

The Leader's Leader—

The Meaning-Driven Organization

The Leader's Leader holds a baton... not a bat! Such leadership is at once magnetic and dynamic; people are attracted to it, inspired by it, and they cheerfully respond to it.

by **Jack Lannom**

1211 words | 5 pages

There are three types of companies: **profit-driven** companies, **customer-driven** companies—or the organization which will survive and thrive in the new millennium: the **meaning-driven** company. An entire organization cannot and will not unite behind a drive for profits; an initiative to make the customer Number One will fail to ignite passion in an entire group; but *everyone*—from the custodial crew, to the accounting department, to the sales staff, to the Board of Directors—can and will unite behind an organizational philosophy that gives meaning to everything they do. The *logos* provides **rallyable reasons for long-term success**.

Some readers may disagree with the preceding paragraph. After all, they reason, the whole purpose for going into business is to earn profits which reward the entrepreneur(s), pay the staff and other operating expenses, fund R & D, fuel further expansion of the enterprise, and, ultimately, attract investors. I wholeheartedly agree that **profit is a very important ingredient for a healthy company; however, it does not encompass the entire recipe**. A company that is focused solely on profits is concentrating on the short-term.

There is no enduring future focus in the profit-driven company, because only an organization that passes on values, mission, and

vision to its staff empowers that staff with meaning.

It has been well said that profit is like health; you need it to live, but it is not what you live for. Respected educators Gary Hamel and C.K. Prahalad observe, "In most companies employees don't share a sense of purpose above and beyond that of short-term unit performance. Lacking a compelling sense of direction, few employees feel a compelling sense of responsibility for competitiveness. Most people won't go the extra mile unless they know where they are heading."¹

Consider some of the great movements of human history: the spread of Christianity throughout the Western world, the anti-slavery movement prior to the War Between the States, the push for women's suffrage, the civil rights movement of the 1960s. All these great, world-shaking movements that inspired men and women to perform great, heroic deeds have been motivated by *meaning*, not money. Men and women in the corporate setting can and will perform heroically also, but, as Hamel and Prahalad conclude, "It is senior management's responsibility to imbue ... work with a higher purpose than a paycheck."²

The Leader's Leader Holds a Baton

If you have been following these articles regularly, you know that I have been presenting the **ten core competencies of the Leader's Leader**, which are arranged according to the **LEADERSHIP** acrostic:

Logos
Example
Authority
Destiny
Education
Relationships
Systems
Happiness
Ideation

Passing on a Legacy

These ten core competencies represent a logically developed blend of beliefs and behaviors that equip leaders to turn ordinary people into extraordinary performers. Currently, we are giving our focused attention to the third success strategy of the Leader's Leader: **authority**. I have defined true authority as **the authority that makes other people authoritative**.

In other words, real power is the power that makes other people powerful.

I urge you to pay close attention to the idea conveyed by this article—that the best leaders hold a baton, not a bat—it is as central to the theme of this entire study as any single article you will read throughout this series. Please, take your time with this; read, reread, and evaluate your own leadership style against that which is presented here.

You may be surprised to discover whom I will present as the quintessential example of the Leader's Leader. I have not selected a steely-eyed CEO from the corporate world, a brilliant military tactician, or a charismatic leader from the church or the political arena.

No, my exemplar is the brilliant composer, Johann Sebastian Bach.

Bach worked from a system of knowledge. When he had completed one of his symphonies, he understood the entire composition thoroughly. He knew all its parts; he understood how each part fit together; and he knew how each individual musician contributed to the whole. Bach was a **philosopher**—he had a **unified mind**. The men and women who were involved in reproducing the music were ennobled by his knowledge. Moreover, the listeners were inspired, the community of Lipzing was uplifted, and Bach's glorious symphonies resounded throughout the world.

The maestro stands before the orchestra with a small, thin baton in his hand. He himself does not play an instrument, but what truly sets him apart from the musicians is his **knowledge**. The maestro knows the *logos* of the piece; that is, he understands the entire philosophy of how that symphony will be performed and how each musician supports the overall effort. There is an exchange, a reciprocity of power, which takes place between the maestro and the members of the orchestra. The Leader's Leader, operating in the world of business, is no different; a business should be led in much the same way that the maestro conducts an orchestra.

***Knowledge is the common
currency of all leaders, and the
medium of exchange is power.***

The maestro submits to the musicians by serving them; he pours his knowledge and his energy into the members of the orchestra so that they can perform at their very best. In return, the musicians submit to the maestro's leadership abilities... and to his knowledge. The maestro does not hold a bat in his hand for beating people, as a model of high command, high control, and harsh discipline. The maestro holds the baton, a light, delicate instrument. The orchestra willingly and passionately submits to his authority because of his **logos** and his **example**—his philosophy and his character. The maestro—the Leader's Leader—is a product of the product; that is, he has a thorough knowledge of the *logos*, and that knowledge makes him an example of the *logos*. He is the embodiment of the philosophy. Such leadership is at once magnetic and dynamic; people are attracted to it, inspired by it, and they cheerfully respond to it.



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*.