

UNCOMMON LEADERS: MANAGING THE BLUR OF IT!

By Rich Niemiec, TUSC

"I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. I possess tremendous power to make life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration; I can humiliate or humor; hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis is escalated or de-escalated, and if a person is humanized or de-humanized. If I treat people as they are, I make them worse. If I treat people as they ought to be, I help them become what they are capable of becoming." -- Goethe

ABSTRACT

Where have all the heroes gone? The answer is that they are all around you waiting for you to pull the best out of them. This presentation is a sabbatical from the technical presentations this week. It is a time to look at the non-technical traits that allow a professional to succeed and propel those around him to succeed. While technical proficiency is paramount to success, character traits are equally important to the success of a team and a business. This presentation will be a reminder of the importance of the character traits as an ingredient to success. Books on leaders and leadership have been around for a long time, yet never has the need for leaders in the information systems world been so great. The World Wide Web is becoming the main medium for world transactions. Members of the IS community must now become leaders and visionaries within their companies as the landscape of technology changes beneath us daily. The goal of this talk will be to discuss general leadership traits that make the uncommon leaders that will build the Ford's of the future.

The Laws of Leadership haven't changed. You still need to make the correct decision at the correct time to successfully move a business forward. Exercising good timing as well as good character is imperative to a great leader. A leader who exercises good character traits will find that he or she will always be aware of timing concerns since employees and customers will communicate it. Maxwell's results of timing are listed below:

Results of Timing

Wrong action/wrong time = Disaster

Right action/wrong time = Resistance

Wrong action/right time = Mistake

Right action/right time = Success

Remember that leaders make sacrifices for everyone else. As the quote goes, "One of the costs of leadership are your own rights. As responsibility grows, you lose the right to think about yourself." As the leader, you are a contributor to humanity.

ARE YOU A BOSS OR A LEADER?

"Where have all the Heroes Gone?" - John Mariotti

Are you a boss or a leader? If you are a boss, you are depriving yourself of the time that you desperately need to succeed. Leaders succeed because the team they've built doesn't need or want someone breathing down their neck. If you find that you constantly need to "ride" a person to get work out of them, then you are spending your efforts in the wrong place. Take the time to correctly position them in the organization and then teach them to take charge of that area. You will be surprised when they start helping you retrieve time

instead of soaking it from you. Below are some traits of bosses and leaders. Investigate the changes that you can in positioning your staff to move yourself from the left to the right.

Bosses

Creates Fear
Says "I"
Job should be done
Rely on Authority
Drives
Fixes Blame
Rules/10% problem
Causes Resentment
Work is drudgery
Problems are disasters

Leaders

Builds Confidence
Says "We"
Career should be forged
Rely on Cooperation
Leads
Solves Problems/Fixes Mistakes
Works along 90% Cooperative
Fosters growing Enthusiasm
Work is interesting
Problems are opportunities

Which Covey box you find yourself in may also help determine whether you have been acting more like a boss or a leader. Stress is probably the most frequent cause for poor leadership. Investigate the chart below to see causes for missing leadership.

Bosses

Stress
Burnout
Crisis Management
Putting out Fires

Leaders

Vision and Perspective
Balance
Manage with Discipline and Control
Few Crises

Focusing on the causes for missing leadership and changing the situation will lead to success. No change means that things in motion will continue in the same direction.

Understanding the top issues of the CEO and/or CIO points the leader in the correct direction. Here are common top issues for a CEO and CIO:

CEO Top Issues

- Increasing profitability & lower costs
- Business growth
- eCommerce improvement
- Improve IT performance
- Strategic/Cultural Improvements
- Mergers and acquisitions

CIO Top Issues

- Improve IT performance & lower costs
- Web enablement of all systems
- Increase productivity through automation
- Enterprise storage/database architecture
- Knowledge management

BUILDING A LEARNING ORGANIZATION

The companies that will succeed in the current Blur of Technology are the ones that have built an environment that is a Learning Organization. The traits of this type of organization are

- People feel that they're doing something that matters.
- Every individual is growing/stretching
- Team is more intelligent together than apart
- Organization aware of its underlying knowledge base
- Visions emerge from all levels – Leaders manage
- Employees know what's going on
- Free to inquire about assumptions/biases
- Employees are colleagues with mutual respect
- Employees experiment/risk ... not killed for a mistake

If you don't have a learning environment, you are not prepared for the pace that is upon us. You must make changes that allow your organization to move in this direction. Without change, you will continue in the same direction at a time in history where doing so is not an option that will bring success.

INTEGRITY

"Oil and truth are bound to come to the surface at any time."

Integrity is honesty that stands the test of time with character. It takes a lifetime to gain, yet only a moment to compromise. As we head from the information age into the knowledge age, people and relationships become more important. The uncommon leader who deals with co-workers with integrity will be the ones that rise to the top. People often say that your character is your destiny. Many people judge character by weighing integrity much greater than the other character attributes. The companies that have employees and leaders with integrity will be the ones that become the Ford's of the future as the knowledge age matures. Integrity is instilled in employees by praising integrity when it is displayed and not allowing character that does not display integrity.

MORAL COURAGE

"A well beaten path may not lead in the right direction."

Moral Courage is standing up for what is right instead of standing where it is convenient or comfortable. Many say that moral courage is no longer a necessity for our leaders. I beg to differ. I believe that the leader lacking in moral courage may get results in the short term, but will be surpassed in the long term by leaders and companies that exercise moral courage with co-workers and customers. Moral courage is instilled in employees by setting an example and correcting them tactfully when they fail to understand the complex feelings of another individual.

"In the end, we will not remember the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." – Martin Luther King Jr.

The quote above reminds us that it's not only what we say, but also what we don't say that imprints the fabric of our character in another's memory.

PHYSICAL COURAGE

"Success usually comes to those that are too busy to be looking for it." - Henry David Thoreau

Physical courage is the tenacity of mind and of body in adversity. Physical courage (often of the mind) is beginning to determine the fine line between success and failure in today's fast-paced business world. Technology continues to set a blistering pace, leaving those who must learn and adapt to change exhausted both mentally and physically. A lack in the supply of IS personnel continues to drain the overworked few who can stay with the pace of technology. The road continues to bend and add stress and time to the job of the IT professional. Those who tenaciously adapt to change will be our uncommon leaders at the companies of the future. Physical courage is instilled in employees by sharing a vision that they desperately would like to achieve and then providing them the tools to get there.

SELF CONTROL

"When a person burns with anger or frustration, it is their cue to be silent."

Self control is maintaining your composure when you have every physical and mental right to lose it. As the workload increases and the days become longer, how easy it becomes to lose our self control at least to some minor level. As companies fight for control of the Web and the consumer's attention, the time allowed to get things done will be greatly compressed and stress will be at an all-time high. The business teams rich with self control will be the ones that adapt best to the bend in the road. Self control is instilled in employees by tactful communication and setting an example.

ENTHUSIASM

"One person with enthusiasm makes the majority."

Enthusiasm is the ability to bring a team to a level of performance by painting a picture of a vision that they desperately want to achieve. With the stresses of change, continual education and overworked IT professionals among us, leaders need to employ enthusiasm among teams to relieve stress and awaken purpose and vision. Leaders who understand what motivates the individuals of their respective teams will be the ones that succeed. Enthusiasm is instilled in teams by sharing vision. Leaders are always in motion. As Mario Andretti said: "If everything seems under control, you're just not going fast enough."

TACT

"If you haven't any enemies to forgive, pardon a few of your friends."

Tact is being able to communicate with others in a friendly and professional manner. There is no longer a supply of IT professionals who meet the demands of a technology that rules all segments of business and profit. No longer will our leaders be able to get away with treating employees poorly in any way. The tactful leader will succeed; an IT-starved market unwilling to put up with any types of prejudice will bury the un-tactful leaders. Tact is instilled in employees through tactful communication and setting an example.

KNOWLEDGE

"Opportunity has a way of calling on those who are already successful."

Knowledge will be king in next century. Adapting to changing technology continues to determine success. Those who educate their teams effectively will succeed in their business, but more importantly, they will succeed in keeping the employees who will determine the future success of a business. Knowledge is

cultivated in employees and co-workers by setting up appropriate learning goals for them and implementing plans that create time for education.

INITIATIVE

"When is the last time you tried to punch a hole in the sky?"

Initiative is taking on a task or carrying out a plan without being told what to do every step of the way. Great leaders have teams of employees that are full of initiative. Their teams rarely need more than the vision or the direction; they will complete the plan for success. Leaders with teams that lack initiative will be buried with an endless task of micro management. Initiative is instilled in employees and co-workers by allowing them to fail in their efforts and then showing them the path for success.

RESPECT

"Talk is cheap but like other cheap things it is liable to prove expensive in the end."

Respect is something should be given automatically and yet it is something that is earned over time. The uncommon leaders gain the respect of others by displaying the traits of an uncommon leader, yet they are also the first to show respect for others, no matter how different or complex another individual can be. With the infinite number of personalities that exist in this world, only the true leader understands and respects the individuals around them. Instill respect in employees by showing respect to them.

LOYALTY

"Loyalty is working toward something you believe in."

Loyalty is standing true to something or someone you believe in. Loyalty continues to be a fleeting trait with employees as "Show Me the Money" replaces it. America will achieve a lower standard of success if employees continue to shorten their duration of employment. The cost and stress of changing jobs for the both employer and the employee is great. Loyalty must be re-awakened by instilling it in employees through rewards and gratitude.

UNSELFISHNESS

"You will never become successful without the help of others."

Unselfishness is loving and caring for those around you enough to share that which makes up success. More and more blue chip companies are implementing stock option plans in an effort to gain employee loyalty. The leader who unselfishly shares success with others will be pushed to greater heights. Instill unselfishness in employees by noting the times it is displayed and unselfishly sharing success with them.

FORTITUDE

"You're character will be your destiny."

Fortitude is strength of mind that allows one to endure adversity or pain with courage and character. Fortitude is probably the true measure of how well we have progressed in life as individuals. It is often a painful reminder of how far we have to go in our development of fortitude when we are presented with an extremely difficult situation. If we can instill fortitude in our leaders and teams, we are guaranteed success. The best way to instill fortitude in an individual is to notice those times when they exude it.

“I desire so to conduct the affairs of this administration that if at the end, when I come to lay down the reins of power, I have lost every other friend on earth, I shall at least have one friend left, and that friend shall be down inside of me.”

- Abraham Lincoln

SET YOUR GOALS NOW:

Set your goals NOW (Record your goals for the list below):

1. Write down your top 7 goals for success and happiness; Have your spouse do the same
2. Write the 7 steps you need to take to achieve those goals
3. Write down the 7 qualities from this paper that you will most need to achieve those goals
4. Write down the 7 qualities from this paper that you are most deficient in
5. Work on numbers 2, 3 and 4 above and number 1 will take care of itself

HISTORICAL AGES AND ACCELERATION

The event horizon is that area near a black hole where you are caught by the gravity of the black hole. You start accelerating faster and faster. The event horizon was something called freedom and democracy; the result was the industrial revolution and PC revolution. With the Internet, we will hit the knowledge age. Those countries that exercise freedom and democracy when we enter the knowledge age will drive us to an acceleration never seen and a world that won't resemble the one we now live in. See you there!

<u>Historical Age</u>	<u>Valued</u>
Agrarian (Agricultural) Age	Land (Pre 1700)
Industrial Age (Late 1700s)	Companies/Materials
Information Age	Technology
Knowledge Age	Knowledge/Data

How exponentially fast are we moving? Consider this...just over 100 years ago there was no such thing as a car! In 1943, the chairman of IBM, Thomas Watson said: “I think that there is world market for maybe 5 computers.” Bill Gates said that nobody should ever need more than 640K of memory in 1980. We continue to accelerate. The knowledge age will accelerate all of our lives faster than the industrial revolution or the PC revolution did.

The stock market .com frenzy may have been a blip on the screen, but the reality of technology advancements are not blips. They are real and they are exponential. If you aren't sure, consider where the theoretical amount of addressable memory is. You can see the exponential rise in these numbers and will see that rise in everyday life as they make the theoretical possibilities into real ones (you can't find a hardware manufacturer that offers 16 exabytes of memory yet).

	<u>Address Direct</u>	<u>Indirect/Extended</u>
<u>4-Bit:</u>	16	(640)
<u>8-Bit:</u>	256	(65,536)
<u>16-Bit:</u>	65,536	(1,048,576)
<u>32-Bit:</u>	4,294,967,296	
<u>64-Bit:</u>	18,446,744,073,709,551,616	

When the hardware physically implements the theoretical possibilities of 64-Bit, things will dramatically change in all aspects of life. Moving from 32-bit to 64-bit will be like from 1971 to 2000 overnight.

OTHER SOURCES

There are a variety of sources that will help you gain the character that will drive success. Find a leader of the past and you will see the same leadership traits over and over again. Benjamin Franklin and Abraham Lincoln lived and lead during two tremendous periods of freedom's history, the American Revolution and the Civil War. Some of the traits that each of them lived by are mentioned below.

Benjamin Franklin's list includes the following: Temperance, silence, order, resolution, frugality, industry, sincerity, justice, moderation, cleanliness, tranquility, chastity, and humility.

In *The Words Lincoln Lived By*, author Gene Grissman points to the following Lincoln traits: Determination, courage, honesty, morality, patience, magnanimity, time management, work, diligence, curiosity, vision, assertiveness, tenacity, self-preservation, justice, influence, responsibility, communication, focus, compromise, flexibility, simplicity, energy, tact, conciliation, forgiveness, ambition, study, resourcefulness, ethics, altruism, compassion, trust, achievement, citizenship, democracy, patriotism, tolerance, idealism, self-reliance, piety, timing, adversity, deliberation, research, conviction, freedom, self-discipline, humor, friendship, charity, and life's brevity.

Here is the Seven Point Creed that John Wooden's Dad gave to him when he was younger:

- Be true to yourself.
- Make each day your masterpiece.
- Help others.
- Drink deeply from good books, especially the Bible.
- Make friendship a fine art.
- Build a shelter against a rainy day.
- Pray for guidance and give thanks for your blessings every day.

*Talent is God-given. Be humble.
Fame is man-given. Be grateful.
Conceit is self-given. Be careful.*" - John Wooden

If you don't have a mentor, read a book on one of the above leaders. It will be just like having a mentor. I look at each of these as mentors. Past leaders influence future leaders.

How they became leaders

Natural Gifting	10%
Crisis	5%
Influenced by a Leader	85%

SUMMARY

People write books on success and making more money all of the time. What they forget is that the equation for success is not one that can be chased down. The equation is to simply live the traits of the uncommon leader. Only then will success find you! Freedom brought innovation, innovation brought advances rarely seen in the world. If we can couple technological advances with character advances, we will build a future that will make current visions of utopia archaic.

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-- Goethe

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