

TRAINING

JULY 2011



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[leadership]





Letter From the Editor

The theme of this issue is **Leadership**. What thoughts come to your mind when you hear that word? Dictionary.com defines this noun with three ideas:

1. The position or function of a leader.
2. Ability to lead.
3. An act or instance of leading; guidance; direction.

Our articles certainly have these definitions covered. *Leadership Charisma and Employee Engagement* describes the impact charismatic leaders can have by engaging employees in challenging work conditions. *Putting the LEADER Back Into Learning Leader* offers

tangible ways Learning & Development leaders can model competence and capability in their organizations.

Check out the interview with Mike Cooley — his road to leadership was unconventional, but his track record illustrates both his ability to lead and his unquenchable determination.

Coaching Distinctions for Leaders compares the varied roles a leader needs to play — leader, mentor, coach, and counselor. Which hat are you wearing today?

In her column, *The Learning Curve*, Amy Krenzke describes attending the ASTD International Conference & Exposition (ICE) from a student's perspective. She also shares her thoughts about meeting a true pioneering leader in our industry.

Speaking of industry leaders, I recently had

the opportunity to meet Bob Pike in a small group setting. He shared his insight on a variety of topics. When asked what advice he would give those who are new to the L&D arena, his message is to be passionate about what you do. It will keep you going in the right direction. I think the same sage advice applies to seasoned professionals as well...lead with your passion... hmmm....I like that!

Louann
Louann Swedberg

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The Learning Curve

by Amy Krenzke

What was a student to do at the ASTD ICE conference in Orlando, Florida? I found many great opportunities that led to all types of learning. The first day I attended the conference as a volunteer which then allowed me to attend as a regular attendee for free on the following day. Volunteering at ASTD ICE is a great opportunity for a grad student or any participant to save a little money.

Tuesday I participated as a regular attendee but also as a student. Tuesday was specifically set aside to host students in the morning. We had a special seating area in the keynote speech. We had time to network with other students in the morning and it was great to hear that many were pursuing PhD work in T&D fields. Student day this year featured a special treat during the lunch session. We were lucky to have keynote speaker Mette Norgaard share some knowledge

with us during an open question session. This was a unique and rare opportunity to interact with a true professional and leader in the T&D field. It was a very intriguing discussion and exciting to hear her insights. Student Day ended with a group of invited students (including myself) to participate in a focus group. Members of the ASTD outreach team sought the opinions of students and how ASTD can better serve students better... just like we've been working on diligently in CCASTD. I truly appreciated the opportunity to share my thoughts and it brought to attention the need to continue to provide tools for students and help support Special Student Interest Groups within local chapters.

Lastly, one of favorite opportunities was attending Don Kirkpatrick's retirement party. Thanks to Trish Uhl and Owl's Ledge for the invite. As a student it was



Don Kirkpatrick and Amy Krenzke

fascinating to meet one of the legends of our industry! In closing, ASTD ICE was an excellent opportunity for any T&D professional but a great step for students to become more involved and learn! ASTD ICE was an amazing experience and I am already looking forward to next year in Denver.

Upcoming CCASTD Programs

What's New In 2011? Mark Your Calendar!

Join your Chicagoland area learning & performance peers every third Thursday of the month for an evening of networking, dinner, and a 50-minute presentation with the new CCASTD monthly dinner meeting format!

Added Bonus: Certified Professionals in Learning & Performance (CPLP®s) will earn 1.0 recertification credit for attending CCASTD dinner meetings.

Learning & Performance Scavenger Hunt:

Thursday, July 21, 2011

Location: Downtown Chicago.

Dinner to follow @ P.J. Clarke's in Streeterville/Downtown Chicago

Kirkpatrick Partners Workshop: Training on Trial

Friday, September 16, 2011

8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Location: Allstate Plaza North - Heritage Room
2775 Sanders Road
Northbrook IL, 60062

Check CCASTD.org for details and registration!

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Training Today, the CCASTD quarterly magazine is still accepting advertising. Our audience consists of over 1000 members in the field of workplace learning and performance. We have full page, half page and quarter page ads available.

For more information, contact Venessa Stampnick by phone 847-264-5902 or by email at admin@ccastd.org.

Want to get published?

In addition to ads, we are always looking for articles to educate our members on best practices and actionable ideas in our industry. Article guidelines are available on our website, www.ccastd.org.

Leader Charisma and Employee Engagement

by Bruce E. Roselle, PhD

The economic downturn of the last couple years has been tough on most organizations and many are now struggling to increase engagement of employees who remain. Human resource learning professionals can take definitive steps to help their corporate leaders develop engaged workers at all levels. The key is to assist leaders in leveraging their personal charisma.

We will start with the word “charisma” itself, and then look at how to leverage it. Wikipedia defines charisma as a personality trait featuring personal charm and magnetism, along with powerful interpersonal abilities. But what makes leaders personally charming or magnetic? It might be helpful to think about what charismatic leaders do and what they do not do.

One aspect is the interpersonal signals leaders emit to others around them. This includes their non-verbal behaviors, like eye contact, facial and hand gestures, energy and enthusiasm, or how close they stand to people. Signals also include verbal behaviors like word choice, vocal tone, and clarity of articulation.

Successful charismatic leaders.

The most charismatic leaders are those who exhibit an energized, enthusiastic presence. They are verbal and talkative, but also spend a good portion of their time asking questions of others and deeply listening to the responses. They recognize and appropriately respond to people’s interpersonal cues. They draw people out with their gentle queries and encourage others to speak up and participate in conversations or discussions. Optimistic and upbeat, they motivate others and help create a collaborative environment and culture.

Charismatic leaders often set high standards for their teams and hold themselves to the same metrics. They make their expectations clear, cast a motivating vision, and help remove obstacles so their team members can feel good about the progress they

make. Though serious in their focus on achieving objectives at the highest levels of quality, they also exhibit an inclusive sense of humor. And they make it a priority to help their direct reports develop in their careers.

To a learning professional working to help nurture charismatic behaviors in key leaders, this might seem a bit overwhelming. However, the good news is that leaders do not need to be perfectly charismatic to have a very positive effect on their direct reports and others. Even if they simply avoid the opposites of these charismatic attributes and approaches, most people will view them positively. For example, just by helping leaders steer clear of things like accepting mediocre work, being closed to new ideas suggested by others, displaying a lackluster level of energy, and projecting a muddled vision, most leaders will exhibit a level of charisma. Leaders do not need to be perfect to be charismatic.

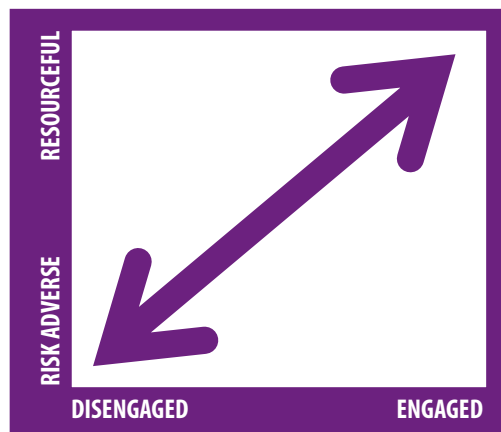
Engaged, resourceful followers. You can help leaders positively affect their team members by emphasizing the importance of fostering “followership” as they lead. This graphic provides per-

spective on the various types of followers leaders may currently have on their teams:

In the lower left corner are those followers who are relatively disengaged from their jobs and the rest of the team, and, at the same time, likely to avoid decisions or actions that seem risky to them. The goal as a leader is to help team members move from this quadrant to the resourceful and engaged part of the graph. Followers in the upper right of the graph usually display a good level of energy related to their tasks and responsibilities, and they are capable of coming up with new ideas for improving their approaches. One way to help your organizational leaders dial up their charisma and encourage development on their teams is to assist them in identifying which of their direct reports would best be described as:

- Risk-averse and disengaged (lower left)
- Risk-averse, but engaged (lower right)
- Resourceful, but disengaged (upper left)
- Resourceful and engaged (upper right)

Each category, above, requires a different charismatic strategy to generate enthusiasm and optimism on the part of team members. Of course, for the resourceful and engaged team members, the strategy you can recommend to a leader is simple—keep doing what you are doing and try to stay out of the way! But, what about the other three follower types?



Continued on next page

For the resourceful, but disengaged, the key is to figure out what is causing the disengagement. Perhaps leaders have not sufficiently reinforced them for their inventive ideas and actions, and, consequently, they have become discouraged. Maybe something outside of work related to their personal situation is causing them to disengage from work. They might even be depressed on some level and not cognizant of their level of disengagement. Whatever the source, your role can be to point out examples of the disengagement and express your desire to assist these leaders in re-energizing and re-engaging their people. Suggest that they reinforce any behaviors they observe in their team members that seem energetic and positive.

In the case of the risk-averse, but engaged, the primary need is to help them experience success in taking risks. Start by suggesting that leaders give these people small responsibility “stretches” that might not seem risky to the leader, but may seem like major hurdles to an employee. Recommend that they give as much support as team members need to work on the task, and they encourage every resourceful, confident step they observe. Leaders with these risk-averse, but engaged folks should continue to give them assignments that stretch their comfort with risk and make sure they positively reinforce every resourceful idea or action they observe.

The most entrenched and difficult to move are the risk-averse and disengaged team members. They need a consistent combination of reinforcement for small steps they take to optimistically solve problems or take a risk, as well as any expressions you observe that suggest energy and engagement. Suggest that leaders consider pairing these team members on projects with someone who is both resourceful and engaged to see if the enthusiasm of the one rubs off on the other. As a last resort, you can help leaders take steps to replace the person in the position. Disengaged, risk-averse workers are not happy in their work, and it is very possible that they might blossom in a different role or environment. Sometimes, the most compassionate step leaders can take is to help someone exit their role or the organization.

The bottom line. As a learning professional, you can help leaders recognize the ways in which they are charismatic and the ways in which they undermine their capacity to enroll others, and you can suggest new approaches to create more

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resourceful, engaged followers. To function as a charismatic leader, they must exhibit energy, engage others in communication by listening and conveying their thoughts and feelings, and use humor to disarm stressful situations. They must set clear expectations and high, attainable goals, and ensure that the team makes good progress. Suggest that they prioritize the development of team members so that they become more engaged and resourceful in their work. The result will be one in which you, key leaders, their teams, and the organization all win.



Bruce E. Roselle, PhD, is an organizational psychologist who brings a breadth of experience and a deep sense of purpose to the task of helping leaders develop greater effectiveness and wholehearted, fearless attitudes. For more than 25 years, Bruce has served organizations in the areas of leadership and team development, executive coaching, and psychological assessment. Founder and principal of Roselle Leadership Strategies, Inc. (1995), he is a recognized expert in the field of leadership development. Bruce is a frequent speaker at professional conferences and corporate events, and his views regarding leading from the core, leading fearlessly, and dealing effectively with stress have appeared in newspapers, magazines, radio and television. He has published two books, *Vital Truths* (2002), and *Fearless Leadership* (2006), which won awards for Best Business Book and Best Self-Help Book in 2007, and he is working on a third book, *Lead from the Core*. Bruce can be contacted at: bruce@roselleleadership.com

Coaching Distinctions for Leaders

by Michaleen K. Lewis MS-MOB, PCC, CPLP

As the leader of your organization, you are tasked to create a focused and productive workforce for a higher level of success all around.

You've probably attended an array of workshops and have read numerous books on how to do this. The different terms of "experts" on the topic of coaching can be confusing; would it be best to be a coach, a mentor, a consultant or a counselor for your organization? In fact, what is your definition of coaching and mentoring? My experience as an ICF Certified Professional has taught me that the greatest value to an organization comes from a leader who is also an effective coach; one who coaches in every one-on-one and group encounter. This article will explain how this is true for you and can make the best use of your time and resources in the new 21st Century Economy.

Coaching is a thought-provoking and creative, interactive process helping individuals and organizations be inspired to develop more rapidly and produce more satisfying results. As a result of coaching, you can set better goals, take more action, make better decisions, and more fully use your natural talents.

Professional coaches are trained to listen and observe, to customize their approach to the individual client's needs, and to elicit solutions and strategies from the client. They believe that the client is naturally innovative and resourceful. The coach's job is to provide support to enhance these skills, resources, and creativity the client already possesses. While the coach provides feedback and objective perspectives, the client is responsible for taking the steps to produce the results he or she desires.

Coaches assist leaders in becoming more productive in their own personal and professional lives supporting the ultimate goals of enhancing professional performance and producing a better quality of life for themselves as well as for those in their organizations.

Coaches:

- Help people set better goals and then reach those goals.
- Ask their clients to do more than they would have done on their own.

"Coaching is an ongoing relationship which focuses on clients taking action toward the realization of their visions, goals or desires. Coaching uses a process of inquiry and personal discovery to build the client's level of awareness and responsibility and provides the client with structure, support and feedback. The coaching process helps clients both define & achieve professional and personal goals faster & with more ease than would be possible otherwise."

ICF – International Coach Federation.

- Help their client to focus better so as to produce results more quickly.
- Provide clients with the tools, support and structure to accomplish more.

As a leader, you wear many hats of various sizes and shapes. Donning the "coach" cap, your role is to: ask many questions, help compile and summarize information, test assumptions and limitations, offer different perspectives, and finally, together, inspire possibilities to move into action. Your role is to support your team member's movement forward, encourage each to take a risk or a new opportunity, support them as they make a tough decision and engage each of them, bringing new ideas to light. It is your role to believe in them, especially when they may not see their own strengths, talents or future potential!

THE CHALLENGE

As a leader, it is very easy to be an advisor or the expert - always telling - especially if you have also risen through the ranks because you know what you would do. **HOLD BACK!**

At first consideration, identify where each individual is in their career or current position of the situation. If they are new, you may want to direct or teach them vs. just ask questions, otherwise they will become frustrated because they don't have the knowledge you possess. As much as you think they should know about a specific situation, they may still need your guidance. As they bloom into their own confidence and ability, strongly consider being more coach-like - asking many more questions. It's about recognizing where each direct report is located in the broad spectrum of comprehension, then engaging each to find their own answers - ensuring internal motivation - the best kind for accomplishing any goal!

Unraveling the Truth: There is a myth that a coach needs to know the industry or the job of the leader. This is not true. Great coaches ask lots of illuminating questions to help the leader define and become clear on their own, creating actions to gain momentum. If a client leader wants specific job or industry advice - support them to seek out a mentor. As

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coaches, we encourage people to seek mentors to help them navigate in their own environment/field/ former position in parallel with coaching.

COACHES ARE EXPERTS IN THE PROCESS — How Can Leaders do the Same?

The method of holding the space to allow each person to uncover their own strengths and motivation is what a coach does. There are times when a coach offers ideas, yet we believe the answers essentially lie inside the individual; our charge is to draw them out. A good analogy may be in the silliness yet patient wisdom from the movies *The Wizard of Oz* and *Star Wars*. Remember when Glenda the Good Witch says to Dorothy, or Yoda said to Luke Skywalker, “You’ve always had the power”? We too, as coaches, share the same sentiment, the power is within you, not telling you what to do!

As a leader coach, help your team explore who they are, what they want by keeping them focused and aligned (organizationally and personally), co-creating a strategy and following up to ensure achievement. A heartfelt sense of accomplishment shows up as you walk beside your staff member as they go for it!

DISTINCTIONS

What are the differences between a number of phrases and terms associated with coaching? Specifically, how are the following defined? ¹

Consulting: A consultant is considered to be an “expert” on specific subject matter material. Instead of telling a client what to do, a coach asks succinct questions enabling the client to recognize what is needed to move forward. Some consultants are also very good at asking questions, yet they also give us recommendations. Consultants enter into a situation and may or may not be the implementer of the suggestions made. A coach’s role is to stay with the client leader supporting their implementation and sustainability learning new skills / changes ensuring goals attained.

Sports Coaching: Coaching includes several principles from sports coaching, like teamwork, going for the goal, being your best. Unlike sports coaching, most professional coaching is not formal competition or win/lose based. Leaders set the strategy not coaches. Coaches hold or facilitate the process. Coaches don’t tell you what to do; they keep leaders aligned & focused on their own organizational strategy, seeking win/win solutions throughout the engagement.

Mentoring: Mentoring usually happens inside an organization or industry. The more knowledgeable mentor takes on a protégé or mentee under their wings. They may advise, counsel, guide – navigate, influence. Some mentors use coaching and asking lots of questions as well as give advice. Some mentors who are high influencers may have the opportunity to introduce protégés to more influential leaders who may play a strong part in their development and/or promotion. YET, that is not their entire charge and should not be expected. Mentoring is more about being there for the emerging leader. Mentors can also be informal and/or external - a guide in supporting movement toward where the protégé or mentee seeks as goals in life /work.

Counseling/Therapy: Professional therapists / counselors have had numerous years of formal education and are qualified and licensed to deal with and handle mental health issues. Whenever an individual wants to get “deep” or delve into the past of the WHYS of a situation, the ethical coach quickly spots this is not their forte and immediately refers out to a licensed professional. Coaches start in the now/the present moving towards the wants and desires of client’s future with a strategy and action steps to get there.

Manager as Coach: A certain “power” is present when a manager coaches their direct report. Expectations and performance related concerns emerge. Expectations may be heavily weighted and possibly judged differently because of the power of being the manager. Coaching can be done if set up ahead of time in a win-win agreement for both performance

(JIT/remedial) and developmental coaching opportunities.

Friends/Family Support: Friends and family are great, and also create a certain “influence” over the client. It may be a tricky situation, as each may have hidden agendas and reasons wanted to change or not to change. The comfort level in the relationship can impede the outcome. Although they care for the client, they may/may not sabotage efforts depending on their own beliefs of what the client “should” or should not do or be, and may not really support what the client desires. We all need an outside view, not having allegiance to the one being coached.

As a leader, what elements of these definitions and behaviors can you model in maximizing the potential of your own teams and organizations? How can you craft what you read above and meld it into who you want to be as a leader?

YOUR CHALLENGE: Commit to incorporating coaching into every 1:1 discussion you hold. Yes, it does take more time; however, the ROI yields first-rate and surprising RESULTS!

1. References:

Adapted to and integrated with information from Coach U: www.coachu.com, International Coach Federation: www.coachfederation.org.

About the Author: 2006 President of CCASTD, Michaleen Lewis is a Professionally Certified Coach (PCC) and one of 6100 Certified Coaches Worldwide sanctioned by the International Coach Federation (ICF). Lewis has coached hundreds of leaders across all levels for US and Global Organizations. Lewis is a graduate of Coach U and licensed facilitator of the Corporate Coach Clinic and Certified Coaching Leaders (T3+ Master Facilitator). Featured author of Real World Career Development Strategies that WORK, Lewis has written over 16 articles and holds more than 10 Assessment and OD Certifications.

Ms. Lewis integrates her passion and expertise for Coaching, Leadership Development and Organizational Effectiveness in all offerings: Executive and Talent Development, Succession / Hi Potentials, Professional Development and more!

Putting the LEADER Back Into Learning Leader

by Don Sandel

Increased recognition of your learning organization's value comes with high expectations.

The science that has indeed become our field has grown in acceptance. There is no disputing that. As a result of Peter Senge's now classic argument around the "learning organization" or GE's sagacious and decades-long investment in the John F. Welch Leadership Center at Crotonville, chief learning officers now fill many C-level offices.

And perhaps because of our own improved ability to show the return-on-investment in learning, the value of learning and development (L&D) has never been greater. Moreover, L&D's stoic response to the current recession is encouraging because, according to the ASTD 2009 State of the Industry Report, average learning expenditure as a percentage of payroll has actually increased. There is also evidence that our confidence as an industry has recovered—in the second quarter of 2010 the Learning Executive Confidence Index reached "its highest value to date."

But with that increased value comes great expectations. To sustain the newly acquired cachet and influence on organizations in this new decade, learning leaders need to rise to the challenge in a sustained manner or risk tumbling backwards to be merely an adjunct of HR departments or be relegated as "nice-to-have" but not integral to building organization capability.

Learning leaders must model the same competence and capability they teach their fellow employees and executives. Yes, the standards are different for them, and they are higher. Parents can't yell at their children to stop yelling any more than learning leaders can demand excellence from colleagues and not be excellent themselves.

Learning leaders can and should con-

tinue to be the L&D experts, and lift organizations through their ability to grow individual and group capacity. But to keep L&D at the table, more is indeed required. Each training manager, director, vice president, or CLO must be a leader, manifesting qualities in parallel with their L&D pedigree. And this shouldn't just happen by accident or happenstance any more than learning should. Learning leaders have to enact a simple, uncomplicated plan and then put it into action.

BROADEN YOUR KNOWLEDGE BASE

At a certain level, learning leaders must have the ability to think beyond training. They are expected to respond to organizational challenges with the bent toward learning, but their real value will be when they don't respond as a trainer. Their response should be cogent and value-added—when they don't go back to the same well, but offer a fresh business approach that may suggest a new paradigm or is integrated with other disciplines—such as marketing, finance, or operations; they are not responding for those disciplines but in concert with them.

"We require business savvy," explains Roger Turnquist, the founder of Leadership and Learning Partners. "Really understanding all there is to know about actually running a business unit, about learning and the various technical and nontechnical options, and of course, about people and the key business drivers. L&D must be very smart about the business side and the people side of the business."

If learning leaders are successful in developing their knowledge outside of their natural expertise, they will organ-

ically increase the value and credibility of that expertise. A rising tide, as they say, lifts all boats. This does not require abdication of their role as learning leaders but augmentation of it. Of course, this will also go far toward influencing C-level decision makers about their own departmental objectives. When asked to explain the business reason for that new learning program, linking the program to key business drivers will be that much easier to do and to believe.

SHOW INTEGRITY

Integrity is perhaps the cornerstone of leadership competence, no matter the role, department, or industry. When we have difficult decisions to make or are challenged and need to come out swinging, our response must come from a safe and reliable place. "We lead from who we are," Kevin Cashman writes in *Leadership From the Inside Out*. Working to lead with a solid, core level of integrity assures that our responses will almost always be, if not the right ones, at least responses that we can live with. This competency is no different for learning leaders than for any other leader and is critical to being seen by others as worthy of following.

"A learning leader must be authentic—consistently demonstrating integrity and congruency with conversations, commitments, and intentions," explains Theresa McDaniel, director of training and OD at Sinai Health System in Chicago. "Authentic leaders demonstrate honesty, hold others accountable for acting with fairness and respect, and coach others to do the same. It is the role of a learning leader to build and support environments where open and honest relationships

Continued on next page

and an organization's community can thrive."

Learning leaders who act on integrity do so with the intention of seeing reality as reality is, no matter how unattractive. And unique to the learning leader, Turnquist suggests, "I'd also add integrity as a key competency. Because to be successful, you have to know what's not working to be able to help fix the problem and that means you must be trusted to use this information in a professional way. If not trusted, you won't have the key information you need to identify solutions and priorities." Integrity garners trust, which begets honest information and accurate data. Only through valid data can good choices emerge.

MODEL THE RIGHT BEHAVIOR

When Mahatma Gandhi suggested that we should "be the change we want to see in the world," he was referring to the global community. If learning leaders want their organizations to change more, learn more, develop people more, and rely on evidence over conjecture more, they have to engage this same concept; it must begin with them.

"Learning leaders must live and breathe continuous improvement," says Cathy Gallagher, Manager, Organizational Change Management, MillerCoors. "We must be very good models and coaches." As obvious as it sounds, we must lead the way.

A hunger for learning won't hurt, but supporting the learning of others while seeking "teachable moments" must be part of our creed. A manager without credibility won't last long, but a learning leader without it is history. It's not a "do as I say, not as I do" opportunity. But to be not only effective but credible, learning leaders must act congruently with the advice they dispensed in last week's workshop or yesterday's coaching session.

With greater influence comes greater responsibility. Learning leaders are closer to their collective goal of unquestioned influence, but they can slip out of favor like a newly elected politician who didn't sustain value once given a real place of power. We're close but not there yet. Because our influence is so new and therefore tenuous, our sustainability is much like the Gandhi sagacity offered earlier: It is up to us — not them.

Published in ASTD's Learning Executive Briefing, August of 2010.

Don is a highly experienced training, talent, and OD leader with an expertise in leadership development. He's led projects ranging from curriculum and instructional design to supervisor and executive development. Don's strategic thinking capabilities make him equally successful in working boundaryless and inter-departmentally. Don can be contacted at dsandel@wowway.com.

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Society for Technical Communication: www.stc-chicago.org

A Leadership Interview with Mike Cooley – He Found Rock Bottom and Refused to Fail

by Renie McClay

Since 2006 Mike Cooley has been the CEO of The Quinlan Companies, a document management and silver reclamation company. His path to the top leadership position was not a typical one that included finishing high school, going to college and working up through the ranks. Growing up, Mike came from a broken home and bounced between St. Louis and Texas – often walking from one city to the other! Unstable and unsafe situations caused him to leave home at age 15 and learn how to survive on his own.

At age 27 he got a job at Action Systems as a box packer and started making his way in life. He worked days, attended Brookhaven College (Dallas) at night. He was mentored by a professor who liked and encouraged him. His career path went from being an office assistant to rising to Senior Vice President of Operations for a \$40 million consulting company. This was the same guy who only a few years earlier was living out of his car, with all of his worldly possessions in the back seat.

Bob Rickert, a peer of Mike's at Action Systems, describes Mike's attitude as always "to exceed everyone's expectations." He kept earning more responsibility. Even though he didn't have credentials or experience for new jobs, he would figure it out and do them well. He valued everyone around him and learned something from everyone.

Mike has a refreshing business philosophy with a powerful message. The following are Mike's views on leadership.

You overcame a lot of challenges at a very young age. How has that helped to form your leadership view?

It has helped tremendously in understanding the challenges and

adversity that people face, and it allows me to relate to my employees, customers, vendors and other contacts. Not having much of a family or very many friends growing up, I try to earn each relationship one at a time and make those relationships important to me. Understanding that if I can do everything I can to help them be successful, they will respond by helping me to be successful. I think this is an incredibly important factor to individual success. Taking this approach at the organizational level will help ensure your company's overall success.

What factors are responsible for getting you where you are today?

Great relationships, great mentors, having a sense of urgency, working at adding value, and refusing to fail. I was (am) driven!

I think I always work, manage and lead with an incredible sense of urgency, maybe even to a point of appearing desperate. I try to build teams that follow the four principles (deliver the highest quality in the fastest time at the lowest possible cost and always provide outstanding service).

How would you describe your values as a leader?

This sounds like a cliché, but it is doing the right thing — doing the right thing for the customer, for the vendor, and for the employees. If you feel you've made a bad decision, but you made it while trying to do the right thing for the company, then it is something to learn from. It doesn't make it wrong. As a leader you must try to instill that in the employees.

What are your expectations of people who report to you?

I believe that each person's job is to replace the person ahead of them, thus allowing that person ahead of them to opportunity to move to the next level. And doing the right thing is how to get there. Leaders need to work as long and as hard as everyone else and be just as committed to do whatever it takes to make the company successful as a whole.

From a productivity standpoint, I will stack my team against three times as many people. The key to success as a leader is to encourage people to be who they are and what they want to be – don't see any job as being an inferior job – see it as a path. If someone says, "I'm just a lowly dishwasher," I will tell them I was a lowly dishwasher and ended up a manager. If the job is "just in the mail room," I will tell them I started in the mailroom in a consulting firm and then ended up as the Sr. Vice President. It is a matter of working hard and trying to add value where you can in whatever position you have.

What do you see as the keys to success?

Wherever you work and whatever your position is, you will be successful if you:

Deliver the **highest quality** in the **fastest time** at the **lowest possible cost** and always provide **outstanding service**.

For each job these factors are important. Quality, Quantity and Cost Management may conflict. For example, in order to deliver the highest quality you may need more time and it will cost more. If time is a factor it may cost more and the quality may not be as high. So do the best you can with the time and money available. However,

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outstanding service should never be compromised. This sounds simple but must be communicated at all levels of the organization.

What motivated you to write a book?

After all that I endured I was blessed with a beautiful family, a fantastic career, great people around me and just an awesome life. When my daughter was born I started writing a journal of my life to give to her when she was an adult. Others read the journal, including my wife, who felt this could be used to reach, help and inspire others. So thanks to the help of many people, my journal became *Rock Bottom – From The Streets To Success*.

Mike has a significant message for business leaders. It is particularly powerful in our current business climate today, when trusting leaders is so very difficult. I have seen his recommendations on LinkedIn and they are powerful testimonials to the kind of leader and mentor he has been to people. I also get the distinct impression he can handle anything thrown his way. If he doesn't know what to do or how to do it, he will figure it out. And, he is a very encouraging manager who inspires the best in people. Many people can spend their entire careers working and never be led by someone like him. Those who work for Mike Cooley are very fortunate to have such an inspiring and driven leader.

Renie McClay focuses on helping companies to design and deliver solutions for improved productivity. Specialties include improving creativity and innovation and improved sales effectiveness. Renie is the author of 10 Steps to Successful Teams, Fortify Your Sales Force, The Essential Guide to Training Global Audiences, and Sales Training Solutions. Her success and key insight comes from extensive experience and passion for learning and developing people all over the globe. Renie's background includes sales and management experience as well as managing training departments for several Fortune 500 companies, including Kraft, Novartis, and Pactiv. She helps authors to develop and deliver their first manuscripts to publishers.

To learn more about Mike Cooley or his book, Rock Bottom – From The Streets To Success, visit his site at <http://www.michaelcooley.tateauthor.com>.



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