



TALENT JOURNEY

BUILD A TEAM • CREATE A DESTINY

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Servant Leaders – The Path to Success in the 21st Century

Everyone holds some type of leadership role in life. Wherever you lead - home, sports, community, church, or work – you have an important opportunity to influence and some core leadership principles apply.

Most people think of leadership as a position of power and control: “I tell others what to do and they do it,” or “I finally get to run things the way I want to.” Leadership naturally carries a certain amount of power and authority which increases or decreases depending on the position of leadership. However, the real test of leadership impact is how effectively leadership power and authority are used in accomplishing the goals of the organization.

Most organizational charts take the shape of a pyramid, with the leader at the top and those led listed somewhere beneath them. This type of chart implies a top down approach to leadership. In fact, many leadership authors applaud this traditional pyramid approach when talking about setting vision. Most of us agree that leaders are ultimately responsible for setting and communicating vision within their organizations.

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Align Structure with Goals for Higher Performance

Customer focus combined with proper alignment of vision with strategy, structure, people and processes is the best way to outperform and outlast your competition. When these critical components are in harmony, results are astounding. To sharpen your competitive edge, look at what keeps you from getting results you deserve.

Whether you are a group of one or many, the way you structure your organization can make the critical difference between simply satisfied and overwhelmingly loyal customers. That significantly affects revenue and profit.

The best organizations deliberately make the most of their resources...in this case people. Winning companies define clear roles and responsibilities and their customers (internal and external) find them easy to work with. How about you? Does your structure make it easy, or difficult, to create loyal customers and get great results?

You can have outstanding people and motivate them toward action, but if structure restricts innovation and higher levels of productivity, improvements are temporary at best. Structure can either help or hinder your ability to react to the changing needs of the customers you serve. You cannot change the world in which you do business, but you can create a structure to best respond to your own market.

Definition

Structure is different from culture and different than process. Structure is about roles and reporting relationships; process is about rules and procedures; and, culture is about attitudes and behavior.

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Culture influenced how your current structure evolved and will affect your ability to successfully implement changes.

A great tool for evaluating and improving your structure is a simple organizational chart. If yours is out of date or nonexistent, the exercise of creating it will be enlightening. Include relationships with outside suppliers, contractors and anyone else you count on to provide goods and services to your customers. Once the picture is clear, you can begin to see where you may be out of alignment and what stands between you and the ability to excel.



Assessment

In many organizations, a group of people creates strategy, another focuses on getting and keeping customers, another manages people, while still others run internal systems. At times, it may seem they are separated by walls ten feet high and ten feet thick because, even in small organizations, the right hand literally doesn't know what the left hand is doing. What is your inter-departmental strategy? Does it take an Act of Congress to get something done? How satisfied are employees with their ability to function and what impact does dissatisfaction have on client service?

Great indicators of mis-alignment are “work-arounds.” When individuals bend or ignore standard reporting and decision-making procedures, it signals a problem. It's common to have people working at cross-purposes without even recognizing it. This leads to competition between individuals and functions, mis-allocation of resources, lost productivity, customer complaints, poor morale, duplicated effort, pass the buck mentality, absenteeism, employee turnover, stress, loss of clients, lower profit...have you had enough? Let's turn to solutions.

Alignment

The best thing for yourself, your organization and those you serve is a regular check up. The org chart is a great place to start. One of my long-time, favorite book recommendations is Michael Gerber's *The E-Myth Revisited*. Gerber popularized the phrase, “work **on** your business, not **in** it.” Although written over a decade ago, the concepts are still strong, the message straightforward, and the lessons on systematizing your business are practical and applicable.

Continued on next column –

Whether it's been a few years or you've never read it, try reading it twice within a couple of weeks. The repetition will add to the value.

For additional insight into your own structure's effectiveness, professional organizational assessments range from simple to extremely complex. Once obstacles are identified, the solutions may not be hard to find.



Questions to Ask Yourself and Your Team

- ✓ Are the right people in place to answer customer questions?
- ✓ What is the response time for customer inquiries?
- ✓ Are we flexible or burdened with bureaucracy and lengthy approval processes?
- ✓ Is it easy or difficult to place an order?
- ✓ Are invoices correct and easy to understand?
- ✓ How do we react when we make a mistake?
- ✓ Do departments work together smoothly or is there a silo mentality?
- ✓ Are there measurements in place to determine if customer needs are being met?
- ✓ What functions and activities add ZERO VALUE to the customer?
- ✓ Are front line employees and contract service providers equipped to resolve client issues quickly?

BOTTOM LINE: DOES YOUR STRUCTURE ALLOW YOU TO DO THE RIGHT THINGS RIGHT? When the answer is no, it's an opportunity to increase revenues, customer loyalty and profit. The better you understand customer needs, wants, and expectations, the greater your ability to structure your organization to create a true competitive advantage.

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Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.

– John F. Kennedy

To will is to select a goal, determine a course of action that will bring one to that goal, and then hold to that action till the goal is reached. The key is action.

– Thomas Hanson

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Some 21st century leadership gurus, however, also advocate turning the traditional pyramid upside down. This inverted pyramid depicts leaders serving the needs of those reporting to them. It is a model of servant leadership. The servant leader's primary role is to grow and develop the people they lead.

A natural discomfort can emerge at first glance when considering the notion of servant leadership. Becoming a servant often conjures up feelings of weakness, softness, or lack of resolve. In reality, those attributes are the exact opposite of what it takes to be an effective servant leader. Servant leaders demonstrate strength, transparency and tenacious resolve as they instruct, teach, encourage and grow their people.

According to Max DePree, former CEO of Fortune 500 Company Herman Miller Inc., "The art of leadership is liberating people to do what is required of them in the most effective and humane way possible. Thus, the leader is the 'servant' of his followers in that he/she removes the obstacles that prevent them from doing their jobs." Eloquently said, Max DePree awakens our minds to think of leadership as the place from which positional authority equates to helping others be successful. This flies in the face of top down "tell them what to do" management. In short, the true leader enables his or her followers to realize their full potential.



A shift in style and skills aligned with servant leadership requires a move away from a dictatorial "project/task" approach to a critical "results through people" orientation. When the focus is on making others successful in their roles – people learn, grow and flourish. The result is increased effectiveness, confidence, and overall organizational success.

A servant leader should not be deterred by the initial investment. In the short run, it can take longer and requires more effort on the leader's part. It means giving more of one's self to others. It requires patience and compassion. It also means giving up control and allowing others to experience recognition and reward. A motivated leader can learn and adopt these concepts of servant-leadership, and the rewards are great! It is a win-win all around, for the individual doing the task, the leader, and the company.

Closing thought: "The bottom line is that leadership shows up in the inspired action of others. We traditionally have assessed leaders themselves. But maybe we should assess leadership by the degree to which people around leaders are inspired." Dr. Jack Weber, Professor of Management, University of Virginia.

Edited by Diane Brown and Alane Taylor of TJ Associates, LLC. from June 2008 Newsletter written by Chaplain Bill Stewart of Lexus Toyota Carlsbad, CA. Copyright protected worldwide.

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.

– John Quincy Adams



ONE MINUTE IDEAS

10-Minute Organizing Tasks

When you have 10 minutes to spare, tackle one of these tasks:

- ◆ Read a brief article or report
- ◆ Organize your work area
- ◆ Clean out a desk drawer
- ◆ Complete your to-do list for the next day
- ◆ Relax by breathing deeply

Say 'NO' with tact

Protect your time-without appearing to be unhelpful-by saying "no" without using the word. *Here's how:*

Explain what you would have to eliminate to meet the request.

Example: I'd like to help plan the conference, but I would have to cancel my new-client meetings in Detroit."

"We must walk consciously only part way toward our goal, and then leap in the dark to our success."

– Henry David Thoreau

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Second Passports: The State Department's Best-Kept Secret

Some countries will not permit entry to travelers whose passports show that they have previously visited certain other countries. Most Arab countries, for example, won't allow entry to people whose passports have a stamp showing that they visited Israel. A similar situation confronts people traveling among some African countries. Traveling freely among these countries is a matter of carrying two passports and knowing when to use them.

You can get a second passport, referred to as a restricted passport. It looks just like a regular US passport; except it clearly states that it is limited to travel for specific countries.



To find out if you need a restricted passport, check the Visa Information Sheet available from any passport office. Extra protection: Check with the consulate or embassy of each country you plan to visit.



Reason: Customs regulations of foreign governments change so quickly that even the State Department is unable to keep its information completely up-to-date.

Avoid relying on information from travel agencies. They use the "*Travel Information Manual*" published by an airline organization. Since the compiling, distribution, etc., can take a long time, the manual can be out-of-date as soon as it's issued.

While traveling, be sure to stay on top of possible entry rule changes at borders. If entrance to a country depends on the restricted passport, show only that document. Most governments frown upon using two passports and there could be repercussions. If you use the wrong passport on arrival, you'll probably be refused entry.

Very important: The restricted passport may not be honored by some countries. If not, contact the nearest US embassy or consulate for emergency assistance.

Source: US State Department

The Spirit of Leadership Column

Something is holding me back professionally. How can a coach help?

The best coaching "answer" is a question. A good coach asks questions to help you do, be and give your best with the right intention. Consider the following "self-coaching" questions. Maybe it's time to hire a coach.

How are you driven by what might be possible? What do you really want? What risks are you avoiding? How much of your life is compared to what others expect? What truth lies in others' perceptions? How do you know? What are you willing to learn or unlearn? If money was not an issue, to what one thing would you dedicate yourself? How would your life be different if you pursued just one important "dream deferred"? What's stopping you? What if you don't pursue your dreams? What is important?



Four potential 'beings' exist in all of us. We can be **Explorers**, searching who we are designed to be. We can be **Sophisticates**, fooling ourselves into believing we have all the answers. We can be **Prisoners**, living to the expectations of others and not our own. We can be **Vacationers** – staying in our comfort zone, afraid of risk. Listen to the questions you may be asking yourself. What could you explore today that might take you to the edge of your potential?

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