

Leadership Challenge

Title: *Leadership Challenge: How to Get Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations*

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Leadership is not mysterious. Through research, interviews, and the experience of hundreds of managers, Kouzes and Posner show how leadership can be learned and mastered by all of us.

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Book Quotes:

Traditional management teachings tell us that the job of management is primarily one of control. The control of resources, including time, money, materials, and people. Leaders know that the more they control others, the less likely it is that people will excel. Leaders do not control. They enable others to act. (xvii)

Tradition suggests that leaders direct and control others by giving orders and by issuing policies and procedures. But we know that leaders' deeds are far more important than their words. Credibility of action is the single most significant determinant of whether a leader will be followed over time. (xvii)

As we looked deeper into this dynamic process, through the case analyses and survey questionnaires, we uncovered five fundamental practices that enabled these leaders to get extraordinary things done. When they were at their personal best, our leaders: 1. Challenged the process. 2. Inspired a shared vision. 3. Enabled others to act. 4. Modeled the way. 5. Encouraged the heart. (7- 8)

People must believe that you understand their needs and have their interests at heart. Only through an intimate knowledge of their dreams, their hopes, their aspirations, their visions, their values is the leader able to enlist their support. (10)

To begin the investigation, along with professor Warren Schmidt we surveyed nearly 1,500 managers from around the country in a study sponsored by the American Management Association. We asked the following open-ended question: "What values (personal traits or characteristics) do you look for and admire in your superiors?" More than 225 different values, traits, and characteristics were identified. Subsequent content analysis by several independent judges reduced these items into fifteen categories. The most frequent responses, in order of mention, were (1) integrity (is truthful, is trustworthy, has character, has convictions), (2) competence (is capable, is productive, is efficient), and (3) leadership (is inspiring, is decisive, provides direction). (16)

Credibility is one of the hardest attributes to earn. And it is the most fragile of human qualities. It is earned minute by minute, hour by hour, month by month, year by year. But it can be lost in very short order if not attended to. We are willing to forgive a few minor transgressions, a slip of the tongue, a misspoken word, a careless act. But there comes a time when enough is enough. And when leaders have used up all their credibility, they will find that it is nearly impossible to earn it back. (24- 25)

Managers, we believe, get other people to do, but leaders get other people to want to do. Leaders do this by first of all being credible. That is the foundation of all leadership. They establish this credibility by their actions--

- by challenging, inspiring, enabling, modeling, and encouraging. (27)

We believe that intrinsic motivation must be present if people are to do their best. And contrary to the hierarchical theory of motivation, we believe that it is possible to excel even when one is fighting for survival. So we would like to contribute another management axiom to the literature, one that helps explain why people seek to excel. What is rewarded gets done. (44)

The key to structuring activities for maximum intrinsic motivation is to find the proper balance between the opportunities for action and the person's skills. (46)

Studies on motivation research and development teams, for example, show that the work climate for success is characterized by two things: an equitable reward system that recognizes excellence and a willingness to take risks and experiment with innovative ideas. (61)

Innovation and change must be perceived as opportunities rather than threats if people are to feel strong and efficacious. Leaders should do everything they can to communicate the positive aims of the change and its benefits to individuals and the organization. They should keep channels of communication open and go overboard to inform everyone of all plans. Innovation is a breeding ground for rumor, so leaders should over-communicate. A rumor- control center might even be necessary if the change is especially traumatic. Retreats, staff meetings, workshops, teleconferences, and other methods of facilitating communication are useful in reducing the level of threat that a change might produce. (77)

Sandra Kurtzig, founder and chairperson of ASK Computer Systems, said that when you start a company, "You have to have focus." The most important role of visions in organizational life is to give focus to human energy. Visions are like lenses. They focus unrefracted rays of light. They enable everyone concerned with an enterprise to see more clearly what is ahead of them.

Just recall the last time you watched a slide show. Imagine that the projector was out of focus. How would you feel if you had to watch blurred, vague, and indistinct images for the entire presentation? We have actually done this little experiment in some of our leadership programs. The reaction is predictable. People express frustration, impatience, confusion, anger, even nausea. They avoid the situation by looking away. When we ask them whose responsibility it is to focus the projector, the vote is unanimous: "The leader, the person with the focus button." Now some people will get up out of their chairs, walk over to the projector, and focus it themselves. It is gratifying that individuals in organizations are assertive enough to take control of any situation. But this act does not change how these people feel. They are still annoyed that the person with the button- - the leader- - would not focus the projector. (98)

Visions spring forth from our intuition. If necessity is the mother of invention, intuition is the mother of vision. (101)

Berlew's speculations about what workers might want from organizations seem to have been confirmed in a study conducted by psychologists Edward Lawler III and Patricia Renwick. They asked readers of *Psychology Today* to indicate those job aspects that they found most important to them and their current level of

satisfaction with each. The top six reader- respondent rankings were, in order of importance: 1. The chance to do something that makes you feel good about yourself as a person. 2. The chance to accomplish something worthwhile. 3. The chance to learn new things. 4. The opportunity to develop new skills. 5. The amount of freedom that you have to do your job. 6. The chance to do the things that you do best. (116)

We don't like leaders who are negative. They bring us down. (121)

Let your enthusiasm show. Smile. Use gestures and move your body. Speak more clearly and quickly. Make eye contact. All of these signals are cues to others that you are personally excited about what you are saying. If you do not perceive yourself as an expressive person, we suggest that you begin to practice expressiveness by talking to a favorite friend about what most excites you in life, about what most turns you on. As you do this, pay attention to your verbal and nonverbal behavior- - or, better yet, turn on the video camera so that you can watch yourself later. We bet that you will discover that when you talk about things that excite you, you do a lot of the things we have just described. (129)

Leaders build teams with spirit and cohesion, teams that feel like family. They actively involve others in planning and give them discretion to make their own decisions. Leaders make others feel like owners, not hired hands. (131)

Teamwork is essential for a productive organization. Collaboration is needed to develop the commitment and skills of employees, solve problems, and respond to environmental pressures. Fostering collaboration is not just a nice idea. It is the key that leaders use to unlock the energies and talents available in their organizations. (135)

Here are some things that you can do to foster collaboration and trust: 1. Always say we. 2. Create interactions. 3. Create a climate of trust. 4. Focus on gains, not losses. 5. Involve people in planning and problem solving. 6. Be a risk taker when it comes to trusting others. (153- 159)

Empowering others is essentially the process of turning followers into leaders themselves. (179)

The intriguing paradox of power is that the more you give away to others the more you get for yourself. (182)

The more that people know about what is going on in the organization, the better off you will be. Without information, you can be certain that people will not extend themselves to take responsibility; armed with information, people's creative energies can be harnessed to achieve extraordinary results. In our study of effective insurance branch offices, we found information and access to decision makers were significant predictors of why people felt they had influence in their organizations. Information empowers people, strengthening their resolve and providing them the resources they need to be successful. (184)

Leaders provide the standard by which other people in the organization calibrate their own choices and behaviors. In order to set an example, leaders must know their values and live them. (190)

Values comprise the things that are most important to us. They are the deep- seated, pervasive standards that influence almost every aspect of our lives: our moral judgments, our responses to others, our commitments to personal and organizational goals. However, silently, values give direction to the hundreds of decisions made at all levels of the organization every day. Options that run counter to the company's value system are seldom considered. Values constitute our personal "bottom line." (190- 191)

Values are here- and- now beliefs about how things in the organization should be accomplished. While visions refer to the future and to the what the organization should be doing, values refer to the means (the how) by which these ends can best be achieved. While it is essential that the ship's captain have some vision of

what lies beyond the horizon, it is also important that the crew understand the standards by which performance will be judged as they sail toward it. (191- 192)

Consider the actions at Johnson & Johnson in the face of seven deaths from cyanide- laced Extra Strength Tylenol capsules. Quantities of the product valued at over \$100 million were quickly recalled. James E. Burke, CEO, observed that it was the company's philosophy and values that played the most important part in its decision- making process during this incident: "We believe our first responsibility," begins the Johnson & Johnson Credo, "is to the doctors, nurses and patients, to mothers and all others who use our products and services." Consensus about the meaning of this responsibility facilitated prompt corporate actions. (196)

The message about what really counts in the organization is delivered, demonstrated, pointed out, and emphasized by the leader's moments of truth and how well these moments are orchestrated. Leaders and would- be leaders, must consciously structure moments of truth to communicate and reinforce their intangible values. The most typical moments of truth center around: • How leaders spend their time. • The questions leaders ask. • Leaders' reactions to critical incidents. • What leaders reward. (201)

The average executive has nine minutes at a time to spend on any one item of business before being interrupted. (224)

Choice is the cement that binds one's actions to the person, motivating individuals to accept the implications of their acts. It is the personal acceptance of responsibility for your actions. (227)

People also produce best when they are given feedback about how they are progressing. (253)

Here are seven strategies that you can use to recognize accomplishments: 1. Develop tough measurable performance standards. 2. Install a formal systematic process for rewarding performance. 3. Be creative about rewards. 4. Let others help design the non- monetary compensation system. 5. Make recognition public. 6. Go out and find people who are doing things right. 7. Coach. (254- 257)

Cheerleading- - not cheer managing- - is a large part of the leader's function. After all, leaders can't get extraordinary things done in organizations alone- - they need the help of their teams. The best quarterbacks in the National Football League are usually the first ones down the field to congratulate the receivers who carry their passes into the end zone. (260)

Vince Lombardi, the unforgettable coach of the Green Bay Packers, believed in love. In a speech before the American Management Association, he made these remarks: "Mental toughness is humility, simplicity, Spartanism. And one other, love. I don't necessarily have to like my associates, but as a person I must love them. Love is loyalty. Love is teamwork. Love respects the dignity of the individual. Heart power is the strength of your corporation. Of all the things that sustain a leader over time, love is the most lasting. It is hard to imagine leaders getting up day after day, putting in the long hours and hard work it takes to get extraordinary things done, without their hearts being in it. (271)

Leadership is an affair of the heart, not of the head. (271)

Ultimately, leadership development is self- development. Musicians have their instruments. Engineers have their computers. Accountants have their calculators. Leaders have themselves. (277)

Failures can be as instructive as successes, if we take the time to reflect upon them. (286)

Wanting to lead and believing that you can lead are only the departure points on the path to leadership. Leadership is an art, a performing art. And in the art of leadership, the artist's instrument is the self. The

mastery of the art of leadership comes with the mastery of the self. Ultimately, leadership development is a process of self- development. (298)