



Inspired Success
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Principles For Inspired Success Ezine

"Tips, Tools, & Resources for People-Whispering"

The Leadership Gap as a Future Imperative

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People-Whispering Tip:

As we start a new decade and continue to climb out of the worst recession since the Great Depression, it is crucial to revisit the importance of leadership skills. New research from the highly respected Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) found that organizational leadership skills are inadequate to meet both current and future demand. CCL surveyed a representative sample of 2,200 leaders from 15 organizations, in three countries between 2006 and 2008 with the intention of answering the following three questions:

1. What leadership skills and perspectives are critical for success now and in the future?
2. How strong are current leaders in these critical skills and perspectives?
3. How aligned is today's leadership strength with what will be the most important skills and perspectives in the future?

Without delving into the research project's findings in depth, the bottom line is, the study revealed a significant leadership gap in the competencies that are most critical for success now and in the future. This study and others like it, point to a global shift in the awareness that many of today's leaders are not well prepared to effectively lead today's most talented employees. One could point to flaws in the study as it is based upon the subjective opinions of people deemed to be "leaders." It was also a forced-choice survey using competencies from CCL's Benchmark instrument within a relatively short, five year time horizon.

All of that said, the results still point to some alarming needs in crucial areas highlighted by the recent recession. For example, "resourcefulness," "doing whatever it takes," and "being a quick learner" are more critical now than ever before. My work supports these results as I have worked with some very talented people in the last year who are excellent at leading change initiatives and strategic planning but have a need to let go of what used to work for them and their organization in order to adapt to a rapidly changing market environment.

Sometimes this means learning new skills. For instance, in the training and development field, traditional face to face trainers and instructional designers may also need to learn to design and facilitate online courses using new methodologies and tools. This is a new skill I have invested in learning more about this past year. Sometimes adapting means letting go of old methods and flawed premises. Sometimes it means learning to transfer skills from one context to another with a fresh and yet experienced eye. One thing is for sure though. Being successful as a leader always requires self-reflection and a willingness to grow and evolve or die.

As you enter this new decade, ask yourself if you are doing everything you can to improve your skill set and to keep your personal and professional development ahead of the curve of the present and future needs of your business. I am continually amazed at the numbers of “leaders” who are still ignorant of key business needs such as social media trends, emotional intelligence skills, and/or global, cross-cultural issues to name a few.

On a positive note, one of the most exciting trends in my opinion is the fact that the increasing complexity of today’s business environment is forcing us all to rely on our intuition more consistently. No one can possibly analyze all of the variables necessary to predict the future without a combination of analysis and inner knowing. Both skills are needed for the future. For a great outline of the need for more whole brain thinking, I recommend reading anything by Daniel Pink particularly his book, [A Whole New Mind](#).

If you’ve been reading this Ezine or have worked with me in any capacity as a coach, speaker, or trainer, you know that one of my guiding principles for inspired success is to take personal responsibility for your future and to seek support to implement your goals and intentions.

As we kick off a prosperous 2010, ask yourself:

- What am I doing to improve my leadership skills?
- What am I doing to assist others in growing their leadership capabilities?
- Am I taking inspired action or just going through the motions by doing what is expected of me?
- How can I shift my attitude and perspective to stay fresh and on the leading edge without throwing the proverbial “baby out with the bathwater?”

I love this quote by Peter Senge about the nature of true leadership. He says, “Leadership is about creating a domain in which human beings continually deepen their understanding of reality and become more capable of participating in the unfolding world. Ultimately, leadership is about creating new realities.”

In 2010, take the leadership challenge to recreate and reinvent your reality personally and professionally. You’ll be glad you did.

DiSC Assessment Application:

One of the misconceptions people often harbor about leadership is that it necessarily implies positional authority. While tacit authority certainly helps, it is even more important to be able to “influence without authority.”

As I prepare for a training course with my Forum colleagues for a division of Siemens, I am reminded of the power of DiSC to help others do just that. Our participants are a selective crop of the “best and the brightest” relatively newly hired “high potentials.” As is often cited in the management literature, these Millennials have high expectations of management which indeed they should.

What they don’t know yet however, is the importance of speaking to their managers in the manager’s language rather than just asking the same questions over and over again (and more loudly). One of the basic tenants of human behavior is that even our greatest strengths when overused can become liabilities. It is akin to the old cliché of doing the same things over and over again and expecting different results. Instead, a change of strategy - in this case, employing the art of people-whispering - is required.

Once you understand your own behavioral style and personality characteristics, you know what your gifts and strengths are as well as what you might tend to overuse. We teach people to leverage these strengths, but also to attune to the language the other is speaking in order to communicate with them in a way that makes sense and “lands” with the listener not just the speaker.

This ability to connect and communicate with people with differing styles is at the heart of leadership and always will be. Understanding [DiSC](#) and all of its [applications](#) in today’s new world of work is endlessly exciting as real magic occurs when people relate at this level. Another key to leading regardless of your title, is to cultivate your self-worth and become a new you in the new year with enhanced self-esteem. Check out my book called [A Guide to Getting It: Self-Esteem](#) for more support in this area. It is a compilation of great contributions from some highly regarded Master Certified Coaches in both the life and business coaching arenas.

Make no mistake, these skills are not just warm and fuzzy people skills. Understanding how to use DiSC- based relationship skills encompass a wide range of personal, social, communication, and self-management behaviors. You can have all the technical expertise in the world, but if you can’t sell your ideas, get along well with others, or create solutions for organizational problems, you are going nowhere fast.

For support to help you be a better leader regardless of position or role, call us at (404) 327-6330 or email me at Laura@lauraadavis.com. We can help you thrive and not just survive in the year and years to come.

Transformational Coaching Tip:

Last month I promised to continue to offer more ways to stay in touch with your aliveness and to stay out of a rut. Since I do my best to practice Don Miguel Ruiz' Four Agreements, one of which is "be impeccable with your word," I am offering more such pearls this month. Yet because it is a New Year and a New Decade, I feel compelled to include something akin to New Year's Resolutions.

For any Jane Roberts fans, you'll recognize this list which focuses primarily on the feelings and attitudes to cultivate first before inspired action is recommended. Email me if you'd like further information as to the source of this wisdom. Here goes:

1. "I will approve of myself, my characteristics, my abilities, my likes and dislikes, my inclinations and disinclinations, realizing that these form my unique individuality. They are given to me for a reason."
2. "I will approve of and rejoice in my accomplishments and I will be as vigorous in listing these-as rigorous in remembering them-as I have been in remembering and enumerating my failures or lacks of accomplishment."
3. "I will remember the creative framework of existence in which I have my being. Therefore the possibilities, potentials, seeming miracles, and joyful spontaneity of Framework 2 (the invisible creative intelligence) will be in my mind, so that the doors to creative living are open."
4. "I will realize that the future is a probability. In terms of ordinary experience, nothing exists there yet. It is virgin territory, planted by my feelings and thoughts in the present. Therefore, I will plant my accomplishments and successes, and I will do this by remembering that nothing can exist in the future that I do not want to be there."

Happy New Year!