



*Leading Culture  
Handbook*

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***Note: This is a sample of the Leading Culture Handbook.  
It has been abbreviated for quick review.***

# Introduction

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The Leading Culture Handbook has been developed as a tool for leaders to expand their repertoire of behaviors, practices and action strategies for strengthening culture. Changing behaviors and altering long-standing routines is difficult for anyone, but for leaders trying to deliver today's results plus improve collaboration, innovation, productivity, agility or other culture strengths, this is particularly challenging. The Leading Culture Handbook provides a rich resource of ideas about how leader's can use their own behaviors and practices to shape culture.

## *Research-based*

The Leading Culture Handbook is anchored in over a dozen years research into leader behaviors and practices that build productive and adaptive environments where people deliver their best. It is founded on constructs developed based on the work of social scientists in the area of national and organizational culture, including Geert Hofstede and Fons Trompenpaars, as well as The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies by House, Hanges and others. The GLOBE Study involved approximately 17,000 managers from 951 organizations operating in 62 societies with a research team of 170 scholars and research scientists from the same 62 countries.

## *Leader behaviors*

The Leading Culture Handbook describes in detail behaviors that leaders can use to strengthen the 10 areas of culture listed below. It provides examples of behaviors and practices for managers to master and role model in each dimension.

Agility	Engagement	Performance
Collaboration	Learning	Risk
Direction	Openness	Trust
Discipline		

## *Focus on four kinds of practices*

While behaviors are important, they need to be used in the context of day-to-day practices in order to develop new routines and habits. By focusing on changes to four kinds of practices - Social, Managing, Operating and Search, leaders are able to open-up positive and productive dialogue about beliefs, behaviors and artifacts (such as policies, language and symbols).

In addition, leaders need ideas about where to start, so included in this handbook are action strategies that illustrate starting points for strengthening each dimension of culture. This includes

tactics for shifting culture that get to the heart of the question of how to invite others on a journey of culture change with you.

The behavioral examples that follow are based on observation of and interviews with high performing leaders in organizations from a wide range of sectors and industries around the globe. These leaders include people at all levels that positively influence the thoughts and actions of those around them. To be clear, these leaders are not just people in management positions. They include individual contributors such as engineers, analysts and shop floor workers among others.

## *Definitions*

**Leader Behaviors:** The often unconscious actions that leaders demonstrate in response to different situations. These actions send signals to others that tell them what is the expected and, when the leader is influential, the best way to act. For this reason, it is important that leaders are self-aware and in touch with the ways that their words and actions are influencing others' behavior and shaping the culture around them.

**Leader Practices:** Repeat patterns of activity that leaders use as they go about their work. This is different from a process which is the transformation of an input into an output. An example of a practice is the way that leaders approach running meetings. For example, if a leader runs his or her meetings in a structured and disciplined manner, it sends a very different message than if his or her meetings are informal and loosely organized. There are four different types of practices that leaders use:

- Social** The way leaders interact and communicate with others. This includes the way they connect and build relationships with others and the way they help others to do the same.
- Managing** The way leaders accomplish work through others, including the way they choose to make decisions, solve problems, develop plans, conduct meetings, communicate, manage performance, develop their staff, and recognize achievement.
- Operating** The activities leaders perform in doing their work, such as activities that are specific to their occupation, department and function such as the way a customer complaint is handled or a loan is authorized.
- Search** The approaches leaders use to seek out and identify ways to enhance the current way of doing things. This includes the way that leaders help groups learn from the past using practices such as 'after action reviews' and 'post mortems'.

**Action Strategies:** Approaches and interventions that focus energy and attention on a culture dimension that you want to strengthen or change. To be effective, these must be accompanied by consistent and aligned behaviors and practices.

## *Strategies for Shaping & Changing Culture*

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There are a number of things that leaders can do shape or change culture. Keep these strategies in mind as you develop your action plan to strengthen the level of engagement of your team.

### *SHARED PURPOSE – Unite people in purpose & intention ....*

- Culture change can start with anyone. The leader stands alone at first and has the courage to be different. The leader is willing to be different because he or she has a purpose and realizes that the current way of doing things is not going to get the outcomes desired. The leader is clear about the change they want to create
- Leaders embrace followers as equals and show them how to follow because it's not about the leader; it's about the purpose that both leader and follower share.

### *BEHAVIORS – Focus on one or two behaviors ...*

- Culture change leaders don't confuse the end with the means. They identify exactly the behaviors needed to achieve the end result they want.
- Often they look for who is getting the outcomes already and uncover the behaviors that work or figure out new ones. Then they narrow the focus to only a small set of behaviors.
- They anchor these behaviors in day-to-day practices or routines. For example, 'shift meeting' is an important practice that is the focal point for shaping beliefs and behaviors at Four Seasons Hotels and CN Rail. Both companies use the first 15 minutes at the start of each shift to focus on specific behaviors.
- Inspired culture change leaders identify pivotal groups of influencers to introduce behaviors to. For example, a leader who desires execution discipline might start a culture change with his supervisors.

### *SEEK OUT THE NETWORK OF PRACTICES – Use a network effect to create momentum...*

- Leaders that accelerate culture change focus on high-leverage inter-related practices. Often one or two changes can create a tipping point to shift behaviors, values, attitudes and outcomes. For a leader who wants to improve execution discipline, this may mean having a Monday morning cross-departmental meeting (a practice) to coordinate work, a Friday conference call to review progress (a practice) and a monthly feedback session (a practice) about where improvements are needed. Each practice focuses on the same two behaviors: being accountable and using constructive feedback.
- Improving every day practices sends signals that something that needs paying attention to is going on. Some practice changes are significant and create upheaval and pain. Some create incremental change, building on current strengths. Leaders must choose which strategy is needed, knowing that transformational change does not come without pain.

## **USE THE AMPLIFYING EFFECT OF LEADER BEHAVIORS** – *Role models ....*

- During times of change, everyone is watching leaders for signals about the way things will get done in 'the new world'. Every action is interpreted as a signal of the new culture. Leader behaviors are compared and contrasted. Inspired leaders take advantage of this by identifying the way they want their culture to develop and then shaping it every day through their own behaviors.
- Accelerated culture change requires leaders, from top to bottom, who role model the right behaviors. Like ripple effectives on a pond, leader behaviors shape the culture of the organization. For this reason, self-assessment, employee focus groups, culture surveys and feedback sessions help leaders understand how their behaviors are perceived by others.

## **MAKE IT PERSONAL** – *Tap into values...*

- Most culture change efforts rely on personal and group motivators and let the value of the behavior itself reinforce the gain from new ways of doing things.
- Sometimes however people are uninterested in the behaviors or resist change. In this case, connecting the desired behavior to the person's personal values can be a powerful means of helping them see what is positive in it for them. Open discussion with the individual about his or her personal values and how contrary behaviors support (e.g. more self-awareness) or violate them can be a turning point in working with resisters and cynics.
- Inspired leaders talk to these folks about what they want personally, long term, from their lives and allow them to make their own links between their current behavior and what they really want. They also refrain from lectures or advice as this is unlikely to change the thinking of resisters.
- When extrinsic rewards are needed to accelerate culture change, inspired leader keep rewards simple and targeted at the behaviors themselves.
- Punishment is the final resort and conditions for it need to be communicated in advance and planned so the message is clear.

## **MAKE IT DESIRABLE** – *Tap in to intrinsic satisfaction...*

- Most people want to do well, put in a good day's work and be proud of their achievements. Research shows that people have a powerful desire to do what is right. Inspired leaders get positive feedback coming often from many sources.
- Research also reveals that people whose work requires conceptual thinking are motivated by purpose, autonomy and mastery. Inspired leaders help people tap into these three powerful factors for intrinsic motivation. For example, a leader might realize that the new behavior is going to create some pain before it becomes as habit. He or she might make mastery fun by creating a game around it, increasing individual and team targets over time, posting daily results and having some friendly competition across groups. What could be an unpleasant learning situation can become a source of pride in individual and team achievement.

### *NO EXCEPTIONS – 100% consistency...*

- Inspired leaders leave no place to hide. They track adoption of new behaviors and practices. They make progress public. When progress is slow they provide support. When willingness is low, they try different strategies.
- They understand and use peer pressure and create opportunities to make it happen. They build more and more followers and have them help assess how the new behaviors are being adopted.
- Finally inspired leaders have the courage to deal with non-compliance because it not just impacts group productivity, it impacts group solidarity. As the saying goes, the chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Without solidarity, groups cannot effectively work in concert and deal with complex emerging issues and inter-dependencies. Inspired leaders focus on the betterment of the whole and take action when needed with individuals whose behaviors weaken it.

### *FOLLOWERS – Engage the influential ones ...*

- Leaders seek out first followers. These people are influential, respected and connected to important groups of followers. Inspired leaders seek out these influencers and spend a disproportionate amount of time with them, introducing the new ways of doing things.
- These followers make a choice, to have the courage to join and support the leader by adopting the new behaviors or to stay in their comfort zone. To help the first followers, the leader demonstrates how the new practice or behavior is done and keeps it simple.
- The first followers find that the experience is pleasurable or at least neutral and because there is a shared purpose with the leader, the first followers are willing to seek others to follow. Pilots with a small group can build a group of first followers.
- Others see what to do. It is easy enough to follow, so another follower joins the first follower, creating a group. It is these first followers who are most influential in embedding new norms into day-to-day practices.

### *STORIES – Forget the PowerPoint presentation...*

- The best way to start a culture change is to have everyone experience what it will be like. Immersion is great but too often this is not possible. So inspired leaders create a vicarious experience by visiting areas where the behaviors are in use and by using stories. People need to know two things: Will it be worth it? Can I do it?
- Stories explore what the behavior feels like and create an empathetic reaction in the listener. We become gripped by what was on the person's mind, the details of what it was really like and the results that were achieved.
- Leaders encourage others to tell the whole story making sure there is clear link between the desired behaviors and existing (or possibly) future negative results. They draw out the story teller to explain how the new behaviors brought better results. They let the listeners work through the two big questions: Will it be worth it? Can I do it?
- Inspired leaders evaluate early behavior change to see if the behaviors are having an impact and create the outcome desired. These little tests become early stories about the gains ahead and proofs of the benefits. They also identify unintended consequences, barriers and gaps in support.

### **MAKE IT PUBLIC** – *Engage the system...*

- Others must see the followers, not just the leader. To accelerate change other followers must see the first followers in action and copy their behaviors.
- When other followers see followers experiencing what is new, the risks are clearer. They won't be made fun of and they won't be punished. They can either be with the 'in-crowd' or they can wait. More people join in.
- Those sitting on the fence start to 'tip over' and join the first followers, creating a 'tipping point' of behavior change so that soon if you are not with the crowd, you will soon be ridiculed for not joining in.
- When the behavior is different and new, it is hard to safely embrace it. In this case, people need to talk openly about it. Some people will want to halt wide-spread discussion about it. The more controversial or high-stakes the behavior change is, the more the system needs to be engaged in discourse about how to make the change happen.

### **SKILLS & SUPPORT** – *Build competence and confidence...*

- New behaviors require learning which can be painful. Inspired leaders immerse people in the behavior frequently and stick it out for at least two months so habits form.
- They focus on the sense of accomplishment associated with the result and help people track their progress. They focus on consistency, from everyone (including those at the top).
- Inspired leaders figure out the social support (e.g. training, coaching, and supportive actions) and structural support (e.g. policies, procedures) vital to building consistency and get them installed across the system.
- They know that people are learning and will falter. People need recovery support to get back on track when they drop new behaviors. They need to consider what the situation is that is impeding the behaviors. Such conversations are essential to helping people figure out how to maintain new behaviors consistently. Leaders, peers coaches and external coaches are all social supports that can be part of gaining consistency.

# Action Plans

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To develop your action plan, you are going to need the results of the High Engagement Culture Survey which are provided in the report that you received at the Leadership Excellence Program. The report provides you with data that you will have used to identify one engagement factor that you would like to strengthen. The reason for focusing on one factor is simple. Most leaders have their hands full with their day-to-day work so adding anything new is a challenge. By focusing on one factor and using strategies that build it into normal activities, the potential for success increases substantially.

## Instructions

1. Identify one engagement factor that you would like to strengthen (use the table on page 3 of your report).
2. Read the example of a completed Action Plan Worksheet on page 8 of this Handbook.
3. Go to the section of the Handbook for the engagement factor that you selected (see the Table of Contents for the page number).
4. Read through the suggested behaviors, practices, enablers and action strategies. Identify the ones that you think might apply (as is or modified) to your situation. Consider how you would apply them and, if appropriate record any that you plan to use in the blank worksheet that is provided on the next page.
5. Brainstorm additional ideas of behaviors, practices or other things you can do to strengthen the engagement factors. Record these in your worksheet.
6. Read through your completed worksheet and make any additions, changes or deletions that you think are necessary to end up with a realistic and achievable action plan.
  - ▶ Consider the culture change strategies (page 2 -5) as you evaluate your plan.
7. For each action item, note who you will ask for feedback and how you are going to measure success.

# Action Plan Worksheet

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The dimension that I am focusing on is:

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The things I am going to do to strengthen the culture within my area of influence are:

Action Item	Who will I ask for feedback?	How will I measure success?
<b>Behaviors I am going to consistently demonstrate are:</b>		
<b>Practices I am going to use are:</b>		
<b>Other things I am going to do are:</b>		

## Example of a Completed Action Plan Worksheet

The factor that I am focusing on is:

- Trust – We need everyone to speak openly and honestly about their concerns, ideas and opinions.

The things I can do to strengthen the level of trust with my team are:

Action Item	Who will I ask for feedback?	How will I measure success?
<p><b>Behaviors I am going to consistently demonstrate are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I will be honest and straight forward. I won't 'spin' things. I will call things the way they are.</li> <li>• I will treat everyone with respect. I will listen attentively and ask questions to make sure I understand what they are saying. I will not cut people off or otherwise shut them down. I will respectfully invite 'quiet' people to provide their ideas and suggestions.</li> <li>• I will take on issues head-on, even the "undiscussables." I will address the tough stuff directly. I will acknowledge the unsaid and won't skirt the real issues.</li> </ul>	My staff	Evaluation at 3, 6 and 9 months (see other things I am going to do)
<p><b>Practices I am going to use are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I will hold weekly 'dialogue' sessions to discuss questions, concerns and suggestions. These will be employee-driven with me listening and probing to understand the messages. The objective of these sessions is to encourage open, two way conversations that help to build a shared understanding of issues and concerns and strengthen trust.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ I will start by picking a 'safe topic' such as an operations problem that we are facing. I will ask a member of my team (a friend) to prepare and lead the discussion.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• For every major decision, I will clearly state the rationale for the decision and, if appropriate, the implications for people in our areas.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ I will inform people in a timely manner using technology when necessary although, as much as possible, I will communicate major decisions face-to-face.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	My staff	Evaluation at 3, 6 and 9 months (see other things I am going to do)
<p><b>Other things I am going to do are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am going to meet with my team and tell them what I am planning to do and ask for their feedback. I will also tell them that I am going to check in with them periodically to find out how I am doing – what I am doing well and what I can do better</li> <li>• I am going to write a blog that my staff can read. I am going to use the blog to record my reflection on what I am doing to build trust – what I think I did well and what I want to do differently as well as things I want to start doing</li> <li>• At the end of three months I am going to ask my staff to write an evaluation of my efforts – what I am doing well, what I need to improve and what suggestions they have for things to do differently</li> <li>• I am going to engage my 'friends' (Bill and Tom) to help me build trust with other members of my team</li> </ul>	My staff	Evaluation at 3, 6 and 9 months (see other things I am going to do)

## Strengthening Culture

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This section of the Leading Culture Handbook provides examples of leader behaviors and practices, as well as action strategies that leaders can use to help shape the culture within their sphere of influence.

These examples are intended as ideas to get you thinking about actions that you can take rather than singular behaviors. Adapt them to your situation and identify others that will work for you.

The Handbook can be used with the Leading Culture Snapshot, a 360° survey that helps leaders to identify areas of strengths and opportunities for development with respect to ten dimensions of organizational culture that contribute to a strong foundation culture.

The culture dimensions are listed below. Those underlined are outlined in this sample handbook.



Agility

Collaboration

Direction

Discipline

Engagement

Learning

Openness

Performance

Risk

Trust

*Agility: The ability to think and act quickly to solve problems and take advantage of opportunities.*

## **Leader Behaviors**

- Be decisive and willing to take a reasonable risk when you don't have all of the facts.
  - Recognize when a decision is needed quickly and, if possible, make it or steward it through the organization to ensure a timely response.
  - Defer to experts when a decision requires the knowledge of someone with greater knowledge.
- Experiment with new ways of doing things.
  - Try something new every day.
  - Ask others what they did today that was new and different.
- Keep abreast of developments in the external environment and encourage others to do the same.
  - Build a network of strong relationships with people outside your organization, i.e. customers, suppliers, community leaders.
  - Seek out experts and engage them in conversations about developments in the external environment and their implications.
  - Read industry and professional publications.
  - Look outside the organization for better ways of doing things.
- Avoid language that indicates that you are stuck in the past e.g. 'we've already tried that', 'that will never work here' etc.
- Seek out the opinions of people with very different perspectives and backgrounds from your own
  - Listen for and point out the new ways of thinking about things that they provide
- Ask 'what if' and 'what can we learn' a lot

## **Leader Practices**

### **Social:**

- Identify who needs to be involved in a decision and work with them to develop a way to get them what they need to make a decision quickly.
- Manage your network of relationships within and outside the organization.
  - Develop a plan to maintain and strengthen your internal and external network especially with decision-makers and knowledge experts.
  - Connect members of your team with people in your network.

### **Managing:**

- Conduct scenario planning exercises

## Leader Practices

- Brainstorm future possible developments in the industry, technology etc.
- Discuss the implications and what changes would be necessary to take advantage of the opportunities available
- Design a rapid problem solving and idea generation approach that involves experts within and across teams:
  - Clearly define how decisions are going to be made.
  - Implement structures to make it easy for it to happen e.g. involve only people who need to be involved when they need to be.
- Implement guidelines for response time to others' request for assistance.
- Implement lessons learned practices and structures such as 'after action reviews'.
  - Deconstruct events/situations to identify contributing success factors and the root cause of errors or omissions. Identify what should be retained and improved. Share the findings.

## Operating:

- Walk around and ask others what is getting in others way of getting things done.
  - Seek out and remove barriers to decision-making.

## Search:

- Host discussion forums on the implications of developments in the external environment:
  - Lunch and learn sessions
  - On-line discussion forums
- Add time at the end of meetings to discuss what worked and what needs to be better to make the meetings and decision-making more effective.

## Action Strategies

- Invite external speakers such as vendors to lead discussions on new trends and developments in the industry, technology etc.:
  - Discuss the implications for your area or organization.
- Organize a visit to another organization in the same or a different industry or sector:
  - Prepare an in-depth briefing package for participants.
  - Create a research plan focused on identifying opportunities for new ideas to be explored.
- Create a poster/mural of pictures of trends impacting customers and create a top 10 list of emerging trends your organization or your department needs to pay attention to.
- Organize a 'seek and destroy' team to identify opportunities to streamline decision-making.
- Examine the decisions you are making on a daily basis to identify ones that you don't need to be involved in:

## Action Strategies

- Keep a log or journal for a week and record all of the decisions that you are making or are asked to make.
  - At the end of the week, sort the decisions into groups: A. high risk – if the wrong decision is made there are major repercussions; B. medium risk – if the wrong decision is made there are repercussions but these can be managed; C. low risk – if the wrong decision is made, it can be corrected reasonably quickly and easily.
  - Review your analysis with your team and ask them for their feedback; test that what you think is a high risk is REALLY a high risk. Decide what decisions can be made by your staff and who can make them; be sure to identify any support that they need.
- Create a strong support system that encourages others to make decisions.
- If people are reluctant to make decisions, it is usually because they do not feel that they will be supported if something goes wrong. Check that the following is available:
    - Access to the information they need to make informed choices. Do they know where to go or who to talk to if they have questions?
    - Responsive support to their requests for assistance. How quickly do you or others respond to their questions or requests?
    - Skills and knowledge. Do they have the skills and knowledge they need to make the right decisions? Do they need training and/or coaching??
    - Feedback and coaching. Do they know when they are making right and wrong decisions? Do they get coaching to help them when things go wrong?
    - Absence of blaming. Is there finger-pointing and blaming when someone makes a mistake? Do you ask what needed to be different to make a better decision in future?
    - Rewards and recognition. Do you acknowledge when they have taken a risk and made a difficult decision?

*"Our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake, to adjust to new ideas, to remain vigilant and to face the challenge of change."*

**Martin Luther King Jr.**

*Collaboration: The ability to work effectively with others and create the conditions that encourage and enable others to work together in a cooperative and collaborative manner.*

### **Leader Behaviors**

- Demonstrate empathy and caring for others.
  - Ask people about their family and personal interests
  - Send a card or other gesture for special occasions
- Use active listening and ask questions to make sure you understand the other person's perspective. Demonstrate that you are genuinely interested in their opinions and concerns.
- Use language that doesn't exclude others, such as 'in' jokes, acronyms and so on.
- Avoid 'us' and 'them' language.
- Give people 'the benefit of the doubt'.
  - Ask questions and test your assumptions before taking action
- When appropriate, direct employees to consult with other teams. Check that this is happening.
- Make addressing problems affecting other departments a priority.
  - Personally get involved in resolving them.
- Ask your staff how their work affects other group e.g. have you made department X aware of this issue?
- Be alert to problems and issues that may affect other departments.
  - When these occur, immediately contact the appropriate people in the other groups and inform and/or involve them in resolution.
- Emphasize cross-department goals and efforts to help other departments be successful. Use formal and informal opportunities to ask your staff:
  - What have we done to help this or that department achieve its goals?
  - How are we doing on our deliverables to other departments?
  - What are we currently doing that is helping other groups be successful?
  - What else should we be doing to help other groups be successful?
  - How are other departments helping us?
  - What else do we need from other departments to be effective?
- Ask what you can do to help others solve a problem, achieve a goal etc.
  - Let people know when you hear something that may affect them; watch out for the other people you work with

## Leader Practices

### Social:

- Reach out to peers you don't regularly see.
  - Make time to meet them for a coffee.
  - Get to meetings early so you can socialize with people.
- Create an employee profile tool either on the web or on a bulletin board (virtual tools are more accessible).
  - Include the person's skills and knowledge including their past work experience and current role as well as their personal, outside work interests.
  - Post pictures of your team and note what each person is responsible for.
- At least once a week, touch base with someone in interdependent departments.
  - Ask if they are getting the deliverables and support that they need.
  - Identify any issues or concerns that your group is experiencing with them.
- Create a peer recognition board where employees can post notes recognizing the people they work with for excellent work, going out of their way to help others etc

### Managing:

- Identify where infighting, duplication and competition are draining productivity and address.
- Identify the departments that affect your work and those that you affect.
  - Hold a meeting with these departments to share goals and identify dependencies.
  - Share what is most important to contribute to and 'synch' what is important and not as important for the coming year.
  - Conduct a risk assessment and develop a risk mitigation plan e.g. what needs to happen for each department to be successful?
- Use recognition programs to acknowledge the contributions of other teams to your success.

### Operating:

- Share information about developments in your work area with other work teams on a regular basis.
- Work with your peers in other teams to solve joint problems and develop shared plans.

### Search:

- Engage your team in an exploration of collaboration in action:
  - Look for examples where a high level of collaboration resulted in unexpected outcomes.
  - Deconstruct the stories to identify ideas that can be applied to future endeavors.

## Action Strategies

- Include a 'get to know you' activity at meetings.
  - Each person writes 3 truths and 1 lie on an index card that describes things about themselves. Throughout the meeting between agenda items have someone read their card and the others have to guess what the lie is.
  - Ask each person to complete the sentence, "If I were an animal, I would be a..." and explain why they chose that animal (or car, superhero etc.)
- Identify the teams you need to collaborate with and develop practices to work together on an area of mutual importance.
- Conduct interviews with inter-dependent teams to identify areas of tension that are impacting collaboration with your team.
- Conduct an audit of your work environment to determine how physical space supports or gets in the way of collaboration.
- Collect success stories about other teams that support your own. Communicate them.
- Schedule new social events to strengthen relationships with individuals and teams that need to collaborate with each other. Interview friends and relatives about how groups collaborate in completely different industries for leading-edge practices.
- Develop a 'contract' with other departments that identifies dependencies and deliverables.
  - Be specific. Example, if another department depends on your group to provide deliverables so that they can do their work, identify what the deliverables are, when they will be delivered and by whom.
  - Agree to a process for monitoring execution against the contract.
  - Measure and reward success based on cross-department outcomes.
- Conduct regular, scheduled cross-department reviews to identify what's working and what needs to change to ensure all departments are successful.

*"... everybody, every team, every platform, every division, every component is there not for individual competitive profit or recognition, but for contribution to the system as a whole on a win-win basis."*

**W. Edward Deming**

*Discipline: The ability to manage the implementation of policies, procedures, processes, plans and initiatives in a disciplined manner.*

## **Leader Behaviors**

- Always finish what you start.
- Deliver on your commitments to others.
- Ask the tough questions when individuals are not performing: why are things not getting done; what is stopping people from delivering results?
- Actively search for problems to solve and get involved in problem-solving.
- Confront people who are not meeting their commitments.
- When reviewing plans, don't just sign off – ask for an explanation and drill down until the answers are clear.
- Consistently follow important policies, procedures and processes.

## **Leader Practices**

### **Social:**

- Get into the 'field', ask questions and talk to people about their work and progress on initiatives.
  - Show a genuine interest and concern in what they are doing and helping them to be successful.
  - Ask for their ideas on ways to improve.
- Recognize people who are executing – a personal thank you note is a good start.

### **Managing:**

- Set a few critical and clear goals that everyone can focus on – too many are distracting and deplete resources.
- Implement a disciplined planning process that takes into account available resources.
  - Schedule formal time for planning with your team. Schedule weekly, monthly quarterly and annual planning and review time.
  - Involve all of the people important to delivery in the development of plans; focus on the 'how's' of execution – how are they going to ensure on-time and on-budget delivery?
  - Use techniques for evaluating plans such as: Cost/Benefit analysis; PMI (Plus, Minus, Interesting); Force Field Analysis; Cash Flow Forecasts and Break Even Analysis; and, Risk Analysis and Contingency Planning.
  - Hold pre-planning events such as brainstorming sessions, focus groups, or internal service agreement meetings to build shared understanding, joint commitment and improved quality of inputs to plans.

## Leader Practices

- Build communications routines for sharing plans with staff and stakeholder groups.
- Develop contingency plans to ensure achievement of goals, despite changes to plans.
- Implement a disciplined process for monitoring execution that includes milestones and clear accountabilities.
  - Follow through with others to make sure plans are fully implemented and benefits received.
  - Implement an operations review process that includes planned, regular meetings of key stakeholders and team members.
- Measure results by comparing what was achieved to exactly what you said would be achieved.
  - Use tracking and measurement systems that allow observation of trends and patterns.
- Dedicate time at every meeting to review upcoming project milestones, key activities and resource assignments and work on strategies for success.
- Before launching into problem solving at meetings, ask your team to step back and examine what is happening overall. Describe the dynamics of the system and the inter-relationship of its parts. Focus on the forest, rather than any one tree.

## Operating:

- Build discipline into the way that you do your work e.g. be on time for meetings, implement performance management in a disciplined manner, insist that others are on time for meetings, plan and run organized meetings and so on.
- Establish a toolkit of planning templates for team member use including spreadsheet formats, document templates, decision trees and so on.
- Invest in and share software tools that make planning visualization more effective.

## Learning:

- Identify patterns that may indicate the potential for a problem in the future.
  - 'Listen' to the process. Collect data and compare trends over time. Assess whether processes meet desired outcomes and if there are additional opportunities for improvement.
  - Identify causal factors which prevent processes from meeting their objectives.
  - Look for gaps between what is needed and what is happening and take steps to close the gap.
- Gather stories about planning that has resulted in success. Identify best practices your team can adopt.
- Organize teams to improve core processes. Identify the resources available for the improvement effort, such as people, time, money, and materials, establish reporting requirements, and determine the team's level of authority (team charter).

## Action Strategies

- Implement an operations review process where everyone involved in delivery has an opportunity to be part of a discussion where tough questions about what worked and what went wrong get asked.
- Develop a personal plan for strengthening execution – get out and talk to people doing the work; keep abreast of the details; participate in problem solving.
- Build organization memory about the way processes operate end-to-end by sharing a compelling story that starts with customer needs and includes how different groups contribute to bringing the customer value.
- ‘Walk’ a key process. Pretend you are a form, a customer or a supplier and identify every step required to complete the process. Look for ways to simplify the process immediately.

*“An average plan vigorously executed is far better than a brilliant plan on which nothing is done”*

**Brian Tracy**

*Engagement: The ability to motivate others to go above and beyond expectations to achieve high levels of performance.*

## **Leader Behaviors**

- Greet employees by name.
  - Ask about their families using their names; show that you care enough to get to know their family situation
- Get to know people on a personal basis. What are their interests? Demonstrate that you genuinely care about them as a person.
- Look for opportunities to show your enthusiasm and positive attitude towards your work and the work of the organization.
  - Get involved in extra-curricular activities such as organizing social events or team building activities.
  - Laugh, have fun and encourage others to do the same.
  - Put in the extra effort even when it isn't absolutely necessary.
- Go above and beyond to help others. Be alert to indications that others are struggling and be proactive in offering assistance.
  - Don't just offer assistance. If you know that someone needs help, roll up your sleeves and get to it.
  - If your team stays late, be there with them.
- Demonstrate that you feel empowered to make decisions even when you don't have all the facts and are dealing with ambiguity and complexity.
  - Use these as coaching opportunities to explain to your staff why you made the decision, what factors you considered, the risks involved, options available and so on.
- Do not blame others when you make a mistake or things go wrong or when someone else makes a mistake.
  - Ask what should I/we have done differently to achieve a better outcome?
- Share your knowledge and expertise with other, less experienced people.
  - Develop your coaching skills and look for opportunities to apply them as a part of your day-to-day work.
- Walk around and ask employees for their feedback on new programs and initiatives (continuous improvement) on a regular and informal basis.
- Refrain from second guessing people who make decisions that are different from the ones that you would have made.

## Leader Practices

### Social:

- Reach out to staff in other locations on a regular basis:
  - At least once a week call them and ask how they are doing.
  - Schedule face-to-face time; there is no substitute for this and the best thing is to plan it so that it happens.
  - Add 5 or 10 minutes personal face time to a scheduled meeting they are attending.
  - Look for opportunities to meet face-to-face with employees when you are in the area for other reasons.
- Plan the first 10 to 15 minutes of every team meeting as social time. This is an investment in relationships which contribute to higher levels of trust and related outcomes.
- Send personal notes of acknowledgement when someone goes above and beyond to help others or the organization as whole.

### Managing:

- Make others work more interesting and challenging by adding elements that tap into their personal interests.
- Provide opportunities for people to work on things that they are genuinely interested in e.g. ½ day every other week where they can work on anything they want with the only condition being that they have to present the results back to the organization in a fun forum.
- Ask team members for their ideas and opinions on decisions that affect them.
  - Do this one-on-one as well as meetings.
  - Only ask for their input if you are willing to give it serious consideration. If not, they will see right through it and likely be unwilling to participate in future.
  - When you make a decision where you have requested their input, clearly communicate the decision and your reasons for it. Acknowledge their input and if necessary explain why you did not go in that direction.
- Consult others on technical/operational decisions that they deal with on a day-to-day basis.
  - Acknowledge that they have the knowledge and information needed to make sure the right decision is made.
  - Express appreciation for their suggestions.
  - Follow-up after the decision is made and explain why you decided to do what you did.
- Encourage others to make decisions within their defined area of responsibility, capability and level of authority.
  - Avoid making decisions that they should and can make; use developmental coaching techniques instead of telling them what to do e.g. what do you think you should do? What else have you considered? Is there any reason why you feel it is important to get my input or approval?
  - Avoid being too hands-off. Provide the support, resources and direction each person needs to

## Leader Practices

be effective.

### Operating:

- Use difficult decisions and complex problems as opportunities to share your knowledge and expertise with others.

### Search:

- Identify and provide opportunities for others to get involved in new projects and initiatives.
  - Throw out 'stepping stones' (a.k.a. questions or ideas) and see who grabs hold of it then given them the support to run with it. This can be a good way to see who takes initiative and wants to take on more responsibility.

## Action Strategies

- Make the workplace personal and fun!
  - Hang photos of employees with their families or pictures of them doing their favorite hobby or sport.
  - Create a pet wall of employee four-legged, finned and feathered family members.
- Every day, ask at least one person how things are going, what if anything is getting in the way of them doing their job and what suggestions they have to improve things.
- Use regularly scheduled meetings with employees to build in time for things like CI discussions, brainstorming, employee presentations on a topic etc.
- Create a discussion board for posting problems and gathering suggestions and input on solutions.
- Set up a wall board in a gathering space and invite employees to post stories celebrating the accomplishments of their peers and teams.

*"Few things help an individual more than to place responsibility upon him, and to let him know that you trust him."*

**Booker T. Washington**

*Performance: Taking responsibility for one's actions and decisions while achieving high levels of performance.*

## **Leader Behaviors**

- Consistently deliver results on time and within budget – no excuses allowed.
- Speak about the importance of achieving short-term targets or results. Tell stories that illustrate potential for success.
- Publicize how you are doing on key indicators of your performance.
- Proactively identify when an objective might be missed and take steps to correct it.
- Be responsive to others' request for assistance – provide the assistance they need within reasonable timeframes i.e. by end of shift, within 24 hours etc.
- When new demands arise, ask your staff for assistance in developing plans to address them.
- Deal with poor performers – watch for early indicators and take steps to correct.
- Personally avoid blaming and finger-pointing when things go wrong. Accept personal responsibility for your mistakes and publicly acknowledge them.
  - Admit mistakes and what could have been done differently for improved results.
- Correct employees when they blame others. Ask how they could help prevent the error in what they could do differently to avoid this from happening in the future.
- Give credit to others who contribute to your achievements.
- Reflect on lessons learned about executing your accountabilities and incorporate them into your future work.

## **Leader Practices**

### **Social:**

- Identify dependencies between individuals and teams and facilitate the development of strategies to link them.
- Dedicate a percentage of your time every week to check in with your staff and talk about their performance – How are they doing against their objectives? Do they need help? What problems are they encountering? What have they learned?
- When blaming occurs, ask team members what could have been done to improve results. Ask 'what' and 'how' questions, not 'who', 'why' or 'when' (for example, what could we have done to ensure a better outcome or how can we make sure we learn from this to build better collaboration between our teams).

### **Managing:**

- Set SMART objectives – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-sensitive.

## Leader Practices

- Set stretch objectives that will foster reaching the next level of performance.
- Build effective performance management routines into your own and your team members' schedules – objective setting, performance feedback, development plans and progress reviews etc.
- Assess individual capabilities and create development plans to close the gap; include coaching strategies.
- Provide effective performance feedback – balance positives and negatives; use straight talk.
- Use formal and information recognition and reward practices to shine a spotlight on those who contribute most to short and longer-term goal achievement.
- Consider additional work demands when assessing performance.
  - Look for effort above and beyond expectations and reward it promptly and appropriately; make an example of people who are high performers.

## Operating:

- Build coaching into your day-to-day activities – take a coaching approach to problem solving and capability development.
- Whenever you or your team take on an initiative or objective, use it as an opportunity to reinforce accountability and performance:
  - Clearly define your deliverables and how these will be measured; make them public.
  - Identify milestones and track your progress against these milestones; make this visible.
  - Report the results and celebrate success.

## Search:

- Ask how things can be done better and what would it take to take performance to the next level. Look for answers internally and externally.
- Ask your staff what obstacles they are encountering in achieving results and what help they need. Follow through.
- Involve your staff in examining ways to improve their responsiveness to each other as well as their customers and people in other teams.

## Action Strategies

- Construct a scorecard for your team. Identify top performance metrics and track and monitor them with the team. Make progress visible.
- Benchmark the performance in your area against others (internal and external) – identify performance standards and set targets that move towards a leadership position.
- Define standards for responsiveness such as all customer calls requesting assistance will be responded to within 2 hours and employee calls within 4 hours.
- Have your department assess, on a continuum from high to low accountability, the department's

## Action Strategies

fulfillment of each of its key responsibilities.

- Identify individuals who have made a difference and how they have delivered on their accountabilities.
  - At a meeting, share stories about experiences in demonstrating accountability (from home, community and work). Explore what 'made the difference' and unleashed the passion to succeed.

*"That some achieve great success is proof to all  
that others can achieve it as well."*

**Abraham Lincoln**

*Trust: Create a work environment where others feel safe to speak and act in an open and honest manner.*

## **Leader Behaviors**

- Be straightforward and frank when giving other people feedback on their behavior or performance.
- When agreements are made at a meeting, voice your concerns when people are present (not later).
  - If you don't agree with a decision or don't understand it, take the steps necessary to reach a point that you are able to explain it appropriately to others.
  - Avoid saying 'I don't know', 'this is just the way it is', 'it's their decision, not mine' etc.
  - If you have participated in a decision you must support it unless you clearly state that you are not going to support it when the decision is made
- Be skeptical if you only tend to hear good news. If bad news never reaches you, it is probably because you are sending subtle signals that suggest you don't want to hear about it.
- Put the elephant in the room – don't be afraid to open up conversations about the unspoken issues that everyone is thinking about but no one is talking openly about.
- Make it clear that you want straight, unfiltered and unvarnished feedback and that no one should censor what is being said.
- Make it clear that fear and intimidation are not acceptable and that use of these behaviors is not welcome in your dealings with people.
- Admit a mistake. It gives everyone around you permission to do the same.
- Listen effectively and demonstrate that you genuinely want to understand the other person's perspective.
- Ask for feedback on your behavior and what you can do differently to help others be more effective.
- Say what you are really thinking – avoid 'political' behavior such as putting a 'spin' on things to make them sound better than they really are.
- Keep an open-door policy and encourage people to drop in and speak with you about their questions and concerns

## **Leader Practices**

### **Social:**

- Create opportunities for people to get to know each other on a personal basis. We tend to trust those that we know and like more than those we don't.
- Provide opportunities for employees to speak out about their concerns one-on-one and in teams. If they are reticent...
  - Use techniques that allow them to state their views with anonymity and gradually build

## Leader Practices

towards openness.

- Start with a few key individuals and encourage them to act as role models in meetings.
- Clearly articulate and describe the behaviors that demonstrate and encourage candor. What does candor look like when it is happening?
- Make using candor a desirable behavior by acknowledging those who bring unpleasant news or who 'talk straight' about an issue.
- Always share sensitive information such as people affecting decisions face-to-face
  - Provide opportunities for people to 'safely' ask questions and state their concerns
  - Take the time to ensure understanding

## Managing:

- Make candor a requirement at all team meetings and interpersonal interactions.
  - Include a candor check periodically to make it explicit that this is the expected way of working.
  - Avoid 'gotchas' and emphasize that this is new behavior and mistakes are expected. The important thing is to learn.
- Critically test the need for secrecy of information.
  - Be very clear as to what information cannot be shared and the impact this will have.
  - Develop a contingency plan to manage the fall-out from not disclosing information.
- Share the reasons for decisions in a timely fashion.
  - It is not necessary to share the reasons for all decisions. Some are obvious however if the decision is people affecting (e.g. promotion, hiring, recognition etc.) or it may be perceived to be in conflict with the organization's values then it should be disclosed.
  - It is important that you get people to ask questions to ensure they have accurately heard and comprehended the reason for the decision.
- Explain the process to be used to make important decisions.
  - Explain how decision-making is going to happen.
  - Identify who is going to make the decision.
  - Be clear when you are asking for input only.
  - Always close the loop by telling people that you asked for input what the decision is and your rationale.
- Involve and consult people on issues that affect them.
  - Provide opportunities for people to voice their opinions and ideas
  - Listen and ask questions to make sure you understand their point of view
  - Provide real-time feedback on their input
  - When the decision is made, speak with each person involved and explain the reasons behind it.

## Leader Practices

Acknowledge their input and explain how it affected the decision.

### Operating:

- Explain the reasons for your decisions in a timely manner. Invite others to ask questions if they don't understand why you made a particular decision.
- Tell people when you are sharing sensitive information, ask them to handle it appropriately (be clear what this means) and explain the consequences for not doing so.

### Search:

- Periodically ask yourself what you did that day to build trust with others.
  - Make this a habit and do it at least once a week.
- Ask your team what it would take for everyone to feel comfortable to speak openly about their concerns and opinions
  - Engage them in creating a work environment where candor can happen.

## Action Strategies

- Host feedback sessions where employees can air their concerns and ideas – start using techniques for anonymity and build towards openness. One example is to use 'truth cards' – simple index cards onto which each person writes what they heard through rumor that month. The leader responds to each card, providing information and background and correcting inaccurate rumors.
- Train employees on how to hold a difficult conversation that balances candor with respect and empathy.
  - Immediately apply the new skills and knowledge in meetings and one-on-one interactions.
  - Periodically check-in with employees either formally and/or informally to find out how comfortable they feel to speak candidly

*"I'm not upset that you lied to me, I'm upset that from now on I can't believe you"*

**Friedrich Nietzsche**