

# LEADERSHIP Excellence

Warren Bennis



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

NOVEMBER 2008

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## Mind the Gap

*Many leaders are experiencing a Grand Canyon gap between their vision of a glowing future (along with their professed values) and a seemingly bottomless pit of errant behaviors and bottom-line losses.*

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# Win or Lose: Palin's a Player

*How authentic are the presidential candidates?*



by Ken Shelton

**M**ANY PEOPLE HAVE ASKED ME in recent months: who are the best leaders among the presidential candidates? And then when the field was narrowed to the party tickets: who among the President and VP nominees are the best bets to perform well in office?

As people, I like all four survivors—Obama and Biden, McCain and Palin. They've each displayed leadership qualities. For sheer impact (and pure entertainment), I give the nod to Sarah Palin. Love her, hate her, or flatter her with imitation—you must admit: she has turned heads, shaken hands, touched hearts, changed minds, and won votes (moved feet) for her ticket. That's influence.

In their new book on the topic of influence, my four friends of the VitalSmarts—Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, Al Switzler, and Kerry Patterson—contend, "Master influ-

encers know that a few behaviors can drive big change. They look carefully for the vital behaviors that create a cascade of change."

However the election plays out, the two people with the most influence also have the most to learn: Barack Obama (with three months in the Senate before starting his race for president) and, of course, Sarah Palin, with 18 months as governor of Alaska before joining the Republican ticket. Biden and McCain, albeit old dogs in the Senate, would also need to accelerate their learning curves (learn many new tricks).

My point: leadership, notwithstanding the campaign rhetoric, always requires "on-the-job training." Great leaders grow in office.

## Top Thought Leaders and Practitioners

Our congratulations to all the winners in our list of top thought leaders in leadership and practitioners in leadership development in government, education, military, and non-profit organizations. LE

### Excellence 100 Top Thought Leaders

- |                         |                           |                           |                        |                      |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
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| 2. Warren Bennis        | 22. Norm Smallwood        | 42. Judith Glaser         | 62. Michael G. Winston | 82. Lance Secretan   |
| 3. Dave Ulrich          | 23. Michael Porter        | 43. Renee Mauborgne       | 63. Christopher Rice   | 83. Dede Henley      |
| 4. Marshall Goldsmith   | 24. Max Bazerman          | 44. Ken Blanchard         | 64. Richard Chang      | 84. Bill Adams       |
| 5. James Collins        | 25. Jay Conger            | 45. Jeff Snipes           | 65. Andre Martin       | 85. Maya Hu-Chan     |
| 6. Peter Block          | 26. Rosabeth Kanter       | 46. Eileen McDargh        | 66. Joel Barker        | 86. James Cabrera    |
| 7. Ram Charan           | 27. C. K. Prahalad        | 47. Beverly Kaye          | 67. Malcolm Gladwell   | 87. Rob Lebow        |
| 8. Noel Tichy           | 28. Ichak Adizes          | 48. Nathaniel Branden     | 68. Ken Shelton        | 88. Ron Crossland    |
| 9. Kevin Cashman        | 29. Kevin/Jackie Freiberg | 49. Barry Conchie         | 69. Gregg Thompson     | 89. Steven Arneson   |
| 10. Tom Peters          | 30. Chip Bell             | 50. Patrick Lencioni      | 70. Ira Chaleff        | 90. Terry Bacon      |
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| 17. Clayton Christensen | 37. Nicholas Negraponte   | 57. Bill Byham            | 77. Larry Senn         | 97. Richard Leider   |
| 18. Marcus Buckingham   | 38. Jay Conrad Levinson   | 58. Jon Katzenbach        | 78. Jeff Sonnenfeld    | 98. Gary Harpst      |
| 19. Peter Senge         | 39. Michael Treacy        | 59. Ed Lawler             | 79. Larry Bossidy      | 99. Chris Majer      |
| 20. Meg Wheatley        | 40. Dan Goleman           | 60. <b>Robert Whipple</b> | 80. Vijay Govindarajan | 100. Daniel R. Tobin |

### Top Practitioners in Leadership Development

- |   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
| Andrew Garman - Rush Univ Medical Center                                    | David Ray Hudson - US National Guard                                 | Jeffrey A. Sonnenfeld - Yale/Leadership Institute       | Patricia Diaz Dennis - Girl Scouts/Boy Scouts |
| Bonnie Stouffer - Ascension Health  | David Quisenberry - Army Management Staff College                    | Jim Goodrich - Alliant International University         | Richard Bolden - University of Exeter         |
| Brian Powers - EMC University   | Deborah Leben - US Secret Service                                    | Jonathan Spector - Conference Board                     | Russell L. Frutiger - US Army Europe          |
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| Carol Davidson - Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration | Frank J. Anderson, Jr. - Defense Acquisition University              | Kathy Nadurak, Sandra J. Stein - NYC Leadership Academy | Steve Angellillo - NASA Kennedy Space Center  |
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# Deliberate Practice

*It leads to great performance.*



by Geoff Colvin

**G**REAT PERFORMANCE is usually the result of deliberate practice—a rigorous discipline that produces desired results. More of it leads to better, if not great, performance.

What exactly needs to be practiced? Precisely how? Which specific skills or other assets must be acquired? What factors account for top performance? What is the chief constraint?

The chief constraint is mental—even in sports, where we might think the physical demands are the hardest. The required concentration is so intense that it's exhausting. If deliberate practice is so hard—if in most cases it's "not inherently enjoyable," why do some people put themselves through it day after day for decades, while most do not? Where does the necessary passion come from?

## Five Elements

Deliberate practice is characterized by five elements:

**1. It's designed to improve performance.** It's vital for a teacher, coach, or mentor to design the activity best suited to improve performance. You may think that you can design your own practice, but you never outgrow the need for a teacher's guidance. Becoming great at anything is difficult without the help of a teacher or coach. Without a clear, unbiased view of your performance, you can't choose the best practice activity. Even if you could make an honest assessment of your own performance, you can't design the best practice activity for that moment in your development—the type of practice that would put you on the road to achieving at the highest levels. You likely lack extensive knowledge of the latest and best methods for developing people in your chosen field. The best methods of development stretch people beyond their current abilities. Deliberate practice requires that you identify certain elements of performance that need to be improved, and then work intently on them. Only by choosing activities in the learning zone—the location of skills and abili-

ties that are just out of reach—can you make progress. You can't make progress in the comfort zone because you can already do those activities easily, while panic-zone activities are so hard that you don't know how to approach them. Identifying the learning zone and then staying in it as it changes, are keys to deliberate practice.

**2. It can be repeated a lot.** High repetition is the most important difference between deliberate practice of a task and performing the task for real, when it counts. Two points distinguish deliberate practice from what most of us actually do. One is the choice of a properly demanding activity in the learning zone. The other is the amount of repetition. Top performers repeat their practice activities to stultifying extent.

**3. Feedback on results is continuously available.** You can work on technique all you like, but if you can't see the effects, two things will happen: You won't get any better, and you'll stop caring. In many situations a teacher, coach, or mentor is vital for providing crucial feedback.

**4. It's highly demanding mentally.** Deliberate practice is above all an effort of focus and concentration. That is what makes it deliberate. Continually seeking exactly those elements of performance that are unsatisfactory and then trying your hardest to make them better places enormous strains on your mental abilities. The work is so arduous that you can't sustain it for very long. Four or five hours a day seems to be the upper limit of deliberate practice, and this is done in sessions lasting no more than 60 to 90 minutes.

**5. It isn't much fun.** Doing things you know how to do well is enjoyable, but that's the opposite of what deliberate practice demands. Instead of doing what you're good at, you seek out what you're not good at. Then you identify the painful, difficult activities that will make you better and do those things over and over. After each repetition, you force yourself to see—or get others to tell you—exactly what still isn't right so you can repeat the most painful and difficult parts of what you've just done.

You continue that process until you are mentally exhausted.

If the activities that lead to greatness were easy and fun, everyone would do them—and they would not distinguish the best from the rest. Most people won't do it. Your willingness to do it will distinguish you all the more.

## Application Rules

To apply the principles of great performance at work, follow eight rules.

**1. See that each person is not just doing a job, but is also being stretched and grown.** Assign people to jobs in much the same way that sports coaches or music teachers choose exercises for their students—to push them just beyond their current capabilities and build the skills that are most important. About two-thirds of people development come from carefully chosen job assignments, about one-third from mentoring and coaching, and a smidgen from classroom training. Put managers into stretch jobs that require them to

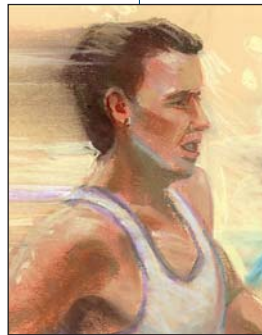
learn and grow. For people trying to improve, making real decisions in real time is the central practice activity that produces growth. Your hardest experience—the stretches that most challenge you—are the most helpful.

**2. Find ways to develop leaders in their jobs.** You experience tension be-

tween your need to develop people by moving them through different jobs and your need to develop their expertise in certain domains by leaving them in jobs. A division has a tough time competing when the boss moves on every 18 to 24 months (a typical pattern). The challenge is to provide the growth benefits of new stretch assignments without moving people into new jobs so often.

**3. Encourage your leaders to be active in their communities.** Most companies have values that include respect for the individual, good citizenship, and integrity. When company leaders also become leaders of charities, schools, and other nonprofits, they show their commitment to those values, encouraging and inspiring employees. Community leadership roles are opportunities for employees to practice skills that will be valuable at work.

**4. Know the critical roles of teachers and feedback.** Great performance is built through activities designed specifically to improve particular skills, and teachers and coaches are helpful in designing those activities. Yet at most



organizations, nobody is in the role of teacher or coach. Employees aren't told which skills will be most helpful to them—nor how best to develop them. Top-performing organizations have explicit coaching and mentoring programs. Careful job assignments and other programs determine the direction of an employee's development; mentors provide detailed advice on which subskills need attention right now. And people receive frequent, rapid, and accurate feedback to improve performance.

**5. Identify promising performers early.** Working on people's development early creates huge advantages, and yet in most companies, development programs are reserved for an elite group of executives who are several years into their careers. Developing future leaders early creates a competitive advantage that lasts for decades, as their pipelines of high achievers become bigger, better, and more reliable.

**6. Understand that people development works best through inspiration, not authority.** Deliberate practice activities are so demanding that no one can sustain them for long without strong motivation. The best leaders contribute to that motivation through a sense of mission. Identifying or even creating an inspiring sense of mission requires a journey deep into the corporate soul.

**7. Invest time, money, and energy in developing people.** People development is at the center of CEOs' jobs. Indeed, the biggest investment may be the time of the CEO and other executives. As their direct reports see what the boss is focusing on, they also become devoted to developing people. Not that these companies rely solely on the power of example. Virtually all of them evaluate executives partly on how well they're developing people, including themselves.

**8. Make leadership development part of the culture.** At the best companies, developing leaders isn't a program—it's a way of living. For example, honest feedback has to be culturally okay; at many companies it isn't. Devoting time to mentoring has to be accepted. Working for nonprofits has to be encouraged, not just tolerated.

Applying the principles of great performance is hard, but the effects of deliberate practice are cumulative. The more of a head start you get in developing people, the more difficult it will be for competitors ever to catch you. **LE**

Geoff Colvin is Senior Editor-at-Large of Fortune magazine and co-author with Larry Seldon of Angel Customers and Demon Customers (Penguin Putnam). Visit [www.washingtonspeakers.com](http://www.washingtonspeakers.com).

**ACTION:** Create a culture of LD.

## Find Your Voice

*It's the mark of great leaders.*



by Stephen R. Covey

**L**EADERS OFTEN SENSE A painful gap between possessing great potential and actually realizing a life of greatness and a career of immense contribution—between being aware of problems and challenges at work and developing the personal power and moral authority to break out of those problems and become a force in solving them.

One word expresses the pathway to greatness—voice. Voice lies at the nexus of *talent* (your natural gifts and strengths), *passion* (those things that naturally energize, excite, motivate, and inspire you), *need* (including what the world needs enough to pay for), and *conscience* (that still, small voice within that assures you of what is right and prompts you to take action).

When you engage in work that taps your *talent* and fuels your *passion*—that rises out of a great *need* in the world that you feel drawn by *conscience* to meet—therein lies your *voice*, your calling, your soul's code.

### Take Four Steps

Leaders on this path to greatness find their voice and inspire others to find theirs. They often find their voice when they face challenges and take these four steps:

**1. Tap into your talent.** Tapping into your talents starts with understanding where you excel. It involves recognizing your strengths and positioning yourself to leverage them. To tap into your talent, consider the question: What am I good at doing?

**2. Fuel your passion.** When you take part in activities that fill you with positive emotion, you are fueling your passion. Pursuits that spark your passion bring excitement, enthusiasm, joy, and fun. To fuel your passion, ask yourself: What do I love doing?

**3. Become burdened with a need.** When a problem in society lodges itself in your heart and won't let go, then you have been burdened with a need. Perhaps, the need is an injustice you wish to remedy. Maybe it's a disease you would love to cure. Whatever

the case, a burden gnaws at your conscience. To take stock of your biggest burden, wrestle with the question: What need must I serve?

**4. Take action to meet the need.**

Once a need has arrested your attention, then you can find your voice by taking action. A need compels you to do something besides criticize from the sidelines. To meet the need, think about this question: How can I align my talent with my passion in order to meet the need that burdens me?

### My Promise and Challenge

I extend a promise and a challenge.

**My promise:** if you will apply these four capacities—talent (discipline), passion (emotion), need (vision), and conscience (spirit-directed action) to any role or responsibility of your life, you can find your voice in that role.

**My challenge:** take two or three of the primary roles in your life, and in each role, ask yourself these four questions: What need do I sense? Do I possess a true talent that, if disciplined and applied, can meet the need? Does the opportunity to meet the need tap into my passion? Does my conscience

inspire me to become involved and take action?

If you answer all four questions in the affirmative and develop a plan of action and work on it, I guarantee you will find your voice and enjoy a life of deep meaning, satisfaction, and greatness—and inspire others to find their voice.

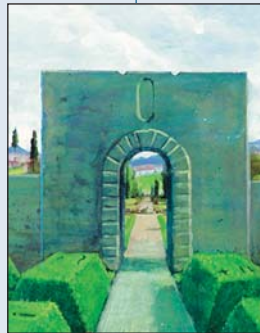
**The choice to expand**

**your influence** and increase your contribution is the choice to inspire others to find their voice. As you do, latent human genius, creativity, passion, talent, and motivation are unleashed. Those organizations that reach a critical mass of people and teams expressing their full voice will achieve next-level breakthroughs in productivity, innovation, and leadership in the marketplace and society. As you find your voice and inspire others to find their voice, you increase your freedom and power of choice to solve your greatest challenge and learn how leadership is a choice, not a position.

Leadership in your organization will become widely distributed. And while you must still manage or control things, you will lead and inspire people. **LE**

Stephen R. Covey is the author of The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness. Visit [www.stephencovey.com](http://www.stephencovey.com).

**ACTION:** Express your leadership voice.



# Four Promises

*Productivity amid change.*



by W. A. (Bill) Adams

ONE OF THE FIRST conversations we have with senior leaders explores the four primary leadership promises. Most leaders fail to recognize these concerns as promises that they must keep. Let's describe each promise from the perspective of CEOs (L1) and their direct reports (L2).

**Promise 1: Set the right direction for the organization and create meaning and context for the work.** L1 and L2 leaders come together on the Executive Team, and the Executive Team is responsible for setting the direction and defining the strategies required for sustainable growth and profit. These strategies include identifying business direction, objectives, markets and products, and defining the mission, values, and culture. These are essential components of what makes up meaning. Leaders must create relevant meaning to thrive. Employees and stakeholders hold leaders to this promise: that they will choose the right direction.

From this direction and meaning flows the identity. Leaders need to define how the organization creates value, and address what they can uniquely contribute to the world. When we work, we contribute our life's blood, and we want to readily identify the meaning of the work we do—to see rewards beyond money and to acknowledge the higher purpose. Leaders set the context and create the conditions for success. When the Executive Team aligns the direction of the company with the work at hand in meaningful ways, people can see how their contribution makes a difference. This shared identity provides a foundation for corporate meaning.

**Promise 2: Engage employees (and other stakeholders) in the work and earn their commitment to focus their energy on performance.** When direction and meaning are left to executive leadership, value is minimized—if it is created at all. This promise speaks to the commitment that leadership will fully engage employees in owning the direction and gain their commitment to perform by providing the “why” behind the “what.” The “why” comes

from making a direct connection to the value created by the organization and the personal contribution made by each individual. Also held is the belief that leaders will tap into the inherent potential, discretionary energy, and passion that people put into their work. It is about creating an environment where people strive to contribute and where every individual is valued for their contributions. There is a strong link between recognizing an individual's strengths and talents and tapping that potential, and obtaining full, committed participation. This promise can be difficult to keep. While executive leaders (L1 and L2) and even senior leaders (L3-L5) usually understand the direction and why certain work is critical to that direction, the energy and commitment required to fully engage everyone and create shared meaning is often underestimated. Clarity often ends at the leadership team level.

This promise has been broken whenever employees can't answer the question, “How does what I do make a difference?” or when they stop asking the question and resign themselves to work that provides little meaning beyond their paycheck.

**Promise 3: Ensure processes and systems are in place so that focus and execution will translate into results.** An employee's well-being is ultimately tied to the organization's performance, which is directly correlated to the ability to execute on key initiatives. Underpinning every stakeholder's belief system is the notion that the leadership has the responsibility to ensure the organization delivers results in the market by successfully executing on these initiatives. Hence, Leadership Promise 3—keep the organization focused on execution. Effective execution provides feedback on the work being done; action provides clarity. When results are linked to effort, people get a clear line-of-sight to long-term success.

Leaders break this promise in two primary ways: 1) by not providing the resources (time, people, and money) necessary to ensure execution; and 2) by allowing people to be distracted by “silver bullets” or “bright shiny objects.” Both quickly exhaust people and rob them of discretionary energy and enthusiasm. When an organization operates beyond its capacity, activity takes precedence over results, and

short-term fixes are substituted for long-term success. Repeatedly breaking this promise creates a culture of frustration, resentment, and hopelessness in which the associated cynicism-by-experience regarding all strategic change initiatives poisons the well.

**Promise 4: Lead effectively.** This promise speaks to our expectation that our leaders will improve their effectiveness through ongoing personal and professional development. This promise is at the center of the model. Failure to lead effectively ensures the breaking of the other three promises.

The rate of leadership development (and leader development) must keep pace with the rate of change. Leaders must commit to improving and growing, to becoming increasingly self-aware, to understanding the impact



they have on others, and to modeling what they want to create. Leadership teams must recognize that a critical step to keeping the Four Promises begins by keeping them with one another.

They do the intense work necessary to construct a viable strategy and persevere together through the excruciating dialogue re-

quired to create shared meaning. It means they work deliberately and unflaggingly on their own engagement and tell the truth. It means they focus their leadership energy on ensuring that they have what they need to succeed.

We're all familiar with the consequences of broken leadership promises. When Promise 1 is broken, the organization fails to be competitive and declines. When Promise 2 is broken, employees under-perform, turnover increases, competition takes advantage and the organization declines. When Promise 3 is broken, significant dollars, human capital, and time are wasted; the organization becomes mired in a culture of resentment and hopelessness, and ultimately, declines. And if Promise 4 is broken, there is no chance of meeting Promises 1, 2, and 3.

Leaders are expected to fulfill the Four Promises. Creating organizations that make a difference; ensuring individuals find meaning in the work they do; sustaining and growing the hope that businesses will matter in our lives—these rewards return a multiple far beyond the investment required. LE

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**ACTION:** Fulfill these four leadership promises.

# Don't Play Politics

*Rather you should take it seriously.*



by Anthony F. Smith

**I**N THIS ENERGIZED political season, we're reminded of the intense, aggressive, competitive nature, and ultimate importance of politics. Although governmental politics plays out far more dramatic on the nightly news, politics in organizations is alive and well, despite the many prescriptions of "pure, humble, servant leadership" advocated by some idealists.

We all know people who rise through the ranks, gaining allies and supporters as well as recognition, reputation, and status. They also accumulate detractors and enemies—people who feel used, pushed aside, out-manuevered, and neglected. When an organization is dominated by politics, it indicates that trust is low, leadership is in distress, and the organization is in distress.

As an executive coach, I'm often the messenger of the feedback: this leader is perceived as *being political*. I know that stings. It's not a term that has any gloss or neutrality to it. Instead, it implies a disparagement of that person's character and an attack on the core of who they are and how they behave. It's not an easy message to give, but leaders need to hear the news straight in order to change how they behave and how they are perceived in the world.

I'm *not* on a mission to eradicate politics and political behavior; in fact, I believe that politics is not a *necessary evil* in the leadership game—it is just plain *necessary*. No leader achieves his goals without politics. No organization is politics-free. Instead, politics is the air leaders breathe and an important source of energy and dynamism.

We don't like to acknowledge politics because we prefer an idealized and sanitized view of our leaders. And yet, when we encounter a leader who is not political, we find that person disappointingly ineffective.

## Politics Are Necessary

Politics is a necessary skill for making leadership meaningful. When I work with leaders who are labeled as *too political*, I don't coach them to

change in order to become better, more morally centered and likeable people; I teach them to change their ways because it's time, at this stage, to do the political thing differently. Like any critical leadership skill, the art of politics needs to be mastered, as followers determine who they will support.

Organizational and Governmental politics are similar. Politicians who are competing in elections "campaign" for support for their issues and candidacy. They conduct polls and focus particularly on opinion-leaders, those with sway over others, and try to garner as many votes as they can. They try to identify with key constituents (The Sarah Palin effect) and be well-liked by everyone (kissing babies and shaking hands) because that sense of likeability



can turn into passionate support. Workplace politicians do many of the same things. While we see electoral politics as full of staged rituals that are acceptable because they are traditional, we view any perceived lack of sincerity or any overt efforts to garner support in organizations as distasteful.

Henry Mintzberg of McGill University recognizes the good *and* bad in organizations. He notes: "I am no fan of politics or of illness. Yet I know we have to understand one like the other. Politics can be viewed as a form of illness, working both against and for the system. On one hand, politics can undermine healthy processes, infiltrating them to destroy them. On the other, it can also work to strengthen a system, acting like fever to alert a system to a graver danger, even evoking the system's own protective and adaptive mechanisms."

Like most of us, Mintzberg believes that the existence of politics is a bad

thing; but there's a good side. When we spot politics, we know something is wrong. The patient is sick, and politics is the symptom. Knowing that, we can rush the patient to the emergency ward and save his life. Mintzberg implies that in a healthy organization, only minimal politics would be necessary; but he also suggests that the existence of politics is a sign of life. Only a dead organization is free from politics; because nobody cares what happens in them anymore. If politics is a necessity, it is because disease goes with life.

## Politics as a Mode of Power

I disagree that politics is bad and should be eradicated. Instead, I believe that politics is a tool that leaders must use to achieve their goals. You can't achieve impact and change if you don't have the support of critical followers.

Leadership is *an episodic process whereby an individual pursues his or her goals and vision by intentionally influencing others to perform various tasks to their full potential*. Politics is not "war by other means" but "power by other means." It is an influence tactic that leaders use to achieve their goals by getting others—regardless of position, division, or affiliation—to perform tasks effectively that reflect the goals of the leaders, and yes, the followers too.

Org charts don't tell the full story of how decisions get made. Title and rank do not always correspond with authority and influence, just as hierarchy is an imperfect map of power. Many decisions are made informally, and later sanctioned or ratified in formal meetings between those who represent power bases. It's rare that information flow, budgetary dollars, sponsorship, and all requisite activity and decision-making reflects the org chart. It's more likely that a constant scramble is going on. Politics, in that sense, is the dance of the ever-shifting dynamics of power.

## Competition for Followers

If power and influence are leadership commodities, politics is the marketplace through which many deals and bargains are made. Everyone knows that leaders compete for resources; grappling over slices of the budget pie, CEO face-time, manpower. To a degree, such resources are a way of quantifying power and influence. Leaders also compete for followers—with each other, outside distractions, and conflicting priorities.

The ebb and flow of energy is difficult to harness, let alone use efficiently. Leaders can use positional power to control resources, make moves, and

define direction. But this power doesn't ensure that others will follow or perform up to their potential in service of the leader's vision. Leaders are constantly vigilant in their search for ways to win the competition for followers' hearts and minds. This makes them, by definition, political. We should not look at political behavior as necessarily good or bad, but neutral. To evaluate the extent to which political behavior is contributing or distracting, don't look for the existence of politics—figure out what it's being used to do.

### What About the Dark Side?

Some people are ultra-political by nature. They walk into a room and immediately get a feel for who is powerful and who is not. Worse, they brush by those who aren't important to get at those who are. Eventually, the behavior gets noticed and discussed, and a reputation develops. A consensus forms that such a person is not to be trusted, and must be dealt with carefully.

Other people become political by experience. They learn the art of politics because they realize that being political is essential for achieving their objectives. Or, maybe they realize that position and authority don't influence people as much as one would hope; and learn to play the game differently in order to be more effective. In any case, being political is just one more weapon in the leadership arsenal.

Some leadership experts coach executives to be less political because they have an idealized view of what being a leader means. In reality, most organizations can't afford their leaders to mute or restrain those political skills; efficiency, aggressiveness, and effectiveness would be sacrificed. Instead, coaches need to recognize that leadership is a contact sport, in which hands get dirty and noses are bloodied. It takes skill to be viewed as a leader who is not political while being politically astute.

Leaders who believe that they can stop being political once they reach the top are often disappointed. Being political is always part of the game; however, the political skill set changes as a leader rises in the ranks. A leader at the top might need to be viewed as benevolent, compassionate, articulate, and visionary. But do those attributes have to be real; or is perception more important than the reality? The question reeks of being political. LE

*Anthony F. Smith, Co-founder and Managing Director of Leadership Research Institute and author of The Taboos of Leadership (Jossey-Bass). Visit [www.lri.com](http://www.lri.com).*

**ACTION:** Develop your political skill set.

## Befriend the Crocodile

*It's an adaptive way to negotiate.*



by Charles Avakian

DO GREAT NEGOTIATORS always get an agreement? If they interact in close quarters with the person they're negotiating with, they may have to adapt their concept of a successful agreement outcome. Once I came across a client that faced a negotiation situation that called for a new kind of solution, beyond the deal-closing focus of our standard negotiations program. Unlike other IT services outsourcing firms, their consultants are often fully embedded in their clients' organizations. This is one reason they lead their industry and are the global leader in their field. However, many of their embedded consultants are reluctant to engage in proactive negotiations with their customers, and as consultants working directly inside a client organization, they often find themselves in a unique position when it comes to negotiating agreements:

- *On the one hand*, they are the organization's face-to-face contact for certain customers, so they must negotiate as its rep.

- *On the other hand*, their daily work directly involves them in the client's organization, where they participate in the client's business.

Also, because this client's embedded consultants are often drawn into negotiations that focus the result on price, or on some co-dependency factors that are aspects of how they do business, the consultants need a suite of tools and techniques that enable them to *turn the negotiation into a value discussion instead of a features (or benefits) debate*. To negotiate in these two contexts—as embedded consultants and as sellers of value-add services—is tricky, and it requires subtler skills not available from conventional negotiation approaches. Instead of culminating only in a contractual agreement, the approach should be to have participants gain the ability to transcend the negotiation as transaction and to achieve the best BATNA and ZOPA possible for all parties.



This client required a custom program to maintain the balance between their internal stakeholders and the customer in all areas of the negotiation process—one that would focus on building partner relationships with the clients, and developing a win-win situation.

We took the time and invested the resources and the subject matter expertise to grasp the nature of our client's negotiation processes, circumstances, and needs. We could then build an engaging, interactive offering that mirrors their real-world work processes.

The program achieved this result in part because our CEO, Terry Bacon, directly worked with the client to create a set of case study simulations and practice negotiation scenarios that were incorporated into the program as the centerpiece of the curriculum. With a real-world example to work on, participants engage in a two-day negotiation process that includes preparation and table tactics such as anchoring, framing, bundling, and validating. The adaptability component is framed in terms of helping the consultants:

- Understand their negotiating styles and preferences, using a negotiations style self-assessment.
- Profile other negotiating styles and preferences.
- Challenge and stretch participants, with exercises, to learn and adaptively use each negotiating style.

This simulation derives the true "value proposition" that will make getting a deal meaningful to our client and to their prospective clients.

From working to solve this client's negotiations needs, we understood that for many negotiations situations, whether or not you get the deal, the adaptive mindset makes it an effective negotiation. We helped to reconfigure and re-imagine a negotiations program that delivers the kind of vision, knowledge, and skills that are transforming our client's consultants into adaptive negotiators that are effective in their unique context. Together we've managed to move toward ensuring that their consultants continue to lead the way—both for the company's position in the industry and for their clients, as we help them gain a greater appreciation for a positively negotiated solution that embraces values over deals. LE

*Charles Avakian is VP Business Development, North America for Lore International Institute with experience as a senior client manager, an account manager, and a sales manager.*

**ACTION:** Learn to negotiate adaptively.



# Crunch Time

*Engage with your allies.*



by Gary Ranker and Colin Gautrey

AS THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN TAKES hold, corporations worldwide are starting to take drastic action to shore up their balance sheets, reduce their exposure, and make radical moves to ensure they survive the looming crisis. Some are taking action because they are feeling the pain, while others are taking preemptive steps to reduce the risk of catching a cold later.

In these corporations, individuals are also taking stock of their position and starting to worry. It is noticeable that as the downturn gathers pace, so too does the amount of political activity at senior levels. Different ideas will surface about the most appropriate course of action to take. Powerful people will start to exert their influence to gain agreement to their ideas. That these ideas also save their own jobs should come as no great surprise! Those that set themselves in opposition to these powerful people suddenly become extremely vulnerable.

In times like these, the wrong people exit. Even highly skilled and talented individuals are threatened by those more adept at managing the political dimension. As the downturn progresses, this latter group are likely to become ever more ruthless in their pursuit of survival. The body count could be high! Survival rates depend on the strength of an individual's political base—the network of allies and friends. In times of crisis, these can be tapped into to establish what is going on and help work out what to do for the best.

Our work involves helping people with talent and integrity survive and thrive in highly political environments, and here we outline some of the latest thinking coming out of our work. This will help you to become more capable of protecting yourself in a political crisis and reduce the risk of it occurring in the first place!

**Analyze your political base.** Work

out who is in your political network. Split these into supporters (those who will help you if asked) and advocates (who will be proactive on your behalf). Notice how your base maps onto the structure. Where are the gaps? Think though how powerful the people in your network are. What else do you notice here? Perhaps most of your network originates from the New York office, or started life in sales roles. What action does this analysis inspire?

**Strengthen your base.** Strong relationships will only stay strong if they are kept fresh. Lack of contact could mean that when needed, the support has evaporated. Who do you need to reconnect with right now? What can you do to rekindle the relationship? Focus on the most powerful and important people within your network and try to move them towards becoming advocates.

**Consider worst-case scenarios.** It is very difficult to predict how an organizational crisis will take form, yet any attempt to set down the possibilities will help to provide you with early warning and give you the opportunity to take action to improve your position if it happens. So work out three or four main possibilities for how things could take shape over the next six to nine months. How would each of these options affect your political base? What impact could they have on you?

**Expand your political base.** Based on the probable scenarios and your impact assessment, where do you need to find new friends, supporters, and advocates? Invest time and energy in building new relationships and beginning collaboration in areas where you may need it in the future if one of the scenarios emerges. Building new relationships in times of crisis is tough; so if you can begin this work early, you'll be in a much better position later if the worst does happen.

**Pump real value into your base.** Work hard to deliver value to those in your network so that they view you as someone who is crucial to the organization's long term success. Avoid getting a reputation for only talking to people when you want something. Looking at

the priority people in your network, consider what life might be like for them right now. Is there anything you can help them with—something that might help them towards their goals? Sometimes just sending them an article you noticed in the press and thought they may find useful can make a big difference to the relationship. The point is that you're demonstrating support for your strategic partners during a time when many managers question who they can rely on.

**Engage with your allies.** Take every opportunity to stay close to those who matter in your political network. As trusted allies, open up the scenario debate with them and see what they think about the possibilities. They may not have thought it through and will be very glad you helped them start

thinking in this way. You'll gain new ideas and intelligence from the synergy of thinking things through together. This joint work with your allies will improve the prospects of survival—of your careers and your ideas.

These activities form a core part of executive capability, irrespective of the current climate. If you are to progress and protect your career, you need to learn, practice and hone the skills involved here. Our extensive work with clients suggests that you can gain many benefits by developing these skills.

If your organization is in crisis and the political storm is raging, these suggestions still apply, except you have to do them faster and the scenario is clearer! You'll also be handicapped because everyone will know that a key motivator for all of your words and actions is survival, so expect some suspicion as you make your moves. Your best chance is to focus on established relationships and work together with your allies to build greater insight into what you all need to do.

In business you can't always win. No matter how polished your political skills, or widespread your network, there are no guarantees. However, we can guarantee that if you apply the points made in this article, you will survive the credit crunch with your career and your integrity intact. **LE**

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**ACTION: Engage with your allies.**



# Truth to Power

*Beware perils and penalties.*



by James O'Toole

HERE'S A QUIZ FOR fans of the absurd: What do Antigone, Hamlet, Sir Thomas More, Galileo, and former-Bush Administration press secretary Scott McClellan all have in common? These individuals—fictional and real—experienced the trials and perils of speaking truth to power. The first four of those displayed great courage, putting their lives on the line when they brought news to those above them that those powerful men desperately did not want to hear.

In contrast, McClellan waited until he was out of harm's way before mustering the moxie to speak up with regard to the fabricated rationale for invading Iraq. Hence, he was condemned on the right for being "disloyal" and on the left as "cowardly" for his tardy dallying with the truth.

But before dismissing McClellan's revelations as a spineless, "kiss and tell" exercise by a disgruntled former employee, it is worth weighing the moral value of McClellan's act. In our study of transparency, Warren Bennis, Daniel Goleman, and I reviewed the consequences when leaders create—or fail to create—cultures of candor. Those lower down the pecking order experience, from time to time, the terror involved in having to tell unpalatable truths to those ranked above them. While few of us have to call attention to Iraq-scale fraud and deception, we have stories to tell of retaliatory fury from the enraged "alpha dogs" we muster the courage to confront.

I experienced the peril in the early 1990's when I dared to question the factual basis of an assertion Donald Rumsfeld made during a seminar. He came after me with bone-chilling intensity: "No one questions me! Do you understand that?" And, apparently with total conviction, he added, "I am never wrong." Hours after, I was still shaking from the encounter. I learned later that he had tried to get me fired.

Daring to speak truth to power often entails considerable risk—whether at the hands of an irate parent, neighborhood bully, or incensed boss. Imagine

the courage it took for an Enron employee to confront Jeff Skilling with his financial deception? Or, the courage required by a GE employee to question former CEO Jack Welch? According to *Fortune*, former GE employees reported that dissenters were berated, insulted, and abused: "Welch conducts meetings so aggressively that people tremble. He attacks almost physically with his intellect—criticizing, demeaning, ridiculing, humiliating." And Welch had a reputation for being a great people developer!

In the 1970s, Albert O. Hirschman posited that employees who disagree with company policy have only three options: "exit, voice, and loyalty." That is, they can offer a principled resignation, or try to change the policy (speak truth to power), or remain loyal team players despite their opposition. Most



people choose option three—the path of least resistance. They swallow whatever moral objections they may have to questionable dictates from above, concluding they lack power to change things or, worse, will be punished if they try. Two-thirds of American workers report having witnessed unethical behavior on the job, but only about a third of those say they reported it to their supervisors for fear of retaliation or belief that management would not act appropriately on the information.

Such docile employee behavior is assumed: most executives expect their people to be "good soldiers" and not question company policy (or, if they do, that they will go away quietly). Indeed, "disloyalty" is their trump card in dealing with those who dare to voice truth internally in the hope of changing policy, and against those who exit and then "tell tales out-of-school." Employees who muster the courage to question the prevailing "group think" open themselves to charges of "disloyalty." That's

why most workers have to be totally teed off before they will speak up publicly. To get angry enough to face an onslaught on one's character requires not only disagreement over policy—typically involving the conviction that a moral principle has been violated—but also deep personal hurt. Such were the mixed motivations in high-profile cases of whistle-blowing at cigarette-maker Brown and Williamson and at Unum Provident Insurance. In both instances, leaders said that the whistleblowers' testimony should be discounted since they were "disgruntled" (ex-employees were portrayed as angry "nut cases" with enough skeletons in their closets to outfit a Halloween ball). McClellan received much the same treatment.

The charge of disloyalty is as easy for leaders to bring against followers as it is difficult for the accused to counter and disprove. Moreover, since loyalty is typically an admirable trait, it is also a convenient blind for cowardly followers to hide behind. As such, former members of the Bush administration as Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neil, economic advisor Lawrence Lindsey, pollster Matthew Down, national security expert Richard Clarke, and ex-Army chief General Eric Shinneskei found, they were attacked for being "disloyal" and said to be "too angry" for their criticisms to be trusted. Of course they were angry. If they weren't, they might still be trying to voice disagreements through established processes. But they had tried that, failed in their attempts to be heard, and opted for vocal exits.

It would be prettier if whistleblowers weren't so angry, but anger is often a necessary spur to doing the right thing. What might have happened had Secretary of State Colin Powell allowed his reported anger over the decision to invade Iraq to overcome his military-disciplined instinct to loyally fall into line with administration policies? Had he, instead, resigned and publicly voiced his concerns, would we have been so accepting of the questionable evidence on weapons of mass destruction? Who knows? But if we too quickly ignore the words of disgruntled officials, fewer of them will step forward to safeguard public interest.

Speaking truth to power requires a courageous speaker and willing listener—but the truth that makes us free is often truth leaders prefer not to hear. **LE**

*James O'Toole is Distinguished Professor of Business Ethics at the University of Denver and co-author with Warren Bennis and Daniel Goleman of Transparency: How Leaders Create a Culture of Candor (Jossey-Bass, 2008).*

**ACTION:** *Speak truth to power.*

# Low Engagement?

*Invest more in your people.*



by Christopher Rice

**E**MPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT reflects each individual's unique relationship with his or her work.

We studied more than 7,500 survey responses and conducted interviews with 40 HR and line managers to find that fewer than one in three workers are fully engaged. Moreover, in North America 19 percent are completely disengaged, and another 13 percent are disillusioned, at risk for disengaged.

We see a strong correlation between engagement and retention. We find that 85 percent of engaged employees plan to stay with their company, compared to 27 percent of disengaged employees. Engaged employees appear to stay for what they give (they like the work that they do), while disengaged employees stay for what they get (favorable job conditions, advancement, growth, or job security). That's not a winning business relationship.

The best organizations make engagement an ongoing priority, taking a multi-faceted approach to address problem areas and improve engagement. Their best practices include:

**Maximize managers.** Ensure that managers are engaged and understand how to help their team members picture what full engagement looks like. Hold them accountable for the coaching and development of their people. Weed out bad managers.

**Align, align, align.** Make sure people see the big picture and how they can contribute to the organization's success. Start at the top by aligning the executive team, then communicate clearly and tirelessly. Your performance management system can help.

**Redefine career.** Provide employees with a compelling picture of what "career" means in your organization. Help them clarify what they want, provide them with tools and support, focus on development and opportunities to leverage unique skills through projects, not necessarily promotions. Employees want assurance of a future.

**Pay attention to culture.** Work with management to build a values-driven culture and invest in managers to sup-

port and sustain it. Ensure that systems and processes work in favor of—not in contradiction to—the aspired culture.

**Survey less, act more.** Develop a measurement strategy that provides actionable insights. Avoid the analysis-paralysis trap and hold all leaders accountable for increasing engagement.

## Engage Your Team

Leaders are vital in employee engagement. Like a catalyst that enables two chemicals in a beaker to combine what would not otherwise mix, you can smooth the way for mutually beneficial connections between individual employees (on their personal paths for great "work") and your organization (with ambitious strategies that need execution). To succeed, you need to:

**Reflect and recharge.** How engaged are you? You can't help your team if



you're miserable or out of control. If you're not engaged, think about why you took your job. Reconnect with that passion. If you are engaged, how can you stay there—and "infect" others?

**Hire engage-able team members.** Select people who can succeed in your environment. Do candidates have the right skills, interests, and experience? Cultural fit? Instead of training square pegs to fit a round hole, hire round pegs.

**Earn trust daily.** Trust provides the foundation for your effectiveness as a leader. To build it, you need to reveal who you are as a person. When your employees look at you, do they know what's beneath the surface?

**Stress employee ownership.** You can't create an engaged team if your members don't have visions of personal success. Remind them that they are ultimately responsible for their satisfaction and career. Be available to provide guidance and remove barriers.

## Remind people of your destination.

If you're not clear on your strategy, demand answers. Help your team understand the direction you're moving toward and their role in it. Help them prioritize the myriad tasks they face each day to deliver desired results.

**See feedback as a gift.** People want and deserve information that can help them achieve their goals. Let them know what they do well so they can keep doing those things with confidence. Suggest course corrections to help them be efficient and enjoy their work more.

**Talk more and listen even more.** Too often communication is one-way. Conversation is about dialogue. It drives clarity. It is the most effective vehicle for providing performance feedback and generating new ideas for increasing business results and personal job satisfaction. It helps prevent misunderstandings and builds trust.

**Match projects, passion, and proficiency.** Every person comes into work with different values, talents, and goals, which they seek to satisfy on the job. They don't necessarily want a lofty title or a higher salary. If you can help them connect what's important to them with what's important to the organization, you can make a positive impact on their job satisfaction, commitment, and contribution.

**Get to know team members.** You don't need to be their friend. You do need to know what makes them tick. Who shows signs of being disconnected or burning out? What motivates your most engaged employees? Pay attention. Ask questions. What's preventing people from attaining maximum satisfaction and contribution in their jobs?

**Tailor your coaching strategies.** Invest in moderately engaged team members, providing feedback, resources, and chances to excel. Redirect the efforts of those who appear disconnected. Help new hires ramp up their productivity and enthusiasm by clarifying priorities and what they need to do to succeed. Help those who are burning out to clarify what success looks like to them. Size up your disengaged, coaching some out. Spell out expectations with the rest; take stock of their interests and talents, and enable them to do work that matters to them.

**Don't take your engaged employees for granted.** Full engagement is hard to sustain. Nurture them, recognize them, stretch them, and develop them. **LE**

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**ACTION: Lead better to engage more.**

# Happy Climate

Can happiness = profit?



by Cathy L. Greenberg and Johanna Dillon

ANY COMPANY CAN PROFIT FROM A natural resource it already has—happiness. The secret is to engage your best talent through whole-brain function to overcome fear with appreciation. It's teachable and transferable. Use happiness to improve performance—and deliver profit-providing useable insights.

## Whole-Brain Function

Think of something that makes you smile—for example, praise from a trusted mentor. Now, think of something that makes you frown—for example, your mentor goes away from your life tomorrow. She is your favorite co-worker, the one who believes in you and pushes you to be your best, but she's dying and leaving work today. Hold a visual of your time together and the threat of her leaving forever, both at the same time. Can you balance joy and fear in your mind?

If you say *yes*, I won't believe you. It's impossible to feel fear and appreciation simultaneously. You can't feel hope or appreciation while experiencing sorrow, guilt, or anger. You can't experience positive and negative emotions simultaneously. Whole-brain function is required to make decisions, but first you must engage your emotional state before taking action. Unfortunately, you will only use that portion of your brain that is available; in many cases, that state is fear, anxiety, or grief. In the best of all worlds, it's appreciation—an attitude of gratitude.

As a behavioral scientist, executive coach, and business consultant, I want everyone to know that being a happy company is the single greatest transformation a company can take to retain talent, improve its competitive position and top-line revenue.

Let's start with five HAPIE principles:

**H** - Heartfelt, humble, inclusive, inspirational, innovative leadership

**A** - Adaptive, enthusiastic, emotion-

ally intelligent employees

**P** - Profit for all who contribute to return on people (ROP), in addition to ROI

**I** - Invigorated stakeholders, vendors, and clients who market the company

**E** - Engaged, constructive, community partners who share their success

From these five traits emerge a set of behaviors that create a positive, transformational climate of inspiration and happiness.

When applied together, they pave the way for a culture of appreciation or a Happy Company Climate.

## Happy Organizations

Few leaders understand the importance of engaging energy like "happiness". In a hard-nosed, numbers-based business, they misinterpret *happiness* to be a time-waster that doesn't support bottom-line results. Cynics imagine everyone singing "Kumbaya."

Here's the truth.

- Corporate happiness is a deep commitment felt when people engage their sense of purpose while contributing to a fulfilling corporate mission.
- Happy companies see reality through a positive mindset, even in adversity.
- It perceives the market as a place of abundance with many opportunities.
- Great leaders choose optimism over pessimism because a positive culture inspires creative, pragmatic approaches and draws out the best in people.
- Honesty pervades a happy company, infusing it with personal respect, appreciation, and trust and contributing to business success.
- Every stakeholder and community respects and appreciates happy companies because of their constructive force that enhances the quality of life.

Happy companies create optimal conditions that enable the ultimate engagement of our mission at work. They are best prepared to succeed long term. Everyone wants to work in a profitable, happy company.

## The Truth Really Hurts

Why do few companies apply these principles and achieve "happiness = profit"? They focus on reacting to problems and fear, which blocks their ability to engage happiness factors.

Most companies are only vaguely aware of their fear-based state because they spend more time trying to focus their energy on solving problems rather than building on the success of their strengths. Management does not know how unhappiness severely hurts performance. Why? Because they lack skills to perceive, measure or change behaviors known as happiness factors to bolster success, or how unhappiness causes failure. Leaders of unhappy companies know they are struggling and get stuck. Despite their best efforts, they can't match their competitors.

Employees work harder, even though they try to work smarter—"the faster I work, the behinder I get!" Unhappy companies only sustain positive energy for short bursts (during a crisis) but fear poisons productivity with politics.

The best leaders know you can't run a successful, dynamic business based on fear. Fear prevents people from contributing their best and hurts profits through increased absenteeism, turnover, and redundancy.

In many organizations, fear is a dominant management technique.

- We fear missing a deadline, losing a sale, or receiving unfair treatment (even if we make the numbers).
- We induce fear based on unknowns in business; we fear many things—our competitors, their high-quality or low-price alternative, missing profit projections, even successful growth that may be too much to handle.
- We have financing fears: of interest rates, bond rates, exchange rates or a downturn in the capital markets.
- We have conflicting fears: management fears spiraling wages, healthcare, and possible strikes; labor fears abusive management and low raises.
- We even fear weather that might disrupt our production, our delivery, or our customers' buying patterns.
- And some fears haunt us all: terrorism and the cost of war.

Fear has many immeasurable costs—talent, wellness, and energy. Yet, fear is everywhere. It so saturates our spirit and cultures that we accept it as "normal." But does fear motivate us to perform better? No. Fear is a limited motivator because it triggers a state of activated stress which results in a limited set of responses: freeze, flight, or fight. These old-brain behaviors limit whole-brain function. Often the reaction is fear-based hostility, a



primal, reactive reflex. Fear is great for split-second survival, but it thwarts long-term prosperity because it “short-circuits” higher thought, shutting down the part of the brain that enables us to see possibility. Fear drains both the individual and the franchise of energy and imagination. Instead of motivating us, fear depresses our spirit of innovation and can even kill us physically through stress-related illnesses like high blood pressure, heart disease, alcoholism and diabetes.

**What’s the good news?** We can beat our wiring, even though fear and imagination still operate in different parts of our brain. Fear-based management behaviors mimic our caveman ancestors; biologically the behaviors are identical. Our primal emotions are the same, since fear trumps reason.

**Try this exercise.** When we see a lion about to pounce is our fear-based reaction healthy? Are we dreaming of a peaceful coexistence with nature? Think again. Those in the past who pondered such crises often died.

But if fear wins every time it is activated, then in today’s world, where wild animals wear suits, live at desks with access to unlimited information, commute on planes, and join boards and committees, how can we overcome our biology?

Happy people and healthy companies think before they react and apply enabling coaching techniques to explore and engage the best in everyone. They learn to recognize fear and apply HAPIE principles of positive psychology. Primal emotions, while required for survival, short-circuit the higher emotions needed for performance as a competitive weapon in the war for talent. Emotions and thought are closely entwined. While fear can drive us down, optimism can elevate us because it reshapes behavior and enables us to bond, find strength in numbers, feel appreciation, achieve creativity, and create a sum greater than our parts.

Happy companies succeed because people engage using positive, reinforcing emotions that maximize their diverse strengths. Their people constructively work together, find meaning and satisfaction in their work, and deliver high-quality service and products that positively contribute to their franchise and society. Profits follow naturally. Now, you can see now how Happiness = Profit! LE

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**ACTION:** Apply the HAPIE principles.

## Celebrating Failure

*Hype or hope from on high?*



by Irving H. Buchen

THE NEW RALLYING CRY from CEOs is “Make mistakes!” At least that is what Proctor & Gamble’s CEO A.G. Lafley urges in *The Game Changer*. He lists 11 “Biggest Innovation Failures.” Of course, the moment such errors are embraced and personalized, wisdom and humility walk hand in hand.

Actually, Lafley’s advice is not new. Richard Farson enshrined the same concept in paradoxical terms: *The Success of Failure, the Failure of Success*. Gary Hamel warned us about risk-averse CEOs and managers whose timidity may jeopardize the current and future bottom line. Another broadside was directed against complacent executives living off past capital by Gottfried and Schaubert in *The Breakthrough Imperative*.

Why this preoccupation with a commitment to error? It is all about innovation, and the conviction that failure is the absolute path to creative success. But is it, always? Even if error is the threshold of creativity, how do we un-program a generation of achievers and teach them how to stumble? And while we wait for this paradox to generate wonders, what do we do in the meantime? Hope for the redemption of innovation?

### Three Options

CEOs need more sensible and imaginative initiatives to manage the ongoing, stir breakthroughs, and see the way ahead. Those three options should keep us going and moving ahead.

- **Ongoing mainstream.** Being failure-averse is not necessarily a bad thing. Many of our most productive managers can’t handle or manage error. In a few cases, it would drive them crazy. Nor should they have to. In our craze for the eureka moment, let us not overlook the strong and steady commitment to continuous improvement and the constant tweaking that generates incremental gains in product and service quality. Let us not throw out the everyday baby of productivity for the

heavy waters of creativity. The business has to go on. It can’t be put on hold while the brain trust burns the midnight oil. Besides, you could not find a more exacting group to test the latest innovations than those who have successfully been working out the bugs and turning a sow’s ear into a purse for many years. The mainstream still remains the ultimate reality check.

- **Tangential breakthrough teams.** Seek professionals with a high tolerance for paradox, ambiguity, and speculation—especially if they tend to be loners or ornery. Group them by their differences: disciplines, units, degrees, age, gender, nationality. Create as many teams as the criteria dictate; ideally all should be miniatures of the whole. Suggest unfamiliar places where they can meet, but never during regular work hours. Their agenda is what’s new. It can’t be incremental or familiar. It must support a new business or one which if we fail to adopt can put us out of business. They will not be monitored or evaluated. At the end of each month they are to send a memo to the CEO.

- **CEO seminar on the Future of the Future.** While this is going on, the executive team has to pull its head out of operations and become star-gazers. Every two weeks, they are to play leapfrog; while we are catching up, let us also get ahead of the pack. Nothing is out of bounds. The range should be 360, the scope global, the topic or approach somewhat radical. Invite wild cards, a

few crazies, gurus on innovation, and a few pontificating academic types. The subject is what’s new but fused with what’s ahead—it has to have the durability of a mega-trend. The test of discontinuity is that VPs should leave with a different scenario of creation and start having different dreams.

**Will it work?** It has to. It spans the now, the emerging, and the brand new; it differentiates between the everyday doers, the off-the-wall creative types, and the big-picture and policy-making chiefs. Will innovation occur? Yes. The only questions are: how long will it take for the lone rangers to collaborate creatively; what increases in innovation productivity will occur over time; and how fast can the mainstream wire the new in place to be industry leaders? LE

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**ACTION:** Explore these three options.



# Charismatic Leadership

Develop seven qualities.



by Dr. John C. Maxwell

WILLIAM GLADSTONE and Benjamin Disraeli were two of the fiercest political rivals of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Their epic battles for control of the British Empire were marked by intense animosity that spilled over from the public arena into their personal lives. Ambitious, powerful, and politically astute, both men were spirited competitors and masterful politicians.

Though each man achieved impressive accomplishments, the quality that separated them as leaders was their approach to people. The difference is best illustrated by the account of a young woman who dined with the men on consecutive nights. When asked about her impression of the rival statesmen, she said, "When I left the dining room after sitting next to Mr. Gladstone, I thought he was the cleverest man in England. But after sitting next to Mr. Disraeli, I thought I was the cleverest woman in England."

What distinguished Disraeli from Gladstone was charisma. Disraeli possessed a personal charm sorely lacking in the leadership style of his rival. His personal appeal attracted friends and created favorable impressions among acquaintances. Throughout his career, Disraeli's charisma gave him an edge over Gladstone.

Of all leadership attributes, charisma is perhaps the least understood. At first glance, charisma appears to be an invisible energy or magnetism. There is no denying its presence, but it's hard to put a finger on its source. Some mistakenly believe charisma is a birth trait—embedded in certain personalities, but completely absent in others.

I believe charisma is learnable and helps to boost a leader's influence. In this article, I examine the causes of charisma and suggest how to increase the charisma you display as a leader.

## Seven Qualities of Charismatic Leaders

Charisma is "the ability to inspire enthusiasm, interest, or affection in others by means of personal charm or influence." Leaders who have this ability share seven things in common:

**1. They love life.** Leaders who attract a following are passionate about life. They are celebrators, not complainers. They're characterized by joy and warmth. They're energetic and radiant in an infectious way. Look no further than the smile to illustrate the power of charisma. When people see a smile, they respond with a smile. If you're skeptical, try it. Smile at cashiers, waiters, co-workers, etc. You'll find your smile earns a reciprocal smile almost every time. We are hardwired to take on the energy of those around us.

Leaders who love life have charisma because they fill the room with positive energy. Said Henry Van Dyke, "There is no personal charm so great as the charm of a cheerful temperament."

**2. They value the potential in people.** To become an attractive leader,



expect the best from your people. I describe this behavior as "putting a 10 on everyone's head." Leaders see people, not as they are, but as they could be. From this vantage point, they help others to build a bridge from the present to a preferred future. Benjamin Disraeli understood and practiced this concept, and it was one of the secrets to his charisma. He once said, "The greatest good you can do for another is not to share your riches but to reveal to him his own." When you invest in people and lift them toward their potential, they will love you for it.

**3. They give hope.** People long to improve their future and fortunes. Charismatic leaders connect with people by painting tomorrow brighter than today. To them, the future is full of amazing opportunities and unrealized dreams.

Napoleon Bonaparte once said, "Leaders are dealers in hope." They infuse optimism into the culture and boost morale. While attentive to the

current reality, they do not resign themselves to present circumstance.

**4. They share themselves.** Charismatic leaders add value to people by sharing wisdom, resources, and even special occasions. They embrace the power of inclusion, inviting others to join them for learning experiences, brainstorming sessions, or simply a cup of coffee. Such leaders embrace team spirit and value togetherness. Hence, charismatic leaders are not lonely at the top. "Charisma is a sparkle in people that money can't buy. It's an invisible energy with visible effects," writes Marianne Williamson.

**5. They cultivate other-mindedness.** For leaders, the greatest satisfaction is found by serving. They find great pleasure celebrating the successes of those around them, and the victory they enjoy the most is a team triumph. "How can you have charisma?" asks Dan Reiland. "Be more concerned about making others feel good about themselves than you are making them feel good about you."

**6. They find and use their voice.** One expression bandied about by political commentators has been of a candidate "finding a voice." Seemingly every candidate found his or hers. *Time* contributor, Ana Marie Cox, wrote about Senator Barack Obama "finding his voice," at a Democratic dinner party. During post-debate coverage on CNN, David Gergen asserted, "I think that the most presidential tonight was John McCain, who's found his voice again." Jack Horowitz, *New York Observer*, noted Hillary Clinton's primary election victory in New Hampshire with the headline: "Hillary, Triumphant, Finds Her Voice." Ana Marie Cox asked, "Has Romney Found His Voice?" in her article on Mitt Romney's first-place finish in Michigan. Writes Stephen R. Covey: "One word expresses the pathway to greatness: voice. Those on this path find their voice and inspire others to find theirs. The rest never do."

**7. They use their charisma to boost their influence for good.** Charisma compounds a leader's influence. Without it, leaders have trouble inspiring passion and energizing their teams. With it, leaders draw out the best in their people, give the best of themselves, and find the greatest fulfillment.

Charisma is not manipulative energy or a magical gift given to select personalities, but an attractive blend of learnable qualities. LE

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**ACTION:** Develop your charisma.

## Learn from History

Successful leaders are students.



by Rebecca Staton-Reinstein

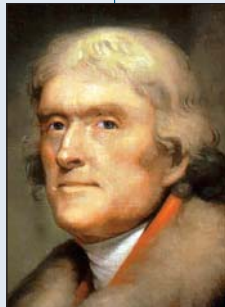
AS BUSINESS LEADERS read about leaders of the past, they want to learn what they can do today when their companies are at stake. Current leaders face a faltering economy, an unstable international situation, a credit crunch, fierce competition, and shifting demographics.

These situations are similar to the challenges faced by U.S. leaders who gathered in Philadelphia in 1787 to draft a new constitution and form a new government. You can learn and apply seven secrets from the founders.

### Seven Historical Secrets

Savvy leaders learn these secrets:

**1. History matters:** Leaders know the importance of learning from the past to avoid mistakes and understand how important leaders faced monumental challenges and succeeded. The U.S. founders were all history buffs. As the framers debated the details of the *Constitution*, they pointed to specific lessons from the rise and fall of the Roman Republic to make our own republic more robust.



**2. Downtime matters:** They are clear about their priorities. They spend time resting, reading, and enjoying their families and friends. Their historical counterparts enjoyed rich social and family lives, were physically active and never stopped reading and thinking. The founders didn't have seminars on work-life balance but still achieved more than most people today, while making time for enjoying life.

**3. Learning matters:** They read history and biographies because they enjoy learning. They look for ways to improve their performance by applying the lessons of the past. George Washington, John Adams, and Ben Franklin left a rich legacy of self-improvement. When they wrote in the *Constitution* they wanted "to establish a more perfect union," they were reflecting their personal journeys in seeking to become more perfect leaders.

**4. Citizenship matters:** Admired business leaders admire their country and its history and want to learn from it. They look for ways to practice their citizenship on the local, national, or global level. They serve on nonprofit boards, mentor students, build homes, and dish up dinner in soup kitchens. Ben Franklin founded dozens of civic groups, and Alexander Hamilton and John Jay helped found a society for the abolition of slavery. Jefferson founded a university to create an "academical village" to mingle formal education with practical commercial learning.

**5. Government matters:** Unless you understand the origins and functioning of government, you will find it difficult to interact with it effectively or be a good citizen. Our "Founding Parents" never turned down the call to serve their country. They believed it was their duty to be in public service, even when it interfered with their business and personal affairs.

**6. Leadership matters:** Real leaders commit to becoming better. What better role models to learn from than the towering successes and human shortcomings of the founders? We can learn from the founders precisely because they are so like us, so human. They struggled with the same shortcomings we must overcome. They provide a practical guide to leading under the most difficult circumstances.

**7. Survival matters:** The founders staked their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor, believing liberty required an informed public. Many key political debates today hinge on what went on in the minds and lives of U.S. leaders in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. These debates will influence whether companies survive and thrive. The best leaders stay informed, learn from history, and encourage their employees, friends and family to stay involved.

The publication of so many enthralling histories and biographies means there is no excuse for ignorance of American history and its lessons.

Successful leaders never stop learning and are not ashamed to bring their insights from their learning into their decision-making and leadership.

As you apply the lessons of history, the founding fathers and mothers are waiting to coach you. **LE**

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**ACTION:** Start your leadership learning journey.

## Get Better ROI on LD

Find some diamonds in the rough.



by Sharon Birkman Fink

WITH BUDGETS BEING focused on production and marketing, HR functions receive lower priority on funding requests. In large enterprises, significant resources may be allocated to HRMS; and yet HR professionals rarely measure and analyze data directly related to development and training. As a result, HR fails to serve as catalyst to improve performance.

Most HR measurements are tactical and transactional. Measures that indicate the effectiveness of OD, including training ROI and human capital ROI, are rare. By identifying high-potential candidates for leadership and management training and allocating training resources to those best positioned to benefit from them, HR can efficiently use its resources and accelerate its impact. *Effective training for the right people* should be the mantra.

*The goal of training* is to accelerate the promotion of qualified candidates into positions of responsibility through training that focuses on and develops the unique assets of each individual. Training should enhance how an individual's personality traits mesh with specific job requirements and enable individuals to work with or lead others productively and effectively.

Use personality assessments to identify what motivates behavior and the needs that drive behavior in positive and productive directions. Each person has his or her own strengths, weaknesses, productive behaviors, and stress behaviors that may be similar to or differ from peers. Personality testing enables you to individualize training.

Before you promote individuals into management and leadership positions, test to identify their strengths, motivational needs and stress reactions, and discover how they can fulfill their motivational needs while contributing to company success. Answer these questions: Does the person prefer to work alone or in a team? Does the person prefer to work in a structured, predictable environment or an unstructured one requiring adaptability and flexibility? Must they have control over what they do and when they

do it? Do they work on the big picture, or implement details? Does the person take initiative to perform the assigned tasks directly or distribute responsibility by working through people?

The answers provide HR professionals with a *cost-effective roadmap* to structure training that bridges generational differences in diverse workplaces, where members of several generations are working together. Each group has distinct learning preferences:

**Baby boomers** (48 to 62 years old) view training as a means to career advancement and prefer such training forms as classroom teaching, independent reading and one-on-one coaching.

**Generation X** (26 to 47) value flexibility and view themselves as free agents who are not indefinitely tied to any organization. Their training expectations are for self-focus and building a portable repertoire of skills.

**Millennials** (18 to 25) want training that is multi-sensory, immediate, team-oriented and driven by positive feedback. For them, everything is about speed, freedom, customization and interactivity, and digitalization.

Of course, each member of a generation will have his or her own strengths, weaknesses, behaviors and learning preferences. Personality testing brings those characteristics into focus.

### Training Application

When approached in this way, management training accelerates the promotion of qualified employees who help the company grow and evolve. Structure training to emphasize strengths and measure whether personality traits mesh with specific competencies required for the leadership task. Competencies often go beyond hard skills and experience to include the ability to productively work with or effectively lead others by accepting feedback, advancing teamwork, and demonstrating workplace satisfaction.

Qualities that make a difference in performance can be found within individuals not previously tapped for leadership roles, and a well-designed personality assessment can find these "diamonds in the rough" and give you more bench at minimal cost. By identifying which candidates have potential to be leaders and their potential leadership styles, personality testing establishes a systematic program for developing leaders. This can help you overcome a leadership deficit. LE

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**ACTION:** Find your diamonds in the rough.

## Master Motivation

*It's a strategy, not a speech.*



by Dave Durand

**O**NE COMMON approach leaders take to motivate their people is to give inspirational speeches. But speeches alone fail to produce anything more than a temporary warm and fuzzy that wears off by the next morning. Great leaders know that motivating employees is more strategic than a one-time presentation.

To build sustained results, leaders employ *four wheels of motivation*: 1) set mutual targets, 2) instill confidence, 3) support, and 4) reward and recognize. A car can move on three wheels, but it will be hard to steer. On two wheels, it can drag along but never gain momentum. With only one wheel, it will spin in place—no matter how much energy is expended. Each wheel of motivation works with the others to get results.

**Wheel 1: Set mutual targets.** As a leader, you must establish goals that inspire you and your subject mutually. Weak leaders usually fall into one of two categories. They either present goals to a team member without considering the personal strengths and mindset of the individual, or they ask the team member to submit their own goals without offering any input on their standard. The former usually means that the leader is inspired but not the team member. The latter means the opposite. Either way, one party enters the discussion less enthusiastic or committed to the result. Shared goals allow you to avoid both traps.

Mutual goals are best worked out over time and openly discussed in a spirited manner so both parties can be in agreement. Come out of the discussion with both parties feeling victorious. If anyone feels that they had to compromise, the party is over before it begins. As a leader, your job is to help your team reach higher than they might otherwise on their own, so ask a lot of them and set high standards. If they have legitimate concerns about achieving the goal, listen and work through them together.



**Wheel 2: Instill confidence.** Leaders accept the duty to impart confidence. Since everyone faces self-doubt, effective leaders help team members focus on their strengths. Tell your team members *why* you believe they can achieve the goal. Be specific. Don't flatter them with "you can do it" clichés. Tell specific people what you see in their character, experience, or talents that inspires your confidence in them. Don't overdue this by turning confidence-builders into victory speeches. Your team must see their strengths as a means to an end—the shared goal they feel equipped to handle.

**Wheel 3: Support.** Let your team members know how you will support them. People need motivating, but they don't need to know that you'll do their work for them. They just want to know that they are not alone. Your support is like a cheer. Hearing words of encouragement and instruction along the way is inspiring. Some leaders weaken their teams by "pitching in" and helping too much. They often intend to demonstrate humility by showing the team that they are not above the work. But when taken too far, it shows a lack of

confidence in the team and contradicts the second wheel. When possible, stay on the sidelines, but be fully engaged as you let the all-stars on their court take the shots.

**Wheel 4: Reward and recognize.** Praise team members along the way. Don't wait 30 years to hand out a gold watch at a retirement party before you let them know you appreciate them. Shower hard workers with your gratitude and praise in public or in front of their peers. Spend a few dollars on a gift card to a coffee house or, if the numbers work, pay a bonus for their efforts along the way. This motivates people to work better on the task at hand, and to stay in their jobs longer. Rarely do people leave organizations where they feel appreciated.

These four wheels are incomplete unless you set a resilient example and spirit in the office. People will see your enthusiasm as a sign of hope, and your frustration as a sign of fear. Be the beacon on top of the hill, and your team will find your example more powerful than your greatest speech. LE

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**ACTION:** Employ the four wheels of motivation.



# Leaving a Legacy

Lead sustainable enterprise.



by Jeana Wirtenberg

THE WORLD IS AT A tipping point: uninformed decisions—or decisions that simply maintain the status quo—may bring on irreversible catastrophes. Global warming, species extinction, and loss of biodiversity, poverty, inequity, and war are daunting and can easily lead to a sense of hopelessness and despair. Challenges today demand creative, novel leadership based on the confidence to make profound choices that move us from cultures of *either/or* to one of *both-and*.

Systemic, deep-rooted problems require systemic, long-term solutions that engage key constituencies in deep inquiry. Familiar solutions stemming from a single discipline or sector are inadequate. With new ways of thinking and being, you can help change the course of history—and improve your bottom line. While set in a global context, the most-effective solutions are locally developed and applied.

*Which path will you choose?* We invite you to explore familiar solutions and new possibilities, encompassing both incremental and radical change, and harnessing our imagination, creativity, and commitment to creating a sustainable future.

## Qualities of a Sustainable Enterprise

A study of nine sustainable companies identified a *Sustainability Pyramid* of seven core qualities associated with implementing sustainability strategies and achieving triple bottom line (social, environmental, and financial) results, along with the necessary contributions of human capital practices.

“Foundation” contains deeply held corporate values consistent with sustainability, top management’s visible support for sustainability, and its placement as central to strategy.

“Traction” is achieved by developing sustainability metrics and by aligning formal and informal organization systems around sustainability.

Toward the top of the pyramid is “Collaborative Integration.” At this stage, the many facets and functional domains of sustainability are coordi-

nated through stakeholder engagement and integration. Even the best firms on the triple bottom line struggle to reach this cross-boundary, multi-stakeholder, integrative pinnacle. Deeply infusing sustainability-oriented values and creating integration seem to be the highest-level challenges.

## Creating a Sustainable Enterprise

Sustainability strategies vary widely as companies learn to take advantage of the social, environmental, and economic opportunities offered by their location, community, and placement in the global market. However, two fundamental elements remain: for these strategies to be successful, they must be integrated into the company’s core business plan and leaders must wholeheartedly support them.

Companies become sustainable using divergent strategies. GE increased



its sales through its Ecomagination initiative. Wal-Mart reduced waste and harmful materials in its supply chain. Unilever addressed the social concerns at the “bottom of the pyramid,” vastly expanding its market, with 40 percent of its revenue now coming from developing countries. And Interface, icon of sustainability, has done it all.

These firms are seeing that an integrated triple bottom line that balances attention to employees/society, the environment, and financial outcomes is critical to the world’s sustainability and to a company’s own long-term viability in the global marketplace.

## Future and Beyond: Three Scenarios

### Scenario 1: Things fall apart.

Organizations give up trying to be sustainable. Businesses just want to survive in an increasingly anarchic world, plagued by global war for natural

resources, especially oil and water.

*Scenario 2: Muddling toward sustainability.* At best a mixed bag and, at worst, an utter mess. Global agreements on everything have symbolic value, but they have no real teeth and are ultimately ineffective.

*Scenario 3: A global sustainability culture.* When this culture takes root, a cultural tipping point is reached. Factors shaping it are alarming scientific findings, changes in climate patterns, geopolitical conflicts, global media networks, innovations in the marketplace, and success of “green” business. The confluence of these factors creates a “preservation mindset” or “global sustainability culture.”

Where will sustainable business practices be in the next 10 years? Much depends on whether business leaders and managers gain greater awareness of sustainability and continue to choose to adopt sustainability-related values, strategies, principles, and practices. The choice is ours to make.

## Leading a Sustainable Enterprise

How can we as leaders make our greatest contributions and become catalysts for a global sustainability mindset? How can we move our organizations and stakeholders from hopeless, helpless, and immobilized to engaged, inspired, and in action?

We invite you to engage in an authentic conversation, in a spirit of discovery, starting with the assumption, “We don’t know what we don’t know,” and asking along with the profound question, “What else is needed?” “What questions do I need to ask myself and others?” Engage with people’s natural tendency to self-organize, bring people at all levels into the conversation, and listen deeply. What you hear may bring you to a new starting point. Look to nature. Widely dispersed in organizations and natural systems are the energy, creativity, and intelligence to create the necessary solutions.

You can create a legacy to be proud of, fired by imaginative leaps, innovation, and inclusiveness and founded on a profound sense of gratitude for our people and planet. The sustainable enterprise can nourish the spirit of the people, help regenerate resources, and lift the economic well-being of generations to come. What a legacy to leave. **LE**

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**ACTION: Define your legacy.**

# Leader-Speak

Communication gets results.



by Macy Boehm and Bob Matha

**M**ANY LEADERS ARE FACING A CRISIS of confidence as their stakeholders view them with some degree of suspicion or anger. What can they do?

Few CEOs have inspirational personalities or over-the-top charisma. No one will mistake them for Ronald Reagan or Barack Obama when they make a speech. They don't ooze power and determination like Jack Welch. Even if they could remake themselves, that would take time they don't have—leaders have to get results now, up and down the line, by mobilizing people to get work done. Once smart people rise to positions of responsibility, they have to lead—with the skills and tools they have.

## Critical Factor

A critical factor is communication that does not depend on charisma or a dynamic personality, but still gets employees marching in the same direction, excited about where they are going, and *taking action*. That kind of communication depends on the “who, what, where, when, how and why” that moves information and motivates employees to act in desired ways.

The “who” of good leadership communication isn't just the CEO—it's the entire group of *leaders*. And by *leaders*, we don't just mean people with titles, but also the “informal leaders.” They all need to be aligned behind the “what” message, and it needs to be clear, concise, candid, and consistent. The emphasis isn't on “spin” or salesmanship, but on telling employees what they need to do to be successful in simple, understandable terms. The “where” and “when” of leadership communication involves not only the typical channels such as town-hall meetings, newsletters and



intranets, but also the conversations leaders have daily with employees at work. The “how” is the packaging and style of delivery. The most effective style is interactive—where employees talk and listen to each other as they communicate, consider decisions, and execute strategy. Finally, the “why” involves ensuring people understand why strategy execution is important so they are motivated to act.

Leadership communication that moves the needle involves planning, message development, training and an organic approach to communicating that depends on a high interaction and conversation among leaders and with front-line employees. The who, what, when, where, how and why are delivered as part of a structured process, not an occasional event.

## Principles in Practice

When put in practice, these six dimensions are very powerful. We've seen leaders use these principles to achieve real results, such as:

- A division president who saved \$200 million in nine months;
- A Plant Manager who turned his operation from worst performing to best in his company in one year;
- Airline management who won support for a controversial merger in less than four months;
- A front-line supervisor who eliminated the 150 sources of quality defects in a little more than a year.

## Focus for Action

Of course, communication alone can't do all that—at the end of the day, it's the intelligence, ingenuity and dedication of employees that achieves results—but *communication provides the focus for action*. It enables that intelligence, ingenuity and dedication to be applied to the right problems and opportunities so strategy is delivered effectively.

Communications is as important as strong business strategies, solid systems, key metrics and a healthy balance sheet. It aligns employees behind strategy, harnesses their ability to contribute, and motivates them to act. Most important, communication moves the bottom line. LE

Macy Boehm and Bob Matha are authors of *Beyond the Babble: Leadership Communication That Drives Results* (Jossey-Bass, 2008). Visit [www.basics3.com](http://www.basics3.com).

**ACTION:** Hone your communication.

# Winning Culture

How can you build one?



by Ed Gash

**H**AVING COACHED sports for 10 years and leaders and managers for 20 years, I have some insight into what it means to be a coach. The title “coach” gets bandied about these days. It seems as if *anyone* can be a leadership coach, if they have a little experience and a grasp of buzzwords.

But not everyone can be a real coach—someone who can build a team by bringing a diverse group of talented people with different strengths, personalities and drivers together and turning them into a cogent, cohesive unit in the pursuit of a common goal. They also need the bravado to lead a diverse and talented group. During the decade I coached wrestling and football, I saw well-formed teams with chemistry and unruly groups of players who went in different directions.

All teams—groups of people placed in the same situation at the same time for a certain purpose—have a *culture* that informs them how to behave, interact, and do what is expected of them. What separates a great coach is the ability to build a winning team culture. Legendary coaches win championships consistently because of the culture that they create—not just the talent of the players they have.

*How can you create a winning culture and become a winning coach?* A winning coach is committed to *building* a winning culture. Cultures that are allowed to happen are haphazard, loose, and permissive. You need to proactively *build* your team's winning culture—and start by building a winning attitude. To have all the right answers for your team, you first need to have those answers for yourself.

## Answer Six Questions

Address these six questions: Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How.

**Where?** The *Where* question can be answered in the form of a *vision statement*. Where are you going, personally? What are your ultimate goals? Where do you ultimately want to be? When you answer this question for yourself, you can also answer it in

team terms. What are your ultimate goals for any team you coach? A coach who can present a clear vision statement has the potential to win. When a team can see where it is going, it is much easier for them to get there.

**Why?** The *Why* question can be answered in the form of a *mission statement*. Once you know where you are going, you need to define the reasons why you must succeed in getting there. What's your *motivation*? It is much easier for men and women and children to carry out a task if you give them a good reason for doing it. "Just because" doesn't motivate you or any of your team members. Define the reasons why you want to succeed. It's easier to motivate yourself and your team when the driving factors are clear.

**What?** It's great to set goals and define why you want to achieve them, but you also need to know the critical success factors involved in reaching your goals. *What* do you need? Make an inventory. Know what you need to achieve your goals. A team full of role-players who work well together will achieve more than a team of superstars each trying to outshine the other.

**How?** The way that you choose to win, the *how* that defines your team, will also define the type of success that you have. *How* will you choose to implement your critical success factors (your *What*)? How you use your talent will influence the way your team performs. How will you use your team's talents, implement your game plan, and set incentives and rewards?

**Who and When?** Once you determine your *How*, you can turn that strategy into tactics for winning games. You understand the talents of your team members. You know *what* must be done to achieve your goal and *how* it must be done. Now, to build a winning team with a group of role players, determine which roles they play, and how they play those roles—*Who* does *What*, and *When*? In what situations do certain team members step up, while others stand down? The *Who* and *When* make up the *execution* of your strategic plan. Too often strategic plans are announced, then forgotten or pushed aside for some urgent task.

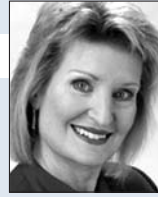
While coaching is grounded in execution, it must be propelled by strategy or vision and mission. If that mission and that vision are strong, your culture will be ready to win, and win often. **LE**

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**ACTION:** Create a winning culture.

## Communication

Your most important asset.



by Dianna Booher

**P**OOOR COMMUNICATION! We hear this complaint often. The problem? Information is not communication. Posting announcements, holding teleconferences, or scheduling meetings is not substantive communication. These 10 strategies will help you deliver a message that informs and encourages others while gaining buy-in:

**1. Be Correct.** Tell it like it is. From the C-suite to the mailroom, truth-telling is key to productivity. If you missed your numbers, say so. If you made a mistake, admit it. Be known as a person who speaks the truth. There are easy answers. And then there are truthful, more difficult answers. Your power as a communicator often depends on your choice between the two.

**2. Be Complete.** Don't get so busy analyzing, solving problems, questioning, coordinating, deciding, and delegating that you fail to communicate what's going on to those on the sidelines. To make good decisions and take appropriate action, people need complete information. Great leaders give people the why's, what's, and how's.

**3. Be Clear.** Be specific. Separate facts from opinions. Verify assumptions. Vague generalities create confusion. Speak and write in simple, plain language. Muddling information creates a sense of phoniness, insincerity, or intimidation. Purposeful evasion—where harmony is valued above honesty—destroys trust, erodes morale, and lowers productivity. In such cultures, everyone gets along, goes along—and sinks together. Face-saving is a poor substitute for problem solving.

**4. Be Consistent.** A manager hears, "The company is not doing well. Freeze wages." Then she sees construction crews remodeling the executive dining room. Customers, colleagues, and employees experience disenchantment when they see inconsistencies in the workplace. You can't *not* communicate—by words, action, or silence. You communicate by the policies you



enforce and ignore, by the behavior you reward and penalize, and by the quality of the products and services you advertise and actually deliver.

**5. Be Credible.** Consider the look, language, likeability factor, character, and competence. People often judge your credibility by your appearance (dress, grooming, movement, gestures, facial expression, posture, walk). When you speak, they judge your ability to think on your feet and express yourself. People tend to trust people they like.

**6. Be Concerned.** Concern connects people. In whatever situation—from product recall to layoffs to employee illness to accident victims to stressed colleagues—there's great power in communicating your concern. When logic causes a lapse in the relationship, emotion closes the gap.

**7. Be Connected.** Leaders who show they care about people as individuals—not as employees, suppliers, or customers—make a connection. Those who don't fail to communicate, and lose employees and customers.

**8. Be Current.** Speed is the new measure of quality. No one wants to wait days to hear the latest big news. Speed

is essential in bringing scattered work groups up-to-date on new projects, diffusing rumors, and maintaining morale.

**9. Be Competent.** Ensure your communication demonstrates competence. People hear what you *say* or see what you *write* about your work. Often they judge your competence by

what you communicate—your reputation with customers or colleagues often rests on a single interaction.

**10. Be Circular.** Ask, "Who else needs to know?" when there's a change of plans or when new ideas surface. Publicizing your point, encouraging feedback, facilitating conversations across functions are just a few ways to be circular in your communication.

Communication is the most critical component of great customer service, the biggest challenge leaders experience in times of change and upheaval, the most frequent reason top talent joins a new team, and the most frequent complaint employees cite as their reason for leaving.

How well you communicate dictates how well you do as a leader. **LE**

Dianna Booher is author of The Voice of Authority (McGraw-Hill). She is CEO of Booher Consultants, a communications training firm. Visit www.booher.com or call 800-342-6621.

**ACTION:** Apply these 10 strategies.

# Innovating with Meaning

*Authentic leaders build on this foundation.*



by Alex Pattakos and Elaine Dundon

**I**NNOVATION MANAGEMENT IS ALL THE rage. We've witnessed the transition from viewing innovation as simply the commercialization of new technology to a broader perspective that encompasses innovation in products, services, processes, and strategies.

Leaders must evaluate how they will foster and sustain innovation. Yet many leaders struggle to lead their innovation agendas. Many leaders pursue innovation for the sake of innovation, or espouse innovation, then launch new products and services that don't add anything to the world or even to the bottom line.

The missing element in this equation is the foundation of authentic leadership—*meaning*. Authentic leaders lead *with* and *to* meaning. With this meaning-centered orientation, our paradigm is *innovating with meaning*.

## Our Products Lack Meaning

Customer expectations are rising. Competition for the attention of customers is fierce. There's an overabundance of products and services to choose from, and many offerings are duplications of other offerings. Many new products and services that are touted as "innovative," don't add any value or *meaning* to customers' lives. Customers simply are not engaged.

- Is introducing that new cherry flavor of your cookie brand innovative and meaningful or is it just another "activity" and a waste of resources?
- Does the new food product you are introducing help address the obesity problem or does it just ignore, or worse, add to the problem?
- How does that new approach to paperwork at the hospital resonate with your patients? Does it just add confusion to an already cumbersome process? How is it *meaningful* to your patients in terms of their experience?

These are examples of the questions

we ask to get to the deeper meaning of what customers want and need.

- *Vancity*, a large credit union, is connected with its customers and communities. Their *Shared Growth* term deposit enables customers to choose a community project in which to invest. This innovation gives *meaning* to customers, employees, and community. From passion and purpose come profit!

- Our local Toyota dealership calls us on our birthdays to make us, as customers, feel important and to let us know that our relationship with Toyota is *meaningful* to both of us!

## My Job Has No Meaning

How often do we, as leaders, hear people say, "My job has no meaning. I'm just going through the motions. Is that all there is?" How often do people complain that they've heard it all before, that the speeches are "the same old same old," and that they're too busy to think about "innovation?"

The role of leadership is to help people connect with the meaning in their work and show them that what they do is important. Yes, leadership is about setting the direction, encouraging new ideas, allocating resources, rewarding performance or taking corrective action; but the essence of leadership is to tap into the meaning of what each member of a team is asked to contribute. If people can connect with the deeper meaning of their work, they can be more engaged and contribute to reaching their highest potential. Without meaning, people become disengaged, lose passion, stop innovating, and harm productivity.

Meaning gets at what organizations are all about. Why do we do what we do? Are we doing all we can do to add value to the world? Are we making a positive difference? What is the true meaning of our work?

As leaders, we can help others connect with the meaning of their work. There is meaning in identifying new ways of doing things, in the way co-workers interact, in choosing a positive attitude instead of complaining

that things are always changing. When we bring meaning to work, we bring with us the possibility of meaningful change in our work and workplace.

One of our clients asked us to visit their headquarters to share our views on innovating with meaning. When we arrived, we saw many innovation banners but received a lot of negative feedback about the lack of authenticity behind the message. We shared this feedback with leaders and helped them address these comments through

more authentic and meaningful dialogue with the employees, and through other channels. It's one thing to talk about innovation—it is another to walk the talk and meaningfully engage everyone in putting innovation into practice.

One way that IBM tapped into the meaning of its employees' work was to engage 319,000

IBMers in an open "values jam" on its global intranet. Everyone was asked to share thoughts about things that get in the way of innovating and serving customers. One core value was "Innovation that matters, for our company and for the world." As CEO Samuel Palmisano said, "We need to work for each other's success and innovate in ways that truly matter by taking personal responsibility for our relationships."

## Innovating with Meaning

Advancing and sustaining innovation requires a transformation of culture. It requires strong leaders who encourage employees to engage with each other in more meaningful ways and encourage customers to relate to the organization in meaningful ways.

Meaning drives engagement, which drives innovation and productivity. Meaning is the foundation of authentic leadership and the primary intrinsic motivation of all people. It drives innovation—along with the passion for excellence, quality improvement, and peak performance. Without true meaning, innovation *activities* are busy work, a waste of resources. It's time to take innovation to the next level—to lead and innovate with meaning. **LE**

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**ACTION:** Build on the foundation of meaning.

# Just Be You

*You are good enough!*



by Marshall Goldsmith and Patricia Wheeler

**I**S YOUR COMPANY COMPETING FOR TOP talent? Do you participate in hiring decisions or developing leaders?

If so, pay attention! The workforce is changing dramatically—in two years, there will be more members of the Millennial Generation than Baby Boomers. The work environment requires increased global savvy, virtual skill, and technological knowledge. Rapid change is the order of the day, with global mergers, acquisitions and shifts—and the resulting talent and leadership challenge will likely determine the success or failure of your organization between now and 2020.

As they consider opportunities to advance their careers, talented “high potentials” share five concerns.

**1. To what degree can I trust you to develop my talents and skills?** One talented manager asked for training, and was told that there was no budget for it. Despite the company’s message of valuing the development of people, if training isn’t in the budget, it isn’t believable. When it comes to development, do your actions match your words? Will you use skilled coaches and mentors to help talented people leverage their strengths as well as identify and overcome blind spots?

**2. To what extent will this job challenge me?** Most satisfying jobs combine leveraging individual strengths with a strong learning curve—neither so flat as to lead to boredom nor so steep to lead to anxiety. One fast-tracker remarked, “Please help me anticipate routine, not make me discover it as an unpleasant surprise.” They seek challenges that prepare them for leadership positions.

**3. How do you honor requests for “next steps” in my career progression?** With flatter organizations, the path upward requires lateral moves. People want to know how a lateral move will round out their skills and prepare

them for taking larger roles. Help them see the big picture.

**4. What opportunities will this job really lead to?** People now expect to have several different careers (not just jobs), and they want to know how skills they develop in this position will translate into other positions—and to other careers. As top talent is more likely to organization-hop, you must address this issue or expect that the best and brightest will eventually leave.

**5. How much will you support my living a balanced life?**

People are interested in work-life integration issues. What accommodations do you make for unforeseen family issues? What transfers or global assignments can they anticipate?

People may not ask these questions directly, but your answers will determine if they employ their talents with you or with the competition.

## What Really Matters?

We encourage you to ask and answer the big questions about what really matters to reawake your passion for what you do. You might even decide to write your grandchildren.

*Dear Yet-to-Be-Born Grandchildren,  
Greetings from the past!*

*I was lucky to spend time with Peter Drucker. He encouraged people to ask, “Who is the customer?” before they do anything.*

*I finally understood the importance of that question when Larissa MacFarquhar, a writer for the New Yorker, wrote a profile about me. Larissa spent two months traveling with me, and interviewing my family, my clients, and people who work with me. She then wrote a long story and published it for 800,000 people to read. This was a little scary, since some of the New Yorker profiles can be pretty negative, and I didn’t get to read it ahead of time.*

*I originally thought that my “customers” in doing this profile should be my clients—the people who pay me to do my work. I thought that maybe I should “be careful of what I say” and try to act appropriately. Maybe I should be careful not to embarrass anyone. But, as Larissa began to follow me around, I figured out who I really wanted to be my customers for this*

*profile. It was you, my grandchildren. I decided that this profile was a special opportunity for you to get to know me.*

*I decided to just act like myself. If I had acted like someone who was too careful of what he said, it would have been a story about an imaginary person, not me.*

*Your grandmother and I discussed this, since she’s in charge of our money. I told her to assume that we were going to lose \$150,000 in business because of this profile. I figured that by just acting like me, I might annoy someone who wouldn’t want to work with me anymore. I figured that it would be worth the \$150,000 to have a brilliant writer spend two months on a story about me that I could send to you.*

*As it turns out, I was glad that I just acted like me. I received approximately 300 e-mails about the profile. They almost all said the same thing: “The good news is: It*



*sounds just like you. The bad news is: It sounds just like you!” My fears about losing business as a result of this profile were unfounded. Not only did I not lose any business, I was later interviewed in the Harvard Business Review and many other publications. I ended up with more clients—not fewer.*

*From this experience, I learned this lesson: **Just be you.** You are good enough. In the long run, any success you achieve, if you don’t act like yourself, won’t seem real anyway—you’ll just feel like an imposter.*

## Do What’s in Your Heart

I was one of the original developers of 360-degree feedback. I help successful leaders achieve a positive, long-term change in their behavior. I also try to help my clients (and everyone around them) have a happier life.

My greatest contributions in my career have come from stuff I invented. No one can tell you how to do anything that hasn’t been done before. To do anything creative, you simply have to make it up yourself as you go.

**If you have an idea that sounds good to you, go for it.** Just be you. Do what is in your heart. You may fail, but at least you try. Don’t waste your life worrying too much about being normal. Lots of people are normal. It is more fun to be different. Just be you.

When your grandchildren read the story of your life, make sure that it is really about you. LE

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**ACTION:** Cultivate your authenticity.

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