LEADERSHIP | PERSONAL GROWTH | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Leader's Leader

How an Organization Benefits from the Leader's Example

Far from being blown and tossed by the winds of economic change, the organization that is founded on logos and led by an example that is consistent with that logos will stay the course and remain true to its purpose.

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We have been defining and discussing **Example,** the second success strategy contained in the LEADERSHIP acrostic. Now let's look at the benefits that an organization reaps when its managers lead by Example.

The internal integrity that characterizes the Leader's Leader will inevitably foster **consistency** in an organization. Once a leader has demonstrated that his or her philosophy is one that stands solidly through sunshine and storm, the staff will naturally gravitate toward that individual because they want to possess that integrity in their own lives! The character of an organization is developed in just this way. A united, effective group does not consist of individual "self-starters," each looking within for personal motivators; organizational character is built on the foundation of a solid common philosophy.

> ***The example of the Leader's Leader is a powerful tool for building community—a common unity of shared belief.***

The leader's example encourages the staff to live out their beliefs, to put skin on the philosophy (*logos*), and to remind the staff that **every interpersonal encounter gives Purpose Partners the opportunity to demonstrate the truth of the philosophy.** At the moment of truth, when

a customer's eyes meet the staffer's eyes, and the customer's hand grips the staffer's hand, that customer will *know* the organizational philosophy. The customer might not be able to articulate the philosophy, but he or she will know, at an instinctive, visceral level, what the organization's philosophical beliefs look like in human form. Is this an organization that values and respects *every* human being? Does the staff *truly* see "problems" as opportunities—opportunities to display that a philosophy of truth in all things, wisdom in all things, and excellence in all things is alive and well and working in the company?

Such organizational character provides stability and predictability. In such a philosophically empowered culture, customers and employees alike know exactly what to expect. There is a trustworthy *standard* for behavior, and the common culture holds *everyone* responsible to uphold the values. There is no paternalism, where one individual at the top of the organizational hierarchy is responsible for mandating standards of behavior.

> ***The leader is not the standard for behavior; rather it is the logos that provides the code of conduct, and every member of the organization is a steward—a caretaker—of the philosophy.***

The CEO is simply another living example of the *logos*, and he or she is just as accountable to the philosophy as anyone else. Part of a true leader's strength is *vulnerability*—the willingness to make oneself accountable to the other members of the group. No one is exempt from the philosophical standards of excellence; everyone is accountable to each other.

Will the leader fail, at times, to meet that standard? Of course! In fact, *everyone* will fall short of the standard of personal and professional excellence at some point in every day! But the standard remains, because it is a *true* standard, it is the *right* standard, and everyone encourages each other to continue to work toward excellence. We may

drift off course, but the North Star remains the same. And when we do fail, that provides the members of the group with another opportunity—the opportunity to be gracious with one another. The organizational philosophy, professed in the attitudes and actions—the example—of the ambassador, the Leader's Leader, establishes a foundation for healthy relationships, and provides a trustworthy framework for resolving conflicts.

In summary, the first benefit an organization reaps from the leader's example is **stability**. Far from being blown and tossed by the winds of economic change, the organization that is founded on *logos* and led by an example that is consistent with that logos will stay the course and remain true to its purpose.

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".

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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*.