

LMI Journal



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Understanding the Common Threads of Leadership

By Michael Diercks

Having spent more than 20 years in leadership in six different industries, at both large and small companies, I have had the opportunity to interact with leaders about their own leadership development as well as the development of their businesses. **And, I've discovered three common leadership threads:**

1. Every person that I have talked to wants to be a more effective leader. This is true of CEOs of large corporations as well as hourly workers in the smallest businesses.
2. Every person has the potential to be an effective leader. In the course of a person's lifetime, invariably, they will be put into a leadership position in some situation, whether this be a business, family, charity, church, sports team or whatever. The good news is that everyone can rise to the challenge and be an effective leader.



“Leadership is about a sense of direction. It is knowing what the next step is.”

– John Adair

3. For an individual or business to succeed and thrive in the 21st century, effective leadership skills must be developed. In today's and tomorrow's business environment, the person with the best leadership skills will more than likely prevail.

In my discussions with leaders, there have been a number of questions that come up again and again. **Here are some of them and my responses:**

◆ *“Why has leadership become such a hot topic?”*

Leadership has always been a hot topic in the sense that it has always been important. The difference today, however, is that we're being inundated with mountains of information and confronted with a multitude

of options – much more so than in the past.

Noted leadership expert John Adair said, “Leadership is about a sense of direction. It is knowing what the next step is.” With

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the huge amount of information that we have available, it presents many options, alternatives and choices that confront us.

Because leadership is about deciding on and moving in a specific direction, the need for effective leadership has become almost desperate.

◆ *“What exactly is effective leadership?”*

Author and business guru Peter F. Drucker was right about effective leadership when he said, “It has little to do with leadership qualities. Its essence is performance. A leader’s actions and a leader’s professed beliefs must be congruent.”

Leadership actually involves a combination of three separate factors: ability or knowledge; attitudes or beliefs; and actions or habits. To be a truly effective leader, you must have all three working in unison.

◆ *“What is the best way to develop leadership?”*

Traditional methods such as books, seminars or university programs are sometimes inadequate in two ways.

First, they tend to concentrate on only one factor – knowledge – while excluding the other two.

It’s relatively easy to teach people about leadership whereas it’s much more difficult to get people to adopt new beliefs or change their habits.

Second, if they attempt to deal with beliefs or habits, it’s usually in a way that has no lasting effect. Leader-

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“Leadership development can and should be one of the most profitable investments an individual or company ever makes.”

– ***Michael Diercks***



ship comes from experience.

◆ *“Why don’t individuals and companies do more to develop their leadership abilities?”*

Individuals and companies tend to view leadership development as an expense where the goal automatically becomes to reduce it as much as possible,

especially in today’s intense competition.

Companies even speak of leadership skills as soft skills, implying that there is no measurable value in them.

Individuals and companies need to change this and view their development as an investment. Instead of trying to reduce it, the goal then becomes to maximize the return.

“Individuals and companies need to... view their development as an investment.”

Our organization calls it return on people investment. We show our clients a measurable return of 100 percent to 1,000 percent or more, straight to their bottom lines.

Leadership development can and should be one of the most profitable investments an individual or company ever makes. And, it’s becoming an investment that individuals and companies can no longer afford not to make.

Praise Learning

As a leader, your responsibility is to create a learning environment by your attitude toward innovation and change, and by how you communicate to your team members your estimate of their potential and worth. Your attitudes establish the atmosphere of receptiveness to behavior change.

The attitudes of people toward training are almost always a direct reflection of your own attitude. If you're fearful of employee development, if you fear change, or if you see training as a step toward enabling employees to "get out of hand," the general feeling of those you work with will reflect these attitudes.

The success of a training and development program is determined by the extent of the behavior change it produces. Trainees must believe that a change in their behavior is appreciated. If the new behavior goes unnoticed, people quickly revert to the old, more comfortable behavior. Encourage people to grow and use more of their potential.

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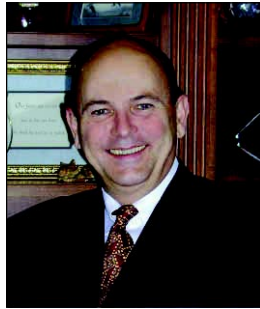
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Inspirational Vision vs. Uninspired To-Do List



David Byrd
President, LMI

The most difficult task in planning is designing and building a passionate vision – a willed future, a picture of the future as you want to make it. Without a driving, inspirational vision, planning is reduced to nothing more than an uninspired to-do list. Vision places the compelling *why* behind what you do. **From both personal and organizational experiences, I have developed a five-step system for building clear vision:**

- ❖ Keep an ongoing dream list. A dream list is simply a list of wishful goals that you have always wanted to accomplish – everything that you have ever wanted to be, have, or do. This exercise forces you to use your imagination. Dreams are the fuel for our internal drive
- ❖ Write a vision statement. The statement should be written in paragraph format and should be no more than one page. It should be dated five to ten years into the future but written in present tense. Write a clear description of your ideal future, as if you are already there. You should be somewhat realistic, but be careful not to limit your potential.

- ❖ Set annual goals that will move you closer to your vision. Goals should always be driven from vision. Each year review your dream list and set specific, measurable goals. Ask

“Without a driving, inspirational vision, planning is reduced to nothing more than an uninspired to-do list.”

yourself, what can I realistically accomplish this year that will move me closer to my vision? This is where specific goals begin to bring you closer to your vision. Each goal should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and tangible with a target date for completion.

- ❖ Review your vision statement annually and make revisions. Your evaluation should always be about how compelling the vision is, never how realistic it is. Vision is never about reality. Vision is always about using the gift of imagination to visualize your ideal future. That compelling vision then drives your daily actions and behaviors.
- ❖ Share your vision statement with a mentor, and ask him or her to hold you accountable. Accountability and results management are two of the strongest motivations I have ever experienced. Many people are afraid of accountability because it requires commitment. Commitment puts the reality of your vision on the line. If you resist accountability for your commitments, you trade the drive of an inspiring vision for the fear of commitment.

Effective leaders are aware of how the power of vision counterbalances the forces of apathy. Burnout, stagnation, lack of focus, and lack of drive are merely symptoms of the forces of apathy and are inevitable without a passionate vision. The power of vision keeps the effective leader moving toward a passionate vision for tomorrow, rather than settling into a comfort zone of security today.

**Excerpt from David Byrd's new book "The Tripping Point in Leadership: Overcoming Organizational Apathy"*

With Positive Expectancy,

David Byrd
President, Leadership Management Institute™

Motivate By Changing People's Attitudes

Leaders fill many different types of positions and perform widely diverse functions. But the chief task of leadership is the same for all: to motivate people who will then use their skills and efforts to achieve the goals of the organization. The operative word in that definition is *motivate*.

The attention given to motivation isn't new. Since the first recorded history, leaders have attempted to discover new ways to attract the willing cooperation of others. Records of their attempts – along with accounts of their successes and failures – have filled countless volumes, but all of the different methods discovered can be sorted into three basic categories: fear, incentive, and attitude.

Motivation Through Fear

The oldest method of motivation is fear. Physical strength was originally the source of power, and weaker members of the group followed orders because they feared the physical punishment that was sure to result from refusal to conform.

As society became more organized, other types of power came into play: social, economic, and political pressures forced obedience. Even today, the attempt persists to use fear to motivate people to behave in desired ways. Families and schools try to control children with the threat of punishment or withholding of privileges. The threat of punishment is the basis of our criminal justice system. Fear is even used in the business world with rules and policies for undesirable behavior – all the way from a memo of censure placed in the personnel file to denial of increased pay to outright dismissal.

Motivation Through Incentive

Although fear is often a powerful motivator, many would-be leaders who lacked the personal power to demand obedience looked for other methods of producing the cooperation they wanted. They realized that every behavior is the result of a desire either to gain a benefit or to avoid a loss. Since they lacked the power to enforce a threatened loss, they offered an incentive – the promise of some gain to those who complied.

Incentive motivation is generally regarded as a more enlightened strategy than fear. Families and schools use the promise of rewards to coax children to perform. Organizations offer people awards, prizes, and privileges for certain achievements.

Motivation Through Attitude

The master method of motivation is attitude. When people are willing to perform because they personally believe that a particular course of action is right, they're self-motivated. It's then unnecessary for anyone else to "motivate" them.

All three of these basic approaches to motivation have been available since the early beginnings of organized society. Both fear and incentive motivation have consistently proved to be temporary.

Fear ceases to exist if the power to inflict punishment is gone. But it also ceases to motivate action if people find out they can live with the punishment, or that the threat of punishment isn't likely to be carried out. A team member who is careless about following established procedures learns that the only punishment is an angry reprimand; it may be easier to tune out the lecture than to follow the rules

exactly. Fear is successful as a motivator only if the pressure is constant and power to punish is exercised.

Incentive motivation loses its power when the promised rewards are perceived either as unattainable or as unappealing. When employees consistently earn a promised reward over a period of time, that reward is expected. It no longer appears desirable enough to inspire extra effort. It's soon looked upon as a right instead of a reward. Incentives must become progressively more impressive to continue to motivate desired behavior.

Both fear and incentive motivation fall short because they're externally controlled and temporary. Attitude motivation, on the other hand, is a permanent force for producing desired behavior – whether the individual is working alone or in a group.

Attitude motivation grows out of the individual's dreams and desires. It's a function of the need to belong, achieve, and use the innate talents with which the individual is endowed. The nature of attitude motivation addresses the basic problems a leader faces. Motivating people is basically a matter of showing them how to develop the power of self-motivation and then demonstrating to them the desirability of using that power to accomplish the organization's purpose.

Admittedly, it takes longer to start the process of achievement in your organization through attitude motivation than you might produce through either fear or incentive. But once team members have experienced the sense of fulfillment that comes through the use of attitude motivation, they're permanently sold on making full use of their potential.



Increase Delegating Effectiveness

Many managers and team leaders fail to delegate or share responsibility because they fear that the quality of the work will suffer. They complain, "If I want it done right, I'll have to do it myself." If you're tempted to put off delegating, remember that at some time in your career you didn't know how to do what you can now do easily. Someone invested the time to teach you. Admittedly, training someone may involve a considerable amount of time and effort now, but weigh this against the long-term permanent savings of both time and effort that will be yours when the training is complete.

Some managers also fail to delegate because they fear that strong, well-trained employees may replace them.

Actually, this possibility should be welcomed – not feared. When you have trained people to do your work effectively, you are available for promotion – not replacement. Even when your organization does not have promotion opportunities immediately available for you, the benefits of training other team members are still valid. In addition to maximizing your effective-



ness, you increase overall team effectiveness. Not only do you increase your team or department's flexibility in responding to needs because of the cross-training you've encouraged, you also enjoy the benefits of working with

more highly-qualified, competent, and experienced colleagues. The person who develops the talents and abilities of others and increases their productivity becomes one of the organization's most valued assets.

Increase your effectiveness as a delegator by making a specific plan for del-

egation. List all the various tasks you perform. **Your activities will fall into several categories:**

- *Tasks that could be eliminated.* You may be surprised to find that some tasks that clutter your work day are

actually unneeded. When tasks don't add value to the results you're responsible for, the best thing to do with them is to eliminate them. Determine whether the reports you make are actually used. If not, cut them out. Ask to be removed from distribution lists of paperwork that don't help you in your work. Direct members of your work group in a similar study of their own activities. If they can eliminate useless tasks and simplify others, they have more time to accept additional delegation.

- *Tasks that you must do personally.* The tasks that you must do personally are the most vital, high-priority responsibilities connected with your job. They demand your expertise, your more extensive knowledge of the organization and its goals, and possibly confidentiality.

- *Tasks that you can delegate.* Some tasks that fill your time could be done by others. A few of these can

be entrusted only to the most gifted and talented people on your team. Others could be done by anyone in the organization with only a few minutes' explanation. The easier the task is to teach, the more important it is to delegate it.

- *Tasks that could be simplified.* Some of the tasks you currently do may involve more detail than required. Analyze all tasks to find ways that you

might simplify them. Doing so may allow you to train others to take over these tasks.

Now, review the written list of various tasks you do. Take immediate action to eliminate unnecessary tasks. Then concentrate your attention on the items you could delegate to others. Make a specific plan for teaching these procedures to someone else and delegating the responsibility for them. Get started immediately on this important strategy for success.

After you've delegated some tasks, look back over your task list at the items you've identified as your personal responsibility. Estimate how much time you actually spend on these tasks. As the most important elements of your job – your high pay-off activities – they should fill the major portion of your time. Once you've delegated or eliminated less important items, you can give more time to these vital high pay-off activities and still have time left to accept new responsibilities. Set a goal to spend 70 to 80 percent of your time on high pay-off tasks and new responsibilities.

Live a Life of Integrity

By Bill Moyer

The news today is filled with stories about well-known people who have fallen from grace. These lapses and errors in judgement from our leaders illustrate very clearly the erosion of values and integrity that exists today.

Whether it's a politician who has an affair with a staff member or a religious leader who embezzles money, these high profile stories make a profound impact on our future leaders. It appears in the news like these people have lost their integrity all at once, when in reality we lose our integrity by one degree of dishonesty at a time. Have you ever padded your expense account? Have you ever copied a piece of software for your computer? Did you ever tell someone you did not get a message when you really did, but simply didn't return the call?

All of us are leaders in some area of our lives, whether in a formal position at work, in our family, or in a volunteer capacity. As a leader it's important to remember that "Everything you say or do counts" and "you can never not lead."

“Living a life of integrity is not an easy thing to do. We are constantly faced with temptations and short cuts in all areas of our lives.”

Integrity with your spouse is total commitment to your marriage and total honesty in your communication. Integrity to other people is to always do what you say you will do. Integrity to your friends is to simply be who you are and not wear a mask of deceit. Integrity at work is a full day's work for a full days pay and treating customers, coworkers, and your boss with respect.



“The ultimate test of leadership is to become a person of integrity... You can live a life of integrity!”

– Bill Moyer

Remember that people do not forget integrity mistakes. Leaders who sustain trust are consistent and maintain a high level of integrity.

What are some of the foundation principles to be a person of integrity?

- ▲ Always err on the side of fairness.
- ▲ Stand up for what you believe in.

- ▲ Keep your promises.
- ▲ Live what you teach.
- ▲ Do what you say you will even if it hurts.

Living a life of integrity is not an easy thing to do. We are constantly faced with temptations and short cuts in all areas of our lives. The ultimate test of leadership is to become a person of integrity. The impact you make on others will be judged solely on who you are and not on what you have accomplished. You are responsible for the choices you make in life! You are responsible for your success and your failure! Take personal responsibility for your life and all of the abundance of the world can be yours. You can live a life of integrity!

“All of us are leaders in some area of our lives, whether in a formal position at work, in our family, or in a volunteer capacity. As a leader, it's important to remember that ‘Everything you say or do counts’ and ‘you can never not lead.’”

Closing Generation Gaps

By Richard Underwood, D.Min.

During a recent management training session, it became very obvious that all but two of the managers were Baby Boomers and Traditionalists. Many of the management scenarios discussed involved conflict with Generation X and Y aged employees. For example, a manager was having trouble with a direct report arriving late and staying late. This same employee refused to work extra hours in order to complete a special project. When the manager was questioned about the employee's behavior, she emphatically stated the employee was lazy and he didn't want to be accountable. Others agreed. One of the Generation X managers asked the others to consider if maybe there was a value difference about work ethic.

It's common to find four generations of employees in most organizations. While it's dangerous to stereotype, research shows generalizations can be helpful. An understanding of the differences may lead to better recruiting, motivating, managing, retention, relationships, work environment, and results.

During any generation, the media bombards children with compelling messages. Educational systems, parenting patterns, and other unique circumstances in life all shape and mold the children of a given era. Other diverse issues also effect the development of attitudes, values, and behaviors such as race, socio-economic status, ethnic background, family configuration, and regional differences. Some are impacted by more than one generational influence such as those on the cusp between generations. However, each generation has a mood or tone that pervades the developing perspectives of its age group.

Here is a quick summary of some of the value differences between the generations:

- ❖ Traditionalists (1930-1945) – • Outlook – practical
 - Work ethic – dedicated, loyal
 - View of authority – respectful
 - Leadership by – hierarchy/top down
 - Relationships – personal sacrifice
 - Perspective – patriotic
- ❖ Baby Boomers (1946-1964) – • Outlook – optimistic
 - Work ethic – driven/live to work/competitive
 - View of authority – love/hate
 - Leadership by – consensus
 - Relationships – personal gratification
 - Perspective – team

- ❖ Generation X (1965-1976) – • Outlook – skeptical
 - Work ethic – balanced/work to live, casual / technically literate
 - View of authority – unimpressed/not intimidated
 - Leadership by – competence
 - Relationships – reluctant to commit, independent
 - Perspective - self
- ❖ Generation Y (1977-1990) – • Outlook – hopeful, confident, can do attitude
 - Work ethic – ambitious, meaningful work, want goals, need immediate feedback, technologically proficient, or learners
 - View of authority – relaxed, polite, want to please
 - Leadership by – achievers
 - Relationships – loyal
 - Perspective – civic /community awareness

The following principles may help in mixing the generations more successfully:



- ◆ Initiate conversations about the generational differences. Talk and listen to fellow employees at least once a month. Specifically, discuss the meaning of accountability and responsibility.

- ◆ Learn to appreciate the strengths of employees of different value orientations.

- ◆ Involve employee representatives of each generational group in strategic planning.

- ◆ Help all employees understand the meaning of their role and their contributions to the overall goals of the organization.

- ◆ Offer opportunities for self-development and professional development.

- ◆ Be responsive to employee needs. Discover what motivates each individual.

- ◆ Be flexible and offer options with work hours, rewards, and incentives.

- ◆ Expect the best from everyone.

- ◆ Seek a variety of perspectives on important issues.

- ◆ Create a team value statement and use an Internet based real time feedback system to monitor behavioral results.

Paul J. Meyer suggested that leadership ability and effectiveness are enhanced tremendously by a leadership philosophy that calls for belief in the worth of people of all ages, belief in their abilities, and belief in their potential for growth. If we believe that outstanding leadership is achieving great results with and through people, then an extra effort to understand, appreciate, and be responsive to all age workers is essential.

By taking an honest look at the values that have influenced your work force and management philosophy, you can find creative means for closing the generation gaps.

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Publisher: Ronnie Marroquin

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