

LEADERSHIP Excellence

Warren Bennis



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

AUGUST 2011



**Strategy
Execution**

**Leadership
Identity**

NeuroLeadership
Address the Social Brain

David Rock
Leadership Consultant

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—WARREN BENNIS, AUTHOR AND
USC PROFESSOR OF MANAGEMENT



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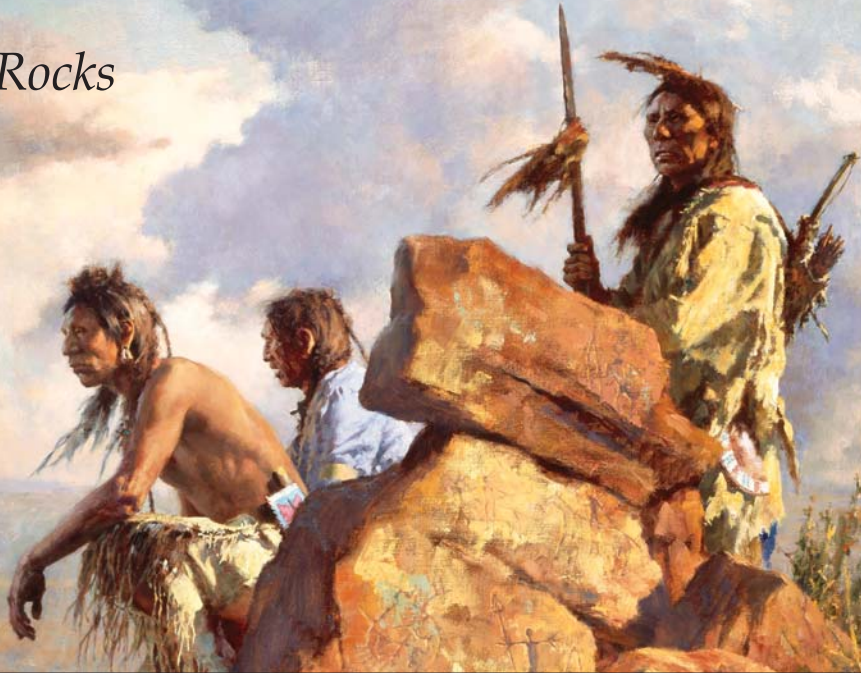
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Schedule the Big Rocks

As leaders survey the landscape from the high and sacred place of petroglyphs, they give thanks for their blessings and pray for success.



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Dark Side of LD Programs

From unfair, to comical, to materialistic.



by Ken Shelton

EVEN AS I SEARCH FOR THE 500 best LD programs (to be featured in October LE, along with the program directors and 50 best practices), I'm reminded of the downside risks of having any program, process, or paradigm for developing leaders. These include:

Are Leadership Programs Seen as Unfair?

Programs to identify and develop certain employees for leadership positions are seen as "unfair and political by 25 percent of workers, and 27 percent see them as flawed but well intentioned," said Sandi Edwards, SVP for AMA Enterprise, a division of AMA.

"Only 12 percent consider efforts to identify and develop future leaders as impartial and even-handed (37 percent have little idea how LD programs are perceived by employees)."

One reason for perceived unfairness is the selectivity of LD programs, says Edwards. "Organizations limit who may apply—and who are selected—for leadership development. Many may be called, but few are chosen. Or, not everyone is eligible for participation given roles and responsibilities. So some jealousy forms. At the core of effective TM is a shared sense of openness and fairness. Let everyone know the program criteria and that others might be selected in the future. Keeping open the door of opportunity is key to holding onto good workers. If a person doesn't make the cut for entry to a program, point out that the chance will come up again." (Contact: Arlene Bein, abein@amanet.org).

Do LD Programs Fail to Boost Engagement?

Employee engagement is the top HR challenge, according to a survey conducted by SHRM and commissioned by Globoforce: 69 percent of HR pros cite Engagement as the top challenge, 63 percent note employee retention, 53 percent say recruitment, and 51 percent say managing the culture. Is LD an answer?

The survey also shows that recognition is key to engagement—80 percent of HR pros say they have a recognition program, but 87 percent don't track the ROI of such programs, said Evren Esen, manager, Survey Research Center at SHRM. HR pros rank the most

common recognition areas as follows: years of service (58 percent); going above and beyond with an unexpected work project (48 percent); successful performance results related to the financial bottom-line (43 percent); exemplary behavior that aligns with values (37 percent); completion of regular work projects with high-quality results (9 percent). Methods used to track engagement reflect the practical: exit interviews (71 percent); retention rate (65 percent); engagement surveys/analysis (43 percent). One in 10 now track employee social media comments about the organization to keep tabs on engagement. Does your LD program boost engagement, recognition and retention? Visit www.shrm.org/surveys.

Is LD Becoming Comical?



Napoleon Hill

With the mandate to develop leaders in fun and entertaining ways, are some directors selling out? Franco Arda, CEO of SmarterComics, has adapted bestselling business books into comics. Arda imparts keys to leaders without boring them with dull, lifeless text. "In less than an hour, these books will help you become more successful," says

Arda. "We aim to entertain and empower. We absorb visual information better than text. Why not embrace that for business purposes?"

Through a series of vibrant comic books, you can now get smarter while having fun. Current titles include *Think & Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill. Visit www.smartercomics.com.

Is LD Becoming More Materialistic?

Materialistic development focuses on the financial and lifestyle gain people may get from their personal and leadership development. Do some LD programs promote materialism? I've seen such a focus, especially in the multi-level marketing arena, including the Success programs being run by Video Plus (Stuart Johnson and Darren Hardy), and the new program being developed by Send Out Cards (Kody Bateman and Craig Case) wherein participants start with a dreamboard.

One antidote to these poisonous practices is found in the newly released *Outwitting the Devil* by Napoleon Hill (with Sharon Lechter annotation). In these times, you would do well to head to the Hill and learn from "the devil" himself.

LE
Ken Shelton
Editor since 1984

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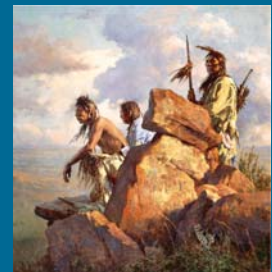
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Strategy Execution

Make it your core competency.



by Joy Stroud Ruhmann

FOR YEARS, COMPANIES have invested big resources in strategic planning. Sadly, for many, the process is thwarted by failure to properly execute. Making strategy execution a core competency is vital to your success.

Typically leaders are responsible to create the strategic plan. Yet, it is the duty of managers and employees to execute and make the right things happen. And that's where the breakdown often occurs. Given the way managers and employees typically work together, those most responsible for execution are rarely clear about how what they do impacts the strategic direction, thus hindering execution.

Four Core Planning Elements

I see *four core elements* in creating a clear and inspiring strategic plan:

- **Assessing.** The top team starts by *assessing* the culture and business environment. This should include a culture survey, employee engagement survey, or a *Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats* (SWOT) analysis to provide insight into what is happening in the company, industry. With this information, the team is armed with the data necessary to effectively plan.

- **Defining.** In this stage, the team outlines its *purpose, mission*, and *core values* required to drive performance.

- **Futuring.** In this stage, the team creates an extended outlook of where the organization is headed, molding the vision of what they want to build.

- **Planning.** Finally, the team works toward short-term goals and determines what *key initiatives* must occur during the current or upcoming fiscal years in order to fulfill its mission and vision.

Then the breakdown occurs. As the organization hits the *strexecution point*—the gap between *strategy* and *execution*—where the excellent planning of management is eclipsed by the urgency of day-to-day crises-based activities that cripple implementation.

Beyond the Strexecution Point

The key to breaking through the *strexecution point* lies in operationaliz-

ing the strategic plan, effectively driving it down to those individuals most responsible for execution—mid-managers and front-line employees.

This is only possible when leaders revamp the manager/employee relationship. First, ensure that both managers and employees have a clear *line of sight* between their day-to-day activities and the strategic initiatives. Second, managers and employees must be *far more proactive* in managing performance, meeting often to evaluate progress and making timely course corrections.

Many leaders use traditional *annual performance appraisals*, which managers and employees alike find difficult and often fail to complete in a timely manner, if at all. Most *performance appraisals* are one-sided and backward-focused, and rarely address the issues key to achieving goals. When surveyed about



their most disliked tasks, managers rank *conducting performance appraisals* second only to *terminating employees*. Clearly, there's a better way.

With *strategic execution management*, the focus is on the manager, employee, and how employees contribute to long-term goals. They are the individuals who will ultimately complete the tasks that result in the execution of the plan.

When we operationalize the strategic plan, managers and employees can relate to a set of annual initiatives and use them to define what they will do to *directly contribute*. This creates *alignment* between the daily activities of employees and managers, giving them a *clear line of sight* between *what they do* and *how it contributes* to success. This leads to a higher engagement as employees feel they are an integral part of the success.

Effective Execution

This is where we break through the *strexecution point* and begin the *three phases of effective execution*:

- **Executing.** When individual goals are tied directly to annual initiatives, employees focus their energy on *the things that bring the most value*.

- **Monitoring and evaluating.** Managers and employees should set up and conduct *bimonthly progress meetings* and prepare for these forward-focused, two-way conversations. Both should complete an evaluation of employees' performance against their primary responsibilities and key goals to ensure that they have a voice in the feedback. When a disconnect between *how employees see their performance* and *how a manager rates their performance* occurs, *more meaningful conversations can occur* and *course corrections can be made proactively*.

Once employees have defined their roles and how they will contribute to the plan, reports are generated and used by management to determine where things stand compared to the plan. This provides them with information to make appropriate adjustments at the employee, department or organizational level, to ensure execution of the plan.

The *core values*, defined in strategic planning, are created to drive the culture. For example, to fulfill a mission of being *customer-driven*, you need to create a *customer-focused culture*, where employees personify *excellence* and *accountability*. Often, *core values* sound like *platitudes* and never make it beyond a poster, placard, or a laminated card.

For core values to drive the culture, they must be created as *behavioral expectations* that get to the heart of customer and employee interactions and behaviors. They can then be part of the bimonthly meeting discussion.

When managers and employees are rating performance against the *core values* (*behavioral expectations*), they have two options: *meeting expectations* or *missing expectations*. If there's a gap between *how employees feel they are performing* and *how the manager views their performance*, we again can engage in a powerful dialogue that leads to proactive change.

- **Rewarding performance.** Today you need to retain your top talent through full employee engagement and *rewards consistent with their contribution*. People need and want to know what they do matters. Provide *frequent and effective feedback* that keeps them focused on goals.

Strategic execution management leads to better results and creates more engaged people willing to expend more *discretionary energy* to achieve goals. LE

Joy Stroud Ruhmann, President of Level Up Leadership, works to implement cultural transformation and strategic execution tools. Visit www.levelupleadership.com.

ACTION: Break through the *strexecution point*.

Breakthrough Strategy

When the answer is the question.



by Andrew Blum

IT'S TIME TO MOVE BEYOND hypothesis-driven analysis, long a leader's primary tool for evaluating opportunities, advancing strategies, and pursuing innovation, as it now limits how leaders act.

When a team is tasked to analyze something—for example, a market opportunity for a new technology—it is routinely done with an *incoming hypothesis* and a *senior-level request to prove or disprove the hypothesis*. Big surprise: *the team finds data to prove the hypothesis that was designed to be proven* since the analysis was never a true exploration—only a justification exercise meant to make an intuitive or emotional decision appear rational and data-driven.

Leaders don't need to stop making intuitive or emotional decisions—these experience-based decisions often serve them well—but they need to acknowledge them as such, and be honest about the difference between justification-based analysis and true exploration and use each more thoughtfully.

When the ultimate aim is to drive some breakthrough or game-changing idea, *you must adopt an approach that's based on asking questions and exploring how human emotion influences decision-making*. Breakthroughs require capability in *managing the limits and barriers we unconsciously create*.

Through our work in transformational strategy and innovation, I've observed that **organizations that create breakthroughs have courage and process to question known facts and to explore seemingly obvious barriers**—and they do this with full integrity.

To do this with your team, *you need a structured process of asking simple questions about core facts*—not to prove them untrue, but rather to *explore* and move beyond the limits that emerge when those facts become *givens*. This makes people aware of unconsciously invented limitations—and ensures exploration doesn't begin in vain with an artificially narrowed frame of inquiry.

To make sense of this *Breakthrough Inquiry Process*, let's use an incontro-



vertible fact: *the stock market in 2011 has been volatile*. No one would debate this. Yet in openly exploring the implications of this fact, we may discover new ideas and directions. The process starts with *three simple questions*:

Q1: Is this fact valid? *Answer:* By all objective accounts and measures, yes.

Q2: How do we react when this fact guides our thinking? *Answer:* We get cautious. We assume there'll be many unknowns in the future. We begin to lose confidence in the accuracy of our forecasts. We decide it is *unwise* to make large capital investments. We might begin making up rules or guidelines of what we should and should not do in a volatile market environment.

Q3: What would we do if we suspended belief in this fact? *Answer:* With permission and space to consider a different reality, *new ideas and actions can emerge*. In this case, we might see that our forecasts already take into account the recent volatility, so we can spend less time questioning them. We might notice that our emphasis of volatility has created fear and stress that is more disruptive than the volatility itself. We might begin to think about large capital investments knowing that the likely conservatism of our competitors will lead them away from such investments—when we began to explore *that possibility*, we might find ourselves suddenly looking at other ways to leapfrog our competitors through other investments.

When this flow of possibility-based exploration starts, breakthroughs occur. This flow starts with *honest inquiry*. We become aware of the limitations or barriers that we accept, put them under the light of inquiry where most prove less powerful, and *interrupt the patterns that emerge from contracted thinking*.

Almost every breakthrough is characterized at some level by an innovator's suspension of belief, by exploring actions that would only be available if the accepted facts *weren't* accepted.

When we don't question what appear to be clear facts, we get McKinsey & Company's 1980 study for AT&T that saw no great future for cell phones! Socrates *really* was thinking big when he said, "The unexamined life is not worth living." Likewise, the unexamined fact is not worth accepting. LE

Andrew Blum is Managing Partner of The Trium Group and past leader at Towers Perrin and the U.S. Marine Corps. Visit www.triumgroup.com or email info@triumgroup.com.

ACTION: Question your way to new opportunities.

Crisis Management

Master four highly effective stages.



by Jane Jordan-Meier

FROM THE DEVASTATING earthquake in Japan, to revolutions in Egypt and Libya, to the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, social media has revealed its power, saving lives, providing vital updates, and raising money. Crisis management plans are flawed, incomplete, and inadequate without a social media plan. *Twitter* breaks news, is the new police scanner, and provides valuable real-time intelligence for updates in a crisis. *Facebook* allows organizations to engage directly with its stakeholders, and *YouTube* allows organizations to be their own broadcasters. Leaders who ignore these social media do so at their peril. By following simple rules and understanding the *four predictable stages of news reporting in a crisis*, they can effectively manage image/reputation:

Stage 1: Fact-finding. The spotlight is beaming squarely on the triggering event. This is the *breaking news stage*.

Stage 2: Unfolding drama. The spotlight moves from the *incident* to the *response* and the *victims*. This is the *reputation-forming stage* where the rallying on social media sites, both negative and positive, becomes a focal point.

Stage 3: Blame game. Everyone has an opinion; your crisis is beamed everywhere. People want to know who is to blame and why, making this the *finger-pointing stage*.

Stage 4: Resolution. This marks the end of the crisis, but the spotlight can be turned to full glare again if you slip up or something similar happens elsewhere. In this *fallout stage*, try to gain closure with an event that demonstrates solutions and lessons learned.

This approach also enables leaders to make effective decisions about who is the best spokesperson (this is not always the CEO, particularly at Stage 1). Frontline employees are often better informed and closer to the action. They need to be empowered, not shut down in a crisis. The *Stages* method also aids effective *messaging*—what to say when, and *planning*—what to do when. LE

Jane Jordan-Meier is a media and crisis management expert and author of *The Four Highly Effective Stages of Crisis Management* (CRC Press/Taylor&Francis Group). www.janejordan.net

ACTION: Master these four stages of crisis.

Leader of the Free Culture

Making the ideal organization a reality.



by Isaac Getz

IF BUREAUCRACY IS SO bad for performance, why stop just at *streamlining*? Why not get rid of it *completely*? Many leaders argue that a real organization is impossible without some bureaucracy. Like barnacles dragging on a boat and yet inevitable, bureaucracy is an inevitable cost of running a company and coordinating its activities.

Truman mused about Eisenhower taking over the president's office, issuing orders only to discover that *nothing gets done in the bureaucratic swamp*. But Truman underestimated him. Ike realized the bureaucracy problem on day one when an assistant handed him a *sealed envelope*: he promptly changed this time-wasting procedure. Later, he asked for memos to be kept to one page and summarized letters from congress into mere one-liners. He signed only with initials to save time. Yet, despite these *streamlining measures*, Eisenhower still kept the bureaucracy.

Some leaders view bureaucracy from a different angle. To them it is the epitome of how people who take initiative to advance the company—the best people—stop trying and either get depressed or leave. In large organizations, this *cost on people* may not be felt immediately, but in small companies—the effect is stark, and can *sink the ship*.

Is it possible to coordinate activities without rules and procedures? Well, these leaders see examples—of some great boats—proving that *manners other than bureaucratic can assure smooth sailing*. This frustration with bureaucracy paired with admiration for the great alternative organizations triggers them to become *leaders of the free culture*.

Building the free culture. During our four years of research, Brian Carney and I studied several dozen companies and leaders instrumental for building their unique, *freedom-based cultures*—cultures in which employees have complete freedom and responsibility to take actions they—not their bosses or procedures—decide are best.

Such cultures are *not* unfamiliar. They are akin to the “Theory Y” organization described by McGregor in 1957, and in practice they’ve existed since the 1960s

in W. L. Gore or Avis, later joined by Southwest Airlines, SEMCO, and Ideo. The problem, however, is that *most attempts to build or imitate such organizations have failed*. Hence the key question we asked: How can these superior *free cultures* displace bureaucracy in more companies? The answer—a *liberating leadership style*—enables building a culture with complete freedom and responsibility of action. Here are the *four steps of liberating leadership*:

1. Stop telling and start listening.

When subordinates come with a problem, ask: “What do you propose?” rather than telling them what to do. Then, remove all practices that prevent people from feeling *intrinsically equal*—this will end the bureaucracy.

2. **Start sharing your vision openly and actively so that people will own it.** But don’t do this before Step 1, since



people who are not treated as equals won’t embrace *your vision* as *their own*.

3. Stop trying to motivate people.

Build an environment that allows people to grow and self-direct—and *let them motivate themselves*. If they understand the vision from Step 2, their actions will benefit the company: *Freedom isn’t anarchy but self-discipline*.

4. **Stay alert.** To maintain freedom, become the culture-keeper. In this role, as liberating leader Bob Davids of Sea Smoke Cellars says, “one drop of urine in the soup is too much—and you can’t get it out.” Freedom requires vigilance.

One Free-Culture Leader

Once General **Robert McDermott** became the incoming CEO of USAA—then a 3,000 employee moribund San Antonio-based car insurer for military officers, it didn’t take him long to discover the *crippling bureaucracy*. To bust it, he didn’t start giving orders—he listened. “All services are delivered at the front line. I couldn’t make all decisions.

Top-down isn’t going to get the right thing.” That made other peoples’ ideas *intrinsically equal—even superior*—to his. He then removed all symbols and practices that prevented people from feeling *intrinsically equal*—stripping *command-and-control managers* of their authority, removing distrustful controls, and introducing a four-day workweek.

These new practices satisfied peoples’ need for *intrinsic equality* and made them receptive to McDermott’s vision of world-class service: “*Serve others as you’d like to be served*: If we serve people, they’ll come back to us.” He facilitated everyone in owning this vision—the *golden rule of service*—which provided people with a clear criterion of how to choose the *best* action. Freedom is not *anarchy* but rather *self-discipline* to act freely and responsibly for the *best* of the company’s vision.

To insure that employees *can* do their best to help customers, McDermott launched training. Soon, 75 USAA training rooms were providing classes to 30 percent of the workforce. Service reps—60 percent of the workforce—got up to 16 weeks of training, including a week in *affective listening*. Employees could also easily move to other jobs and further growth opportunities.

What remained was their *ability* to achieve that which depends on people’s authority to self-direct by taking actions they deem best for the company. This authority was provided by McDermott’s motto “*We do whatever we can to help our members (customers)*.” This translated into *wide authority given to service reps to spend time to solve the customer’s problem* (they’re measured by the *number of problems solved during the first call*), to approve claims on the spot of up to *several thousand dollars* even if the customer has no accident proof, even to undo a signed policy if it appears that the company ill-advised customers. *In freedom-based companies, it’s not bureaucratic rules or bosses that dictate actions but the vision*.

In his 25 years as CEO, USAA grew to become the fifth largest insurer in America, increasing its owned and managed assets 400-fold with only a sevenfold increase in workforce.

Freedom Inc. can be built and sustained anywhere. We’ve seen *liberating leadership* build *free cultures* in companies large and small. Moreover, with liberating leaders assuming the *culture keeper* role, many *Freedom Incs.* stay at the top of their industries *for decades*. LE

Isaac Getz is a professor at ESCP Europe Business School and co-author with Brian Carney of Freedom, Inc. (Crown Business). Visit www.freedomincbook.com.

ACTION: Create a free culture using a liberating style.

Are You Leader Material?

Take 10 tips to being more promotable.



by Jean Kelley

ANY SUCCESSFUL executive will tell you that there's a game in business. If you're not willing to play the game, you can't win at it. So while many people aspire to become leaders, they don't make it past the \$80,000 per year income level simply because they don't play the game.

Why won't they play? "I hate business politics," they say. But who said business politics had to be negative? For example, if your boss does something commendable, invents something new, or makes a great speech, it's okay to congratulate him or her. That's not being political or kissing up; it's being gracious and having decorum—two things that will help you climb the ladder.

Aside from your job-specific abilities or skills, other big components of the game include your comportment, appearance, speech, attitude, and habits. Consider these 10 tips:

1. Claim your space. When you're walking in the office, you need to look purposeful and centered. Scurrying, looking harried, or trying to blend into the background will make you appear as though you lack confidence. Instead, walk with your full height and claim the space around you.

People need to view you as someone on a mission—a mission to the top.

2. Build your confidence. Confidence is not about self-esteem or self-worth. In fact, someone can have low self-esteem and still become a leader, as the person's low esteem could be driving them to succeed. True confidence is simply the belief that you can do things well. If you doubt your ability to do things well, look back at your record of accomplishment. Use those past successes as a way to build your confidence so it's apparent to others as well.

3. Speak up. During meetings, weigh in on topics. Don't leave a meeting without having an opinion, or you'll get a reputation for being wishy-washy or unconcerned with the company's success. If the discussion turns to something you're unfamiliar with or is not part of your duties, look engaged anyway. People above you are watching you, and

everything you do—or don't do—counts.

4. Build social capital. Building social capital across the board is critical to your upward mobility. Build social capital with people within your department, and with people in other departments and in other companies who might be a resource for you. *Social capital* simply means *building connections with people*. Learn some personal information about others—such as their hobbies, birthday, and kids' names—and then talk about those items occasionally to build rapport. Remember: *People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care*. When you're on your way up, you need to treat people like people, not like objects. Get to know your peers. You never know if one day a peer will be your boss, and even if they aren't, they can



make your work life very stressful.

5. Learn about business. To make it in business you have to know about business. Read about your industry, and other industries, to learn how different companies handle things. If you're well read, you can give examples from other industries and companies of *what worked* and *what didn't*. To be promotable, you have to be on top of your game at all times; being knowledgeable is one way to display your competence.

6. Do what others won't do. In every area, there are things that need to get done (or that are important to the boss), but no one wants to do them. Identify those tasks, and then *volunteer for them*. Some people will call you a "kiss up," but that's okay. Ultimately, *you have to please your boss* and to some extent your peers and direct reports, not nay-sayers who have no chance of reaching the top.

7. Get a mentor. If your company has a mentoring program, take advantage of it. If you don't have access to such a

program, get a mentor on your own. Look through your network of people and find someone who is at or near the level you aspire to be. Invite the person out to lunch and talk business with them. Learn what they did to get where they are. When you feel enough rapport and comfort with the person, ask if he or she will mentor you. Most people are honored by the request and will say "yes." If the person declines the request, don't take it personally. Simply find someone else to learn from.

8. Look professional. Tattoos and piercings are popular; and if you want one, by all means get one. However, when you're at work, keep the tattoo under your clothing and remove visible piercings from your face or tongue. Today, it's rare to see executives with visible tattoos and piercings. So, for now, keep them hidden at work.

9. Dress at the top of your level. People do judge you by how you look. For example, if you're in a position or company where everyone wears jeans and t-shirts, *you should dress a notch higher*. If you're a man, wear khakis and golf shirts; if you're a woman, wear slacks or a skirt with a tasteful top. *Dress as if you were meeting with your top client*. What attire would be professional yet comfortable? No matter where you work, *casual day* does not mean shorts and flip-flops. If executives see you dressed like that, they'll view you as a "kid." When you're on your way up (in the 25 to 40 age bracket), the last thing you want is to be called a kid.

10. Communicate effectively. How you communicate, both verbally and in writing, can make or break your career potential. Using poor grammar, foul language, or an inappropriate tone make you appear less intelligent. Most executives are very polished when it comes to their communication skills. If your communication skills are lacking, find a resource (a class, a book, a mentor, or a coach) to help.

Realizing your goal of attaining an executive level position is possible. You simply need to go beyond your technical or job-specific skills and add some focus to your executive presence. After all, you can't become an executive if you don't act or look like one. By concentrating on these ten areas and keeping your skills up to date, you'll reach the executive suite sooner than you ever thought possible. LE

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ACTION: Prepare yourself for promotion.

Smart Skills

Lead with or without a title.



by John Anderson and Marc Michaelson

TRADITIONALLY, SKILL DEVELOPMENT was limited to *technical skills*, with some *management and leadership training*. Technical knowledge tends to get more attention and is easier to cost-justify.

So, people with the best grasp of the technical issues and the business get promoted into management positions without ever asking, *what skills are required to be an effective manager/leader?*

Often, people end up in leadership positions without ever having examined their non-technical skill set.

IQ + TQ + EQ = Smart Skills

While *technical skills* are essential for success, they represent *only one suite of skills* required to be an effective leader.

Assess your smart skills. A blending of IQ (*Intellect Quotient*), TQ (*Technical Quotient*) and EQ (*Emotional Quotient*) is required in management and leadership positions. Once assessed, you can craft a *personal development program* to improve certain skills. This highlights your natural talents and helps you focus on areas where your skills and talents are best suited.

Traditionally, so-called *soft skills* have been denigrated by technical people and seen as *touchy, feely*. Given this bias, many people shy away from building soft skills, even resisting introspection, self-examination, and assessment of limitations and weaknesses—not wanting to appear weak or vulnerable. And many trainers and HR pros have not made an effective case as to why these soft skills need to be developed.

We need a *different approach*—hence *Smart Skills*. Here are *six skill areas* that help you become more effective:

1. Emotional intelligence. EI refers to the *capacity for recognizing your own feelings and those of others, for motivating yourself, and for managing emotions in yourself and in your relationships*. Developing your capacity to *recognize and manage your emotions and react appropriately to the emotions of others* is key to relationship building and leadership suc-

cess. Managing interpersonal conflicts and redirecting inappropriate energy is essential to managing relationships. Understanding yourself and developing the capacity to *catch* yourself before being seduced into a disagreement or argument is key to high EI. Similarly, being able to observe and *read* other's emotions is a core skill. When developed, it enables you to defuse *potentially volatile situations* before they begin.

2. Influence with impact. When we looked at what people must do regularly at work to be successful, we identified the ability *influence with impact* as vital. *Influencing is the act or power of producing an effect without apparent exertion of force or direct exercise of command*. Also, it is defined as *the power or capacity of causing an effect in indirect or intangible ways and the capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behavior of someone or something*. This ability to make your case and *influence others*—managers, direct reports, peers, or others—is a vital skill.

3. Interest-based negotiations. When we looked at how often people must negotiate with others, we adopted a negotiating method called *Interest-based Negotiations (IBN)* from the book *Getting to Yes* by Roger Fisher and William Ury. *IBN is a more effective way to negotiate conflicting positions as it expands the mutual interests of the parties as opposed to the traditional win/lose model of position-based negotiations*. IBN enables you to gracefully navigate many difficult situations. It helps facilitate conflict resolution, builds collaboration and tends to temper human emotions in negotiating for mutual gain. People tend to argue their *positions* in an adversarial fashion looking for the *win*, but in IBN the goal is to *make the pie bigger* in order for all parties to get enough of what they want and need to be satisfied. IBN usually does not have the less than satisfying feeling that comes from *compromise*.

4. High-level communications. HLC focuses on communicating effectively in complex and virtual environments. *Communication is any process by which information is exchanged through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior*. New barriers have emerged, and *multi-tasking* (text, email, IM, mute buttons) complicates the job of communicating effectively. You need to be more aware of the barriers and your habits that may contribute to them. Developing effective listening skills amid distract-

tions and using persuasive communications are keys to achieving goals.

5. Stress and change management. The physical and emotional costs of our *24 /7/365 work world* is taking an ever-increasing toll on our physical and emotional well being. The use of and over-use of technology adds to the feeling that people never really *leave* work. This active world demands our attention to a *growing list* of things from work to home to family to community.

There is *global stress* such as war, global recession and threats to our way of life. There is *national stress* from our sluggish economy to the political upheaval. There is *regional stress* with States near bankruptcy and cutting thousands of jobs, and *local stress* with municipalities filing for bankruptcy. Add to this all of the stress that daily

life brings us. Skills in this area are *mandatory*.

6. Appreciative inquiry. We need a better way to approach success paths. *Appreciative Inquiry* comes from work done by David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva. They say that an *organization is a miracle to be embraced rather than a problem to be solved*. AI is

a technique for *deliberately seeking to discover people's exceptionalities*—their unique gifts, strengths, and qualities. It actively searches and recognizes people for their specialties—their essential contributions and achievements. AI explores ways to build relationships, ask great questions and surface the best possible solutions, as opposed to focusing on what is *wrong* in a particular situation. AI looks at *what could be right* and *what may be possible*. Examining what has been successful, what sustains success, and what is required to move forward from the AI perspective is a powerful way to work. People become more energized and committed. They learn how to approach *solution finding* instead of *problem solving* and learn to think differently about issues. Organizations take on a different feeling when using *appreciative inquiry* and the other smart skills. They transform their daily work habits and the culture of the work team, department, or company.

Think about combining all three levels enhanced by Smart Skills learning: IQ + EQ + TQ = Lifelong Success. LE

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ACTION: Cultivate your smart skills.

Leadership Identity

Have a sense of your future self.



by Marshall Goldsmith

MUCH OF YOUR IDENTITY as a leader is determined by your past. So, to make positive changes, you need to *create a strong sense of your future self*—not the person you think you were, but the person you want to become.

Four sources of identity combine to influence your mojo—that positive spirit that starts from the inside and radiates to the outside.

1. Remembered identity. You remember life events that helped form your sense of self. But the farther you go back into your past, the greater the chances that your remembered identity won't match who you are today. We have all made mistakes in our past, but those errors do not necessarily pinpoint who we are now.

2. Reflected identity. This is where the past and other people's opinions meet. Other people remember events in your past, and they remind you of them, sometimes via feedback. Since I rely on feedback to help people change for the better, I would never disparage its value, but not all feedback is offered in good faith or in the most forgiving spirit. Even if your reflected identity is accurately descriptive of your past, it doesn't have to be predictive. You can change.

3. Programmed identity. This is the result of people sending messages about *who you are* or *will become*. This identity has many sources. It can be influenced by your profession, the culture you grew up in, or the people you select as friends. Each can shape your opinion of yourself, but this can also become a convenient scape-goat for your behavioral mistakes.

4. Created identity. This is the part of your identity *not controlled by your past or by other people*. If you view your identity as fixed, you'll likely never try to create a new one. You become paralyzed when you create *self-limiting definitions of who you are*. When you define yourself by saying *you are deficient* at something, you tend to create the reality that proves your definition. Yes, you have real physical, environmental or mental limitations that you may never

overcome (you can't wish physical reality away with positive thinking), but you can change much if you do not artificially limit yourself.

Review the components of your current identity. Where did they originate? Then, review them in the context of who you are today and who you would like to become in the future. If your present identity is fine with you, work on becoming a better version of who you are. If you want to make a change in your identity, you may be able to change more than you think. Assuming you do not have incurable or unchangeable limitations, you can create a new identity for your future, without sacrificing your past.

Four More Tips

Here are four more things you can do to improve your leadership identity:

1. Stop trying to prove how smart you are. One pernicious impulse to prove how smart you are can lead to incredibly stupid behavior—engaging in dumb arguments, in which you fight to prove that you're right and someone else is wrong; telling someone who shares valuable information with you that you already knew that, though it devalues them; defending an opinion or decision; seeking to *improve* a subordinate's idea by saying, "That's great, but this would be even better"; presenting your smart ideas while tuning out what other people tell you. Effective leaders sacrifice the fleeting buzz of needing to be smart for the more valuable feeling of being *effective*—of delivering on time, of bringing out the best in others, of finding the simplest route to a solution.

2. Measure your mojo. When you measure your mojo—a positive, powerful spirit that starts inside and radiates outside—you must do so in the present. Happiness and meaning can't be experienced next week—only now. So, always be "on" when engaged in your craft. Don't *save yourself* for later—love what you do when you're doing it.

Measuring mojo is an exercise in self-assessment. Only you know what you're feeling, and there is a cause-

and-effect dynamic between what you feel, how much of it you show, and how others perceive it. If you love what you are doing but somehow never show it, you are doomed to be misunderstood. Of course, sometimes no matter how positive you feel, you fail to show it. You assume people can read what's in your heart and mind. This is why so many executives are shocked when they receive confidential 360-degree feedback. You may see yourself as *fair, respectful* and *even-tempered*; others may see you as *stressed, angry* and *dissatisfied*.

Once you see the disconnect between *how you see yourself* and *how others see you*, I encourage you to take this feedback to heart, commit to change, seek to improve your assessment scores in those areas dramatically. As a leader, you can't assume the spirit you feel is the spirit you show. You need to ensure that your positive emotions are communicated, and this may take more effort than the activity itself.

3. Repair a damaged reputation. Reputation doesn't happen overnight—one event can't form your reputation and one corrective gesture can't



reform it. You need many consistent, similar actions to begin the rebuilding process. It's doable but it requires personal insight and discipline. When I first start working one-on-one with clients to change their behavior, they want instant results, but it doesn't work that way. If you're known as a sarcastic boss, you have to bite your tongue for months before people recognize the change and start accepting the new you. You can go for weeks without deviating, but after just one incident where the old sarcastic you reappears, people begin to wonder if you've changed at all. You have to be consistent in how you present yourself. If you abandon that consistency, people get confused. The reputation you're trying to form gets muddied by conflicting evidence and eventually loses its focus.

With leaders who have clear, positive reputations, consistency is often their primary virtue. Without *consistency*, we'd never see their *pattern*.

What pattern are you creating? Be consistent and steady, and over time, that persona becomes your signature virtue. People start to think of you as someone who can be counted on, dependable, trusted with confidential information, and someone with leader-

ship potential. So, be consistent—repeatedly give people a clear way to view you, which happens when you're disciplined about your objectives and follow through. After a while, people are locked into one way of interpreting your behavior, and your reputation falls neatly into place. That's the best thing about creating a reputation for yourself: Do it right the first time, and you may never have to change your ways.

4. Overcome inertia. As much as we claim to want happiness and meaning in our lives, I find that our default response in life is inertia—to do more of what we're already doing. Hence, *the most reliable predictor of what you will be doing in five minutes is what you are doing now.* Inertia has a paralyzing effect on every aspect of your life—not just the mindless routines, but things that really matter, such as the level of happiness and meaning in your life.

Breaking the cycle of inertia doesn't mean exerting *heroic willpower.* You just need a simple discipline. For instance, some 20 years ago, I was preparing a leadership development session for a Fortune 100 company when one senior manager asked me: "Does anyone who goes to these sessions *ever really change?*" I replied, "Few people achieve positive, lasting change without ongoing follow-up. Unless they know that someone is measuring if they're doing what they promised to—and at the end of the day, week or month, will report it—most people fall prey to inertia. They continue doing what they were doing and don't become more effective. But if they know someone—a coach, co-workers, or manager—is watching or evaluating them with follow-up questions, they're more likely to change."

To achieve positive change, you may need a manager or coach to follow up on what you initiate; however, you can also try this. Evaluate your daily activity on a 1 to 10 scale on two questions: 1) *How much long-term benefit or meaning did I experience from this activity?* And 2) *How much short-term satisfaction or happiness did I experience in this activity?* There are no right answers. No one can answer the questions for you. It's your experience of happiness and meaning.

When you know *all of your activities will be evaluated* on these two questions, you experience more happiness and meaning in each activity and you have a happier and more meaningful life. **LE**

Marshall Goldsmith helps successful leaders achieve positive, lasting change in behavior. He is the author or co-editor of 27 books, including *Mojo*. Visit www.marshallgoldsmithlibrary.com.

ACTION: Gain a sense of your future self.

7 Universal Principles

For making tough leadership calls.



by Harlan Steinbaum

WHEN I DECIDED TO buy back my company, a large retail drug chain, from a corporate conglomerate, my life changed dramatically. The personal impact this one decision—this *tough call*—had on me made me wonder if others had experienced similar defining moments. To find out, I reached out to several successful leaders.

Through their stories, we see how these people handle no-win situations, manage risk, seize opportunities, and make decisions. Each story is unique, but there are *seven universal principles*:

1. There's no substitute for strong leadership. I define *leadership* as the ability to set a direction and motivate people to move in that direction. Sometimes this requires *getting people to do things they initially don't want to do or think they can do.* It's about getting into a mindset in which they genuinely *want* to follow the mission and put reservations aside. You rarely get to make key decisions under *ideal* circumstances.

2. Ethical behavior is not just right—it is smart business. I would hope *ethical conduct* would be an obvious and compelling principle in its own right, but we constantly see many leaders sailing ethically rudderless. If you are cynical about the benefits of principled behavior, I hope these stories convince you that it's not just right—it's also smart business. For every deal point, negotiating position, higher price, or other advantage you might give up by being ethical, *you'll get it back in multiples for doing the right and moral thing.*

3. Always have a plan. I've heard leaders say "my industry moves too fast for strategic plans." They feel they are too busy to go through the *academic exercise of planning* (unless they're looking for money from investors). *Planning* is not about tying yourself down to a set of steps. It's about *disciplined thinking*—forcing yourself and your team to work through issues so you're prepared either to follow the script as it continues to make sense or go off in

new directions as necessary. Planning is about *imagining the future*, and when circumstances change, *re-imagining* it.

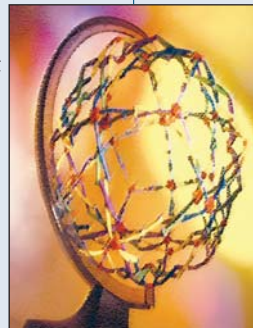
4. Be comfortable with risk. No business is without risks. There's *always* a challenge that must be dealt with. Business is about *risk management.* You are constantly analyzing and assessing new scenarios. I'm not a gambler by nature; but as a leader, I had to take risks. For me, my task was getting as comfortable as I could with the information I had. If you are risk-averse, you don't want to be the boss/leader. Remember, *not to act* is still an action.

5. Know yourself and follow your heart. We see in many stories how CEOs listen to *their inner voice*, despite conventional wisdom. Every leader needs the courage to *go against the pack*, even against advice of respected advisors, family or friends, if his or her internal compass points in a different direction.

6. Take responsibility. *Nobody is perfect*—including you and everyone you work with. When the outcomes of your actions become clear, it's fine to take credit where credit is due (even better if others give it to you), but it's more important to accept the blame

when it all goes wrong. *Be humble in success and open in failure.* When you fail, you're usually going to be found out anyway, so take responsibility upfront—you'll look strong.

7. Never stop learning. Leaders are *naturally curious* about every aspect of business, the psychology of work, the management of



people and enterprises. And in the pursuit of knowledge, there is no such thing as a stupid question. If it's important to you to know the answer, then it's important to ask the question.

The best way to learn is *through your own experiences* and, much less painfully, through *the experiences of others* who have walked the path before you. Faced with a difficult decision, you are ultimately on your own. Nobody can definitively tell you the right answer. But by broadening the inputs—and listening to the voices of those who have been to similar places—you can find comfort, direction, and inspiration for the *moments that will determine your course* and on special occasions, *those moments that will come to define you.* **LE**

Harlan Steinbaum was founding chairman of Express Scripts, and former CEO of Medicare-Glaser, and author of *Tough Calls* from the Corner Office (HarperCollins). To learn more, email harlan.steinbaum@yahoo.com or visit harlansteinbaum.com.

ACTION: Cultivate these seven competencies.

Grow Your Talent

Make daily work developmental.



by Wendy Axelrod and Jeannie Coyle

LAST YEAR WE WORKED WITH A LEADER at a large company. Anguishing over the failing results of a key director, he described her as *stretched beyond capacity*, overwhelmed by putting out fires, and doing a poor job of developing her direct reports. After we suggested ways he could help her develop others, he told us “Sounds great, but, I don’t want to *mess in her business*. Besides, I lack the time to work on *her* staff issues.” Taken aback, we speculated that her approach to developing people was most probably mimicking his!

Too many executives are hands-off when it comes to development. While most leaders know that they should be helping people learn from experience, *only 12 percent do it*. In fact, most still turn to the TM department or send people to training. These programs—along with *performance management* and *managerial coaching*—only get people to do their jobs more efficiently without expanding their capabilities.

So, are these executives doomed to *living with underdeveloped talent* or *hiring fully developed talent*? Not according to the *exceptional managers* who develop their people *daily* while they get results.

A New Standard

Exceptional Development Managers (EDMs) use five people development practices:

1. Make every day a development day. EDMs drive growth by using the work itself to develop people. They carve out *targeted developmental work assignments*. They add to and reshape work, purposely stretching the space for people to grow skills while they achieve business results. EDMs stay ever-present as *active participants* to support employees’ *development on the job*. That also enables them to seize developmental moments. As one EDM said, “When I see something—good, bad or ugly—I speak with the employee about it and don’t wait for a meeting.”

2. Tap the psychological side of

development. To help employees’ master new, complex skills, the development process must also be *psychological*. For example, someone who likes solo problem solving will hardly become good at collaborative group decision making by reading about it. He would benefit from his manager’s counsel to gain self-insight about his current preferences and to explore obstacles to operating more collaboratively. Tapping into *the psychological side of development* involves building a trusting relationship, making it secure for employees to open up to managers, and hear and act on their feedback. Getting to know employees on a deeper level also helps managers identify just how far they can stretch each employee.

EDMs encourage employees to step out of their comfort zone, take risks, and become aware of their internal drivers by providing a safety net. As one employee expressed, “My greatest

development came when my manager really pushed me out on the ledge, but quietly had my back the whole time.”

3. Connect people with development partners. Many leaders value the idea of having others help to develop their people. *Leaders can open the door to expertise that goes beyond their own* while increasing their staff’s ability to find and work with learning resources. EDMs help employees reach out to others. Next, they identify the right experts, based on the targeted skills that their employees need to learn. For example, they might help one employee reverse a souring key account by having him understudy a *legend* at turning unhappy customers into content ones.

EDMs guide employees to both make the most of the new relationship, and be efficient with the *volunteer development partner*. EDMs leverage lessons learned, look for gaps, and hone how people apply newly learned skills.

4. Teach skills to navigate organization politics. EDMs tout the importance of helping their employees understand organization politics. Functional and technical skills can get their people just so far. To succeed, employees also need to know how to navigate the politics and appropriately influence others.

This isn’t about *manipulating the system*. It is about people *being realistic and strategic* regarding how decisions are made and ensuring their ideas get heard. It is also about being sensitive to the needs of the organization, providing results that will resonate well with all stakeholders. Landscapes are littered with fallen solutions, and sometimes, fallen bodies of product champions who never learned to “socialize” their solution and shape it properly. EDMs work with people to map the political terrain, plan an approach, and practice the skills to thrive in the terrain.

5. Shape your environment to drive development. Remember the last time you experienced a culture that teemed with positive employee energy—people working hard, in constant learning mode and enjoying it? EDMs weave development into the texture of their culture, making it abundant to all.



They develop talent not just among a few high potentials, but across the board, circulating work challenges among team members, keeping everyone on the learning edge, and making learning a requirement, not an option.

EDMs manage the interface between the employee’s world and the organization. They divert distractions from day-to-day development and ingeniously adapt the organization’s talent development tools to their department’s needs. Creating a buffer between their team’s culture and the demands of the organization, *they satisfy both while maximizing team learning*. The result is *an oasis of daily development that is a magnet for talent and a prototype for the organization*.

Like the EDMs, you can reap huge benefits in the growth of your people. Learn from their *Five Practices to grow talent while you grow results*. **These five practices make managers a powerful force for development.** The time and effort you take to drive development is offset by employees’ increased ability to carry a larger load, and reduction in rework. Benefits abound. Employees get a *palpable investment* in their future; the company gets stronger talent. Yet, EDMs feel they get the greatest reward—*higher job satisfaction*—because they are not only achieving results, but developing people as they create their legacy. LE

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ACTION: Make everyday work developmental.

NeuroLeadership

Wear SCARF to avoid dysfunction.



by David Rock

PEOPLE IN LEADERSHIP positions are often logical, analytical thinkers. But the human brain is a social organ. Its reactions are directly shaped by social interaction. Although work is often seen as economic transaction, in which people exchange labor for financial compensation, the brain experiences the workplace first and foremost as a social system.

People who feel betrayed or unrecognized at work—for example, when they are reprimanded, given a petty assignment, or told to take a pay cut—experience it as a neural impulse, *as powerful and painful as a blow to the head*. Most people temper their reactions, but they also limit their engagement and become transactional employees, reluctant to give more of themselves because of the social context.

Leaders who understand this dynamic can more effectively engage their employees' best talents, support collaborative teams, and create a culture that fosters productive change. Indeed, the ability to intentionally address the social brain in the service of optimal performance will become a distinguishing leadership capability.

Triggering the Threat Response

When you encounter something unexpected—like a new colleague moving into the next office—the limbic system (a relatively primitive part of the brain) is aroused. Neurons are activated and hormones released as you seek to learn whether this new entity represents a chance for reward or a potential danger. If the perception is danger, the response becomes a pure threat response—a fight-or-flight response, avoidance response, or, in its extreme form, the *amygdala hijack*, named for a part of the limbic system that can be aroused rapidly and in an emotionally overwhelming way.

When leaders trigger *threat responses*, employees' brains become less efficient. But when leaders make people feel good about themselves, clearly communicate their expectations, give employees latitude to make decisions,

support people's efforts to build good relationships, and treat all people fairly, they prompt *reward responses*. People become more effective, more open to ideas, and more creative. They are less susceptible to burnout, and they feel intrinsically rewarded.

Understanding threat and reward responses can help leaders who are implementing change. The brain is highly plastic. Neural connections can be reformed, new behaviors can be learned, and *even entrenched behaviors can be modified at any age*. But the brain will make these shifts only when it is engaged in *mindful attention*—the state of thought associated with observing your own mental processes. In a threatened state, people are more likely to be *mindless*, as their attention is diverted.



Put on the SCARF

Five social qualities enable leaders to minimize the threat response and enable the reward response: status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, and fairness (SCARF). Think of these as headgear that leaders can wear to prevent exposure to dysfunction.

1. Status. We constantly assess how social encounters either enhance or diminish our status. If you think that you compare unfavorably to someone else, the threat response kicks in. High status correlates with longevity and health. Understanding the role of status can help leaders avoid practices that stir *counterproductive threat responses*. For example, performance reviews provoke a threat response—unless extremely participative and well-designed. Offering feedback also puts people on the defensive. Pay and promotion are not the only ways to boost status. Status is also enhanced when people receive praise, master a new skill, and feel *recognized and respected*.

2. Certainty. When we encounter a familiar situation, our brain conserves its energy by shifting into *automatic pilot*: established neural connections have hardwired this situation and our response to it. This makes it easy to do what we have done in the past, and it frees us to do two things at once; for example, to talk while driving. But the minute the brain registers ambiguity or confusion, the brain flashes an error signal. With the threat response, we must stop talking and shift full attention to the road. Uncertainty registers as an error, gap, or tension: something that must be corrected. Not knowing what will happen next can be debilitating—diminishing memory, undermining performance, and disengaging people from the present. Of course, mild uncertainty attracts interest: New or challenging situations spark curiosity and energy to solve problems. The perception of too much uncertainty undercuts performance. When uncertainty gets out of hand, people panic and make bad decisions. Leaders must create a perception of certainty to build confident and dedicated teams.

3. Autonomy. The perception of greater autonomy increases the feeling of certainty and reduces stress. Leaders who want to support their people's need for autonomy must give them latitude to make choices, especially when they are part of a team or working with a supervisor. Presenting people with options, or allowing them to organize their own work and set their own hours, provokes a less stressed response than forcing them to follow rigid instructions and schedules.

4. Relatedness. Fruitful collaboration depends on healthy relationships, which require trust and empathy—and *trust and empathy are shaped by whether people are perceived to be part of the same social group*. Teams of diverse people must be put together in a way that minimizes threat responses. Trust can't be assumed or mandated, nor can empathy or goodwill be compelled. *These qualities develop only when people's brains start to recognize former strangers as friends*. This requires time and repeated social interaction. The *threat response* is aroused when people feel cut off from social interaction. Loneliness and isolation are stressful. Leaders who strive for inclusion and minimize situations in which people feel rejected create a culture of peak performance.

5. Fairness. The perception of unfairness stirs hostility and undermines trust, while the experience of fairness produces reward responses. The cogni-

tive need for fairness is so strong that some people will to fight and die for causes they believe are just—or commit to organizations they recognize as fair. *The perception of unfairness creates a culture hostile to trust and collaboration.* Leaders who play favorites or who appear to reserve privileges for people who are like them arouse a threat response in those *outside their circle*. Fairness is served by transparency. Leaders who share information in a timely manner can keep people engaged and motivated. Morale remains relatively high when people perceive that cutbacks are being handled fairly—that no one group is treated with preference and that there is a rationale for every cut.

If you are a leader, *every action you take and every decision you make* either supports or undermines the *perceived levels of status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, and fairness*. This is why leading is so difficult: your every word and glance is freighted with social meaning. Your sentences and gestures are noticed and interpreted, magnified, and combed for meaning.

The SCARF model helps alert you to people's core concerns and shows you how to *calibrate* your words and actions. For example, people rarely support initiatives they have no part in designing, as doing so would undermine autonomy and status. Proactively adopting an *inclusive planning process* can prevent the sabotage that results *when people feel they play no part in change that affects them*.

The more practiced you are at reading yourself, the more effective you will be. For example, if you see that *micro-managing threatens status and autonomy*, you'll resist your impulse to gain certainty by dictating details. Instead, you'll seek to disarm people by giving them latitude to make their own mistakes.

When a leader is self-aware, it gives others a feeling of safety. It makes it easier for them to focus on their work and improve performance. Being *open, transparent and spontaneous* creates *authentic leadership presence*. This approach minimizes status threats, increases certainty, and creates a sense of fairness.

The SCARF model shows *why intelligence is insufficient for leadership*. High intelligence often corresponds with low self-awareness, social skills, and empathy. Leaders need to create a culture that promotes status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, and fairness. LE

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ACTION: Try wearing the SCARF model.

Power of Principles

From union comes strength.



by Barack Obama

THIS HAS BEEN A DIFFICULT decade. We've learned anew the profound cost of war—a cost that's been paid by the 4,500 Americans who have given their lives in Iraq, and over 1,500 in Afghanistan—men and women who will not live to enjoy the freedom that they defended. Thousands more have been wounded. Some have lost limbs, and others still battle the demons that have followed them home.

Yet, we take comfort in knowing that the tide of war is receding. Fewer are serving in harm's way. We've ended our combat mission in Iraq, with 100,000 American troops now out of that country. Even as there will be dark days ahead in Afghanistan, *the light of a secure peace can be seen in the distance.*

These long wars will come to a responsible end—we will never tolerate a safe haven for those who aim to kill us. They cannot escape the justice they deserve.

As these wars recede, we must learn their lessons.

This decade of war has caused many to question the nature of America's engagement worldwide. Some would have America retreat from our responsibility as an anchor of global security, and embrace an *isolation* that ignores the threats that we face. Others would have America *over-extended*, confronting every evil to be found abroad.

We must chart a centered course. We must embrace America's singular role, but we must be as *pragmatic* as we are *passionate*; as *strategic* as we are *resolute*. When threatened, we must *respond with force*—but *when that force can be targeted, we need not deploy large armies overseas.*

When innocents are being slaughtered and global security endangered, we don't have to choose between standing idly by or acting on our own. Instead, we must *rally international action*, as we're doing in Libya. There we do not have a single soldier, but are supporting allies in giving the Libyan people the chance to determine their own destiny.

In all we do, we must remember that what sets America apart is not solely

our power—it is the principles upon which our union was founded. We bring our enemies to justice while adhering to the rule of law, and respecting the rights of all citizens. *We protect our own freedom and prosperity by extending it to others.* We stand not for *empire*, but for *self-determination*. We support revolutions with fidelity to our ideals, with the power of our example, and with an unwavering belief that *all human beings deserve to live with freedom and dignity.*

Our strength abroad is anchored in opportunity for our citizens at home. In the last decade, we've spent a *trillion* dollars on war, at a time of rising debt and hard economic times. Now, *we must invest in our greatest resource—our people.* We must unleash innovation that creates new jobs and industries, while living within our means. We must rebuild our infrastructure and find new and clean sources of energy. And, we must recapture the common purpose that we shared at the start of this time of war. For *when our union is strong no hill is too steep, no horizon is beyond our reach.*

It is time to focus on nation-building here at home. In this effort, we draw inspiration from Americans who have sacrificed so much. To our troops, our veterans and their families, I say that *we will keep our sacred trust with you, and provide you with the care, benefits, and opportunities that you deserve.* Recently, I met some of these patriotic Americans at Fort Campbell. I spoke to the 101st Airborne that has fought in Afghanistan, and to the



team that took out Osama bin Laden. Standing in front of a model of bin Laden's compound, the Navy SEAL who led that effort paid tribute to those who had been lost—brothers and sisters in arms. This officer—like so many others I've met—spoke with humility about how his unit worked together as one, depending on each other, and trusting one another, as a family might do in a time of peril.

That's a lesson worth remembering—that we are all a part of one American family. Though we have disagreement and division, we are bound together by the *creed* written into our founding documents, and a *conviction* that the United States of America can achieve whatever it sets out to accomplish. LE

Barack Obama is president of the United States of America. This article is adapted from his speech from the White House, June 22, 2011, provided by Vital Speeches of the Day, editor David Murray, vseditor@mcmmurry.com.

ACTION: Center your leadership on principles.

Get Leaders Teaching

Here are the 10 best reasons why.



by Sue Todd

DELL FOUNDER Michael Dell stepped back into his role as CEO in 2007 as company performance sputtered. He recognized that his business model based on just-in-time inventory wasn't enough to sustain long-term growth. The world was moving to a services-based economy, and Dell, like IBM two decades prior, was deeply entrenched in hardware. CEO Dell realized that new Apple stores provided a compelling experience that was luring consumers to fawn over new toys.

Michael called in a consultant to help revitalize his namesake brand. As the new plan took shape, Dell's CLO, Alejandro Reyes, left the top learning post to work with the senior team to inculcate a workforce nearly 100,000 members strong to ensure the entire firm was on the same page in terms of alignment and engagement. The secret weapon in Reyes' strategy was a Leaders As Teachers approach.

A few leaders taught the strategy to the top 700 executives, who taught their direct reports, and so on. In all, leaders delivered 1,500 sessions at 150 locations. Reyes' said improved leader engagement ignited a fire in employees. When leaders participate fully, their companies spring to life.

In mid May 2011, a Dell competitor cut its 2011 revenue projections due to falling demand for its personal computers and printers. That day, Dell beat its quarterly target by 11 cents per share, squeezing greater profitability from each sale. Signs throughout the earnings report showed that the Dell team had moved back on top.

10 Reasons for Leaders to Teach

Here are my top 10 reasons for having a Leaders as Teachers approach to LD.

1. To fill your air sandwich. Nilofer Merchant, in *The New How*, deftly describes the void that arises between strategies and execution plans, as the number of execution options available to leaders increases. As Merchant notes, *leaders must engage in discussions, debates, and learning from experiments to fill this gap.* Leaders can fill the gap by teaching direct reports to evaluate and select options for executing strategies.

2. To develop top talent in every position. What leader wouldn't like to have a talented top performer in every

position? Leaders can't *clone themselves*, but they can *teach lessons* of experience, impart wisdom, and provide guidance to team members in tough situations. Wise decisions need to be made at all levels. The *leader-teacher model* strengthens internal feedback loops.

3. To make LD more stuff-like than thing-like. In quantum mechanics, scientists question whether the essence of matter and energy is more *thing-like*, as in peas on a dinner plate, or more *stuff-like*—as mashed potatoes. Today's approach to LD is too *thing-like*. It operates like a Ford assembly-line with its competency models and linear performance evaluations designed to pop out pure replicas. *Organizations must remove these corsets* if they want, for example, CFOs to be less like bean counters and more apt at giving strategic advice; customer-facing service teams to build deeper client relationships; researchers



and product managers to *fail and learn fast* from mistakes. When leaders start teaching, they can quickly crush *the peas* and mix them into *the mashed potatoes*; development gets filled with *good stuff*.

4. To enable domain mash-ups. Leaders must scour various *landscapes*, and then lead people beyond their own practice areas to investigate the newness in the world, and the frameworks and models evolving in other industries. As teachers, they must create space and conditions for *serendipitous interactions* and the *mash-up* of professional domains.

5. To value learning before there's little value left. CEOs are concerned that training is not strengthening the differentiators that set the company apart. *When leaders participate in designing and delivering training, learning programs target core capabilities more effectively.* Leaders might also use learning programs to adapt to new competitive conditions.

6. To act as stressor. In chemistry, a

stressor is something that can speed up a reaction rate. Today, leaders must see themselves as *stressors*—to push teams out of *stasis* and into *action*, to be vigilant to factors shaping the market, and to avoid the bystander effect. Without a leader-teacher, leader-coach pushing for evolution, teams edge toward obsolescence. Leaders who aren't catalysts will push their teams there faster.

7. To hear your echo. How can you know if the messages you are sending to the team are getting through with the intentions you infused—without misunderstanding, filters, false facts, or cynicism? Often you don't realize your *message* has been *mangled beyond recognition* until things go wrong. Get in front of the team as a facilitator, coach and mentor. Teach your messages. Ask for questions. Listen to how your ideas are being interpreted, and use the time to refine the distinctions, tighten meanings, and practice a common language.

8. To co-design the important experiments. Most R&D teams practice *prototyping* and *failing fast*, finding lessons and making adjustments. Now, to navigate a marketplace where consumers change preferences overnight, and technological disruptions appear without warning—*leaders need to run more parts of their business like a series of controlled experiments.* Leaders must press teams to ensure they are solving the right problem, defining what success looks like, isolating the independent variables under analysis, and defining plans based on actionable data from feedback. Leaders direct *the learning lab*.

9. To be a scaffold for ideas. Leaders have a broader perspective, and should stand back frequently to let the larger view come into focus. From that vantage point, they can teach teams about activities and directions pursued in other departments, and how those parallel efforts might influence possible futures. Keeping teams in a state of readiness for change creates conditions to adapt at the speed of change.

10. To spite Thomas Malthus (*the economist who in 1798 predicted societies would return to subsistence living as population growth outpaced agricultural production*). He could not imagine the efficiencies that might come from advances in agriculture, food production, and energy usage. And, there was no evidence of the natural tendency for birth rates to decline as groups rose from poverty. Teaching leaders must drive innovation to avert future Malthusian crises. **LE**

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ACTION: Ensure leaders are teaching leaders.

The Circle Way

Put a leader in every chair.



by Christina Baldwin and Ann Linnea

WHEN WE CHANGE THE CHAIRS, WE change the conversation. Everyone has a sphere of influence inside which s/he can exert leadership and invite the best participation. For 20 years, through *PeerSpirit Circle Process*, we have been bringing people face to face in collaborative group experiences that spread out leadership, responsibility, and outcomes.

Though we started our careers in different fields, we joined in partnership as we realized that by holding our classes in the shape of a circle—all chairs facing in toward a center that symbolized common purpose, and everyone facing every-one else present—we had happened upon a powerful collaborative form. People were energized, creative, thoughtfully engaged.

Unleashing power and collaboration requires a social infrastructure to support interaction and intention. We began studying the role of council leadership from a cross-cultural perspective and codified common elements into a design we call *PeerSpirit Circle*. “Peer,” because the circle levels the hierarchy that exists outside circle and invites everyone to speak with an equally valued voice; and “spirit” because circle calls something into the space between us that enlivens synergistic possibilities, as though *waking up the spirit of a group*. What a dynamic way to run a team, department, staff meeting, or board!

In a large urban children’s hospital, the new Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) had used *PeerSpirit Circle Process* at her previous hospital and wanted to invite a shift in meeting culture and reporting structure as she started her new responsibilities. After the initial phase of reorganization, and when her staff was in place, she arranged a two-day retreat and invited us in to teach circle. “I wanted a true council



of leadership,” she said, “not a circle of silos reporting to me. We made a commitment to get up into the mountains, and for me to sit as a co-learner while Christina and Ann taught the form.”

We squeezed a circle into the resort condo living room and put in the center objects people had brought that exemplified their commitment to the reshaped team. One woman brought a *bicycle wheel* with many spokes connected to the center, and in that hub a photo of a mother and her sick child—the heart of their work. Around this, we placed four stuffed animals (it’s a children’s hospital, after all): a *giraffe* to represent *vision*, a *lion* to represent *courage*, an *elephant* to represent *the unspoken*, and a *monkey* to represent *fun*. After placing the center as a point of shared focus, we began with a round of check-in, asking people to speak whatever they needed to clear the past, look to the future, acknowledge their challenges, and appreciate their working environment—the elephant, giraffe, lion, and monkey spun from hand to hand. We established working agreements, and a sub-group took on the task of developing an *intention statement* to guide their work.

We then broke for dinner and an evening ramble along a mountain stream.

The next morning, several people with a love of cooking and camping arranged an outdoor breakfast, complete with campfire. Around this fire, people spoke about moments and mentors that

had shaped their careers. When we returned to the inside circle, we did the agenda-based circle, with each person negotiating time for their agenda item, carrying the necessary information into the group, asking for what they needed in the way of feedback, decision, or action. We stepped in to coach the form, but they were spinning the process themselves.

The CNO assures us that the circle is still working—they are *functioning as the council of leadership she envisioned* (and they then envisioned together).

This is a common pattern in our work life—and our greatest joy: that we can introduce a collaborative process that is stable in its core structure and adaptable in its application so that circle can serve wherever it is called and a leader can sit in every chair. **LE**

Christina Baldwin and Ann Linnea are co-authors of The Circle Way, A Leader in Every Chair, and the co-founders of www.peerspirit.com.

ACTION: Put a leader in every chair.

Five Choices

Achieve the extraordinary.



by Stephen R. Covey

THE 5 CHOICES TO *Extraordinary Productivity* empower you to achieve *extraordinary results*—outcomes once outside your reach. They *enable* you to make daily decisions that are focused on your most important outcomes, *the big rocks*, not *the gravel*—activities that distract you from achieving your most important goals. The 5 *Choices* guide you to a new paradigm of your roles, effective weekly and daily planning, technology mastery, and energy renewal for extraordinary achievements.

Choice 1: Act on the important—don’t react to the urgent. Can you evaluate which choices will give you *the highest return on your time and attention*? When you act on *the important*, you get ahead by *doing the right things*. When you react to *the urgent*, you get ahead by *doing more things faster*. Learn to negotiate competing demands, make smart choices, spend more time on *important things*, and *say no to less important things*.

Choice 2: Go for extraordinary—don’t settle for ordinary. Do you define purposeful, high-impact outcomes that will transform the results you achieve? Consider: As a leader, I will achieve (*extraordinary outcomes*) through (*activities*).

Choice 3: Schedule big rocks—don’t sort gravel. Prioritize and organize those *few high-leverage activities that will move you forward in your role*. Spend 30 minutes every week, 10 minutes every day in *quality planning*—this will transform the time you spend everywhere else.

Choice 4: Rule your technology—don’t let it rule you. Do you have a *reliable personal system* that enables you to get the right things done, or are you constantly distracted by your technology? You need to manage *tasks, appointments, contacts, notes, and documents*.

Choice 5: Fuel your fire—don’t burn out. Do you consistently *renew yourself* by relaxing, moving, sleeping regularly, and eating nutritiously to generate *maximum energy for things that matter most*?

Your choices can either sink you or help you achieve *extraordinary results*. **LE**

Stephen R. Covey is Vice Chairman of FranklinCovey. Visit www.the5Choices.com.

ACTION: Make these wise five choices.

Global Leaders

Why they succeed and fail.



by Owen Sullivan

WE HAVE ENTERED the Human Age, where human potential is the catalyst for change and Talentism has become the new Capitalism. Despite the varied implications of our current dynamic market conditions and the global readjustment to economic trends, the one constant is the need for an exceptional workforce. And, at the heart of business growth and transformation is the need for exceptional leadership, specifically leaders with global mindsets and competencies.

Leadership development (LD) today is more science than art. Recently, we partnered with the Chally Group to survey 1,400 CEOs and HR professionals to learn about their LD practices. **We asked them to rate the four competencies most critical for C-level positions.** They cited: 1) *creating a strategic vision*, 92 percent; 2) *inspiring others and maintaining key leadership responsibility*, 62 percent; 3) *developing an accurate and comprehensive overview of the business*, 57 percent; and, 4) *wise decision making*, 55 percent.

Leaders can greatly impact growth and transformation by accelerating the development of high potential talent. Development must include real-world experiences with strategic leaders and exposure to executive stakeholders. Today, leadership development needs to be grounded in real work and focused on the critical competencies required for success in C-level roles. High potentials need to have a *mix and integration of development activities, supported by stretch assignments, mentoring opportunities, and action learning efforts.* Real-life work situations need to be carefully selected to develop the right parts of the success profile. Creating predictive and validated criteria, supported with consistent metrics is required to evaluate their performance.

A challenge for corporate leaders is that leadership turnover for *non-performance* or other *leadership dissatisfaction* issues continue to be problematic for many organizations. Our survey iden-



tified the **Top 10 factors that contribute most to the failure of senior leaders:**

1) *failure to build relationships and a team culture*, 40 percent; 2) *mismatch for the culture*, 32 percent; 3) *failure to deliver acceptable results*, 25 percent; 4) *unable to win support*, 25 percent; 5) *lack of appropriate training*, 23 percent; 6) *egotistical*, 15 percent; 7) *lack of vision*, 14 percent; 8) *inflexible*, 13 percent; 9) *poor management skills*, 12 percent; and 10) *poor communication*, 11 percent.

If leadership success is so critical, why is so little support given to leader on-boarding and early development for both internal and external candidates? A lack of company support for new leaders may be attributed to an onerous cost-management focus—a perspective that it is expensive to develop leaders. Part of the lack of company support may be due to the organization moving with speed to address an urgent leadership opening. The caution here is to not overly rely or assume that the selection process is perfect. The mistake companies often make is to assume that a perceived *all-star* does not warrant development to perform at the expected level. Frequently, this is simply not the case.

The costs associated with failure or ineffective executive transitions are high and the lack of support for talent has long-term negative effects for both leaders and organizations. Considering

the evolving workforce and the increasing importance of *engagement for performance* and *productivity*, the leader's role is *the greatest catalyst for success.* Public or visible failure of high potentials undermines the overall succession and development effort.

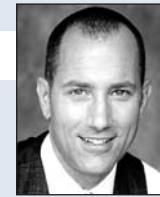
For organizations to thrive in the *Human Age*, leaders must be at the forefront in creating exceptional workforces. Leaders need to build the case for a robust workforce strategy that has a unique and committed focus on leadership development. That strategy must ensure success for internal progression and integrating external talent. It must clearly identify the leadership competencies required for success today and in the future, as well as a sound understanding of the factors that lead to derailment. Only then can leaders truly deliver both on *business growth* and *transformation.* LE

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ACTION: Know what contributes to success.

Storyteller-in-Chief

Why your company needs one.



by Bill Baker

THE BEST COMPANIES have a well-articulated vision and someone whom the tribe can look up to *evangelize* and *vitalize* that vision, speeding it to fruition. That person acts as the company *Storyteller-in-Chief* (SIC).

Developing a new strategic vision is challenging, but not as challenging as convincing employees to embrace and work toward that vision. Often, you are asking them to change (sometimes radically) the way they think, talk and act. New requirements also cause employees to scrutinize leadership to see if they practice what they preach.

If your executives already lead by example, they next need to evangelize the vision through the strategic use of stories that bring that vision to life.

You may feel that storytelling has no place in business, but storytelling is the way we all most readily and naturally communicate with each other. However, there is a big difference between the storytelling we practice as social, communicative human beings, and the storytelling we use strategically as leaders to align, focus and inspire a workforce. The latter involves a more calculated telling of relevant stories to demonstrate a vision coming to life and help employees to understand the nuanced meaning driving that vision and then remember and reflect that meaning in their own work.

Before you assume the SIC role, you need to know what distinguishes a storyteller. Consider these four guidelines:

1. SICs treat storytelling as a dialogue among equals. They interact and engage with the people, bridging the gap between *you* and *me* to make their audience see the storyteller as one of them. They treat *storytelling* as a *conversation*—a genuine exchange of meaning shared between people. It is not a lecture or endless download of information, but a collective experience in which the audience is just as active as the storyteller, each picking up something meaningful from the interaction.

2. SICs use stories to facilitate the way people think and see the world, without forcing it. When done well, storytelling empowers people, enabling them to hear what you have

to tell them and to draw their *own* conclusions. The conclusions are remarkably similar to what you want them to be, but they are *their* conclusions, not yours. People value their own conclusions more than yours. So as a SIC, you use storytelling to shape and guide their thinking, but not to control it. When you entrust them to think for themselves, they will respect their conclusions all the more, and respect you for helping them reach them.

3. *SICs are truthful, vulnerable and unafraid to show that they are human.* They are authentic, genuine, not hesitating to admit mistakes, confusion or doubts if they have them. In this age of ultimate transparency, we recognize that no one is perfect and that even our leaders have fallibilities. We forgive them that (to an extent), but at the same time won't tolerate it if they try to lie their way around something. Ultimately, through the stories that leaders share, they invite people in and reveal parts of themselves; and the audience feels closer to them as a result. Storytelling, used strategically in leadership, is about being human, understanding that *people follow people*—not PowerPoint presentations, emails or reports. Jeff Immelt, CEO of GE, is a gifted storyteller who uses stories to make himself more approachable, accessible, and effective as a leader.

4. *SICs develop a robust pantry of stories to have at their ready.* They collect relevant and compelling stories, identify them, develop them, catalogue them away so that they have them “on file” and ready to use when needed. Through the rich collection of stories they curate, SICs always have the perfect, relevant story to pull use for any situation. Tony Hsieh, CEO of Zappos.com, is a master at such storytelling.

In every great undertaking, many practical steps need to take place; but first there is a leap of faith. Strategic storytelling is a way to get employees to make that leap, helping them marry the logic of where you want to go as a company with the magic of why you want to go there in the first place. As SIC, you can bridge that gap between vision and practice through the stories that you tell of your vision coming to life in practice, and in the process, aligning and inspiring employees to do what you need to do to move your business and your brand forward. **LE**

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ACTION: Become a master story-teller.

Reinvent Succession

Leverage technology to create leaders.



by Marc Blumenthal

BUSINESS IS MORE COMPLICATED; change is constant; expectations are high; and we're moving at warp speed. This is why *the old succession planning model can no longer produce the leaders we need to prosper.* Traditional SP focuses on identifying replacements for the exit of a senior leader. That list of names falls short when it comes to producing *potential leaders* who are ready to handle a multitude of scenarios.

Today, you need more than a succession strategy for the C-suite. You need more nimble leaders who understand the dynamics of our economy and the nature of business. To grow your businesses and serve your clients, *you need decision makers at every level.* Every position now requires smart thinking and leadership. It's time to reinvent succession planning; to change it from a top-down boardroom exercise to an interactive, organization-wide, bottom-up process.

How do we find these promising leaders? Today's virtual work environment has made it a challenge to identify *potential leaders.* With workgroups spread across the country and travel budgets tight, leaders find it tough to identify emerging leaders. This is where technology closes the gap and supports an internal search for potential leaders.

Engaging in social collaboration. Regardless of their role, leaders are voracious learners, always trying to get insight or collaborate with more people. So, whether an organization introduces an internal blog, forum or wiki, high-performing leaders will use it to collaborate with their peers and with the larger internal community to solve problems. It's like a Facebook wall, because it reveals how these employees serve their customers, peers, and managers. And it can be used by leaders to identify those who are helping the business beyond doing their job. *Technology can also allow companies to engage their external audiences.* Social collaboration tools can provide customers with a private, secure online environment for

sharing feedback on their experiences.

By adopting a robust *learning management system (LMS)*, leaders can combine social aspects with an employee's training background, performance history, and competency levels to *identify the top candidates for leadership positions.* And, with the use of various social collaboration tools, organizations will likely discover that *they have potential leaders who have previously gone unnoticed.*

Standardizing core competencies. Technology such as TM systems can help define critical leadership roles, map core competencies to those roles and then objectively measure competency levels through a scoring system. An organization can standardize its competencies, ensuring that they align with the business strategy, goals and objectives. Standardized competencies make it easier to identify and track high-performing employees. And, it becomes more apparent when there is a gap in competencies and skills. With technology, training associated with specific leadership competencies can be identified and added to a personalized development plan for an employee.

Tying career development to succession planning. Reinvented succession planning is bottom-up and requires the active participation of employees. Enterprise-wide technology is ideal for supporting this approach. Online tools that support career management activities can aggregate employee data in online resumes and empower employees to explore internal career paths. These tools can also make it easier for employees to find and apply for positions.

Using mobile technology. Using mobile devices, more employees will access succession and talent management systems and take advantage of social collaboration, mobile learning and online career development tools. For example, a restaurant server might log in to the company's internal forum and find out which competencies he needs to become a manager and watch a training video on tableside cooking. Mobile technology offers more opportunities for career development and expands leaders' contact with employees and facilitates tracking how they learn and collaborate. *Hence, the pool of leadership candidates grows exponentially.* **LE**

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ACTION: Grow your pool of leadership candidates.



Choosing Leaders

Who is the next Steve Jobs?



by Jeffrey Cohn and Jay Moran

MOST INNOVATIVE LEADERS WHO WILL emerge in the next decade aren't toiling in solitude somewhere—*many are probably already working in your organization.* They are your young, antsy, rising-star managers. All you have to do is find them. With the right recognition and resources, they will emerge as industry game-changers. With their talent and leadership, your organization will gain a decisive competitive advantage. Your job is to find these potential stars early, give them plenty of developmental opportunities, and ensure they do not slip away.

Most companies do a poor job of spotting and grooming innovative leaders because they don't know what to look for. They don't understand the underlying attributes possessed by future innovators or leaders. When evaluating talent, they treat all leadership candidates the same, and get seduced by *false predictors of success* such as a charismatic personality, Ivy-League education, or past experience. These factors tell only half the story.

Other times organizations rely on a patchwork of assessment techniques, including *backward-looking interviews* that favor smooth-talking candidates over people with *true leadership potential.* Or, organizations react to a talent gap by reaching outside the company in search of an *expert* innovator or change agent who can come in and magically make all of their problems disappear. This is not a strategy for long-term success: most outsiders fail when recruited to supercharge growth at struggling organizations.

The secret to getting it right starts with knowing what to look for. We examined over 200 leadership attributes and narrowed the list to *the critical seven* that you should seek in your leaders: integrity, empathy, emotional intelligence, vision, judgment, courage and passion. These attributes are like the DNA of a great leader. Other

aspects of leadership—like strategic thinking, social savvy or innovation—flow from these seven. Strategic thinking is a part of good leadership judgment. Social savvy flows from empathy and emotional intelligence. Innovative leaders are rare because they require a heavy dose of many of these traits, including vision (to imagine and inspire the advancement of new ideas), empathy (to understand others' needs and to get them to buy into the process), passion (to persevere and overcome the inevitable setbacks), and courage (to take risks and perhaps run against conventional wisdom).

Organizations go awry when they don't understand these basic pieces and how they fit together. So, they end up with *glaring deficiencies in their leadership ranks*, especially with respect to individuals who can drive innovation. Organizations that link an accurate assessment process to their leadership development consistently come out ahead. They identify innovators early and give them the opportunities, coaching, and resources to succeed.

- **Ryder System.** Ryder uses a robust *assessment approach* to identify and develop its top leaders. They measure seven of the critical dimensions and eschew an assessment process based solely on past behavioral interviews or 360-degree referencing. Ryder has learned that *backward-looking interviews are a sub-standard predictor of success for someone who is assuming a new position.* Instead, Ryder gets a complete picture of a candidate's leadership potential, including his or her strengths and competencies, such as building a team, driving results, and innovation.

- **Western & Southern Financial Group.** Identifying somebody who can be a *true innovator* is only a start. To become a great leader, the individual needs to have *the right opportunities and coaching.* Western & Southern Financial Group (W&S) understands this link.

During his 18 years as CEO, John Barrett has developed new products and earned a reputation for creative

diversification. As of 2010 its life insurance division had a S&P AA+ rating for the fifth consecutive year, putting it in elite company. Barrett attributes much of this success to W&S's *dedication to leadership development.* "We devote more resources to LD than most other companies our size," he said. "It's at the core of what we do." Their LD process begins by *giving rising stars the right mix of opportunities to ensure that they're being challenged and stretched*—taking them out of their comfort zone, and providing some latitude for creative recombination, bold chances, and learning. W&S also emphasizes mentoring to enable rising stars to get feedback in real time and practice articulating and defending any new ideas or vision.

Siemens. When Siemens CEO Peter Löscher was brought on board in 2007,



the company was struggling. In fact, many observers wondered whether Siemens had lost its competitive edge.

Löscher knew that Siemens needed a new repositioning strategy, more entrepreneurialism, and a dedication to cutting-edge innovation that would bring success in

emerging markets and 21st-century megatrends such as green technology and infrastructure.

But Löscher also knew that he needed the right people. He realized that his inspiring vision would go nowhere without a strong bench of innovative leaders in charge of the key business units he was depending on for growth.

Löscher and his team identified the top positions and performed 500 assessments at the senior management level. This new leadership framework contained all seven *key leadership dimensions.* The point was to identify top executives' strengths, and to ensure that they were deployed *in the right place.*

This approach ensured that capable leaders emerged to meet Löscher's vision. This year, Siemens extended its assessment process to over 3,000 rising stars and used the results to place individuals in the right positions, and to build robust, customized LD plans.

These efforts are paying off. In 2010 Siemens increased its dividend by 70 percent over the prior three years and was bullish about future growth in emerging markets.

LE

Jeffrey Cohn and Jay Moran are authors of Why Are We Bad at Picking Good Leaders? Visit www.pickingbetterleaders.com or email jcohn@liag-advisors.com and jmoran@liag-advisors.com.

ACTION: Improve your selection process.

Building LD Programs

You need to pay attention to detail.



by David DeFilippo and Steve Arneson

CUSTOM-DESIGNED LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT programs are a core part of any TM strategy. In fact, the multi-module high-potential program is often the crown jewel of a development portfolio. When done well, participants and leaders (who often serve as faculty) rave about the program's outcomes. But what makes for a successful program? How do you ensure that the *design, execution, and experience* all get an *A* from key stakeholders?

Five Foundations

When launching the LD program, integrate five elements:

1. Develop a robust nomination process. Creating a great LD program begins with *picking the right participants*. Ask your CEO and senior leaders the tough questions about leadership requirements and your current leadership talent. *What are the future leadership needs for meeting growth targets, competitive threats, or innovation goals, and what is the collective capability of the leadership pipeline to meet these needs?* With that picture in mind, align the *participant nomination process with future leadership requirements*. Ensure that senior leaders follow a formal, calibrated process for selecting participants—one that produces a class of leaders that is deserving of this investment. Facilitate the nominations process—don't delegate it. Get to know the qualifications of the participants. Ask these questions: *Where do we see this nominee in the next 12 to 18 months? How will the company support this individual outside of the formal LD program? Have we asked nominees if they want to make this investment in their development?* The nominations process should engage senior leaders to the point that they *own* the makeup of the program's participants.

2. Make being selected a big deal. Make a big deal out the nomination announcement. Arrange for the nomi-

nation letter to be written by (and sent from) the CEO. This will convey recognition, top-level commitment, and show the individuals that they are on the CEO's radar screen. It will also capture the attention of the participants' direct managers—creating the support they'll need during the program.

3. Introduce participants to the program learning experience (and to each other) weeks *before* the program begins. Conduct a conference call or bring participants together to congratulate them on their selection and explain the program's *learning objectives, components, and performance expectations*. Have small groups of participants meet with selected senior executives for informal luncheons to establish an early dialogue and bonding. And, create an internal website with *participant pictures and bios*.

4. Prepare the faculty or teaching team. Whether utilizing external faculty or internal leaders as teachers, make sure each faculty member is ready for the session. Educate *external faculty* on the company history, strategy, and culture *before* the program. Review current issues that may be on people's minds. Ensure that *internal faculty* practice their presentations (winging it results in poor performance). Work with presenters in advance; review their slides, link their topic to a framework or model, and brief them on the questions they'll likely get. And, prep the hotel or venue staff, as well as other supporting players so that everything runs smoothly, and partici-

pants have a first-class leadership development experience.

5. Set a high bar for participation. Open the program with a provocative challenge or dynamic reflective exercise—one that signals *this is a different kind of leadership program*. Ask participants to articulate two learning goals in the first hour, without advance preparation, to signal that you'll challenge them and that you expect them to take responsibility for their learning. Early on the first day, *ask participants how they'll apply the learning*—and repeat this question during the program.

Paying attention to these five details will ensure that participants have the best possible learning experience and will position the LD program as a true *flagship event* in your TM strategy. **LE**

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ACTION: Launch development programs with impact.

Gain a Leader's Edge

Develop the six core competencies.



by Randy Goruk

WHEN JOHN WAS PROMOTED into management, he thought that *this was only the first of many promotions*, but he was never promoted again. He worked hard, but his team constantly fell short of expectations.

Under John's leadership, several issues reoccurred: repeated failure to meet financial targets, high turnover, shrinking market-share numbers, and a stressful work environment. John did not produce favorable results, and he seemed to lack the leadership competencies required for career success.

So what was John missing? John and every leader should master *six core leadership competencies*:

1. Have unwavering character. Trust and respect are earned. Exceptional leaders demonstrate their true character in their words, actions, and behaviors. They are sincere, truthful, fair, embracing of diversity, respectful of the rules, non-hypocritical, and give credit where credit is due. People want to work for someone they trust and respect. *Loyal followers produce results.*

2. Genuinely care. To achieve *maximum results*, you must *get the most* out of all team members. Sincere and genuine interest earns loyalty—critical to the success of your team. *Caring* means that *you care about the people on your team personally and professionally*. You care about their performance, growth, advancement, success, role, health, safety, culture, work-life balance, and the resources they need to do their jobs. You also care about aligning your values with company values, preserving the culture, satisfying customers, improving product quality, and engaging all stakeholders.

3. Use stellar communication skills. To engage your team, you must employ effectively several *communication strategies*, use appropriate techniques for each situation, and be a good listener. Be clear, concise, and consistent when delivering speeches; ask great questions; develop and implement appropriate focal points; speak to different groups at their level; be attentive to your body language and the signals you send with your dress, office,



actions, and facial expressions. Leverage technology to share information, improve your presentations, write genuine personal notes of appreciation, and be available and visible.

4. Be a great thinker. Learn to think forward about how to achieve desired results and outcomes for stakeholders. By being a great thinker, you become a great *problem solver* and *problem avoider*. You have a *vision* that is clearly articulated in a *vision statement*; you know your *mission*, and create meaningful *objectives* and *strategies* with achievable and realistic *goals*. You know when to change and how to adapt to change. You develop plans and know how to implement them. You anticipate situations in advance, are unbiased in your decision making, know when it's time to change the rules, and honor your values and company values. *Think, plan, and act instead of constantly reacting.*

5. Possess mental toughness. Learn to evaluate the situation, ask the right questions, and ultimately make the correct decisions. You are mentally tough when you are not distracted; you can remain clear and objective; and you have discipline of focus. You are personally productive; you strive to eliminate time wasters, stick to your plan, and seek work-life balance. You are confident, consistent in actions and decisions, and deal with conflict. You follow the rules but know when it's time to change the rules. You don't take things personal, and you don't let situations you can't control bother you.

6. Embrace accountability. When you hold yourself and others accountable for results, behaviors, and performances, you become a more effective leader. You understand that you are accountable for your performance and hold yourself accountable. You know you are not entitled, and you know you can delegate responsibility but not accountability. You are not afraid to hold others accountable for their performance. You share good and bad examples of accountability with others, and you respect consequences. *Lead with a no-excuses accountability mindset.*

To gain the leaders edge, enlist the help of a credible mentor or coach, and learn from the mistakes of others. During the day *reflect on your performance, actions, and behaviors*. Complete a leadership self-assessment or a 360-degree feedback survey—and follow through with a personal action plan. LE

Randy Goruk develops leaders through his coaching, training and speaking. He is author of *Sparks—A Business Fable*. Email randy@LeadersEdge360.com or visit www.SparksTheBook.com.

ACTION: Develop these six core competencies.

Jumpstart Growth

With an army of entrepreneurs.



by Jennifer Prosek

I LEARNED THE HARD WAY that no one person can lead a company single-handedly. A decade ago, I bought out an owner of a small PR firm. I had big dreams. PR was my passion, and I worked six or seven days a week.

My efforts paid off, and we grew each year. But I was facing burnout and was frustrated. My staff were good practitioners but didn't seem to "get" the business and failed to make connections that could have resulted in new business. I rarely saw the entrepreneurial behavior we needed to grow.

Then I asked myself a hard question: *Had I ever taught them what they needed to know to be successful?* The answer was no. I'm a natural entrepreneur, and I thought people would just follow my lead. That wasn't the case—and something had to change.

What I needed was an *Army of Entrepreneurs*—a group of rainmakers, innovators, creative thinkers, and problem solvers—to build the business together. We needed to ramp up training, communicate our values, and empower people to develop an *owner's mindset*. Many building blocks existed; we just needed to create a cohesive structure and simple expectations.

Did it work? Yes! During the Great Recession, when 65 percent of PR firms lost revenue, we grew by aggressively seeking new clients, developing new revenue sources, and excelling at *intrapreneuring*—expanding current accounts.

We *jumpstarted growth* by inspiring, developing and rewarding *entrepreneurial behavior*—in five ways:

1. Create an incentive that ties employee compensation to business growth. With our *Commission for Life* program, every employee who introduces us to a new client receives a commission for the entire time we retain that client. The program, open to everyone, offers a big payoff but doesn't require much effort. It attracts their attention and alters their behavior in a positive way.

2. Create an entrepreneurial culture. Culture is an ecosystem where people

thrive or languish. *To kick-start growth, employees need to think independently and take risks.* People want more than a paycheck; they want to be fully engaged in their work. *Leaders need to model entrepreneurial behavior.* Employees need to see that entrepreneurs work hard not only for money or fame but because they're passionate about growth. Get excited. Enthusiasm is infectious. *Create a living, breathing, adaptable, fun culture.*

3. Teach them the business. Put in place a training program, a *Boot Camp*, and *teach your employees the business*. Few people know how their employer operates and makes money. Most training focuses on specific skills people need to do their jobs. But once employees know how the business operates and their roles, they can more easily gauge their own contributions and add value.

4. Over-communicate. Be transparent and honest. You need to *over-communicate*, whether that means an internal blog, in-person meetings, or regular e-mail updates. *Treat people like the entrepreneurs you want them to be*—curious and engaged, wanting to know everything about the business. Consider sharing all information (excepting

salaries) to give all employees intimate knowledge of the business.

5. Have fun—there is more to work than just work. Employees who are slogging through their jobs won't have the *passion, energy and excitement* needed to take a company to the next level. So, whether you're celebrating milestones, wins, birthdays or babies, take the time to get together to enjoy one another and celebrate. Reward your employees with *psychic*, not just *financial*, compensation. Whether that means praise, appreciation, new challenges or autonomy, finding out what matters to your people—and going out of your way to provide it—is very motivating.

These *five strategies* can be implemented in any business. A decade ago, I felt like I was 100 percent responsible for the success of the company. Now, I am standing shoulder to shoulder with my *Army of Entrepreneurs*. We've transitioned from an *owner-led practice* to a *true team*. We persevere through the bad times and come together to celebrate our successes and growth. LE

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Jennifer Prosek is CEO of CJP Communications and author of *Army of Entrepreneurs: Create an Engaged and Empowered Workforce*. Follow her on Twitter and Facebook. Visit www.ArmeyofEntrepreneurs.com.

ACTION: Create an army of entrepreneurs.



Energy Engagement

Create a culture of innovation.



by Tony Schwartz

WHEN IBM RECENTLY polled 1,500 CEOs, they rated *creativity* as the most vital leadership competency: 80 percent said *business demands new ways of thinking*, and less than 50 percent said they were equipped to deal effectively with rising complexity.

To foster cultures of real creativity and innovation, senior leaders need to make *seven transformational moves*:

1. Meet people's needs. Recognize that questioning orthodoxy and convention—the key to creativity—begins with questioning the way people are expected to work. *How well are their core needs—physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual—being met in the workplace?* The more people are preoccupied by unmet needs, the less energy and engagement they bring to their work. So, ask employees, one at a time, what they need to perform at their best. Next, define what success looks like, and hold people accountable to specific metrics; but let them design their days to achieve those outcomes.

2. Teach creativity systematically. Creativity isn't *magical*—it can be *developed*. There are five well-defined and accepted stages of creative thinking: *insight, saturation, incubation, illumination, and verification*. They don't always unfold predictably, but they do provide a roadmap for enlisting the whole brain, moving back and forth between analytic, deductive left hemisphere thinking, and more pattern-seeking, big-picture, right hemisphere thinking.

3. Nurture passion. The quickest way to *kill creativity* is to put people in roles that *don't excite their imagination*. At an early age, kids who are encouraged to follow their passion develop better discipline, deeper knowledge, and are more persevering and more resilient in the face of setbacks. Encourage employees to follow their interests and express their unique talents.

4. Make the work matter. People are meaning-making animals. Money pays the bills, but it's a thin source of meaning. We feel better about ourselves when we make a positive contribution to something beyond ourselves. To feel

truly motivated, we have to believe what we're doing really matters. When leaders can define a compelling mission that transcends each individual's self-interest, they fuel high performance and foster thinking creatively about *how to overcome obstacles and generate solutions*.

5. Provide the time. Creative thinking requires relatively open-ended, uninterrupted time, free of pressure for immediate answers and instant solutions. Time is a scarce, overburdened commodity in organizations that live by the ethic of "more, bigger, faster." Ironically, the best way to insure that innovation gets attention is to schedule sacrosanct time for it, regularly.

6. Value renewal. We aren't meant to operate continuously the way computers do. We're designed to expend energy for short periods of time—no more than 90 minutes—and *then recover*. The third stage of the creative process, *incubation*,



occurs when we step away from a problem and let our unconscious work on it. Go on a walk, listen to music, meditate, or take a drive. Movement—especially *exercise that raises the heart rate*—induces a shift in consciousness in which *creative breakthroughs spontaneously arise*.

7. Engage energy. In the corporate world, *engagement* has come to signify some blend of an employee's commitment, passion, focus, motivation, morale and job satisfaction. It's what every company wants, since we see a strong relationship between *employee engagement* and *organizational performance*.

What most influences engagement? It's *the degree to which employers actively invest in meeting the multidimensional needs of their employees*. That frees, fuels and inspires people to bring their best to work.

We have four core needs beyond survival:

- **Sustainability (physical).** Amazingly few companies try to meet these needs. The

primary value most employers offer employees is *money*, but *even paying employees far higher salaries is no guarantee they'll be engaged so long as their other needs aren't met*. Google does the best job of investing in the physical health and well-being of employees.

- **Security (emotional)**—meaning *valued, recognized, and appreciated*. Less than 40 percent of employees worldwide feel their managers are genuinely interested in their well-being. Only one out of 10 employees feel they're treated as vital corporate assets. *The more our values feel at risk, the more we become preoccupied with defending and restoring them, and the less energy we have left to generate value for our companies*. How people feel profoundly influences how they perform. When we are performing at our best, we feel happy, positive, confident, optimistic—reflecting a *high quantity* and a *high quality* of energy. Leaders ought to be evaluated on *the degree to which they evoke those feelings in those they lead*.

- **Self-expression (mental)**—the chance to use our unique skills and talents and to figure out for ourselves how best to get our work done. Most employers tell their employees when to come to work, when to leave, and how they're expected to work. Treated like children, many people adopt the role. They lose the *confidence* and *will* to take initiative or to think independently. Empower and trust employees to get their work done, and you'll receive more appreciation, motivation and commitment. Measure your employees by *the value they generate*, not by the number of hours they work, or how they get work done.

- **Significance (spiritual).** We long to feel that what we're doing truly matters. Most companies today have a lofty *mission and vision statement*, and a noble set of *core values*. But what gets written on paper counts for little. What inspires us are *leaders who visibly stand for something beyond profit and enable us to get behind a meaningful mission*. You don't need to be curing cancer or solving global warming. Zappos began by selling shoes on line. But by delivering great customer service and treating its own employees equally well, CEO Tony Hsieh and his team have created a company with a *powerful sense of mission and high employee passion and loyalty*.

The companies that shift from *seeking to get more out of their people to investing in meeting their core needs*, will build huge competitive advantage. LE

Tony Schwartz is CEO of The Energy Project and author of Be Excellent at Anything and The Way We're Working Isn't Working (Free Press). Connect at Twitter.com/TonySchwartz.

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