

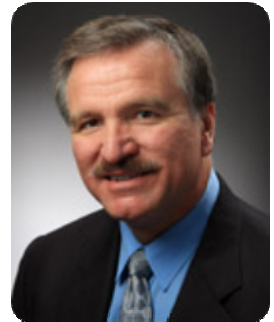
FOCUS: BUSINESS/STRATEGY

Leadership excellence: doing what's easy not to do

Leadership Excellence is more about "doing what is easy not to do, than doing something extraordinary!"

The longer I have been involved in management and worked with others via consulting, the more I've observed, and been convinced, that leadership excellence, and very often business results, are more the result of doing what is easy not to do – than doing anything extraordinary.

Most of the outstanding leaders I know are truly exceptional people who inspire and enable their teams to accomplish extraordinary results – but what they do that differentiates them is not particularly extraordinary or hard to do – rather they do things that are simply very easy not to do! This is very much like some skeet shooting instruction I received – "They are not hard to hit, and they are awfully easy to miss!" Behaviors that I have observed, that make a difference, but are altogether too often not done, include:



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- Caring
- Catching people doing something well, and acknowledging that
- Paying attention to what is being said / giving full attention to whoever is speaking to you or to the group you are in
- Remembering names
- Connecting with people visually (eye to eye) – both when talking one on one and when presenting to a group (one at a time there of course)
- Being courteous - saying please, thank you, you're welcome (Moms around the world are especially proud to see this in their children!)
- Being positive
- Being visible
- Fostering and enabling transparency
- Referring almost always to "We" and "Our" and seldom to "I" and "Me"
- Pitching in, helping others (part of caring)
- Taking and enabling prudent risk
- Using failed initiatives as opportunities to learn
- Confronting in private, praising in public
- Doing what's right when nobody's looking
- Helping others get ahead
- Being enthusiastic and showing strong desire
- Finding the best in others
- Leaving things better than they found them or received them
- Demonstrating respect for oneself – health, fitness, time off
- Having respect for others
- Taking full responsibility for all their actions
- Knowing what to overlook
- Admitting when they were wrong (it's like saying you're smarter today than you were yesterday)
- Making regular and direct contact with the personnel interfacing daily with customers and the customers themselves
- Doing something (The only way to make a mistake is to do nothing . . .)

I agree with the great philosopher Anonymous who said: "Excellence is the result of caring more than others think is wise, risking more than others think is safe, dreaming more than others think is practical and expecting more than others think is possible." For additional information and ideas on leadership, contact Mike Borel at mike.borel@contextnet.com.

The Context Network provides business management and strategy consulting services to the world's leading agriculture, biotechnology and food companies and government agencies and institutions. Major areas of expertise include strategy, merger and acquisition support, valuation of new technologies, formation of alliances, and market research. The West Des Moines-based firm is composed of a core of professional consultants that is complemented by a network of hundreds of industry and subject-area experts.