

LEADERSHIP Excellence

Warren Bennis



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

February 2013



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—WARREN BENNIS, AUTHOR AND USC PROFESSOR OF MANAGEMENT

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Goat or Goal?

This Rocky Mountain goat, a surefooted climber and the largest mammal above the tree line, is found in spectacular alpine landscapes. His bold leadership pose suggests that he is a top performer and master of all he surveys.

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Performance by Design

You either have a wreck or a wonder.



by Ken Shelton

IN RECENT MONTHS, I'VE BEEN assisting on book about *world-class performance* by Michael G. Winston, former chief leadership strategist at Lockheed-Martin, McDonnell Douglas, Motorola, Merrill Lynch and then Countrywide Financial.

When you witness and experience the good, the great, the bad and the ugly—the rise of great organizations and the fall of poor ones, as both Michael and I have done over decades—you learn lessons both in your head and heart. Perhaps nothing, professionally, is as gut-wrenching as seeing your company close its doors, lay off thousands of people, sell off assets, and leave many people with debts. And leaders of failed enterprises own much of the blame—even if they do their best to dodge it, as the Italian captain of the wrecked cruise ship *Costa Concordia* has done.

Captain Francesco Schettino was accused of several crimes as a result of the grounding. But now, the master of the ill-fated ship says he's innocent and that the truth will be told—in his new book, of course.

By all accounts, *Costa Concordia* was sailing too close to shore when the ship grounded off the coast of Italy, taking the lives of 32 passengers and crew. Now, Schettino, accused of abandoning his ship, manslaughter and causing the shipwreck, says he is innocent and did all he could do to help—sticking to his story that he tripped and fell into a lifeboat. Salvage operations continue at the site.

As eye-witnesses to such business wrecks and salvage operations, Michael and I care even more about competitiveness, performance, results, relationships, outcomes, and organizational sustainability.

Inspired by the Olympics

For inspiration, Michael looked to the 2012 London Summer Olympic Games. The book follows this outline or *storyboard*:

- **Conditions:** competitive, hostile, uncertain, changing. Such conditions drive the need to *improve Performance*.
- **Start.** You must start your performance improvement *here and now*, with who you are, what you have.

- **Establish a baseline:** your current performance level. **Benchmark** against your competition and world best, but seek to be to be an original, not a copy.

- **Assess:** Am I in the right event, right place, right race? With diligent, disciplined practice, can I/we compete with and possibly win against the best? Become the best? Choose a field, an event, a level of excellence where you have a real chance of being competitive, perhaps winning an Olympic medal, placing in the top three, and being recognized as world class.

Now Take 10 Steps (Decathlon)

Once you choose your event, start taking these 10 steps:



Costa Concordia

1. **See and sense and assess your talent,** strength, gifts, and competitive advantages.

2. Capture a dream, vision, aspiration, motive, desire, ambition, or mission statement.

3. **Clarify and specify:** your goal, aim, target, objective, or expectation (create SMART goals).

4. **Create a strategy or design** to get from *here* (where you are now in your performance) to *there* (where you hope to be in your performance).

5. **Identify what development standards,** disciplines, practices, tactics, methods, or means will help most.

6. **Identify what program, process, principles, or values will best help** you achieve your performance goal.

7. **Select and affiliate with a coach,** team, model, mentor, school, or organization known for excellence in your event.

8. **Measure progress,** engage in competitions, celebrate improvement, recognize and reward growth and gain.

9. **Establish a performance creed and culture.** Brand your name. Be known for world-class *performance excellence* in some event, race, competition, field, arena, product, or service.

10. **Sustain your gains** and be a model of consistency in performance excellence.

Remember: Every organization is perfectly designed to produce the results it now gets. If you hope to *improve performance* and *win consistently* in the fields and markets of your choice, you need to design the right program/process to deliver desired results.

Ken Shelton
Editor since 1984

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High Engagement?

Management's dirty little secret.



by Gary Hamel

HOW WOULD YOU FEEL about a physician who *killed* more patients than she helped, a police detective who committed more murders than he solved, or a teacher whose students got dumber as the school year progressed? And what if you discovered that these perverse outcomes were more the rule than the exception, that they were characteristic of most doctors, policemen, and teachers? You'd be outraged and demand change!

Why, then, are we complacent when confronted with data that suggests most managers are more likely to douse the flames of employee enthusiasm than to fan them? Why aren't we angry that our management systems are more likely to frustrate extraordinary accomplishment than to foster it? Only 1 in 5 employees are truly *engaged* in their work in the sense that they would "go the extra mile" for their employer. Nearly 4 out of 10 are mostly or entirely *disengaged*. This data represents a stinging indictment of management-as-usual.

Why aren't we scandalized by the fact that for most managers, *employee engagement* isn't Topic A, or B, or even C. How do we account for this? I see three possibilities:

1. Ignorance. Maybe managers don't realize that most of their employees are emotionally tuned out at work. Maybe they lack enough emotional intelligence to recognize the low-grade disaffection that afflicts most of their people. This seems to me unlikely. Anybody who has ever read a Dilbert strip knows that cynicism and passivity are endemic in large organizations.

2. Indifference. Managers know that many employees are *flat-lining* at work but simply don't care, either because a callous culture has drained them of empathy, or because they view engagement as financially unimportant—a *nice to have*, but not an *imperative*.

Many managers have yet to grasp the connection between *engagement* and *financial success*. Companies that score highly on *engagement* have *better earnings growth* and *fatter margins* than

those that don't—and the correlation between *engagement* and *profitability* is likely to strengthen in the years ahead.

3. Impotence. It could be that managers care a lot, but can't imagine how they could change things for the better. After all, many jobs are boring. Retail clerks, factory workers, call center staff, administrative assistants—*of course* they are disengaged, how could it be otherwise? Like prison wardens, managers would be shocked if their charges started bubbling with *joie de vivre*.

Today, you don't have to be the *biggest* to be the most profitable, but you have to be the most highly differentiated. In a world of commoditized knowledge, the returns go to companies that can produce nonstandard knowledge. Success here is measured by profit per employee, adjusted for capital. As you



would expect, Apple's profit per head and ratio of profits to net fixed assets are much higher than its competitors.

It doesn't matter much where your company sits in its ecosystem, nor how vertically or horizontally integrated it is. What matters is its relative *share of customer perceived value* and the costs it incurs to produce that value: the greater your share of differentiation, the greater your share of industry profits.

In a world where customers wake up daily asking, "What's new, different, and amazing?" *your success depends upon your ability to unleash the initiative, imagination, and passion of your people*. This can only happen if all those folks are connected heart and soul to their work and to the mission of the company.

Six Levels of Capabilities

In my hierarchy of human capabilities at work, there are six levels:

Level 1: Obedience. Obedient employees show up each day and follow all prescribed rules/procedures. Obedience is

important, as large-scale enterprise would be impossible without it.

Level 2: Diligence. Diligent employees work hard, stay till the job is done, and take personal responsibility for delivering great results. Again, this is critical. You can't build a winning organization with slackers.

Level 3: Expertise. Next is *intellect*, personal competence—employees who have world-class skills, who are well trained and eager to learn more.

Trouble is, *obedience, diligence, and competence* are becoming capabilities that you can buy in parts of the world for next to nothing (hence, companies have out-sourced millions of jobs). But wage arbitrage is not a strategy for long-term competitive advantage. If *obedience, diligence* and *knowledge* are the *only* things you get from your people, your company will lose. You have to move up the capability hierarchy.

Level 4: Initiative. Beyond expertise is initiative—employees who spring into action when they see a problem or an opportunity, who don't wait to be told, who aren't bound by job descriptions and are instinctively proactive.

Level 5: Creativity. Creative employees are eager to challenge conventional wisdom and are always hunting for great ideas in other industries.

Level 6: Passion. At the apex is *passion*—employees who see their work as a calling, as a way to make a positive difference in the world. For these ardent souls, the dividing line between vocation and avocation is indistinct at best. They pour all of themselves into their work. While other employees are merely present, they are engaged.

In today's creative economy, the three capabilities at the top of this list create the most value. Audacity, imagination, and zeal are the ultimate well-springs of competitive differentiation. And there's the rub. These higher order human capabilities are *gifts*; they can't be commanded. You can *tell* someone to be passionate or creative, but it won't do much good. Individuals choose each day whether or not to bring these gifts to work—and *they mostly choose not to*.

Throughout history, managers have seen their *primary task* as ensuring that employees serve the organization's goals—obediently, diligently, expertly. Now we need to turn the assumption of "organization first, human beings second" on its head. Instead of asking, *how do we get employees to better serve the organization*, we need to ask, *how do we build organizations that deserve the extraordinary gifts that employees bring to work?* How can managers create a culture that

inspires exceptional contribution and merits an outpouring of passion, imagination, and initiative? In our *creative economy*, how fast can a company generate *new* insights and build *new* knowledge that enhances customer value? To escape the curse of commoditization, a company has to be a *game-changer*—and that requires employees who are proactive, inventive, and passionate. The capabilities that matter most are precisely those that are most difficult to *manage*; hence, we need to shift our focus from *managing* to *unleashing*.

No leader can afford to be indifferent to the challenge of engaging employees in the work of creating the future.

Engagement may have been optional in the industrial and knowledge economy, but it's the whole game now.

You might say: *I'd love to create a highly engaging workplace, but the folks who work for me are not creating gorgeous products at the cutting edge of technology; they're answering phones in a call center, cleaning hotel rooms, or bagging groceries. How can you expect people to be engaged in their work if their work isn't engaging?*

You might think that *most people hate their jobs*, yet 86 percent of employees in the Towers Watson Global Workforce Study said *they loved or liked their job*.

So, why not more engagement? Notes Julie Gebauer, who led the study, **three things are critical to engagement**: 1) the scope that employees have to learn and advance (opportunities to grow); 2) the company's reputation and its commitment to making a difference in the world (a mission that warrants extraordinary effort); and 3) the behaviors and values of the leaders (are they trusted, do people *want* to follow them?).

These are management issues! It is managers who empower individuals and create space for them to excel—or not. It is managers who help to articulate a compelling and socially relevant vision and make it a rallying cry—or not. It is managers who demonstrate praise-worthy values—or not. Only 4 in 10 employees agree that senior management is “sincerely interested in their well-being,” “communicates openly and honestly,” “communicates the reasons for decisions,” “tries to be visible and accessible,” and “makes decisions that are consistent with our values.” To improve *engagement*, we have to admit that if employees aren't enthusiastic and impassioned, it's not because *work sucks*—it's because *management blows*. LE

Gary Hamel is Leadership Excellence #1 ranked thought leader and author of *What Matters Now* (Jossey-Bass). www.garyhamel.com.

ACTION: Engage your people to boost performance.

Declines and Comebacks

The mighty can fall, and rise again.



by Jim Collins

HISTORY SHOWS REPEATEDLY that the mighty can fall. How can you know if you are on the path of decline? If some of the greatest companies can go from iconic to irrelevant, what might you learn by studying their demise?

If powerful, well-positioned companies can fall so far, so quickly, any company can. If icon companies that once served as *paragons of excellence* can succumb to the forces of gravity, no one is immune. If companies once considered the champions in their fields can plummet from great to irrelevant, we should all be wary about our success. Every institution is vulnerable. There's no law of nature that the most powerful will remain at the top. Anyone can fall, and most eventually do.

Might it be possible to detect decline early and reverse course—or even better, practice preventive medicine? I've come to see institutional decline like a disease: harder to detect but easier to cure in the early stages; easier to detect but harder to cure in the later stages. An institution can look *strong* on the outside but already be *sick* on the inside, dangerously on the cusp of a precipitous fall.

Five Stages of Decline

Why do some great companies fall, and how far can a company fall and still come back? We identified a set of *once-great companies that fell* and a set of *success contrasts*. What happened leading up to the point at which decline became visible, and what did the company do once it began to fall?

Our analysis yielded a model of how the mighty fall that consists of **five stages** that proceed in sequence. And here's the scary part: You do not visibly fall until Stage 4! Companies can be well into Stage 3 decline and still look and feel great, yet be right on the cusp of a huge fall. We've found companies that recovered—in some cases, coming back even stronger—*after having crashed down into the depths of Stage 4*.

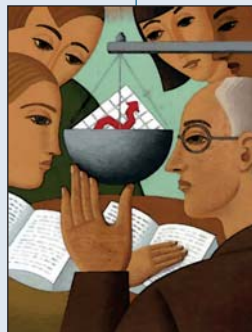
Organizational decline is largely self-inflicted, and recovery largely within our control. So long as you never fall all the way to Stage 5, you can rebuild!

Stage 1: Hubris born of success.

Great enterprises can become insulated by success; accumulated momentum can carry an enterprise forward for a while, even if its leaders make poor decisions or lose discipline. Stage 1 kicks in when people become arrogant, regarding success as an entitlement, and lose sight of the factors that created success in the first place. When the rhetoric of success (“We’re successful because we do these specific things”) replaces penetrating insight (“We’re successful because we *understand why* we do these specific things and under what conditions they would no longer work”), decline will likely follow. Luck and chance play a role in many successful outcomes. Those

who fail to acknowledge the role luck plays in their success—and thus overestimate their merit and capabilities—succumb to hubris.

The best leaders never presume they understand all the factors that brought them success. They retain a somewhat irrational fear that perhaps their success



stems in large part from fortuitous circumstance. Suppose you discount your own success (“We might have been just really lucky”) and worry incessantly about how to make yourself stronger and better-positioned for the day your good luck runs out. What's the downside if you're wrong? Minimal: You'll just be that much stronger by virtue of your disciplined approach. But suppose instead you succumb to hubris and attribute success to your superior qualities, what's the downside if you're wrong? You might be surprised and unprepared when you wake up to discover your vulnerabilities too late.

Stage 2: Undisciplined pursuit of more.

Hubris leads to the *Undisciplined Pursuit of More*—more scale, growth, acclaim, more of whatever those in power see as *success*. In Stage 2, companies stray from the disciplined creativity that led them to greatness, making *undisciplined leaps* into areas where they can't be great or

growing faster than they can achieve with excellence—or both. When an organization grows beyond its ability to fill its key seats with the right people, it sets itself up for a fall. Although complacency and resistance to change remain dangers, *overreaching* better captures how the mighty fall. It's undisciplined to make discontinuous leaps into areas in which you have no burning passion; take action inconsistent with your core values; invest heavily in new arenas where you can't attain distinctive capability; launch headlong into activities that do not fit with your economic or resource engine; become addicted to scale; neglect your core business while leaping after new adventures; use the organization as a vehicle to increase your personal success—more wealth, fame, and power—at the expense of its long-term success; and compromise your values or lose sight of your core purpose in pursuit of growth.

Stage 3: Denial of risk and peril. In Stage 3, internal warning signs begin to mount, yet external results remain strong enough to *explain away* disturbing data or to suggest that the difficulties are *temporary, cyclic, or not that bad, and nothing is fundamentally wrong*. In Stage 3, leaders discount negative data, amplify positive data, and put a positive spin on ambiguous data. Those in power start to blame external factors for setbacks rather than accept responsibility. The vigorous, fact-based dialogue that characterizes high-performance teams dwindles or disappears altogether. When those in power begin to imperil the enterprise by taking outsize risks and acting in a way that denies the consequences of those risks, they are headed for Stage 4.

Bill Gore, founder of W.L. Gore & Associates, articulated the “waterline” principle. Think of being on a ship, and imagine that any decision gone bad will blow a hole in the side. If you blow a hole above the waterline, you can patch the hole, learn from the experience, and sail on. But if you blow a hole below the waterline, you can find yourself on the ocean floor. Great enterprises do make big bets, but they avoid big bets that could blow holes below the waterline.

Stage 4: Grasping for salvation. The cumulative peril or risks gone bad assert themselves, throwing the enterprise into a sharp decline visible to all. The critical question is: How does its leadership respond? By lurching for a quick salvation or by getting back to the disciplines that brought greatness

in the first place? Those who grasp for salvation fall into Stage 4. Common *saviors* include a charismatic visionary leader, a bold but untested strategy, a radical transformation, dramatic cultural revolution, hoped-for blockbuster product, a *game-changing* acquisition, or other silver-bullet solutions. Initial results from dramatic action may appear positive, but they do not last.

When we find ourselves in trouble, on the cusp of falling, our survival instinct and our fear can prompt lurching—reactive behavior contrary to survival. The very moment when we need to take calm, deliberate action, we risk doing the exact opposite and bringing about the very outcomes we most fear. By grasping in fearful, frantic reaction, late Stage 4 companies accelerate their own demise. Of course, their leaders can later claim: “But look at everything we did. We changed everything. We tried everything we could think of. We fired every shot we had, and we still fell. You can't blame us for *not* trying.” They fail to see that they need to get back to a calm, clear-headed, focused



approach. If you want to reverse decline, *be rigorous about what not to do*.

Stage 5: Capitulation to irrelevance or death. The longer a company repeatedly grasps for silver bullets, the more likely it will spiral downward. In Stage 5, accumulated setbacks and expensive false starts erode financial strength and individual spirit to such an extent that leaders abandon all hope of building a great future. In some cases, company leaders just sell out; in other cases the institution atrophies into utter insignificance; and in the most extreme cases the enterprise simply dies outright.

The point of the struggle is not just to survive, but to build an enterprise that makes such a distinctive impact on the world it touches (with such *superior performance*) that it would leave a gaping hole that could not be easily filled by any other institution if it ceased to exist. To accomplish this requires leaders who retain faith that they can find a way to prevail in pursuit of a cause larger than mere survival (and larger

than themselves) while also maintaining the stoic will needed to take whatever actions must be taken, however excruciating, for the sake of that cause.

Well-Founded Hope

By understanding the *five stages of decline*, leaders can increase the odds of reversing decline before it is too late—or even better, *avoid decline in the first place*. Xerox, HP, Nucor, IBM, Merck, Texas Instruments, Pitney Bowes, Nordstrom, Disney, and Boeing each took at least one tremendous fall at some point and recovered. Sometimes the tumble came early, when they were small and vulnerable, and sometimes the tumble came when they were large, established enterprises. But in every case, leaders emerged who broke the trajectory of decline and simply refused to give up on the idea of not only survival but ultimate triumph, despite the most extreme odds.

The signature of the *truly great* vs. the *merely successful* is not the absence of difficulty—it is the ability to come back from setbacks, even cataclysmic catastrophes, stronger than before. We all need beacons of light as we struggle with inevitable setbacks. For me, that light has often come from Winston Churchill and his mantra: *Never give in—never, never, never, never*. Be willing to kill failed business ideas, even to shutter big operations you've been in for a long time; evolve into a different portfolio of activities, even to the point of zero overlap with what you do today; embrace loss, endure pain, temporarily lose freedoms; form alliances with former adversaries, and accept necessary compromise. But never give up on the idea of building a great company. Never give up on the principles that define your culture. Never give up faith in your ability to prevail. Never—ever—give up on your core values.

The path out of darkness begins with those exasperatingly persistent individuals who are constitutionally incapable of capitulation. It's one thing to suffer a staggering defeat—as will likely happen to every business and social enterprise at some point in its history—and entirely another to give up on the values and aspirations that make the protracted struggle worthwhile.

Failure is not so much a physical state as a state of mind; success is falling down—and getting up one more time—without end.

LE

Jim Collins is the best-selling author of Built to Last, Good to Great, and Great by Choice. Visit www.JimCollins.com.

ACTION: Bounce back from setbacks.

Leading Change

It all starts with urgency.



by John Kotter

THE RATE OF CHANGE is increasing exponentially—in fact, it may be the defining characteristic of the business world for the foreseeable future. To successfully react to *windows of opportunity*, regardless of the focus—innovation, growth, culture, cost structure, technology—a new methodology of change leadership is required (70 percent of major change efforts fail because leaders don't take a *holistic approach* to seeing the change through).

My process for *leading change* starts with *creating a sense of urgency*: helping others see the need for change so they are convinced of the importance of acting immediately and feel a gut-level determination to move and win, *now*.

The toughest step in *leading change*—and the most often overlooked—is *increasing the sense of urgency* (and sustaining a sense of urgency over time).

Urgency is vital because change is shifting from *episodic* to *continuous*. *Episodic change* requires urgency in spurts and sprints. It revolves around a single big issue—such as restructuring, new product launch, acquisition, IT integration, or growing revenue. In organizations that excel in episodic change, with a big initiative every few years, you can still find a poor capacity to deal with continuous change since urgency tends to collapse after a few successes. *Continuous change* is a ceaseless flow of change—a marathon. Becoming adept at change must be a company asset to succeed long term, since there is a constant need for an urgent focus on what is important.

In their rush to make a plan and take action, most leaders *underestimate* how hard it is to drive people out of their comfort zones, or *overestimate* how well they've done so, or lack patience to develop appropriate urgency.

Leaders who have a *sense of urgency* are good at taking the pulse of their company and determining whether the state of the organization is one of *complacency*, *false urgency*, or *true urgency*:

- **Complacency.** Complacency can occur whether you're at the top of your

market or facing bankruptcy. It's a state where people fail to react to signs that action must be taken, telling themselves and each other, "Everything is fine." The worst thing for leaders is to step into *complacency* since a sleepy or steadfast contentment with the status quo can create disaster. In mature organizations, complacency is likely the norm; and even in organizations that are experiencing serious problems, business-as-usual can survive.

You have a culture of complacency when: 1) discussions focus inward and not on markets, emerging technology, or competitors; 2) candor is lacking in confronting bureaucracy and politics that slow things down; 3) people regularly blame others for problems instead of taking responsibility; 4) past failures are discussed not to learn, but to stall



new initiatives; 5) assignments around critical issues are rarely completed on time or with quality; 6) cynical jokes undermine important discussions; 7) meetings on key issues end with no decisions about what must happen now; 8) passive aggression exists around big issues; and 9) people say, "we must act now", but then don't act.

- **False urgency.** People are busy working, but their actions don't result in helping the business succeed in their primary goal. This leads to unproductive results, and eventually, burnout.

False urgency is a misguided sense of urgency. It has energized action, but it has a frantic aspect to it with people driven by anxiety and fear. This dysfunctional orientation prevents people from exploiting opportunities and addressing real issues.

You have a culture of false urgency if: 1) hundreds of anxiety-filled, unproductive activities are mistaken for a real sense of urgency; 2) people have trouble scheduling meetings on important

initiatives because *they are too busy*; 3) critical issues are delegated without the involvement of key people; 4) people spend long hours developing power points on almost anything; 5) highly selective facts are used to shoot down data that suggests there is a big hazard or opportunity; 6) people run from meeting to meeting exhausting themselves and rarely focusing on the most critical hazards or opportunities.

- **True urgency.** People are focused on making real progress every day. Urgent behavior is driven by a belief that there are great *opportunities* and *hazards*. It inspires a gut-level determination to move, and win, now. *True urgency* focuses on critical issues, driven by the deep determination to win, not anxiety about losing. There are proven ways for creating true urgency, but often the urge is to skip to the doing before getting employees to embrace urgency. A true sense of urgency is rare because it has to be created and recreated.

You have a culture of true urgency if: 1) people have a "want-to" attitude and engage in urgent behavior; 2) people have a gut-level determination to move, and win, now; 3) people are alert and proactive, constantly looking for information relevant to success and survival; 4) when faced with a problem, people search for effective ways to get the information to the right individual, now; and 5) people come to work each day ready to cooperate energetically.

True urgency is not the product of historical successes or current failures but the result of people who provide the leadership needed to create it. A real sense of urgency is rare, yet invaluable in a world that will not stand still.

You can either fail or succeed at establishing *true urgency* in your culture. Here are the most common ways:

- **Guaranteed to fail:** Change initiatives rarely fail because the case for change is poorly thought out, or not supported with sufficient facts. A solid *business case* that has a theoretically *compelling rationale* only appeals to people's head—and not their hearts.

- **Guaranteed to succeed:** Leaders who know what they are doing will *aim for the heart*. They connect to the deepest values of their people and inspire them to greatness. They make the business case come alive with human experience; they engage the senses, create messages that are simple and imaginative, and call people to aspire. **LE**

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ACTION: Create a culture of true urgency.

Executive Coaching

Five competencies are needed.



by Linda Talley

WITHOUT LEADERS, executive coaches would be without a job. Leaders are tasked with making decisions that lead to success. The executive coach helps the executive establish a starting point, articulate the results to be achieved, and handle or overcome any obstacles along the way.

The effective coach continuously develops personal attributes and *five competencies* to more effectively engage the executive to achieve goals.

1. Leadership approach. A *style approach* enables the coach to approach each client meeting with the skills to engage the client either in task or relationship behavior. The *three-skill approach*—technical, human and conceptual—creates a well-rounded executive coach but most executive coaching scenarios do not require the technical or professional aspect. Executive coaches must develop a balance between *relationship* and *task* when using the *style approach* in order to move easily between the two as needed during the coaching engagement. The coach must also look at his or her strengths or weaknesses, in terms of traits and style, and develop a plan to create some balance between the two or simply focus on strengths and manage around weaknesses. This is where the four aspects of *emotional intelligence* (EI) become important: *self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, social skills*. Since these aspects can complement a coaching relationship, I will review those that make the greatest impact.

2. Self-management. This refers to the ability of the coach to achieve goals using such skills as *self-awareness, self-regulation, self-evaluation, flexibility and time management*. The coach with good self-management can assess clients, actively create and pursue a developmental plan, and work the plan with the client. This is a strength for the coach in that she or he takes time to reflect and determine if they are creating a balanced coaching encounter or not. If the coach is unaware of any biases through lack of self-awareness; if the coach can't regulate cognitions

through a lack of self-regulation; if a coach isn't flexible as the coaching engagement proceeds; if the coach isn't conscious of time during the coaching session, the coach comes across as *off balance, unprofessional, and inflexible*. The coach sets the standard for the coaching relationship, and self-management is a key aspect of it.

3. Cognitive adeptness. The effective coach uses *whole brain thinking*. The left brain analyzes; the right brain creates. The left brain deals with numbers, rational thought processes, sequences which the effective coach needs to analyze the situation, determine the appropriate approach or style, and handle administrative details. Right brain thinkers focus more on the emotions, relationships, intuition, integrating, and synthesizing highly perceptual issues. The effective coach builds a relationship with the client that leads to coaching goals that might include skills or performance coaching. The ability to help the client succeed rests on the coach's ability to *create the emotional connection* with the client by using more right brain thinking.



Effective coaches shift back and forth between right and left brain thinking, adapting their style to assist the client. If the coach's style is too *task related*, the relationship might be jeopardized; if the coach's style is too *relationship related*, goals may not be achieved. The goal is to combine the two styles to positively impact the interaction.

4. Interpersonal adeptness. A coach must be skilled in *interpersonal relationships*. Coaching is a collaborative relationship. The coach must acquire the ability to listen differently based on the situation or person. When a person can really listen to another at the level that the other person needs, relations are deepened; new understandings are created; we gain a greater appreciation for who the other person is and where they are at and what they need. We really hear what is being said without bias; understand what is heard; and become aware of our listening styles (reactive, explorative or attentive). The coach must ask questions using the

exploratory style to help the client create their own answers, and then use *attentive listening* during the engagement.

Attentive listening is collaborative—it uses observation, nonverbal and verbal responses to move closer, emotionally, to the client. A coach can acknowledge the client through the use of attention, mirroring, pace, and focus. The effective coach listens for what is being said in between the lines—where the truth or real need lies. A client may say he wants a promotion when in fact, he wants his boss to give him more at-boys. A client may say she wants to change careers when, in fact, she needs to take a stand for her salary and bonus. An effective coach can listen for this and respond at the level of *real need*.

5. Social and political skills. The best organizations proactively seek innovative ideas to move forward. This may include a change or shift in culture. If so, expect resistance. An executive coach may assist a key executive to develop attributes to engage in the change process, showing the executive how his or her modeling affects other individuals. The executive might have business acumen but lack *social acumen*. *Emotional intelligence* is a predictor of effective leadership. Social skills are needed to create a new culture. The executive who uses social skills to transform his or her relationship with people will attain *followers* rather than *employees*. When an executive coach helps the executive focus on social skills, greater results can be achieved.

Political skills also increase the effectiveness of the coach. An effective coach must understand the internal politics and obstacles. When the coach sees a bias against people within the organization, she or he can be *proactive* in dealing with it. A challenge might come when the coach is engaged by the CEO (HR directors think coaching engagements should be run through them). The coach must involve the CEO and seek internal sponsors *before and during* an engagement to minimize difficult encounters. Although the coaching revolves around *personal attributes*, the effective coach understands organizational behavior and politics.

Mastering these competencies will position the executive coach to build relationships faster; apply the nuances of personal attribute development to the coaching; and remain focused on the *goals* of the engagement. LE

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ACTION: Develop the competencies of a coach.

Take a Bold Pause

It helps boost performance.



by Kevin Cashman

SAO PAULO IS BRAZIL'S largest city and the eighth largest metropolis in the world. With more than 21 million people, it has varied and multiple challenges. To make a dent in the overcrowding and give Paulistanos a sense of space, Sao Paulo's leadership stepped back to ask the question: *What might happen if we removed the print advertising from our city?* This question led to a bold pause that showed up as bold action.

In 2007, the city's mayor passed the Clean City Law, banning advertising on billboards, the outside of buildings, buses and trains. The controversial and innovative law rids the city of the incessant visual advertising that dominated its outdoor space. It transforms the urban landscape, reduces stress, and turns down the visual pollution, giving its residents and visitors a pause from a barrage of visual stimuli that consumed their attention and distracted them from the natural character of the city and its landscape. It was like seeing the city for the first time.

The ban, said the mayor, gave Sao Paulo a chance to step back to think about what they want, how they want to reintroduce advertising in a more regulated way. This *bold pause* gives the city a spacious opening to choose intentionally what they want their city to be—and it all began with a bold question that challenged the status quo, and led to a bold solution. *We create the future and optimize leadership potential in the silence and potency of pause.*

What might be possible for you if you pause more to ask bold questions? Leaders foster and accelerate growth of revenue, market share, profit, purpose, innovation, and contribution. But where does all this growth originate? What is the prime mover? What fuels growth in the first place? Too often, we view growth as an external process, rarely pausing to consider its source within us, others, and our organizations. We excel at measuring growth but do we slow down, step back and precisely look at where it comes from and where it is going?

I see three critical factors for optimizing leadership: Growing oneself, growing others, and growing an innovative culture. Imagine your talent with the awareness to self-monitor and self-correct through change. Envision your key talent passionate and prepared to meet strategic needs. What might be possible when you and your talent create a culture that is innovative, learning agile, and resilient? Would you have what you need to compete? I think so.

To Grow or Not to Grow?

Growth is an inside-out and outside-in process of transformation beginning with inner Self-Growth and moving to Growing Others and Growing Innovative Cultures. Most change begins with *self-change*, and most growth begins with *self-growth*. "To grow or not to grow"—that is the question. No amount of growing others and growing a culture of innovation will compensate for lack of self-growth. The capacity for *organizational growth* is directly proportional to the growth of its leaders. Before we can grow others with authenticity and purpose, we need to consider our own



growth with authenticity and purpose. If we do, our development of others will be powerful, and the credibility we gain with others will be well earned. When we aspire to become the leader we wish to see in our organization, we have a chance to *accelerate the development of others*, and ultimately *the culture*.

Power of Questions, Language of Pause

Why is it paradoxical for leaders to pause, to step back (rather than take immediate action) and to question and challenge themselves? Questioning our choices is perceived as second-guessing, and in the norms of some cultures, that can be construed as weak. In *The Art of Powerful Questions*, authors Eric Vogt, Juanita Brown, and David Isaacs suggest that we rarely participate in *reflective conversations* in which we explore catalytic questions and innovative possibilities before reaching key decisions for *three reasons*: 1) an emphasis on finding quick fixes and an attachment to either/or thinking; 2) the rapid pace of

our lives and work; and 3) a belief that *real work* consists of detailed analysis, immediate decisions, and decisive action. And yet, they note, "knowledge work consists of asking profound questions and hosting wide-ranging strategic conversations on issues of substance."

Why question when we have all the answers, right? What might happen if instead of having all the answers, we had all the best questions to engage in optimal discovery? What might be possible if we built a bank of compelling questions and a practice of asking them, using them to probe, learn, and unleash brilliance? Questioning is perhaps the most powerful pause of all. Questions open the door to dialogue and discovery. They are an invitation to creativity and breakthrough thinking. Questions can lead to movement and action and ignite change. Questioning is "the art of seeking new possibilities," the language of coaching, innovation and dealing with complexity and crises. Questions force a pause and propel us to a new level of thinking. *Effective managers are trained to have the most accurate answers, while leaders foster the skill to pose the most profound questions.*

Pause is a pragmatic, transformational methodology that can be learned; yet this process of questioning, reflecting, and synthesizing is rarely taught. Consider that 78 percent of people get their best ideas in the shower, while exercising, or commuting. Most leaders agree that *innovation is the new leadership*. Yet, most spend less than 5 percent of their time in reflective thinking! Most organizations say *innovation is their top strategic priority*, and yet senior teams spend only 3 to 5 days per year on *strategy and innovation*. What might be possible if you devoted more time for reflective thinking and strategic planning? What if pausing for questions and experimentation, *pause-through for breakthrough*, became the new normal?

In an uncertain world, *pause* may be *the most critical leadership competency* since it prepares us to become more comfortable with ambiguity, more adaptable in change, more agile in volatility, and more clear about complicated issues.

As the practice of pause permeates the organization, it can open the doors of authentic innovation and accelerate sustained growth. What bold question will you pause to ask today? And, what bold innovation might result? **LE**

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ACTION: Pause to reflect then go and grow.

Virtuous Performance

It is a very productive partnership.



by Kim Cameron

VIRTUOUSNESS REPRESENTS the best of the human condition, or the highest aspirations we hold for ourselves. In organizations, we can see virtuousness in collective displays of moral excellence. Positive factors—*virtuousness* in particular—provide an important arena for leaders to enhance organizational performance, since *virtuous organizations* outshine others.

What is virtuousness? First, let's differentiate *virtues* and *virtuousness*: The term *virtues* refers to individual attributes that represent moral excellence and inherent goodness—traits indicative of humanity's best qualities. Examples include displays of forgiveness, humility, wisdom, and compassion. *Virtuousness* refers to aggregates of virtues acting in combination, and manifests itself as behaviors, processes, and routines in organizations. Just as individuals may possess more than one virtue, organizations can also display and enable more than one virtue.

Virtuousness has three core attributes:

1. Eudaemonic assumption: *Virtuousness* is synonymous with the *eudaemonic assumption*—that an inclination exists in all people toward *goodness* for its intrinsic value. Much evidence suggests that our inclination toward *virtuousness* is inherent. *Virtuousness* differs from *ethics* in that it pursues the ultimate best—*eudaemonism*—rather than merely avoiding the negative.

2. Inherent value: *Virtuousness* is not a means to obtain another end, but an end in itself. In fact, *virtuousness* in pursuit of another more attractive outcome ceases to be *virtuousness*. For instance, if *kindness* toward employees is fostered solely to obtain a payback or an advantage, it ceases to be *kindness* and becomes *manipulation*. *Virtuous* actions create advantages for others in addition to—or exclusive of—recognition, benefit, or advantage to the actor. Whereas some activities included in the *corporate social responsibility* and *corporate citizenship* domains may represent *virtuousness*, these activities are often motivated by instrumental benefit or exchange relationships.

Virtuousness extends beyond citizenship, social responsibility, or ethics.

3. Amplifying effect: *Virtuousness* creates and fosters sustainable positive energy. As an inherent attribute of people, *virtuousness* elevates. Observing *virtuousness* in organizations creates upward spirals of positive dynamics. This amplifying quality is the *heliotropic effect* at work—the attraction of all living systems toward *positive energy* and away from *negative energy*. Observing *virtuousness* creates a self-reinforcing cycle toward more *virtuousness*.

Virtuousness in Organizations

Few leaders invest in practices or processes that do not produce higher returns to shareholders, profitability, productivity, and customer satisfac-



tion. Without visible payoff, leaders tend to ignore *virtuousness* and consider it of little relevance to key stakeholders. But what if we could show direct associations between *virtuousness* and *desired outcomes*? Studies have explored these relationships, and the key results are summarized below:

Virtuousness after downsizing: A series of studies examined indicators of *virtuousness* and *performance outcomes*:

- Eight independent business units of a corporation in the transportation industry had recently downsized, and the negative effects were likely to ensure *deteriorating performance*. *Virtuousness* scores for each unit were measured by survey items measuring compassion, integrity, forgiveness, trust, and optimism. Even after downsizing, units with higher *virtuousness* scores had much higher productivity, profitability, productivity, quality, customer retention, and lower employee turnover.

- In 16 industries that had cut staff, the same measures of *virtuousness* were attained. Profitability (net income

relative to total sales), quality, innovation, employee turnover, and customer retention were measured as outcomes. Firms scoring higher in *virtuousness* were *much more profitable*, and—when compared to competitors, industry averages, stated goals, and past performance—achieved much higher performance on the other outcome measures.

- After 9/11/2001, a study conducted in the U.S. airline industry investigated the relationships between *virtuous downsizing strategies* and *financial return* and examined how different firms handled financial setbacks. *Virtuousness* was defined as preserving human dignity, investing in human capital, and providing an environment in which employee wellbeing was a priority. Eight of 10 U.S. airline companies downsized, but some did so in ways that were more *virtuous* than others. The study found that *virtuousness* and *financial return* are positively related.

Virtuousness and causality: Does a causal relationship exist between *virtuousness* and *performance*? More recent studies looked at the impact of implementing virtuous practices over time:

- In 40 business units of a financial services company, the CEO tried to incorporate virtuous practices into its culture to guide the strategic direction. One year later, strong relationships were found between virtuous practices and six measures of financial performance. The following year, similar associations were found between *virtuousness* scores, employee turnover, and organizational climate scores.

- In 29 nursing units in a healthcare system, a multi-year study investigated the effects of *virtuousness* on indicators of performance. It revealed: 1) Units exposed to *virtuousness* training greatly improved their *virtuous practice scores*; and 2) Units improving the most in *virtuousness* also improved the most in outcome measures (*double-digit improvements*).

Virtuousness is associated with, and may produce, desired performance in profitability, productivity, quality, customer satisfaction, climate, and employee retention. The value of *virtuousness* does not require that it be associated with other outcomes. But when faced with stockholder demands for measurable results, or trying to lead an organization in trying times, leaders may find value in virtuous practices. LE

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ACTION: *Strive for virtuous performance.*

Brave Leaders

Think of George Washington.



by Don Sandel

IN THE “LAND OF THE free and home of the brave,” we rarely talk of *bravery* as a mark of leadership, and yet history is replete with examples of brave figures who emerged from battle as changed men, more heroic and revered than when they entered.

Following a turning-point battle in New Jersey, one soldier said of *George Washington*, “I shall never forget what I felt at Princeton on his account, when I saw him brave all the dangers of the field and his important life hanging as it were by a single hair with a thousand deaths flying around him. Believe me, I thought not of myself.”

Washington’s selfless courage and decisiveness was an inspiration to tired and bewildered troops at a time they most needed it. Despite the dangers, he led from the front and changed the course of history.

Difficult times serve as a sort of crucible, forging leaders through fire. Who might have attained stature were it not for the circumstances they found themselves in—a strange serendipity of sorts. As we are all painfully aware, we find ourselves in one of those historic times and are collectively longing for a leader to emerge or re-emerge who leads us in the right direction, out of the mire. Perhaps those who lead some group or endeavor could learn *three lessons* from Washington’s example from 240 years ago.

1. Learn from your mistakes. In 1776, Washington’s troops were defeated in Long Island, White Plains, and especially, New York. Standing face to face with the vanguard of the King’s troops was not turning out to be sound strategy and his troops were already near their end, defeated and demoralized. Washington was, however, adroit at strategic retreat, always enabling the American army to fight another day, which he did during Christmas 1776. Rather than do battle against a prepared, well-equipped adversary, Washington rallied sick and tired troops and, using the element of surprise, captured Trenton and Princeton from a brutal

and mercenary enemy. These quick and decisive victories served notice to the world, but most importantly, *his own men*. Thousands of volunteers soon joined the dwindling ranks of American troops, and once defeatist countrymen discovered they had an intrepid leader who could adapt his strategy as required. **ACTION:** *The greatest leaders continue to learn and are humble enough to draw wisdom from errors in judgment. Search out teachable moments, especially for yourself.*

2. Model right behavior. Washington clearly knew the value of *managing perception*. When the Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia in the summer of 1775, he was the only leader in military uniform. His 6’ 3” frame especially stood out when he made his



rare but influential opinions known. He was the obvious choice to lead the revolt as commander in chief. He said aloud but humbly that “I do not think I am equal to the command I am honored with”, then refused the monthly salary offered to him. Sharing the sacrifice of his men and his young country, Washington only went home twice during the eight-year struggle. When his troops defeated the enemy the day after Christmas 1776 in Trenton, Washington came face to face with their vanquished foe, Hessian Colonel Johann Rall, who lay on the ground mortally wounded. This was his chance to berate the dying Colonel for the atrocities his men committed on surrendering American soldiers in previous battles. Instead, Washington offered medical help and assured his adversary that his men would get fair treatment. He held the moral high ground, which was witnessed by friend and foe alike.

ACTION: *Thoreau said that your actions speak so loudly I cannot hear what you say.*

Your employees or constituents are watching you to decide on how they should act and respond. Teach by doing.

3. Lead from the front. In preparation for his military leadership role in the Revolution, Washington sharpened his teeth in various battles in the French and Indian War. One particular battle was uniquely fierce but quick, which Washington left as the victor. In the middle of the firefight that ensued, he later wrote, “I heard the bullets whistle, and there is something charming in the sound.” Soon, Washington began to acquire some fame with his military exploits, especially following his *bravery* at a battle on the way to capturing Fort Duquesne from the French. In route to the fort, Washington and other troops led by Major General Edward Braddock were ambushed by a group of Indian and French troops. Braddock and most of his troops were slaughtered in the surprise attack but Washington, cool and intrepid, took the lead, rallied the surviving troops to counter the attack, and eventually led hundreds to safety. In the center of the fury, Washington survived, despite four shots through his uniform and two horses shot out from under him. Once Washington became president, he continued his courageous ways. In an effort to quell a minor revolt called Shays Rebellion, and deep into his second term, Washington gathered 13,000 militia and led the forces himself. True to his leadership calling, this was the only time in history that a sitting American president has personally led a military operation. **ACTION:** *Courage inspires. Since it is the job of a leader to inspire others, take bold action, despite the risks.*

Circumstances dictate your opportunity to stand out and make a difference. Washington, like many other leaders, rose to greatness at least in part on the wave of iconic moments in history. But many people, in business, in life, or in government, have not been made great by those moments, but made irrelevant. Not because of some cosmic occurrence outside their sphere of influence but because they did not respond equal to the moment. Just as critical, aspiring leaders cannot wait for events that may never arrive. There does not need to be a battle where you survive four shots through your uniform but . . . assuredly, there will be moments where bravery or courage is required nonetheless; rise to the occasion courageously. **LE**

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ACTION: *Behave bravely in your leadership.*

Abraham Lincoln

Exemplar of Lean Leadership.



by Jerry Bussell

STEVEN SPIELBERG'S acclaimed movie, *Lincoln*, has placed a bright spotlight on our 16th President, as we celebrate his 204th birthday this month. The movie focuses on Lincoln's leadership as he works to get the 13th amendment passed by Congress. His exceptional leadership traits and skills are timeless and universal, and he's an excellent leadership role model.

When I worked as VP of Operations for Medtronic Surgical Technologies, I used Lincoln as a role model as we implemented *lean thinking* to improve operations and support growth.

In their book *Lean Thinking*, James Womack and Dan Jones describe the concepts, methods, and systems that enabled Toyota to achieve world-class performance and gain a competitive advantage in the auto industry. *Lean thinking* focuses on *delivering ever more value, as defined by the customer*, by continuously improving processes to eliminate waste and by engaging people daily to improve their work and work experience to benefit customers.

Lean Thinking requires leaders to serve their people, develop them to take on full responsibility for their work, and deliver value to customers.

Within a few years, our largest plant received two of the top national continuous improvement awards. We had made good progress, but had much to do in terms of *leadership development*.

In 2005, I traveled to Japan to study Toyota and Honda and their leaders. Toyota leaders demonstrated humility, aligned their organization from top to bottom around key objectives, coached by asking effective questions, built consensus, showed respect for people, fostered continuous learning, and addressed problems openly. They reminded me of Abraham Lincoln in terms of character traits and skill sets.

Lincoln serves as an example of 10 traits of *Lean Leaders*.

1. Purpose. Being *purposeful* means finding both the emotional and market definition of the group's highest purpose, putting it in human terms, and turning everyone to face in that direc-

tion. No matter how repugnant Lincoln found slavery, his first purpose was to *preserve the Union*, and he never wavered—that purpose guided his decisions and actions and he galvanized his followers around his purpose.

2. Respect. Lincoln showed respect for people. As president, he spent much time visiting battlefields to support the troops. He would take his *public baths* weekly by meeting with people who lined the halls of the White House. He showed respect to his rivals, and for William Seward by going to his office to meet with him and by finding areas of *mutual interest*. Seward said of Lincoln, "He is the best of us."

At Toyota they *show* respect for people. By being respectful, they engage the hearts and intellects of their people. The leaders are coaches who actively



support their employees. They go to their work areas to engage with them and support them in solving problems.

3. Probity. This word means *transparently honest*. A person of probity is *someone who holds to the highest principles and ideals*. It speaks to a person's integrity, and is the basis for building trust and inspiring people to follow. Lincoln earned the nickname *Honest Abe*. His critics attacked him but could not provide credible evidence to show he was dishonest. Lincoln was *transparently honest* and a *principle-centered leader*.

4. Influence. Influence means guiding people to finding the right answers on their own, so the right path becomes theirs. When individuals arrive at their own answer to a situation, it is theirs—and it causes them to take ownership for their decisions and actions. Lincoln used stories and letters to influence people. In letters to his generals, he did not command them. He provided suggestions and comments to help them determine the right course of action.

5. Continuous learning. This forces us out of comfortable routines, never allowing us to rest on laurels. To stop learning is to halt growth. The learner is always looking for new approaches. Lincoln often studied late into the night. He would read volumes on military strategy and pore over reports to fulfill his role as commander and chief.

6. Persistence. When faced with challenges, *persistence* enables us to continue. Thomas Edison, who used Lincoln as a role model, failed 10,000 times in one year but then used the lessons learned to achieve *breakthrough successes*. Lincoln failed at two businesses, and lost in his bid for eight state and national political positions. His persistence enabled him to win the presidency and the Civil War to preserve the union and free the slaves.

7. Holistic thinking. To think *holistically* is to *think broadly* about the applications of action or inaction. Lincoln had to consider the border states in his decisions and actions to prevent them from seceding. He also had to take an overview of the economic, governmental, and military strategies and determine the implications when making decisions. He had to see the complex interconnections and ramifications.

8. Problem solving. The *scientific method* is a systematic approach to determine the root cause of a problem and implement measures to make improvements. Lincoln always wanted to see problems firsthand. He was concerned that individuals would interject their opinions and emotions and be biased. He had the skill to understand the facts and *look at problems objectively*.

9. Results. Lean thinkers are results-driven, but they focus on the *process* not the outcome, knowing that the process produces the results. They set goals and then create and improve processes. Lincoln showed his *results-driven* nature in the way he urged his generals to prosecute the war and win victory.

10. Courage. A courageous leader thinks less about *personal consequences*, more about what would happen if he fails to make the change. Lincoln stayed with his courageous convictions and did not relent, despite growing pressure to settle with the south and end the war. Sherman's and Sheridan's victories turned the tide and enabled Lincoln and the Union to win the war.

For over 150 years, leaders have asked themselves, *What would Lincoln do?* LE

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ACTION: *Cultivate the traits of lean leaders.*

Magnetic Leaders

Take these 10 critical steps.



by Dianne Durkin

WHAT DO THE LEADERS of top companies do to create and nurture an inviting workplace that is filled with fully engaged and enthusiastic employees? The best leaders engage employees, set the example by showing how to play well with others, and inspire people by demonstrating that every action they take is relevant to them and to their constituents.

The best leaders know how to listen, make a promise and deliver on that promise, and make the necessary investment to engage their employees. They motivate, inspire and energize people by connecting the vision, values, purpose and business goals of the organization to individual values and needs. Here are **10 actions** you can take to improve your leadership.

1. Develop your vision. Make sure you have a vision with the purpose and values to make it real. State where you are going clearly. State your purpose simply. Express your values—the things that you use to guide every action people take at work—directly.

2. Identify your leader type. Knowing who you are and what type of leader you are helps you and others identify where, when and how to best behave and act to focus their time and energy to achieve the goals and objectives you set out for them.

3. Track your leadership development progress. Keep a leadership log to document what you do and what happens. Review what happens regularly. Reflect on what you are learning and how you are changing.

4. Recruit and retain the right people. Identify what makes individuals successful in your culture, and recruit for those skills. The culture will keep them loyal and happy, and exceed all expectations. Improve your interview and listening skills so you can hear what your people are saying. Take immediate action when you identify something that needs to be improved.

5. Engage, empower and enrich your employees. Invite them to become part of your vision. Empower them to be a force of change and be enriched by

your culture. Make them part of the solutions, by giving them a role and the responsibility for implementing solutions to major business issues.

6. Create a work environment that fosters creativity and innovation. Go beyond simply improving the physical environment. Focus on how people feel. Evaluate the energy when you walk the floors. How connected to their teams do virtual or remote workers feel? Make changes to ensure that the work environment fuels your objectives and helps to achieve your goals.

7. Appreciate and reward your employees. Develop and deploy a schedule that regularly and meaningfully rewards employees to create a culture of appreciation. Assess and improve the way you reward people so that you are sensitive and responsive to the differences in age, education, maturity, and demographics.

8. Focus on things that inspire your people. Identify what inspires you and your employees. Do they need more education and training, more creative time and cross-training opportunities, wellness programs to promote less



stress and better health, or even a sabatinal? Develop and improve the key programs that your people need to stay engaged and loyal.

9. Improve the most important things first. Identify your major short comings head-on. Identify what boosts your progress and what holds you back. Are you a poor listener, a technophobe, or do you yell and rave? Admit it. Then take action to get help, fix your problem, and improve your own performance, skills and abilities.

10. Visualize the future. Identify where you see yourself in 10 or 20 years. Define the characteristics of the leader you want to be and what the future looks like for you. Describe how you'll balance your personal and work life and how you'll build loyalty and trust.

Great leaders lead magnetically by fully engaging and empowering people, transforming them into innovative thinkers and major contributors. Appreciating effort and rewarding results generate loyalty and impact profitability.

The best leaders go beyond cultivating their skills—they create a culture of leadership by inspiring others to lead.

Let's explore the vision, purpose and values of great leaders.

- **They use leadership like an engine** of innovation that runs on change, truth, communication and vision. Great leaders make a difference in the lives of their people, organizations, and the processes that cultivate the business.

- **They want workers to bring their brains to work.** The fastest way to lower organizational IQ is to create a culture of followers. Employees who follow the rules and never think outside their job descriptions don't contribute to organizational success.

- **They appreciate and acknowledge their employees.** People want and need more than money to be motivated.

What people want is a basic emotional human need—to feel appreciated.

- **They create loyalty.** Leadership is not an ego game but rather it is purpose driven. Frances Hesselbein, CEO of the Leader to Leader Institute, lauded for her role as CEO of Girl Scouts of America, says: Great leaders put their purpose first—never their own egos.

- **They know that leadership impacts the bottom line.** Leadership requires adapting to changing forces in the marketplace, managing generational differences and embracing social responsibility and philanthropy. In summary it creates a healthy environment that is a powerful force that impacts productivity and profitability.

- **They own an authentic personal brand.** In the age of social media, personal brands grow and spread on Twitter, Facebook and the Blogosphere. Every leader needs to preserve their honesty, integrity and personal image.

- **They hold themselves accountable.** Many use the *Get REAL* approach to leadership: Recruitment to not only attract the right people but ways to retain them; Engaging, empowering and enriching employees by providing the right environment for success; Appreciating people with not just money but recognizing their efforts that go above and beyond their job description; Leadership leads to loyalty. Leadership is first about purpose. When leaders attract the right people and engage, empower and appreciate them, they foster loyalty, productivity, and profitability. LE

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ACTION: Take these 10 actions to top performance.

Take People with You

Everyone wants to make a difference.



by David Novak

IBELIEVE THAT LEADERSHIP is a privilege and that all people

have an inherent desire to make a positive difference through their work. By creating a culture where every person feels that they have a chance to contribute, you create a situation where people can do great things. To build such a culture, you start with trust.

Reaching out to people and building relationships of trust might seem like a natural idea, but *how do you do it?*

Here are *seven things* you can do to show people that you believe in them and care about them.

1. Know that people want to contribute: Realize that 99.9 percent of people come to work wanting to do good and try hard. So *you* have to go to work every day thinking about your people that way and appreciating them for it. If you don't trust people, why should they trust you? It starts with what we've defined as our core formula for success—building people capability. When you get the people capability right, you satisfy more customers and make more money. Many companies start out on the wrong end by thinking first about the money.

2. Demonstrate that everyone counts: Create a culture where every person feels valued. For example, our team in India has made *corporate social responsibility* a priority. One initiative is to have at least one KFC in every major city run by team members who are hearing and speech impaired. I visited one such store in Bangalore. I was amazed to see how the kitchen worked with lights replacing buzzers and bells that tell staff when food is ready. At the counter, customers can point to special menus to communicate their orders. The restaurant even provides table tents that teach people basic sign language. This ability to see the potential in every person and provide a place where that potential can be utilized has been a huge success factor.

3. The more they know, the more they care: To show people you trust in their abilities, share with them what you know. Sam Walton, founder of

Wal-Mart, often had Saturday meetings, where he would gather people to share with them everything he knew about the business. He once wrote: "The more they know, the more they'll understand. The more they understand, the more they'll care. Once they care, there's no stopping them. *If you don't trust your associates to know what's going on, they'll know you really don't consider them partners.*" To learn more about who people are and what they think, ask, "What would you do if you had my job?"

4. Ask questions to promote insight: To find out more about who people are and what they think, ask questions. Get inside people's heads. Don't ask questions of just the people you work with every day. Spend some time with those who report to your direct reports. Extend this idea even to customers or



clients or anyone who might have something to do with *the goals* that you want to achieve.

5. Take responsive action: Once you find out what people think, you need to show that *you take them into account*. You may be the star of the team, but you need to take as many of your teammates as you can with you—help them be great too. When you set your sights on improving not only your performance, but the performance of everyone around you, you unleash the power of all that collective talent. If you're one person getting big things done, that's good, but it will only take you so far. If you can help a team or organization of people reach big goals, then there's no telling what you can accomplish together. It's up to you as a leader to make that happen.

6. Develop people as leaders. When our company spun off from PepsiCo in 1997, I decided to share my vision of leadership with my people at Yum! Brands—how to *take people along* to get

results. Over the last 15 years, I've reached out to our 40,000 restaurant managers worldwide. At Yum!, *we believe in our associates* and all they can do. We have a *four-pronged approach* to nurture their growth: **1) Your development is top of mind.** You're on a path to success. We give you the tools to continue to learn, grow, and develop as a person every day. Each mid-year, you work with your coach to craft a plan that will optimize your personal development. You begin with our *Walk the Talk 360° Survey*, using the *How We Lead* and *How We Win Together* criteria along with the perspectives of coaches, peers, customers and direct reports. This helps strengthen your performance. With that feedback, you can create a solid development plan focused on learning from experience that ensures you reach your full Yum! potential. **2. Lead the way.** At Yum!, *everyone is a leader*. Our LD curriculum is grounded in the key skills and attributes of *How We Lead*, which focuses on coaching yourself and others to remove obstacles to success and achieve breakthrough results. Through a combination of e-learning, virtual classrooms, supervisor support and developmental tools, every associate learns how to apply the right tools and processes to soon make marks of their own. **3. Mentoring.** Everyone can grow professionally and coach others through their career. Mentoring relationships allow a safe and supportive environment to share ideas, try new skills, take risks, improve leadership abilities and turn values and strategies into *Breakthrough Results*. **4. Yum! University (YU).** We developed YU to help associates understand the key concepts needed for success in any experience. We provide the approaches and tools needed to lead and manage effectively. YU's focus is centered around three key areas: *Leadership Excellence*. Each of our associates strive for breakthrough results in their piece of Yum!, as well as coach and develop themselves and their teams. The courses, offered along with supporting tools, help build capability across all levels. *Culture Excellence*. Driving a recognition-based, global culture that focuses on growth and breakthrough performance is essential for our continual success. YU's courses and tools help ensure we live our *How We Win Together* principles and maintain an *Achieving Breakthrough Results* mindset everyday. *Functional Excellence*. To become "the defining global company that feeds the world" requires a sharp *focus on excellence* across all functions. YU's courses support our RGM#1

philosophy and help us *Run Great Restaurants* by teaching critical skills and processes, providing supporting tools, and reinforcing mindsets that span the business functional areas.

7. Recognize achievement. *Recognition* is a powerful motivator. I lead people like a marketer (I have a marketing background). I put my head inside the heads of people I lead and seek to understand their perceptions, habits, and beliefs. When I know how people are thinking, I develop initiatives and approaches that will *shock the system*, so that I can draw attention to what is important. For instance, since I know that recognition has universal value—everybody likes to be recognized—I make that a *high value* in our company.

When I was President of KFC, I gave away *rubber chicken* to shock the system. When I was in Pizza Hut, I gave away *cheeseheads*. I also give away *talking teeth*. All our leaders recognize the value of recognition. *Niren Chaudhary*, President, Yum! Brands, India has *snake charmer awards* that he gives away for *mesmerizing performance*. The president of Taco Bell gives an award in a *sauce packet*. The manager who runs our development function gives away *Eskimo awards*—he shows an Eskimo taking a spear and breaking the ice for *breakthrough performance*.

Since I take a very innovative approach toward recognition and use that to differentiate the culture and have fun, it basically shocks the system.

Recognition is a powerful way to reinforce the behavior you want. We recognize and celebrate the achievements of others, and we also recognize people who are behaving in ways that are inconsistent with our values. We *rack and stack* performance. So, if we have 150 stores in India, *every store is ranked* in terms of its ability to drive operational excellence. If you're in the top tier, you can recognize people. In fact, the top 15 percent restaurant GMs in India can go for an MBA. If they perform, we give them additional education. We also recognize the two highest performing restaurant GMs in India by giving them cars. That's a powerful thing to do (all GMs aspire to win). At the same time, if you're at the bottom, and stay there, despite having a supportive culture and growth opportunities, you will be invited to work somewhere else. That's how we upgrade performance. LE

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ACTION: Upgrade performance in your company.

Bottom-up Leaders

They often drive performance.



by Adrianna Kezar and Jaime Lester

BOTTOM-UP LEADERS OFTEN MAKE KEY contributions and changes that go largely unnoticed and unsupported. Greater understanding of such leaders may promote more support for bottom-up changes that improve performance.

We often read of *multi-level leadership* and the role of *individual responsibility* in change, and yet we read little about the obstacles that both positional and non-positional leaders encounter in creating change. We need guidance for change agents who lack formal authority or for individuals who are low in the hierarchy but have an idea, innovation, or passion for creating change. We often forget that bottom-up leaders need to use different strategies to create change. Those in authority can direct resources, create a strategic plan, develop incentives, and mandate a change. Those in the middle and bottom cannot.

The notions of *distributed* or *shared leadership* begin to address the *agency of others* in the hierarchy by recognizing followers as part of the leadership process. Yet, these leadership models are still based on the premise that leadership is tied to those in authority. Change is viewed as coming from and directed by *formal leaders*.

Individuals at other levels in a hierarchy have ideas that emerge from the bottom up and are not connected to the strategies and plans of those in positions of authority. Many change agents *initiate* innovations—they are not just responding to others directives in a *shared* or *distributed* leadership process.

We often work with leaders who return to graduate school because of a passion to lead causes. Since such leaders rarely complete our programs in formal leadership roles or positions of authority, they need models and strategies for *creating change from the bottom up*.

We conducted a three-year study of bottom-up leaders to better understand

them—and ways organizations can support bottom-up change. This study created a new picture of leadership where *anyone* can use their agency to make changes and *leadership roles* are located across the hierarchy. By highlighting these roles, we help people expand who they see as *potential leaders*.

We document key tactics leaders use to create change, typical barriers they face, how they overcome them, how they maintain resiliency, and how they navigate power when others oppose their ideas. Here are five of their tactics:

- **Use data to tell a story:** Collect and use data to tell the story of your change initiative, raise consciousness, mobilize action, and garner support.

- **Join and use networks.** Grassroots leaders use networks to further their changes; some use institutional bodies or committees. The goal of using formal and informal networks (including social media) is to move from active influence to action. Participation gives visibility to the grassroots change initiative, as grassroots leaders can use committees and the governance structure as venues for speaking on the initiative and influencing people to take action.

- **Garner resources and support.** Grassroots leaders seek seed funding for change initiatives through grants, supporters, or fund raising.

- **Seek convergence**—the fragile communication between the *bottom up* and *top down*. They approach positional leaders to push change efforts beyond a local unit (*diffusion*).

- **Seek support** in the form of mentoring, removing obstacles, connecting and linking people in networks, and creative brainstorming.

Shared Models of Leadership

Positional leaders and bottom-up leaders need to find ways to work in concert toward more shared models of leadership. Grassroots leaders are not *passive followers*. They exercise courage and take risks to make bottom-up changes. Shared leadership is challenging, yet we see tremendous *untapped leadership* that needs support—and many *unacknowledged heroes* who need praise and thanks. Today, success often depends on promoting *shared responsibility for leadership* and encouraging leadership at every level to tap the talents of all for *meaningful change*. LE

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ACTION: Adopt a shared leadership model.



Assessing Leaders

All for one or one for all?



by E. Ted Prince

TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP assessments are based on the notion that certain leadership traits or qualities (like conscientiousness, patience, thinking style, empathy, interpersonal skills) confer upon the individual the ability to achieve high performance in leadership positions, relatively independent of the purpose or goal of the position. We assume that if people possess these qualities in high measure, they'll be good or great leaders.

Typically leaders are rated on their effectiveness in their judgment of people and their ability to inspire people, collaborate, and communicate well. These criteria are usually based on the perception of the raters of the competencies and personality of the leaders, not on the *objective outcomes* of their leadership in measures like *profitability* and *valuation* relative to competitors.

In recent years, I've pioneered the *behavioral outcome approach* (BOA). It posits that we can only define *good leaders* based on the *outcomes* of their leadership. If the purpose of the position is *quality*, then the correct measure is few defects and high customer satisfaction. If it is *financial*, then the metric is profitability or valuation. We can't say that a person is a *good leader* if the outcome is not what the organization wanted—no matter how highly he is rated by his people or how well-liked or popular he might be. With the outcome approach, ratings of leaders by colleagues are not useful or relevant since they don't measure the outcomes being pursued. Leadership *qualities* are much less important than *outcomes*. In the ratings-based approach, qualities are a sufficient condition of effective leadership. In the BOA, success in quantitative outcome indicators is a condition for effective leadership.

Who Rates the Data Later?

Outcome indicators are not new. The *Balanced Scorecard* (BSC) approach has been used to measure their success in achieving goals. The BSC model uses a battery of indicators across financial, quality and human issues to

measure success. However, the BSC can only show the indicators you need to score well on to be deemed effective—it does not show you what behaviors you need to act on to improve on these indicators. The BSC has outcome measures but lacks a behavioral basis for improvement.

This gap is addressed by the behavioral disciplines of behavioral economics and behavioral finance. These disciplines show how behaviors need to change to improve quantitative measures of leadership from a financial and valuation perspective. However, these disciplines possess no formal model that directly links behaviors with financial outcomes when confronted with the cases of specific individuals, teams or companies.

Our model and assessments measure the behaviors at the specific individual, team and company levels—linking these behaviors and their financial outcomes in a precise quantitative manner that translates directly to *financial terms* on an income statement.

What Does the Stock Buyer Want?

The BSC model has another flaw—it does not rank the quantitative indicators that it employs. So the model can show that a company is doing well in product development, R&D, quality and training, but it does not show any rank of importance of these measures.

If a company is doing well on all its measures except for *profitability* and *valuation*, the model tells you that the company is doing well. Yet this is irrelevant if its profitability and valuation falls so much relative to its competitors that it either goes out of business or stays in business consuming so much capital that it can't invest in the future or even survive short-term.

This flaw in the BSC approach is also resolved with the behavioral finance approach which stresses the need to maximize valuation if a company is competing with other companies. In fact, our model shows the behaviors at the individual, team and company levels that need to be changed or modified for the company to be more competitive, to generate more capital and to increase its valuation relative to its competitors.

Intelligent About Leadership

The ratings approach to leadership

effectiveness is different to the BOA. One stresses *qualities*, the other stresses *outcomes*. If you subscribe to the ratings approach, the leader involved must have the qualities of a leader relatively independent of the situation. If you subscribe to the BOA, the situation matters. The BOA is based on direct and formal linkages between functions (sales, quality) and environment (stage of evolution of the company, the market, and the type of market) and the *specific behavioral attributes* of a leader.

This is like the debate about the meaning of intelligence. The old approach was that human intelligence



is a general quality (G) that is more effective the higher its value, no matter what the other behavioral attributes of the individual, situation or environment. The new approach suggests that while there might be a general intelligence, it is very limited in terms of its real-world effectiveness. In this new theory of intelligence, there are many other

types of intelligence that are not measured by G—such as *musical*, *kinesesthetic*, and *aesthetic intelligence*. These lead to high performance and effectiveness in situations where these types of intelligence are important, even where the individual lacks high G.

This theory of intelligence states that, whereas G might be important in an academic or scientific job, in the real world, these forms of intelligence are more powerful in predicting leadership effectiveness and performance. When we look at *outcome*, we need to look at the *types of intelligence* possessed by the individual that achieve *specific outcomes*.

Many forms of *effective* and *high-performing* leadership behaviors are linked with different outcomes. I subscribe to the BOA—if you are looking for leaders who will deliver the best outcomes.

You can improve your LD and selection programs based on this approach supported by *innovative online behavioral assessments* linked directly to *financial and valuation outcomes*. If you use assessments based on a *qualities approach*, add BOAs to improve your ability to predict who will be the best leaders for your purposes. If you are using *Balanced Scorecard* approaches, add BOAs to improve performance. LE

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ACTION: Assess your leaders on outcomes.

Performance

What do you want it to look like?



by Mark Frein

CURRENT MODELS FOR leadership and leadership development (LD)

focus too much on *essential characteristics of great leaders*. In our quest for *authentic leadership*, we can lose sight of the roles performance, improvisation, and playfulness have on *leader performance*.

Recently, I witnessed a beautiful performance of leadership. I was in a room in Manhattan's Garment District. The windows were open, and sounds of the street provided a chorus of noise to the work being done—the development of *leadership presence* in an executive (my client Max). My colleague Russ Hamilton was leading Max in a series of exercises in connection with audience, voice, and self-reflection.

At one point, Max composed a piece on his experience of facing and reconciling the death of a parent and the birth of a first child in the same year. It was moving beyond words. In his authentic performance, Max's leadership shone through brilliantly. He was simultaneously himself, without pretense or artificiality (despite using many techniques of actors). Yet he was also not himself. He was *bigger*, more *compelling*, *dramatic* and *moving*.

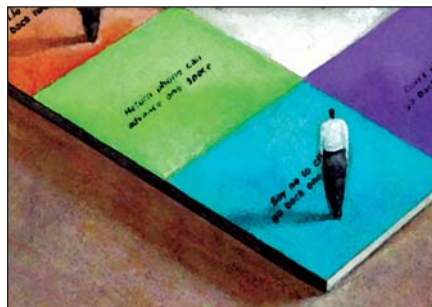
Max realized that he could experiment with, and perform different leadership communications, without sacrificing authenticity. By *playing* with methods to connect with an audience and by *playing a head taller* and outside his comfort zone, Max learned to step away from his leadership performances and critique them aesthetically. He also learned how to talk about them in the *language of performance* and to ask the audience about their experience of his leadership performance. He stopped worrying about how *good* he was to address what worked in his performance. His realization granted him freedom to play with his leadership. With childlike energy and zest, Max discovered pleasure, energy, and passion in *performing leadership*. He also worked harder on his development.

This ironic tension between *self* and *performance*, between *who we are* and *who we are trying to be for others*, is a

key component of my work with leaders. I believe that most literature on leadership misleads developing leaders because it over-emphasizes *essential characteristics of great leadership*.

Even a concept such as *authenticity* becomes vacuous when pursued formulaically. What we need instead is an *aesthetics of leadership performance that asks: What do you want your performance of leadership to look like, to sound like, and to inspire in others?* Since we spend so much time and energy worrying about what it *takes* to be a great leader, many leaders struggle with anxiety. Am I a great leader? If I am not, what sort of person do I need to be in order to become one? How must I change myself? Can I pay you to turn me into a great leader?

Too much emphasis on the *outcomes and outputs* of leadership development can lead into traps. There are times when *great* leaders struggle or fail to be great. There are times when generally *poor* leaders will inspire others or provide game-changing vision. We hold on to conceptions of ourselves as static, concrete and use sticky adjectives like



soft, authoritative, creative, visionary. However, as sociologist Erving Goffman points out, we *perform* ourselves daily in a myriad of contexts.

What if we cared less about the question "*am I good leader?*" and asked: *Was anyone inspired, motivated, or receive clarity from my leadership today?* What if we asked, what *leadership performances* do we need here and now?

Countless leadership articles, books, and speakers present their views on *what it takes to be a leader*, generating a list of *essential characteristics*. Among many problems with any such list is how easily the arguments are defeated by exception. If you posit that *having a pleasing personality* is essential, I can cite countless examples of *difficult people* who were *great leaders*. As Peter Drucker noted, the only characteristic in common with leaders is that they have followers. Moreover, the notion of *what makes a leader* changes over time.

So-called *characteristics of great leaders* only reflect *current social values*.

None of them will ever determine who is a great leader, nor will their absence exclude someone from being considered a great leader by followers.

Aesthetics of Leadership Performance

We need a new way of appreciating leadership and critiquing the behavior of leaders that does not require us to equate a leader's *performance* with their *personhood*. We need ways to talk about *leadership decisiveness* and not be as interested in whether or not it is the same thing as *being a decisive person*.

Russian psychologist *Lev Vygotsky* saw the development of capacity as driven by performing and playing at capacity just outside one's reach. His theory is one of *becoming*, as opposed to *being*: when we play a "*head taller*," we open ourselves to growth.

I've played with such a way of developing leaders. Games and simulations encourage *serious play*. I've seen leaders step confidently into a role within an in-depth strategic simulation that is *a head taller* than they are at present, and demonstrates their capacity to lead in a way that was not previously recognized. I've also seen leaders struggle and realize they need help.

Our language of helping leaders debrief simulation or serious play experiences recognizes the aesthetics: "*What did we think of his performance?*" with the double entendre of *how did he do* and *what sort of performance did he create*.

Our manner of discussing leadership—informed by a focus not on the essence of *good leadership* but on its display, characteristics in action, and performances—changes dramatically when we adopt a theory of *becoming* great leaders. We are always *works in progress*. There is no such thing as a *great leader*. There are *great leadership performances* that are recognized by those listening, watching and feeling the impact of a leader at work. And there are leaders who are working on *becoming great*.

We appreciate and critique *leadership performances*—from speeches to feedback sessions to strategic decisions—as instances of *leadership performance*, not the totality of the person. Thus we help our developing leaders reflect on their behavior and choices without falling into vicious cycles of *am I good enough?*

We are often *deadly serious* in our efforts to *develop leaders*. Like all developmental experiences, LD can and should be challenging *and* playful. LE

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ACTION: Make your LD approach more playful.

Soul of Leadership

Live a conscious lifestyle.



by Deepak Chopra

IN EVERY SITUATION, someone is called on to lead. Taking up the call involves a choice; yet for many leaders, even those who are very experienced, little consciousness is applied. If you ask CEOs how they got where they are today (as I have done dozens of times), the top answer is always “I was lucky.” Looking back, they recognize that they wound up in the right place at the right time.

Many courses in leadership use case studies. The performance of successful leaders is analyzed, with comparisons to less successful leaders. These courses produce a set of skills, but the tendency is for these skills to be technical and managerial—people skills are far harder to teach and pass on. Yet they are the key to persuading other people to follow you.

I take a different tack, arguing that leadership is all about *consciousness*. It has to be, since the responses that a great leader inspires (loyalty, respect, emulation, love) are life-changing. Such responses aren't evoked by *well-trained managers*. Skills can be developed in consciousness. A successful leader isn't a psychological manipulator, power grabber, bully, or public relations hack. Success, as it is practiced consciously, brings a better life, inner and outer, to leaders and followers.

I focus on *seven skills* that fit a conscious leader, organized into the acronym **LEADERS**. Here is a thumbnail sketch of these seven skills.

L = Look and listen. Do this with your senses, being an *unbiased observer* who has not judged anything in advance. Do this with your heart, obeying your truest feelings. Finally, do this with your soul, responding with vision and deep purpose.

E = Emotional bonding. Leading from the soul means going beyond melodrama and crisis mode, getting rid of emotional toxicity to understand the needs of your followers.

A = Awareness. This means being aware of the following questions that underlie every challenge: *Who am I? What do I want? What does the situation demand?* A leader must ask these ques-

tions of himself and inspire his team to ask for themselves.

D = Doing. A leader is *action-oriented*. In whatever he does he must serve as a role model, held responsible for the promises he has made. This requires persistence and the ability to view any situation with flexibility and humor.

E = Empowerment. *Soul power* comes from self-awareness, which is responsive to feedback but independent of the good or bad opinion of others. *Empowerment* isn't selfish. It raises the status of leader and follower together.

R = Responsibility. This means showing initiative, taking mature risks rather than reckless ones, walking the talk, having integrity, and living up to your inner values. Seen from the level of the soul, a leader's greatest responsibility is to lead the group on the path of higher consciousness.

S = Synchronicity. This is a *mysterious element* from the unconscious that all great leaders harness. It's the ability to create good luck and find invisible support that carries a leader beyond predicted outcomes to a higher plane. In spiritual terms, *synchronicity* is the



ultimate ability to connect any need with an answer from the soul.

Look and Listen

In the past, when leaders were more authoritarian, the people who were expected to listen and obey were the followers. Leaders had a monopoly on giving orders, laying down plans, and making all crucial decisions. To some extent, this imbalance is built into the system. But leadership has shifted dramatically, since leaders and followers create each other. Followers have needs that leaders fulfill. *Look and listen* comes first in the list of skills needed, since only by looking and listening can leaders keep with an ever-shifting situation. Great leaders are visionaries, but no vision is created in a vacuum. It emerges from the situation at hand—one that requires a leader to offer guidance. The leader assesses the situation by looking and listening deeply. A conscious leader looks and listens outside to the situation and inside.

Four steps are involved: *Impartial observation*—Look and listen with your senses; *Analysis*—Look and listen with your mind; *Feeling*—Look and listen with your heart; and *Incubation*—Look and listen with your soul. As a leader, develop awareness on all four levels.

Imagine three people, partners in a start-up company, seated on a couch in an outer office. The office belongs to a venture capitalist who has agreed to give them half an hour to present a proposal. Success or failure depends upon this meeting; their future might ride on it. Who among the three will emerge as the leader of the group?

- The first person feels so nervous his palms are sweaty. He tries to make casual conversation but realizes that he's babbling, so he grows quiet. He closes his eyes, repeating the speech he is going to make. He got very little sleep the night before, because he spent hours perfecting every word of his speech. He keeps thinking one thing: “Now or never. It's do or die.”

- The second person looks calmer, even confident. He believes in their idea; he's certain their new business will succeed once they find a backer. Tall and clear-eyed, he's used to being looked up to. In his mind, he wonders if he can talk the venture capitalist into going out for a round of golf. One-on-one is his best mode of persuasion.

- The third person is scanning the room with curiosity. She notices the rich Oriental rug, the fresh flowers on the desk, and the casual attire but clear focus of the employees. She feels *expectant* but not stressed. Whatever happens, she's open to the outcome. Once she sets eyes on the venture capitalist, she'll know who she's dealing with. She is open to her surroundings and picks up clues to build a scenario. She can envision herself in the scenario, and as it unfolds, she will adapt. If she doesn't fit in, she won't make the mistake of taking the venture capitalist's money—the compatibility isn't there.

As you can see, the potential leader is the one who can look and listen from the deepest level. Leadership requires a sound basis inside yourself. If you can arrive at the point where looking and listening comes from your entire being, you are likely to be the leader in any situation, because you have set the groundwork even before you had the first follower. LE

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ACTION: Develop these seven skills.

Leader Success

Here are my 12 top tips.



by Richard Branson

LIKE MANY BUSINESSES, Virgin Group began in a basement. As a leader, how can you *start and grow* a successful business? Here are 12 tips.

1. Dream big and start an adventure. I've always dreamt big. I believe that you should set yourself big challenges and targets—and then catch up and make them become reality. There is no point in starting a business unless you can shake up the industry, shake up the status quo. Virgin is never about what's the cheapest or fastest way to do it—it's about what's the most amazing way to do it.

Get out in the real world and say, "let's do it" and give it a go. You learn so much from being in the jungle and building a business. The best way of learning about anything is by doing. Being an adventurer or entrepreneur is not that dissimilar—if you are an entrepreneur you try to create things that have yet to be created, to push boundaries forward. If you are an adventurer, you are trying to break world records or do things that have not been achieved.

2. Follow your passions. Most entrepreneurs aren't thinking, "I want to create a big business." They are thinking, as I was thinking, "I want to start a cause" (I started a magazine for young people to campaign against the war in Vietnam). The business aspect is just to pay the bills. I don't start most ventures to make money—I start them because I couldn't achieve something unless I create them.

3. Listen more than you talk. You have two ears and one mouth—using them in proportion is a good idea! To be a *good leader*, you have to be a *great listener*. Brilliant ideas can spring from the most unlikely places, so always keep your ears open for some shrewd advice. This can mean following online comments as closely as board meeting notes, or asking the frontline staff for their opinions as often as the CEOs. Get out there, listen to people, draw people out and learn from them.

4. Keep it simple. You have to do

something radically different to stand out in business. But nobody ever said *different* has to be *complex*. There are many *simple solutions* to problems out there, just waiting to be solved by the next big thing in business. Focus on innovation, but don't try to reinvent the wheel. A simple change for the better is far more effective than five complicated changes for the worse. Complexity is your enemy. Any fool can make something complicated. It is hard to make something simple.

5. Take pride in your work. My favorite night of the year is the Virgin Stars of the Year Awards, when we celebrate those people who *go the extra mile* for us in the Virgin world. With so many different companies, nationalities and personalities represented, it is interesting to see what qualities they have in common. One is pride in their work, and in the company they represent. Your people are your biggest brand advocates, and helping them take pride in their work will shine through in how they treat your customers.

6. Have fun, success will follow. If you aren't having fun, you're doing it wrong. If you feel like your work is a chore, it's time to try something else. If you're having a good time, there's a far greater chance a positive, innovative culture will be nurtured and your business will flourish. A smile and a joke can go a long way, so be quick to see the lighter side of life. Not taking yourself too seriously and having a sense of humor are key. For example, our windmill salt and pepper shakers were often stolen from our planes, but instead of pulling them from flights, we wrote on them "*pinched from Virgin Atlantic*." They became our best marketing device. Enjoy life to the fullest. I'm constantly seeking new exciting endeavors, adventures and experiences. I try to live life to its fullest, and turn everything into a game where having fun is on top of the agenda. I mix work with pleasure and creating an easy-going and fun-loving culture.

7. Rip it up and start again. If you are an entrepreneur and your first venture isn't a success, *welcome to the club!* Every leader experiences a few failures along the way—the important thing is how you learn from them. Don't get disheartened by setbacks. Instead, dust yourself off, work out *what went wrong*, find the positives, analyze where you can improve, rip it up, and start again.

8. Make lists. I've always made lists—lists of people to call, of ideas, of companies to set up, of people who can make things happen. I also have lists of topics to blog about, lists of tweets to send, and lists of plans. Each day I work through these lists. By ticking off each task, my ideas take shape and plans move forward. To stick to your resolutions, I suggest making them into lists. Write down every idea you have, no matter how big or small. Always carry a notebook—list small, manageable tasks to complete every day. Mark off completed tasks. Make your goals measurable so you know if your plans are working. Set a few far off, outlandish goals. What do you want to achieve by 2020? Include personal goals. Share them with others. Celebrate your successes—then make



new lists of new goals. I carry a notepad to capture ideas for new projects, gather feedback from customers and employees, and write goals, thoughts and experiences. This helps clarify my thoughts and provides me with guidance. Lessons are often learned through mistakes and experience, but I also take time to read and learn, to create new ideas, plan projects, and think about creative solutions to problems.

9. Brand yourself and your business. Conventional wisdom is to stick with one business you know. If you look at the top 30 brands in the world, almost all of them specialize in one area. Virgin is different—it's become a *way-of-life* brand. It reflects my personality—I didn't go to university. I try to learn everything there is to do with life.

10. Find exceptional people to run the business—and delegate wisely. Since a business is a group of people, hire exceptional people and delegate. The moment you have more than one business, you have to delegate. Find somebody better than yourself so you can think of the bigger picture and do entrepreneurial stuff. When you delegate, don't second-guess people and jump on top of them all the time. Give them the freedom to make mistakes. Run your company like a family, and always look for the best in other people. I love people, I love spending time with people, learning from people.

Over 45 years, I've learned much from making mistakes. If you are fortunate enough to succeed in life, share ideas with other people. Life is short, and you'll likely come in contact with

the same people again and again. If you treat people well, they'll come back; if you treat them badly, they won't. I'm a passionate networker. I enjoy meeting new people, discussing new opportunities, and building mutually rewarding relationships. I surround myself with great people—including coaches and mentors who act as *sounding-boards*—helping to guide my decisions. I also surround myself with reliable colleagues and co-workers who have similar goals, values and interests—and with supportive family and friends who believe in me, my mission and vision.

11. Step outside your comfort zone. Constantly step outside your *comfort zone* into new industries to face unique challenges that test your *discipline*, expertise and resolve. Face problems head-on. When problems arise, tackle them immediately and aggressively, making sure that small problems don't become big headaches. Be open to changing your perspectives, viewpoints and approach if you feel that it will help you attain your goals in a more effective and efficient manner.

Always be on the lookout for new opportunities and ideas that will enable you to gain an advantage over your competitors. Challenge yourself. Constantly ask solution-focused questions to clarify your thinking and overcome the challenges that confront you. Since I see everything as an opportunity to strengthen and grow the Virgin brand, I take calculated risks in business and life.

12. Renew yourself. Understand where the boundaries lie, and don't over-extend your personal and professional capabilities and capacity to move intelligently through times of emotional turmoil. Take time to catnap and daydream. To re-energize my body and mind, I take catnaps during the day. I also daydream about my passions, which invigorates my creative mind and strengthens the flow of new ideas. Mixing work with pleasure lifts my spirits and strengthens my motivation to work for extended hours, day and night.

Make Every Second Count

Knowing that every moment is an opportunity to do things better, to improve a process or to take the next step toward a bigger objective, I make every second count. LE

Richard Branson is founder and chairman of Virgin Group. Visit www.virgin.com.

ACTION: Create a performance culture.

Steps to Sustainability

from top leaders to the bottom line.



by Steve Richerson

BIG COMPANIES LIKE GE, IBM, Wal-Mart, and many smaller companies like Tenant, Centiva, and Stonyfield Yogurt have embraced the target of market profitability through *ecological sustainability*—the way we choose to use natural resources. If we use them in a way that doesn't harm future generations' ability to use them, that use is considered *sustainable* for generations.

Innovative companies opt for sustainability for three business reasons: 1) to cut overhead costs for everything they take, make, and waste (these savings go to the bottom line); 2) to build a successful enterprise they can be proud of, leading to better employee productivity, retention and attraction, which goes to the bottom line; and 3) to build a reputation for being a good corporate citizen, resulting in loyal consumers and fans who can determine questions of zoning, taxes and community support.

Take These Nine Steps

To gain sustainability, take these nine steps:

1. Get buy-in from the top. You'll need to make a pitch, presentation or proposal to convince upper management that sustainability is good for the bottom line. Simply making the "feel good" argument that going green is the "right thing to do" won't cut it. You need to make the business argument for it. Make the case in dollars.

2. Engage everyone on the team. Build a group of managers from all departments who focus on *saving the company money* by saving resources and preventing pollution. Even members of the team who are *environmentally agnostic* (global warming skeptics, people who think recycling is a waste of time) can see that *waste equals inefficiency* and *inefficiency costs money* and *wasted money means fewer raises and promotions*. Align your goals with these two principles: 1) Is it renewable? and 2) Does it create pollution?

3. Get it on the company map. Get an official sustainability statement from your team on the *Corporate Strategy Map*.



This allows *integrated sustainability* to be an aligned priority at every level. You'll get *buy-in* from everyone since it's on the map. Employees want to know that *sustainability* is important to the company and that they'll be rewarded for spending time on it.

4. Take, make and waste. Focus on areas of *take, make* and *waste*. Create a list of opportunities for each area. *Waste* is inefficiency. As you can cut inefficiency, you grow the bottom line and reduce impact on the planet. Ask: Can transportation costs be reduced by getting smaller vehicles or eliminating them completely? Can we cut waste removal costs by recycling? Can we choose an option for shipping that uses less packaging? Is it possible to innovate a new product within our core competencies but has less impact on resources? Can we source raw materials closer to our factories to cut costs? When everyone focuses on the *Take, Make* and *Waste* areas, good ideas for profits and the planet flow out.

5. Measure immediately. Measure the areas of focus. If possible, integrate automated measurements of all inputs and outputs. Even competent managers and front line employees can get it wrong. It's easy to over- or underestimate how much energy, how many raw materials used, how much water is wasted or how much trash is being hauled away if there's no data. Collect the data *now*.

Step 6. Set goals. Now that you have data, set your goals for sustainability. Make them specific, measurable and ensure they're of *strategic bottom line value* to your company.

Step 7. Execute. Now go for your goals. Make small steps towards this goal every day. Keep asking, "How can I make this just a tiny bit better?"

Step 8. Share progress honestly with stakeholders. People will appreciate your attempts to be more sustainable. Be honest about results. They want to know you're on the right path and will support you for that.

Step 9. Conduct an annual review. Have the team review improvements made over the year. Ideas that worked in one area may spur improvements in other areas. Sustainability. It's good for people, planet, and profit. LE

Steve Richerson is a speaker and consultant on sustainability and member of the U.S. Green Building Council, National Recycling Coalition and the North American Environmental Education Association. Visit www.greenbizspeaker.com, call 256-710-7216 or email steve.richerson@gmail.com.

ACTION: Take these steps to sustainability.

Passion for Adventure

Turning Zain into a telecom giant.



by Saad Al Barrak

As CEO of the Zain Group from 2002 to 2010, I led the rebranding effort from MTC to Zain—a brand that became distinguished, the sweetheart of the telecommunications industry. In seven years, we transformed a moribund ex-state-owned telecoms operator with a base of 500,000 customers in into the international giant Zain, a company that reached 72 million customers across 23 countries in the Middle East and Africa, introducing the first boundary-less roaming.

The Zain culture was described as *chaos by design*. Within the apparent chaos was space for creativity, but by design the culture reflected the values of the company and meant that targets were met. *Chaos by design* is deliberately paradoxical: hard/soft, transformational/transactional, internal/external.

Hard management makes plans, sets up structures, and monitors performance. The hard side is based on consistency. The soft is the people-friendly management based on emotions. I made many appointments considered unusual. These worked seven times out of ten. When they didn't work, I admitted it and removed the people. The net outcome, though, was seven people who would not otherwise have become leaders.

My approach was based on curiosity. My aim was to celebrate differences. In managing people, you manage emotions and passions. You try to optimize their passionate state so that they deliver their best. Most managers and leaders mistakenly try to linearize the behavioral side by proceduralizing it.

In recent years, management has shifted from task structure to being divided 50:50 between task structure and people consideration. For me, task structure is 20 percent or less; consideration is 80 percent. At Zain I spent far more of my energy on consideration.

When I arrived at MTC, many people joked that I was running a social club. Something similar happened even as Zain took off, because people often thought I was wasting my time:

“Why does al Barrak spend 80 percent of his day talking to people about issues and 20 percent on planning and strategy?” The answer is that the best plans and strategies are extracted from the hearts and minds of your people, or inculcated in their hearts and minds.

An overemphasis on the hard side can at best achieve a linear increase in performance. But a focus on the soft, non-linear side can lead to an exponential rise in performance. Zain's non-linear rise from 2003 to 2010 could never have been achieved by following conventional, task-oriented management.

No company can work without a hard side, without structures and plans. When we acquired several mobiles licenses in our early growth years, or were deciding to outsource our supply-chain, we had many plans and structures. There's always a tension between being transactional and being transformational. Transactional leaders make the organization better at getting things done; transformational leaders take the organization from one stage to a new one. Some leaders are transformational, revolutionary, and creative; others are transactional—good at putting processes, systems, and mind-sets in place. The challenge is doing both at the same time. The constant is the vision, as delineated in a strategy. Once you change your vision, you change your identity and become a new creature. Since strategy is the execution of the vision, even the strategy is temporary.

My philosophy isn't based on tolerating ambiguity and paradox, but on proactively creating them. Of course, I made many decisions on instinct. But the management systems within Zain went from the budget to setting specific objectives down to teams of three or four. The balance was unusual—perhaps 60 percent on culture and 40 percent on quantified business targets.

Optimal control is no control. If staff align their mission in life with the mission of the organization, and appreciate the complexities around this mission, that's the highest discipline. They think,

“How will I conquer the world today?”

The leader should align the external coalition (board and shareholders) with the internal coalition behind the mission, and ensure the external coalition does not negatively pressure the internal coalition or hinder its progress.

Zain developed an extensive communications operation, at corporate level and in individual countries. When we moved to outsource in Saudi Arabia you could hear the sound of plans being torn up—music to my ears, as the continuums are always moving.

Leaders who mistakenly try to become more professional by taking everything linear, simply decide they want best practice. They look for best practice and copy it. I say that best practice equals beast practice. What makes you win is uniqueness. This establishes a dynamic relationship between transformation and turbulence.

Turbulence, not stability, is the steady state in business. Maturity is a journey, not a destination. A mature business is a stagnant, dying business. The structure must shift to suit the reality of the time.

Depending on the maturity of the follower and the nature of the task, managers should decide how much consideration and how much task/structure to use (see Hersey/Blanchard's Situational Leadership model).

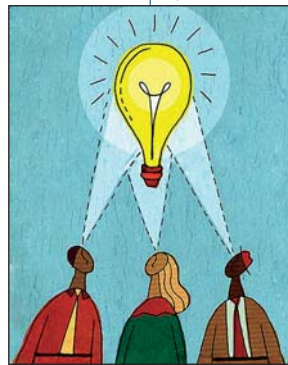
My leadership style is based on curiosity about people. I often said, “Show me what you can do.” I want to be surprised by what people can achieve. Targets and goals had to change, expand and develop: otherwise they constrain what we might achieve.

Yes, it's time-consuming to internalize values, and to manage people's passions, motivation, loyalty and dreams. That's why most managers and leaders focus too much on the task side.

Transformation comes from releasing the potential of people. From day one, MTC and then Zain were always in the process of transformation. Zain was enthused with the idea that the universe was our homeland and humanity our tribe. Our vision was translated into a strategy—a five-year plan with smaller goals in between. We changed our architecture all the time, took decisions on the fly, and tried to be super-flexible. That's what I mean by chaos by design. LE

Saad al Barrak is author of *A Passion for Adventure: Turning Zain into a Telecom Giant* (Bloomsbury) and founder of ILA, an advisory firm. Visit www.saadalbarrak.com.

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