



The Future of Leadership

A Sequence of Presentations on the Art and Science of Leadership

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Introduction: Production, excellence, and profitability are at the center of concern for most business and industrial organizations. The priorities are appropriate. Where there is no margin, there is little else that functions smoothly or lasts very long. Organizations have had an intense interest on matrix-fueled mechanisms that will ensure high levels of productivity and profitability. Unfortunately, the role of leadership as a catalyst that prompts and directs these highly-desired outcomes has either been overlooked, diminished in importance, or dealt with through clichés, platitudes, and wishful thinking. There have been few conversations and programs of leadership that have been equal to the technology and process that supports modern organizations.

Attention was drawn to the programming outlined in the material being presented here during longstanding work done in a major organization (23,000 employees) in the southwestern United States. This organization became heavily invested (approximately \$32 million dollars) over a five-year period in the organizational engineering processes known as “Six Sigma.” The process improvement aspects of this program proved to be highly successful and a large number of employees were trained at various Six Sigma “belt” levels and led numerous process improvement activities. The organization is intent on continuing its Six Sigma work and is very pleased with the outcomes they are continuing to see.

However, the assumption was made that a successful Six Sigma project facilitator would be a good leader in the organization. A number of these successful project coordinators were raised into key leadership positions. The outcomes were almost, without exceptions, always unsuccessful and disappointing. A near-certain conclusion stared the organization right in the face: an exceptionally gifted project engineer may not necessarily be a good leader. Then, the question rose: what attributes or personal *capacities* must be added to personal *capability* to make a person a successful leader? The qualities that allowed for successful leadership seemed as elusive, if not more so, than they had ever been.

The discussions termed here “The Future of Leadership” are intended to explore those qualities/capacities that allow a person to be a successful leader that lie beyond the ability to organize and coordinate a project engineering process. We want good technicians, but a good technician is not necessarily a good leader. And, simply because the good technician is “good with people” does not mean he/she will be a good leader. We do not believe that these discussions can be encapsulated in a one-time, leadership

conference type of event. Instead, we are committed to the idea that leadership development must be hard wired into the way that an organization does business and that, in addition to all other kinds of conversations that are necessary to make an organization viable, conversations, direction, and measurement relating to leadership must take place in a sequence of well-defined, highly specific conversations on leadership. These conversations can serve as, or can augment, any leadership development that an organization does. A quarterly process of a day devoted to leadership development seems to be a good model, with the augmentation of measurement feedback and developmental activities that take place on a continuous basis.

There is no desire that this program become *the* focus of an organization, but it must become *a* primary focus of an organization, or the organization will become something like a powerful, modern jet aircraft without a competent pilot.

Quality Emphasis—it is easy for us to define the qualitative difference attached to our programs and the manner in which we conduct our business. Most programs on leadership and leadership development are highly canned, offer very little to create excitement, and often propel people toward some distraction because they are the “same ole, same ole,” “been there, done that” information that has circulated for years and represents little more than trafficking in the obvious.

We take the greatest pride in having created a program in close coordination with participant feedback and evaluation that is fresh, provocative, informative, enlightening, and motivating. We major on practical application in concrete work situations. We are real people wanting to talk with real people about real-life situations. In addition, by offering the applications of the Judgment Index™, we are not only able to talk clearly and directly about leadership issues specifically relative to an individual client group, but we are also able to create metric and measurements around our conversations. We ascribe to the idea that without measurement, there is likely to be little of lasting meaning. So, we will talk, guide, inform, and direct, but we will also measure and use those measurements to create a sense of the individual needs of the organizations and people we are working with and how those needs can be met.

Topical Emphasis—the following topics will give a brief indication of the directions we take in our sequence of leadership discussions, the focus of the material we will use with a group, and the measurements we will be most interested in assessing.

- **“The Leadership Attitude That Brings Stability in the Midst of Change”**
A four-part sequence that deals with concrete issues relating to dealing with change and chaos

- **“Leadership and Stress”**

Stress diminishes good judgment and lessens the ability to work together with others to accomplish tasks. In this sequence, attention is given to concrete mechanisms for diminishing stress for both the individual leader and the groups he/she supports.
- **“The Uniqueness of Leadership Styles”**

Here, three basis leadership styles are studied and measured. The intent is upon understanding the strengths and weaknesses of these three styles and how they interact with each other.
- **“Trust, Likeability, and Authenticity”**

The major attributes of leadership. Not only will we see how these can be measured, but how they can be very specifically improved and how that improvement can be monitored. Yes: we are saying that *trust*—the single most critical element of leadership—can be measured and monitored.
- **“Value-based Leadership”**

Human beings are driven more by their values than by their rational intelligence, emotional balance, or personalities. The primary outcome of human values is judgment. We will explore the connection between values and judgment. We will also better understand how, in individuals, that values produce the uniqueness of human character, and, in organization, how values produce organizational “culture.” We are intent on believing that individual character and organizational culture can be intentional realities as opposed to accidental realities.
- **“Virtuous/Spiritual” Leadership”**

Virtue here does not mean something akin to Boy Scouts helping old people across crowded streets. *Virtue* relates to the ancient Greek concept of *arête* which is the merger of understood human uniqueness, technical performance excellence, and work that is gratifying, purposeful, and fulfilling. Not only do the best leaders experience this “merger” in their own lives, but they create environments in which others can experience this “merger” for themselves. When this “merger” occurs, great energy, commitment, and passion for work is the result. The leader has come to the place that he/she not only directs the work of others but inspires others. *Spirit* does not mean “religion,” but rather is akin to and attempts to understand better what is meant in statements such as the United States Marines mantra “the *Spirit* of the Corps.”

Additional Uniqueness of Our Approach—clearly, throughout this brief overview, we have emphasized that leadership is a quality of human interaction. We will see “scientific” elements within leadership that relate to precise, technical capabilities and learned skills. We will also see “artistic” elements within leadership that are much more difficult to pin down, to develop, and to sustain over time. We believe that both these scientific capabilities and artistic capacities are measurable. And, if they can be measured, there can indeed be a “metrics of leadership.” We will introduce and pursue these metrics across our work and as the underpinning of all that we do. There will be conversation—and the first step toward positive improvement is “talking the right game”—but there will also be explicit emphasis on concrete measurement, absolute application, and attention to “fit.” “Fit” is our ultimate goal—the right person in the right place with the right qualities of judgment to meet the unique needs of a specific situation. When this kind of “fit” occurs and is sustained over time that which is good is moved to that which is great. Organizational profitability and worker purposefulness find integration and synthesis, and energy is created that will support better outcomes and the fulfillment of higher potential in the future.