

The Total Leader®



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Are You on the Path to Personal Success?

On a trip to a specific destination, a driver can look for certain landmarks to be sure of taking the correct road. A team also has “landmarks” to evaluate whether or not it is on the path to excellence. Several components determine the success of a winning team. These elements include decision making, creative problem solving, collaboration, and facilitative leadership.

Making choices

- ◆ Standards for making decisions. Decisions are always made with reference to certain standards or values. The organizational counterpart to a leader’s strong self-image is a well-defined organizational plan of action that serves as a blueprint for decisions. Identification of priorities among the various organizational goals provides an index to their relative importance to the organization.
- ◆ Responsibility. Determining who will make a particular decision is another important consideration. Even the most effective leaders must repeatedly judge whether to make a decision themselves, refer it to someone else, or delegate it. As a general rule, decisions should be made at the lowest organizational level consistent with quality. Appropriate delegation of deci-

sion making to team members strengthens them, enhances the quality of decisions, prevents morale problems, and maximizes your time effectiveness.

- ◆ Personal accountability. Although you delegate authority and assign responsibility for a decision, you are still personally accountable to the organization for the outcome. Good judgment in the type of decisions you delegate makes it unlikely that such action will be necessary very often. In the event that you are ever forced to reverse or modify a decision, be sure to explain fully to everyone involved. Do all you can to help team members make wise decisions. The more competent they become in making decisions, the bigger contribution they make to the achievement of organizational goals.



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Solving Problems

Like decision making, problem solving may involve a relatively insignificant item, or it may concern a serious issue with the possibility of a major impact on the entire organization. The larger and more important the problem, the more time and detail that go into each step of the problem-solving process. For minor problems, several of the steps may be accomplished mentally in only a few seconds. But the process always includes these steps:

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- ◆ Crystallize the goal. Many problems are caused simply because the goal is not clearly understood by all team members. Take time to review the purpose of the team and its primary goals.
- ◆ Define the problem. It is vitally important to discover the nature of the real problem when something is obviously wrong. Sometimes the visible element is merely a symptom. Define the problem clearly in terms of one or more organizational or personal goals.
- ◆ List criteria for selecting a solution. Establish guidelines for evaluating possible solutions and making decisions by referring to specific organizational goals and priorities. This involves determining the rules by which the most workable solution will be selected and the standards the solution must meet. The criteria might include impact on product quality, cost limits, personnel changes, the leader's time allotment, or a target date for choosing a solution to be implemented.
- ◆ Collect information. Asking open-ended questions and listening carefully to the answers are generally the best ways to gather information. Ask others how they would solve the problem and why they would take that approach. Attempt to see the problem or tentative solution through the eyes of others.
- ◆ Develop possible solutions. Examine all of the data collected and record all possible solutions suggested by the data. List as many possible solutions as you or the group can generate by brainstorming.
- ◆ Analyze possible solutions. Allow time for ideas to "incubate." Work on other problems and come back to the original one with new ideas. In one instance, think primarily in terms of profit. Another time, think in terms of team member development or other objectives. Analyze all assumptions to be sure you are not accepting artificial limitations. When you accept traditional assumptions about what can be done, you limit the ability to find creative solutions. Alter assumptions about what can be accomplished and you open your mind to new possibilities for solving specific problems and for meaningful personal development.
- ◆ Make the decision. When as much information as possible has been gathered and considered, assume the responsibility for making a decision, or for leading team members to choose the best possible solution.
- ◆ Implement the solution and follow up. Since the process is problem solving rather than just decision making, a plan for implementation must be developed to carry the job through to completion. Assign responsi-

bility for each action step. Set up a schedule and follow it to make sure the problem is solved. Make adjustments along the way to ensure successful problem solving.

Collaboration

Many teams who were perceived as underdogs have won championships because they focused on the team goal rather than their own individual goals. The key to collaboration is the ability of team members to work interdependently. Of course, all team members are different from one another. In fact, some teams are purposely designed to maximize the differences among team members. These differences can often lead to friction, tension, and conflict. Conflicts are forks in the road to high performance. How conflicts are handled will determine whether a team stagnates or moves to an even higher level of results. When conflict happens, use the following steps to help team members overcome the conflict:

- Identify the real conflict and the specific team members involved.
- Communicate with each other. This means each team member has a chance to talk about his or her thoughts and feelings and is also willing to listen to other team members.
- Handle the conflict head on and out in the open. This means each team member must be willing to deal with and discuss difficult issues.
- Get team members thinking about potential solutions. Don't judge ideas at this point, just get as many ideas out on the table as possible.
- To resolve most conflicts, get team members to make at least a small compromise on the various issues. Negotiate a solution that is acceptable to everyone.
- Make a commitment. Each team member must commit to the negotiated compromise solution. This means they will give 100 percent effort to make the solution work.
- Follow up to be sure all team members are fully cooperating and putting forth their best effort to make the solution succeed.

Facilitative leadership

Today, the team leader is really the caretaker of the team. This means the leader is responsible for helping, supporting, and facilitating the process of team building, teamwork, and team performance. A facilitative leader understands that the solutions to problems, the information to make decisions, and the creativity to innovate is to be found in team members. Facilitative leaders see their role as bringing out the best talents and abilities of each team member and blending the different strengths of each person into a harmonious whole. The goal is not to make everyone perform the same, but rather to use each person's unique abilities to achieve the best possible performance. The best team leaders develop team members to perform at a high level even without the leader guiding them.

Use Motivation to Grow

Motivation begins by discovering a need so strong that it triggers action. The process is most effective when the action carries some tangible or intangible evidence of exchange. You never get something for nothing, nor do you knowingly give something for nothing. Accept and believe wholeheartedly in the principle and base your motivation on a fair exchange. You are never motivated by an appeal to a nonexistent need, and you are not likely to be motivated by an appeal to a higher need when lower, more basic needs are yet unsatisfied.

Attempts to motivate yourself must always appeal to the desires that are strongest at a given moment. Motivation by attitudes and habits involves accepting responsibility for your own actions. It provides opportunity for growing, for developing creativity and for helping others. Unquestionably, motivation by attitudes and habits is the most powerful and lasting force available for development of personal leadership.

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Develop Others Into Leaders

Tomorrow's business environment will be characterized by more complex problems, even faster rates of change, increased global competition, and the commoditization of most products. It will become more and more difficult for organizations to develop and maintain a unique advantage over competitors. The motivational leader of the future will have to develop in these areas:

- ◆ Leadership is a relationship. Leadership is about people. You don't lead things, you lead people. You lead people through the relationship you have with them. Only when you are able to build positive, trusting relationships with team members will you be able to effectively lead them. You can only develop trusting relationships by spending time with people, interacting, dialoguing, and sharing experiences. When you have relationships based on trust and experience, you know you can depend on each other no matter what the future holds.
- ◆ Lead through goals and values. It is impractical to try to manage and control everything people do. When team members know the goals and are committed to the organization's values, they will almost always act in ways supportive to the organization. The key will be the leader's ability to crystallize the organization's goals and values and effectively communicate them to team members.
- ◆ Balance work. Believe in people, train and develop them continuously, and give them the opportunity to accept responsibility for significant achievement. Just as devastating as the failure to delegate is overdoing delegation. Giving too much of your own authority and responsibility to others who are not adequately trained, who do not share your goals, or who are overworked means that you will soon be out of touch with the operation and will lose the insight you need to influence the direction the organization is moving. Avoid this trap by maintaining a written delegation plan that details what you plan to delegate and to whom, with a schedule for implementing your plan.
- ◆ Focus on strengths. It is easy to drift along allowing people to do the same work they have always done and assuming that is all they can do. People are the greatest under-utilized asset in business today. Study people; learn their strengths, their personal goals, and their desires. Then give them opportunities to develop new abilities and learn new skills that will make them more valuable as team members and more fulfilled as individuals. When people grow, the whole organization benefits. Everyone has both strengths and weaknesses. It is the leader's responsibility to put team members in the right role to best utilize their unique talents and abilities.
- ◆ Multiply your leadership. Make yourself available for new assignments and increased responsibilities. If you are already at the top, developing someone to take over is even more important. The ultimate measurement of a leader's success is how many other leaders they have developed. Organizations succeed in direct proportion to the number of leaders they have. With only one or a few top leaders, organizations must resort to a hierarchical bureaucratic structure to manage and control the actions of employees. This structure is destined to fail in a fast-paced, ever-changing business world. The ideal goal is to develop everyone into a leader.



See Yourself as Successful Leader

The old saying, “Seeing is believing,” was never more appropriate than when it is related to affirmation and visualization. When you set goals, aims, and desires, affirm your belief in your ability to achieve, and exercise the art of visualization to picture yourself already in possession of those goals, you develop an almost miraculous belief in yourself and your ability to succeed.

The art of visualization enables you to move from the area of dreams into the light of reality. A large percentage of patterns of thought are geared to sight. The simplest thought usually calls forth an image. If someone mentions a tree, you will “see” a tree, but mention of an abstract concept, such as justice, requires your mind to grapple with the idea until somehow you reduce the abstraction to a mental picture. If you are unable to form a picture, you may be confused and fail to understand.

If you hear the word “automobile,” you quickly picture one; but it is probably rather hazy. If you are then asked to describe the automobile you pictured, you must refocus your mental image because you did not know in the beginning what to expect. When you have focused your mental picture clearly enough to describe that car, it is probably your own. That is the way most of us respond to the little events in life. Visualization is restricted to what we already know – to the familiar and commonplace. We forget that we are free to use imagination, the spice that adds meaning and zest to visualization.

Visualization is used to the best advantage when you learn to use it in its highest form, that of relating the present to the future. When you can, through visualization, relate the “what is” to the “what can be,” you have developed visualization into a genuine art. Visualization proves that you can create anything you conceive. You learn by the process of visualization to move the future into the present – to expand your own experience. You have the jump on tomorrow. You are prepared for it because you are already familiar with it. You have “seen” it through visualization.

When you free your imagination and visualize your goals with controlled attention and concentrated energy, you begin to see some startling results.

◆ Visualization changes a general idea into something more specific. Your mental camera is brought into focus. Your dream home takes shape and is transformed from a confused blur into a crystal clear image. It is so real that

you can see the roses blooming in the garden. You can see the pictures on the walls, the view from the kitchen window. The power of visualization enables you to believe your affirmation and to dispel any apprehension or worry connected with the goal. The unknown becomes known and the indefinite becomes definite.

◆ Visualization enables you to see errors and incongruities in your plan and make corrections before mistakes become reality. If, while you repeat your affirmation “I enjoy sharing my dream home with my family,” you visualize that home in the most minute detail, you are already experiencing what it feels like to possess it. You can spot mistakes in the floor plan, the decorating scheme, or the size of the rooms. You may then adjust your plan, correct the mistakes, and proceed without serious consequences. Your ego experiences a big boost because you eliminate the embarrassment and the discomfort of actually making a mistake.

◆ Concentrated visualization enables you to refine details.

As you begin to visualize your dream home, it will likely resemble some house you have seen. But as you practice the art of visualization, you will begin to separate the features you like from those you don’t really care for. Then when your dream home is a reality, it will have the distinctive touch that carries the flavor of your own family’s personality.

Willpower alone never produces success because determination and willpower do not foster belief. Unless you overcome and displace the negatives in your mind through the power of affirmation and see the results through visualization, you are forging ahead into the unknown. Remember, habits and attitudes are changed by displacement, that is, by substitution of a more satisfying mode of behavior for old habits. This is not to say that determination is unimportant. It is vital; but it does not provide new or more satisfactory modes of action, and it does not yield belief. Determination must be added to affirmation and visualization. When you affirm your goals with belief and confidence and visualize them with clarity and accuracy, your goals are already in the process of becoming reality. You are on the way to success, and in a sense, have already pre-tasted the satisfaction of achievement.



Increase Productivity with Innovation

Because we live in a world of constant change, organizations must continually change to meet the demands of the competitive marketplace. There seems to be no end to the stories of companies that failed to change, and eventually went out of business. In today's business environment continuous invention and innovation are no longer luxuries; they have become the vital key to survival and prosperity. Innovation is one of the few areas where organizations can achieve a significant competitive advantage.

There are many factors that determine an organization's success at innovation. The goal of innovation is to constantly create new and better products and services that meet or create a need in the marketplace. Innovation is proactive change. Innovation means to think like an entrepreneur – always looking for new opportunities. It is no longer enough to have the best product or service today; you must also consistently innovate for tomorrow.

Unfortunately, this is easier said than done. The larger and more successful an organization becomes, the more difficult it is to change and reinvent its products and services. In fact, the more successful an organization becomes at execution, the harder it becomes to innovate and change.

Leaders must learn to challenge today's success in order to create tomorrow's opportunities. Creativity and innovation must become everyone's responsibility. Most new ideas and innovations are created from the interaction between team members and customers. Customers want solutions to their problems, they want their desires to be met, and their needs fulfilled. These are all potential innovations. Leaders must have every team member actively searching for these opportunities or they will pass right by the organization.

Establishing and maintaining an innovative climate in the workplace requires sensitivity to individual differences when structuring work assignments. Because individual's needs differ, how you lead people must differ. At the same time, the necessary procedures of your business must be met, and the difference in the way you lead particular individuals must avoid any appearance of preferential

treatment. Give careful consideration to these factors:

- ▲ Structure and freedom. Some team members possess highly structured thinking patterns and want to work “by the book.” They want an explicit procedure to follow in every situation because this helps them feel secure. Give them training that enables them to do their jobs accurately and promptly, but do not burden them with the responsibility for making decisions in unpredictable situations. Other team members, in contrast, prefer to devise their own work plan. They want to feel that you consider their judgment dependable, and that they are free to exercise initiative. Generally, the more freedom people have the more creative and innovative they become. Their productivity and motivation are directly related to the degree of freedom and responsibility you grant them. Be sensitive to individual needs and assign responsibilities accordingly. Keep the goals of your organization firmly in sight, but give people as much freedom as they prove capable of handling. At the same time, require accountability. This approach empowers team members to increase their overall productivity and generate the greatest number of innovative ideas.



- ▲ Conformity and creativity. Encouraging team members to use as much of their creativity as possible – as long as their creativity is focused on productivity – is to your advantage. From their creativity come ideas for improving present products, services, and for implementing future projects. As a leader, your responsibility in encouraging creativity requires careful balance between inviting and directing creativity toward appropriate targets, while ensuring conformity in situations where no deviation can be tolerated. For example, the ethical policies of the organization are vital to its existence so conformity must be maintained with no “creative” deviations allowed. Safety and quality control regulations must be the letter of the law. But fresh ideas in many other areas are essential for continued profitability and competitiveness.

The higher your expectations, the more creativity team members exhibit. As the self-worth of team members grows, their motivation and ability to meet challenges improves.

Bridging the Gap Between Potential and Performance

Since 1966, Leadership Management® International, Inc. has been bridging the gap between potential and performance by helping organizations and individuals evaluate their strengths and opportunities through implementation of the unique and proven LMI Process™.

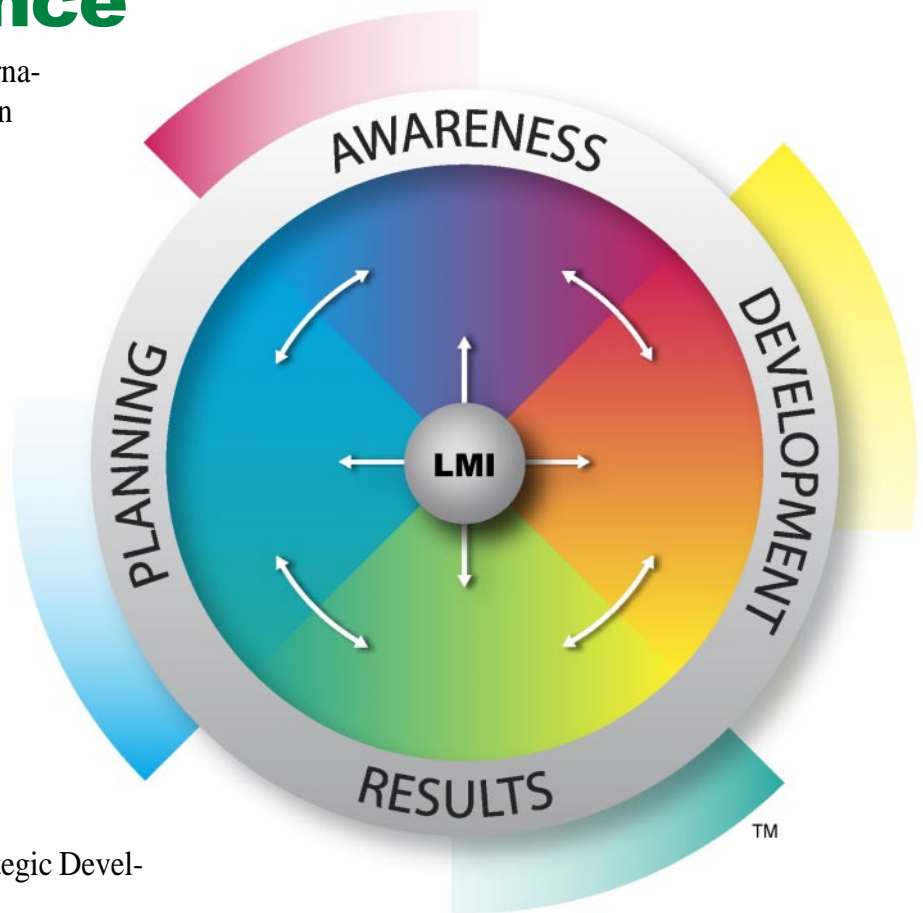
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