit. The transition to what’s next may take a while. Back into it. In the broadcast booth, famed announcers Vin Scully and Bob Uecker got the message. Rather than fall prey to the whims of often fickle baseball owners, they slowly diversified. In the 1970s, Scully honed his credentials in



other sports, from bowling to billiards and skydiving to swimming. Similarly, Uecker branched out in comedy clubs, sitcoms, movies, even beer ads. In their later years, both men scaled back their on-air appearances as prelude to a graceful exit. In effect, they adopted “decelerating roles”—scheduling work around their lives, not the other way around. Keep in mind the Chinese proverb, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” Live life incrementally. Break your departure into manageable steps. Take things bit by bit. By carefully staging your departure, you’ll build confidence and create momentum for your new life. But beware the comeback. Some strong-willed personalities have a hard time making retirement stick. For them, one goodbye isn’t enough. Witness Vladimir Putin’s ruthless crusade to regain Russia’s presidency. More often than not, second acts don’t work. For every Steve Jobs at Apple, there’s a

Jerry Yang, Yahoo’s cofounder and former CEO. My advice: tread carefully if you’re contemplating a comeback.

3. Develop elastic interests. How well have you prepared for the next season of life and what are your options? George Foreman left boxing to become a successful pitch man. Jimmy Dean left music to become a sausage king. Former Dallas Cowboy quarterback Roger Staubach parlayed his fame on the gridiron into a successful real estate career. These eclectic types believe that lifestyles can—and should—be elastic.

Therefore, reinvent yourself. Cultivate the art of making yourself up as you go along. The process of rediscovery will expand your world. Don’t draw lines that limit what you are or are not. Doing so may eliminate novel invitations and the chance of switching gears. Don’t edit out choices or become pigeonholed. Do be on a continuous hunt for what you love, what you do well, and what piques your curiosity.

One characteristic shared by every graceful exiter is *diversity of interests*. They got to the top of the mountain in their fields and started looking around for new vistas—rather than clinging to the mountain they’d climbed. As Mother Teresa put it: “Life is a promise. Fulfill it!”

Disgraced and Resigned Leaders

With the General Petraeus scandal, Hillary Clinton stepping down from her post, and several CEOs such as Intel’s, Lockheed Martin’s, and the Long Island Power Authority’s all resigning from their posts, it begs the question: *At what point do leaders say goodbye to their current career, and when’s the right time (and right way) to do it?*

It’s certainly not when you become the disgraced leader! When subordinates discover that their leader is involved in illegal or unethical behavior, they must confront or counsel the chief and, if that fails, walk away. Unfortunately, in the wake of today’s scandals, we see more instances of superiors who are unworthy of a decent person’s loyalty. If you are the decent follower, here are five guidelines: 1) Don’t bend the rules to play the game; 2) blind devotion often backfires; 3) Befriending the wrong person can be hazardous to your career; 4) a lapse in judgment can taint a promising career; and 5) Character always counts.

Today the principles to *exiting gracefully* and *leaving on top* are paramount.**LE**

David Heenan, visiting professor of global strategy at Georgetown University and a trustee of a large real estate trust, is author of *Leaving on Top: Graceful Exits for Leaders* (Nicholas Brealey).

ACTION: Plan to leave when you are on top.

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