



# Southern Building Material Association's Leadership Tips E-Newsletter

November 2011

"Leadership is Solving Problems."

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A sense of fairness, for dealing with vendors, customers, and employees.

## 10 Traits of Successful Entrepreneurs

by Tim Berry in "Back to Fundamentals, Entrepreneurship, Reflections."

It started as a comment at the bottom of my 10 signs you're probably an entrepreneur post on this blog, a few days ago. What are the traits of successful entrepreneurs?

I was quoting a Twitter friend, Andrew Patricio. I hope you saw that list. I identified easily. But I can't help thinking about that comment left by Robert Hacker:

Next post should be a list of the characteristics of successful entrepreneurs. If you do not write it I will.

That's quite a challenge. What, besides the obvious, do successful entrepreneurs have in common? I know I'm not sure. But at least I can get the idea started. Maybe you can help. What am I missing?

1. There's a lot of talk about P-words: **passion, perseverance, and persistence**. I mistrust all three. A lot of unsuccessful entrepreneurs have them just as much. You have to have some variation on these traits, but you can have all three and still fail. You and I both know people who never made it and never stopped trying. My favorite P-word in entrepreneurship is **planning**, but that's just me. **Stubbornness** is good too, even without starting with P.
2. I like **empathy**, as in understanding how other people think and feel about things. Empathy leads to understanding what the people you sell to want, what they need, how they think, and how to best reach them. It's hard to imagine somebody building a company without being able to put themselves in the buyer's state of mind.
3. **A sense of fairness**. For dealing with vendors, customers, and employees.
4. **Transferable values**. This is closely related to the sense of fairness. I just don't see people building businesses without believing in what they're doing.
5. **Willingness to work hard**, shoulder to shoulder with other people. Cliche, but true: the harder I work, the luckier I get.
6. **Knowing what they don't know**. To me that's much more important than what you do know.
7. **Listening** carefully. Shutting up.
8. **Vision** for what they can build. Imagining a happy future. Dreaming.



*Usually, the problem is a result of poor training.*



*The solutions for poor training are easy.*

9. **Making mistakes.** You have to deal with failure. Keep pitching.
10. **Jumping viewpoints**, like from short- to long-term in an instant, mixing those viewpoints together. That's like dribbling, keeping your eyes up while managing the ball at your feet.

## Leadership Tip of the Week

By Randy Goruk

One of my coaching clients asked me the other day. "**Should I tolerate mediocrity?**"

I asked them a few more questions and I coached them through their issue. I thought it might be worthwhile to share a portion of an old blog I wrote below that addresses the same topic.

As the leader of any organization, you are responsible for many things, including the development of your people. If you have an individual who is performing poorly or who has behavior problems, you must understand what the problem is and then go to work on a solution. They, in addition to you, are accountable for their performance and behavior.

**Usually, the problem is a result of poor training - or a "round peg in a square hole" - or a "square peg in a round hole" - or a complete toxic work environment - or just plain incompetence.**

**The solutions for poor training are easy** ... more training - better quality training - a coach - a mentor - an individual development plan - a 360 degree feedback survey and a boss who pays greater attention to the development of an employee.

**The solutions for someone who is in the wrong position** - find a better fitting position for them in your company or find them a better fitting position for them outside your company.

**The solutions for the bad work environment** - find out exactly what the problem is by getting feedback from others and fix it - if you aren't sure how, hire yourself a leadership coach.

**The solution for incompetence**- do what you can to find them another job somewhere else and do a better job of your recruiting, interviewing and selection process

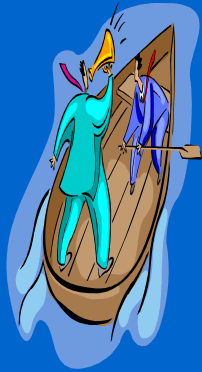
If you do nothing and you elect to tolerate mediocrity, you will end up with a problems you wish you didn't have. You will lose credibility / trust and respect as a leader - you will likely experience productivity, quality and morale challenges ... and the list could go on.

So for the leadership tip of the week ... **Bottom line - do not tolerate mediocrity in the workplace - fix it - you are accountable.**

Enjoy your leadership journey !

**Leadership** is the ability and skill to put your plans into action and make your team take part in this whole-heartedly and ecstatically. It is the ability to get other people to do that which they would rather not, without hesitation. Like any other skill, it can also be learned and can be improved with practice.

Leadership is a process involving conversations and interactions that would result in getting other people more complacent with the language of personal responsibility and commitment. In the process, the leader distinguishes and acknowledges his own feelings



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*The manager often has the role of organizing resources to get something done.*

and those of others in fabricating trusting relationships.

For leadership to occur, leaders must communicate the vision to the followers in such a way that the followers adopt the vision as their own. Leaders must not just see the vision themselves; they must have the ability to get others to see it also. Numerous techniques aid in this process, including: narratives, metaphors, symbolic actions, leading by example, incentives, and penalties.

No matter how one defines leadership, it typically involves an element of vision — except in cases of involuntary leadership and often in cases of traditional leadership. A vision provides direction to the influence process. A leader (or group of leaders) can have one or more visions of the future to aid them to move a group successfully towards this goal.

A vision, for effectiveness, should appear as a simple, yet vibrant, image in the mind of the leader; describe a future state, credible and preferable to the present state; act as a bridge between the current state and a future optimum state; appear desirable enough to energize followers and succeed in speaking to followers at an emotional or spiritual level.

Some commentators link leadership closely with the idea of management; some would even regard the two as synonymous. If one accepts this premise, one can view leadership as centralized or decentralized, broad or focused, decision-oriented or morale-centered, and intrinsic or derived from some authority.

However, a clear distinction between management and leadership is useful. This would allow for a reciprocal relationship between leadership and management, implying that an effective manager should possess leadership skills, and an effective leader should demonstrate management skills.

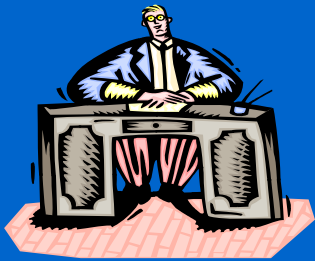
To some, as a broad generalization, managers concern themselves with tasks while leaders concern themselves with people. This goodwill and support originates in the leader seeing people as people, not as another resource for deployment in support of "the task".

The manager often has the role of organizing resources to get something done. People form one of these resources, and many of the worst managers treat people as just another interchangeable item.

A leader has the role of causing others to follow a path he/she has laid out or a vision he/she has articulated in order to achieve a task. Often, people see the task as subordinate to the vision. For instance, an organization might have the overall task of generating profit, but a good leader may see profit as a by-product that flows from whatever aspect of their vision differentiates their company from the competition.

Leadership does not only manifest itself as purely a business phenomenon. But still, a person can excel in both leadership and management.

As individuals, top-notch leaders/managers should have confidence in their abilities. They should be graceful with who they are, but still feed the yearning to learn and improve. They should be something of an extrovert—enjoy being and working with people. They should be honest and straight forward. And they should never exclude others because of the lack of certain attributes; instead, they should focus on others' strengths.



*Leadership and management skills are not coded into our DNA.*



*A young Albert Einstein was always trying to figure things out.*

As team captains, they should be dependable, but can change their judgments. They should not be afraid to try new things and if they fail, admit the mistake, but need not apologize for having tried. In case of emergencies, they should be able to change plans quickly, but should be responsible for their actions and be ready to face whatever consequences. They should make decisions, but should easily accept input from others.

## Do You Really Know How To Motivate Your Team?

### Leadership And Management Skills Are Not Coded Into Our DNA. Do You Really Know How To Motivate Your Team?

Leadership and management skills are not coded into our DNA. But you hear people say, “He or she is a born leader.” Well....not really. They may know less about their own team and what motivates it than they imagined. Just ask managers what motivates workers and they will pop off a list that is topped by “recognition of good work.” Sure that makes sense. We all love praise. But have you talked to your team about what truly motivates them? Their answers may be very surprising, and certainly enlightening.

A research team at Harvard put diaries in the hands of employees. What came back was a picture of the psychology of the employee and what motivates them.

- § Making progress at work
- § Figuring something out
- § Completion of difficult tasks

Think back to the last time your boss said, “Good work.” What does that mean? Did it feel good? Or did it feel like a cursory observation?

A strength-centered compliment has a lot more motivational power. “Ah, you figured it out! Your intelligence and determination, is obvious by the way you made the details talk to get the answer.” Now it feels like all of your hard work resulted in a higher level of appreciation, and more importantly, *you* know you accomplished something, figured it out.

A young Albert Einstein was always trying to figure things out. Throwing a spit wad at another boy in front of the class produced a scientific “Aha...moment” for him. He realized that gravity had a role in the speed of the spitball. His teacher did not care what he learned or achieved, and rewarded him with expulsion. A small acknowledgement of his discovery may have been worth a little behavior modification.

The Harvard study, part of the Breakthrough Ideas for 2010, offers fitting advice when an employee makes progress, a discovery, or solves a challenge.

*“Negative events generally have a greater effect on people’s emotions, perceptions, and motivation than positive ones, and nothing is more demotivating than a setback—the most prominent type of event on knowledge workers’ worst days.”*

Good management and skills must be fostered, practiced, practiced more, and used frequently. If you want to work more effectively with your team, listen to them. There is nothing in DNA coding that makes any of us a natural leader, who motivates and leads well. Your team has the answers to motivation. So listen.

## Leadership development methods and tips

Explaining and understanding the nature of good leadership is probably easier than practicing it. Good leadership requires deep human qualities, beyond conventional notions of authority.

In the modern age good leaders are an **enabling** force, helping people and organizations to perform and develop, which implies that a sophisticated alignment be achieved - of people's needs, and the aims of the organization.

Effective leadership does not necessarily require great technical or intellectual capacity. These attributes might help, but they are not pivotal.

Many capabilities in life are a matter of acquiring skills and knowledge and then applying them in a reliable way. Leadership is quite different. Good leadership demands emotional strengths and behavioral characteristics which can draw deeply on a leader's mental and spiritual reserves.

The leadership role is an inevitable reflection of people's needs and challenges in modern life. Leadership is therefore a profound concept, with increasingly complex implications, driven by an increasingly complex and fast-changing world.

Leadership and management are commonly seen as the same thing, which they are not. Leadership is also misunderstood to mean directing and instructing people and making important decisions on behalf of an organization. Effective leadership is much more than these.

Good leaders are followed chiefly because people trust and respect them, rather than the skills they possess. Leadership is about behavior first, skills second.

This is a simple way to see how leadership is different to management:

- Management is mostly about processes.
- Leadership is mostly about behavior.

We could extend this to say:

- Management relies heavily on tangible measurable capabilities such as effective planning; the use of organizational systems; and the use of appropriate communications methods.
- Leadership involves many management skills, but generally as a secondary or background function of true leadership. Leadership instead relies most strongly on less tangible and less measurable things like trust, inspiration, attitude, decision-making, and personal character. These are not processes or skills or even necessarily the result of experience. They are facets of humanity, and are enabled mainly by the leader's character and especially his/her emotional reserves.

Another way to see leadership compared with management, is that leadership does not crucially depend on **the type** of management methods and processes a leaders uses; leadership instead primarily depends on **the ways** in which the leader uses management methods and processes.

Good leadership depends on attitudinal qualities, not management processes.



*Effective leadership does not necessarily require great technical or intellectual capacity.*



- *Management relies heavily on tangible measurable capabilities such as effective planning; the use of organizational systems; and the use of appropriate communications methods.*



*Integrity is an example of highly significant leadership quality.*



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Humanity is a way to describe these qualities, because this reflects the leader's vital relationship with people.

Qualities critical for a leader's relationship with his/her people are quite different to conventional skills and processes:

#### examples of highly significant leadership qualities

- integrity
- honesty
- humility
- courage
- commitment
- sincerity
- passion
- confidence
- positivity
- wisdom
- determination
- compassion
- sensitivity

People with these sorts of behaviors and attitudes tend to attract followers. Followers are naturally drawn to people who exhibit strength and can inspire belief in others. These qualities tend to produce a charismatic effect. Charisma tends to result from effective leadership and the qualities which enable effective leadership. Charisma is by itself no guarantee of effective leadership.

Some people are born more naturally to leadership than others. Most people don't seek to be a leader, but many more people are able to lead, in one way or another and in one situation or another, than they realize.

People who want to be a leader can develop leadership ability. Leadership is not the exclusive preserve of the wealthy and educated.

#### Leadership Quotes of the Month

***“Effective leadership is not about making speeches or being liked; leadership is defined by results not attributes.”***

**Peter Drucker**

***You don't lead by hitting people over the head - that's assault, not leadership.***  
**Dwight D. Eisenhower**