LEADERSHIP | PERSONAL GROWTH | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | VALUES

The First Logos Leadership Success Strategy

*Leaders do not **react** to the circumstances that confront them on a daily basis; they **pro-act** from the solid foundation of a personal philosophy that keeps the leader from pitching and tossing during the storms that will inevitably assail their personal and professional lives.*

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In last month's article, I presented two reasons why *Logos Leadership* is different from virtually any other leadership program that you will ever encounter.

1. It is a systemic approach to leadership.
2. The foundation of Logos Leadership is philosophical, rather than functional.

Here are two more.

3. The theme of *Logos Leadership* is knowledge.

The **ten core competencies of the Leader's Leader** are presented according to the **LEADERSHIP** acrostic:

Logos
Example
Authority
Destiny
Education
Relationships
Systems
Happiness
Ideation

These ten core competencies represent a logically developed blend of beliefs and behaviors that equip leaders to turn ordinary people into extraordinary performers. As we examine each of these success strategies in detail, you will see that they are united by one common theme: **knowledge**. Leader's Leaders have a detailed knowledge of both the theory *and* the practice of each core competency.

Knowledge is the common currency of all leaders.

Leader's Leaders have a thorough knowledge of the **product(s)** that their organizations offer, as well as a knowledge of market conditions and industry and/or economic trends that could inspire (or dictate) a change in those product offerings.

Leader's Leaders have tremendous knowledge of **people**. They thoroughly understand themselves—their own strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for personal and professional growth. They have knowledge of the individuals with whom they live and work, and they understand what motivates ordinary people to become extraordinary performers. They also possess a broad knowledge of those who are the lifeblood of their organizations—the customers. In short,

Leader's Leaders are masters of human performance technology.

Leader's Leaders understand and utilize the **creative thinking skills** that can be applied to their particular field of endeavor. They recognize that the human mind is marvelously facile and creative, and they have studied the established techniques that harness the power of that brilliant mind and inspire men and women to new heights of innovation and ideation. People look to Leader's Leaders for answers because they *know* their jobs, they know their industries, and they know how to bring out the best in the people around them.

4. *Logos Leadership* debunks the "Great Man" Theory.

There is a pervasive myth that exists within most organizations: the notion that there is one individual who embodies all the core competencies of superior leadership. This person is the so-called “Great Man,” the quintessential leader, who has been blessed above and beyond the rest of us mere mortals and operates at a level of excellence in a number of different arenas. Companies spend a great deal of money searching for this extraordinary individual, and more often than not express disappointment when the person they hire does not measure up to the impossibly high standard they have set.

Instead of searching for one superhuman man or woman, organizations should develop a leadership *team* whose members’ strengths complement and magnify their teammates’ abilities. A Leader’s Leader is not afraid of other people being powerful; a true leader will not promote obsequious “yes-people” whose abilities have no potential to eclipse the leader’s talents. A Leader’s Leader is perfectly willing to confess his or her weaknesses in order to allow others to showcase their personal ability in those particular areas. You might say that

Logos Leadership seeks to promote the “Great Team” theory.

Leader’s Leaders surround themselves with a diverse team of individuals who complement the leader and display strength in those areas where the leader does not.

Now, we will begin to examine the ten core competencies of the Leader’s Leader. These are the attitudes and actions which, when carefully studied and applied, will make a leadership team extraordinary.

I've discussed the **why** of *Logos Leadership*—that is, the reasons why I developed this program and why I believe it is unique. Now we’ll begin to examine **how** it works!

So let's begin to examine the first core competency of the Leader’s Leader; ***Logos*****,** i.e., **knowledge**. An organization’s comprehensive, unified knowledge base gives every member of the team their reasons to believe and their reasons to achieve.

The role of the leader in this core competency is as a philosopher,

one who has a unified mind and a unifying principle that brings unity to multiplicity. The philosopher has the biggest picture of anyone in the organization—he or she sees the whole picture, and everyone in the organization looks to that individual for knowledge.

Logos is a Greek word that is often translated as wisdom, doctrine, or logic. Logic is framed on the foundation of knowledge. If you are building a structure like the Sears Tower or the Empire State Building, you must construct a massively solid foundation before you can safely and successfully erect the magnificent superstructure.

Knowledge is the very foundation of leadership.

When I say that the first core competency of the Leader's Leader is *Logos*, I am asserting that the foundation for the Leader's Leader—and, indeed, the foundation of *Logos Leadership*—is a **unified philosophy.**

Many people recoil from the word *philosophy*, thinking that the study of philosophy is reserved for egg-headed intellectuals on the university campus. But let us examine two dictionary definitions of the word *philosophy:*

Philosophy: "The general principles or laws of a field of knowledge, activity, etc. [the philosophy of economics]; a particular system of principles for the conduct of life."[1]

If we apply these definitions, we quickly see that we are *all* students of philosophy. Every business leader understands—or should understand—the "general principles or laws" that govern his or her chosen field of endeavor. Without such knowledge, a man or woman is not a business leader at all, but merely one who is blown and tossed by "circumstances

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[1] *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language,* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, © 1980) p. 1069.

beyond our control." **The successful business leader is a philosopher.** Leader's Leaders know the big picture. They understand the principles and laws that govern their particular industry. Furthermore, they understand the larger economic and political picture that affects that industry. This is the knowledge that allows a Leader's Leader to lead.

In addition to a thorough understanding of the workplace, the successful leader has developed "a particular system of principles for the conduct of life." Once again, the leader is a philosopher! During the 1960s and 70s, many Americans established a system of thought that governed the conduct of their lives—their personal philosophy. That philosophy was often expressed as "Live and let live; you can't force your morality on others." While many would be surprised to hear such a simple and seemingly haphazard code of conduct described as a "philosophy," that is precisely what it is. It even has a textbook definition: *relativism*.

Leader's Leaders have a much more keenly developed philosophy for personal conduct. They know what they believe and *why* they believe what they believe. In addition, they also know what they do *not* believe and why they do not believe it.

Their philosophy governs and guides all their thoughts, words, and actions.

These guiding principles provide Leader's Leaders with a unity of mind, will, and action, and they eliminate ambiguity from decision-making. Leaders do not **react** to the circumstances that confront them on a daily basis; they **pro-act** from the solid foundation of a personal philosophy that keeps the leader from pitching and tossing during the storms that will inevitably assail their personal and professional lives.

The nobility of one's life is circumscribed by one's knowledge of what it true, what is wise, and what is excellent. The "Oh, well... whatever" philosophy that seems to have drained so many of our young people—and *far* too many parents—of their moral courage plays no part in the personal philosophy of the Leader's Leader. The best leaders have their own standards of excellence—in ethics, in wisdom, and in truth—and these beliefs govern their attitudes and actions. Leader's Leaders will always walk with **integrity**; that is, their behavior matches their beliefs, and there is no contradiction between what they **say** and what they **do**.

Such leaders have taken the philosophical high road; they know and understand the course they have taken, and they bring that consistency of belief and behavior to the organization.

Don't let the "classroom" sound of the word *philosophy* throw you—we are *all* philosophers, whether we realize it or not. The difference between the Leader's Leader and the career **follower** is that true leaders have thought through, and come to an understanding of, a clearly defined set of principles that provide the foundation for their daily behavior and decision-making.

I want to emphasize why knowledge is so integral to dynamic leadership.

The Leader's Leader provides a unified knowledge base that unites everyone in the organization.

If an organization is to operate at maximum efficiency, it is vitally important that every individual in the organization is connected by a sense of purpose and a common set of values. If each man and woman who works for a company is left to develop such a sense of purpose on their own (short-sighted managers pride themselves on hiring "self-starters"), the inevitable result is that there will be no combined or cooperative effort generated within that organization. The aforementioned self-starters *will* develop their own reasons for success, but that is exactly the problem! Each individual develops his or her own reasons to succeed, and those personal motivators are often markedly different from that which inspires the person at the next workstation. Such companies possess absolutely no **synergy** (which means, literally, "together energy"), but only fragmentation.

Imagine a rowing team comprised of "self-starters" that seeks to compete while each member dips his oar in the water according to his own internal sense of when to pull and where to steer the boat. The results would be predictably comical. There is *nothing* amusing, however, about an organization that careens through swirling economic waters in a similarly disjointed fashion.

Every team, whether it is a group of oarsmen or accountants, must be united by common values and a common purpose—a corporate philosophy—if it is to be successful.

Just as an individual is equipped to operate in excellence by his or her personal philosophy, an organization *must* provide all members of the team with the information that allows them to frame and focus on what is important. Gary Hamel, professor of strategic and international management at London Business School, collaborated on a widely respected book on corporate strategy with C.K. Prahalad, a professor at the Graduate School of Business Administration at the University of Michigan. Hamel and Prahalad studied one corporate giant which, while "powerful in terms of resources, its lack of a unifying sense of purpose meant that individual efforts were unlikely to be cumulative." The authors warn, "A lack of direction almost ensures that units will work at cross-purposes, that priorities will be set capriciously, and that consistency will too often be sacrificed on the altar of expediency."[2] Everyone, from the plant maintenance staff to the switchboard operators to the salespeople to the senior leadership, must be equipped with knowledge of what is important to the support of the organization's mission and vision and *why* it is important—over and against what is less important and what is not important at all. A clearly defined organizational philosophy gives a company its identity.

That sense of identity must begin with a clearly defined and communicated set of organizational values.

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[2] *Competing For The Future,* Gary Hamel and C.K. Prahalad (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Publishing, © 1994), p. 143.

Several books that have been written about leadership excellence suggest that the most important thing a leader can communicate to a staff is an organizational vision—a shared sense of where the organization is headed. I respectfully disagree. As vitally important as a compelling vision is to success (I will discuss this idea in great detail in the “Destiny” section of *Logos Leadership*), I assert that primacy must be placed on values.

More on the critical importance of values-driven leadership next month!

Jack Lannom is an internationally known speaker, author, and consultant. He has served as a corporate coach for several Fortune 500 companies, including Citibank, R&R Donnelly and Sons, Jefferson Pilot Communications, Caterpillar, and also Knight-Ridder Newspapers and is featured on the PBS television program, "Lannom Memory Methods".

Jack is the author of *Untapped Potential, Transformational Coaching, Quantum Mind, Memory Genius, The Self-Concept Game, The Leaders Leader, You Are A Genius Children's Interactive Software, Lannom's Memory Methods, People First,* and *The Dynamics of Remembering Names and Faces.*

He's also a talented athlete who holds black belts in six different styles of Kung Fu, including a tenth degree black sash in Wa Lu. And Jack holds the world record for breaking a 3,150-pound block of ice with a single blow from his hand!

To learn more about Jack Lannom, visit his website here: JackLannom.com where you can sign up for his free newsletter, learn more about his products and read the next 25 pages of *People First*.