

LEADERSHIP IN DESK AND DERRICK

Members always look at the leader. Example says a lot. Do they see a leader that they can believe in? Does the fire inside the leader burn hot enough for them to warm from the heat of the flame?

Commitment climbs when members see passion in the person out front. Commitment, after all, is a highly contagious thing. It inspires members to action. Your commitment – your intensity, your focus, drive, and dedication – carries the members forward.

Members always take a reading on the person in charge. So when it comes to building commitment, you must lead by example. If you provide lukewarm leadership, you will see disinterest from the members.

Commitment grows when members have a chance to contribute. Getting a job done carries its own reward. It feels good to finish things. Every little accomplishment ratchets up a person's sense of fulfillment. Successes, even the small ones, breed more commitment to Desk and Derrick. Build commitment in your Region by giving members meaningful assignments that they can carry to successful completion.

Your job, then, is to make every member feel like he or she really matters. See that each feels useful, relevant and significant. Need your members – ASK for their HELP. Lean on them. Commitment comes from feeling necessary. Convince each member that his or her contribution carries weight within the Region, and you will chalk up steady gains in commitment.

As the leader, you should be like a magnet. Pull every person in. Draw all the members together. Include everyone in the communication loop. Take pains to see that each member of the Region feels accepted. A weak sense of belonging makes any of us feel like a benchwarmer rather than like a real player.

Basically, it always comes down to this: you have got to be caring and committed toward the members for them to be caring and committed to Desk and Derrick!

Plato said, "Those having torches will pass them on to others."

CARRY THE FIRE!

NOTE: By Doris Odom and Adapted from "Firing up Commitment During Organizational Change"
By Price Pritchett

PETER'S PRINCIPLES OF LEADERSHIP

(IN A VOLUNTARY SETTING)

By Steve Peter, DTM

I. IF YOU ARE GOING TO LEAD...LEAD!

Don't be reticent about playing your leadership role. People in positions of leadership are expected to lead. You are more likely to be criticized for not fulfilling the role than for overdoing it. Remember though, that you are leading volunteers (just like you). Leadership in a voluntary setting is not equivalent to a dictatorship in some other settings. Often the leader is as much the "servant" as he is the "master."

II. MAKE DECISIONS. GOOD, BAD OR INDIFFERENT...MAKE DECISIONS!!

Decisiveness is an essential ingredient to quality leadership. In fact, it is one of the responsibilities of leadership. Decisions must be made and most people want someone else to make them. Leaders are the "someone else". Don't avoid decision making because you might make a mistake. (You probably will anyway!) Don't let the fear of being wrong prevent you from making the choice. Good, bad, or indifferent...DECIDE!

III. DELEGATE AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO OTHERS!

A leader is supposed to lead, NOT do it all! Every organization has an officer structure, normally with written descriptions of duties (such as bylaws). Unfortunately, these written "job descriptions" normally fall short of hitting on everything that must be done if the organization is to meet its mission. The leader must sort these tasks out (meaning, identify what they really are) and then find somebody to do them. As a leader, YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO EVERY JOB YOURSELF! You can and should delegate tasks to others, along with sufficient authority and accountability to ensure that they get the job done.

IV. FOLLOW-UP...FOLLOW-UP...FOLLOW-UP!

This could very well be the number one chore of a leader in the voluntary setting. Aside from personal pride and recognition received for a "job well done," the incentives for performing in a voluntary organization are limited. As unpleasant as it may sound, the leader will have to "dog" some people to make sure their job gets done. The work must continuously be monitored and the leader is the group's chief monitor. To do this effectively, you must have a working knowledge of the responsibilities of others. After you have delegated...follow-up.

Sub-Principle: Never - Never - Never criticize "subordinates" in the presence of the group. If performance is poor, take it up with the individual on a one-to-one basis. If the situation does not improve, work around the person or replace him/her (if you have the power to do so.)

V. GIVE RECOGNITION.AND BE EXCESSIVE ABOUT IT!

Recognition is your "stock-in-trade" as a leader in a voluntary organization. It's the only real incentive you have to move others to action. The leader is the principal recognizer, if anyone is to be recognized at all. In fact, the leader should go into the job assuming that, for him/her, it's not going to be a big year for recognizing him/her. He/she should be handing out the laurels rather than seeking them. Make sure others are fully recognized for their contributions. If you don't, they may quit contributing.

VI. ALWAYS BE POSITIVE!

Don't allow yourself or your group to get off to a negative start or to become negative. Meetings should always be upbeat and positive and you, as leader, will have much to do with setting the right "mind-set" for the group. If you are negative, the group becomes negative (and vice-versa). Every group has problems, of course. The positive approach to dealing with problems is to dwell on the solution rather than lament the problem. Design programs that positively move to solve problems and then emphasize those programs, rather than the problem.

VII. GET YOURSELF ORGANIZED AND STAY THAT WAY!

The most effective way for a leader to "self-destruct" is by demonstrating disorganization. If a leader acts like he/she does not know what's going on, the "old credibility gap" quickly sets in. Proper planning is the answer to this potential problem along with properly informing yourself. Carefully plan all your programming (from a single business session to overall programming during your period of leadership). Perhaps, of even greater importance is the business of making certain you fully understand the responsibilities of the others with whom you are working, the goals and objectives of the organization and the programs you are undertaking. Thoroughly inform yourself on all aspects of the organization you are to lead and you will be able to lead it. Plan properly and inform yourself so that you can lead others.

VIII. PUT YOUR "MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS!"

Don't accept a leadership position unless you REALLY intend to do the JOB! It is always a great honor to be selected by one's peers for leadership in the organization. Don't make the mistake of assuming that it is just an honor, however. Leading volunteers is HARD WORK and requires great dedication, commitment, personal effort, and TIME! Quality leadership is also essential to the success of the organization as it strives to meet its mission.

Don't accept a position of leadership unless you INTEND TO DO THE JOB!

HOW TO VALUE YOURSELF

1. Don't demand perfection from yourself. Set realistic goals that you can and want to achieve.
2. Reward, comfort, and love yourself. You are OK!
3. You have the right to decide whom, how, and what you want to be without making excuses, justifying, or saying "I'm sorry." You don't need everyone else's approval and you certainly won't get it. It's your life and what happens in it is up to you.
4. Refuse to be manipulated by other people's greed, helplessness, or anger. Set limits. Say "NO" when you mean "NO" and confront those who try to manipulate you with "you should."
5. Check out your "shoulds" to yourself. Is it something you want? OK. Something you have to do, like pay your bills? That's reality. But that is not a "should." For example, "The customer is always right." Well, who said that? Check it out. It may not always be the best way to handle the public.
6. Recognize feelings of inadequacy and guilt for what they are...legacies from your parents and other adults. You can decide not to feel that way.
7. Be constructively selfish. In the long run, doing what is best for you is usually best for everyone concerned. Remember that no matter what you do, someone is not going to like it. You have to risk being disliked, or even ending relationships, if you are going to function in your own best interests.
8. Recognize that there are limits to your power. You really control no more than 50% of a relationship...your half. You cannot get inside someone's head nor can they in yours. Therefore, if somebody says, "Do this," and you don't understand, tell them so. Too often we fake that we understand so that we don't look bad. Say, "I don't understand" or "Help me understand and you won't have to worry about me anymore."
9. Don't answer questions that you do not want to answer. Questions are often threatening, demanding, or manipulative...especially the WHY or WHY NOT questions. Nowhere is it engraved in stone that you must answer questions.
10. Stay in the here-and-now and cope with reality. If you blame others or the world for your problems, or if your behavior is aimed at making you feel better instead of solving your problems you are defending instead of coping. Every healthy person has problems and you do have the ability to cope with them all.

SO YOU WERE ELECTED!

Being elected to an office in any organization brings with it a certain amount of honor, glory and admiration from others. Fortunately, it also carries with it many duties and responsibilities because if, for one minute, you tend to get the “big head,” you will quickly be brought down to earth when you look at the obligations that come with the job. You, as the elected officers of your Region, must actually do business for and with your group – business that usually includes the legal and financial affairs of your Region as well as the social.

The success or failure of your Region will be chalked up for or against you. Don't let your justifiable feeling of importance hide the fact that it will be how you handle the responsibility that counts. All you have to do is call all the signals, delegate the responsibilities and you get all the credit for a job well done. Sounds easy, but in case you've already had some experience along this line and everything did not go as well as you had hoped – or you are brand new and do not know where to start – here are some ideas that may help.

One of the first and most important things you need to create this miracle is diplomacy. Diplomacy will either make or break you as a leader. Brains, driving force, hard work, enthusiasm and poise are all important, but diplomacy is what makes them work. Diplomacy is not something you can buy, but you can pay dearly for not having it. Here are some suggestions.

DIPLOMACY:

Form a habit of requesting rather than demanding. No one likes to be told what to do. If you can make a request of a person so that they feel that they are making a real contribution to the group, they will likely cooperate. If you have a tendency at all to be bossy, watch yourself closely.

Be considerate of the feelings of others. Very little is accomplished if you create a “scene.” Appeal to their better nature and show interest in the other members.

Encourage...praise produces a measurable increase in energy, while words of discouragement produce fatigue. A study done by Dr. Henry H. Goddard, at the Vineland Training School in New Jersey, proved this by means of an ergo graph – an instrument that measures fatigue.

Say “Thank You!” Remember to thank those who help you, publicly and privately, with a written thank-you note. It's amazing how little acts of courtesy and thoughtfulness on your part will make other people feel good, both inwardly and outwardly toward you.

REPRESENTATION:

Remember that you represent the whole group – not just your special friends. Put yourself in the place of an ordinary member of your group for a moment – then represent them as you would want to be represented.

Include all members. Make sure each one has the opportunity to work in the organization. Shy members can be encouraged to become part of the group if you allow them to participate in small tasks, and then acknowledge their contribution.

SENSE OF HUMOR:

When all of your carefully made plans fail to get the desired results, a sense of humor can save you. If you don't want trying situations to get to you, learn to laugh them off.

See the funny side of things. It will help you save face, no matter what predicament you may find yourself in.

Beware of telling jokes unless you have that unusual gift for being a great teller of jokes. Better leave them to the person in your group who has that particular gift.

INTELLIGENCE:

Humor will help you in a lot of situations, but using your head to keep you out of trouble in the first place is even better. Your head should be employed frequently...in fact, constantly. As Regional Director, you have a lot to think about. So how do you put the thinking to work?

Planning: Have a calendar or a planner so that all these dates and deadlines which you have coming at you all year will be in one place that can be referenced quickly. Also, a good filing system never hurts.

Have a carefully planned and well laid out agenda for your Regional Meeting. An agenda allows you to organize your thoughts, and if for some reason your attention is diverted during the meeting, you can look back to the agenda and pick up where you left off.

Give yourself adequate time to organize and plan each activity. Otherwise, in your rush, many important details can be overlooked.

Do not use the same people for everything. You know you can count on them, but they are also the busy ones who really do not have enough time to get the extra job done right. This is a place you could practice using the shy ones in your group...delegate to them small responsibilities. Your "faithful few" who have to do everything will thank you for it.

Work with...not against...other groups and individuals. Use your head and make every effort to gain the cooperation of other groups or persons that you will be working with. This is an important area for you to practice your diplomacy!

ENTHUSIASM:

Enthusiasm is contagious. If you, as a leader have it, your members will catch it from you!

All these qualities are essential and if you have them all you probably have POISE, too. If you feel you need a little practice at being the poised leader your group expects, here are some suggestions.

POISE:

Practice self-control at all times. Concentrate on yourself! Control your mouth. Remain calm, outwardly at least, in times of confusion or emergency. Curb your desire to put someone in his or her place. Remember that you are in the limelight and a great deal is expected of you.

Graciously accept criticism, disappointment, and even defeat. Graciousness means being a good sport about everything. This is a BIG order, but you can do it.

Expect to have some failures. If you learn from your mistakes, you have added to your personal education and will be the better person for the failure.

Know the rules of etiquette. Nothing will help you to feel more at ease than knowing how to act in a given situation. Thoughtfulness is the foundation on which rules of etiquette are built, so if you do not have time to master the rules of etiquette, concentrate on thoughtfulness.

Go to social affairs and visit with many people. Desk and Derrick is educational but we also socialize, or perhaps a better word is network. Convention, Regional Meetings, Town Halls, and Officer-Elect Meetings...all offer you an opportunity to visit with others who have the same type jobs, work in the same industry, and have the same problems. Network with each other – find out what works in their club, their office, and their personal life. This is the added benefit we have being Desk and Derrick members.

Know your parliamentary law. I encourage you to follow the proper procedures in your business meetings. It will keep you, as the leader, out of trouble and allow members their rights.

Last, but certainly not least, look the part of a leader. Your appearance is important. It introduces you to people and is part of their first impression of you. Sometimes, what you say has a hard time getting past what you look like. Always be clean, neat, and dressed appropriately for the occasion.

HOW TO GET AND KEEP PEOPLE INTERESTED

1. GET AND KEEP EVERYONE PARTICIPATING

Get everybody into the act just as soon as you can. People like to be doing something. Let them obey that activity impulse!

2. SHOW YOUR OWN INTEREST

Be interested yourself and look it! People, as a group, have a strong tendency to imitate and to think and feel alike. Recognize this and make it work for you.

3. IDENTIFY AND CALL ON THE INTERESTED MEMBERS FIRST

Watch for those that have caught the spark and direct questions to them. Their interest will, in turn, spark others.

4. USE HUMOR

Don't be afraid of chuckles and laughs. Go along with the gag. Most groups have at least one member whose wisecracks keep people laughing. Enjoy a good laugh along with the group.

5. MAKE EVERYONE FEEL IMPORTANT

Show approval...compliment them! Share the limelight. Everyone likes to see his or her name in "lights." Three things are strong drives for interest: approval, prominence, and progress. It is easy to get discouraged when no progress is being made.

6. AROUSE THEIR CURIOSITY

Don't be too predictable...keep them guessing. The story is told of Will Rogers in his early days in vaudeville. Each evening he appeared on stage with a lariat rope. He would fiddle with the rope and start a few stunts as he wisecracked and talked with the audience. The audience waited for him to do his tricks, but each time when the curtain came down, he had not done any rope tricks. His only purpose for the rope was to keep them curious and interested.

7. KEEP A CONTROVERSIAL DISCUSSION BALANCED

Allow both sides time to share their ideas. In a formal business meeting, conducted according to the rules of parliamentary procedure, it is the duty of the presiding officer to see that following a speaker favoring the motion under consideration there should be a speaker for the opposing view.

8. KEEP YOUR MEETING FREE FROM DISTRACTING INFLUENCES

Too hot, too cold, uncomfortable chairs, the list goes on. Be at your meeting ahead of time to make sure these kinds of problems are taken care of.

Another distraction results from the distribution of literature ahead of time; your audience is too busy reading to participate in the discussion. Save the information and distribute it after the discussion.

9. KEEP THINGS MOVING AND CHANGE THE PACE

Watch the tempo. You have heard the expression “play it by ear.” Perhaps the officer conducting a meeting should “conduct it by ear.” When things are dragging, pick up the tempo. Timing is important in getting things done while keeping the group interested.

This is particularly true if your group has committee reports as a part of the Business meeting. If you have a report that just keeps on going, watch for the point that you can break in and tactfully bring the discussion to a point of closure.

Don't forget that this also applies to you – do not fall in love with the sound of your own voice.

LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

- ❖ Perhaps the best leader is a person who is a good follower
- ❖ Has already attempted the tasks to be assigned
- ❖ Has researched all the possibilities and explored all the alternatives in a given situation and still has the faith and courage to try it another's way
- ❖ Sees crisis as a challenge/opportunity rather than a problem/defeat
- ❖ Is willing to pay the price cheerfully and go the extra mile willingly
- ❖ Can allow another to grow and draw out the best in that person
- ❖ With gratitude in their attitude, like God, counts the efforts far more than the results
- ❖ Can encourage (put heart into) those whom they serve
- ❖ Has a healthy sense of humor...for the ability to laugh, even at oneself, is a precious gift
- ❖ Has enough organization to avoid confusion and chaos, but enough flexibility to appreciate creativity and spontaneity
- ❖ Has confidence enough to trust themselves and thus finds it easy to place trust in others
- ❖ Remembers to accentuate the positive
- ❖ Can climb into the other's shoes on all levels and see through their eyes
- ❖ Has sight of the long range goal and some idea of the number and type of arrows which will be necessary to hit the target
- ❖ Tends to say "YES" to life, people, and living
- ❖ Can say "NO" without stomping on someone's feelings
- ❖ Can sincerely take "NO" for an answer
- ❖ Respects the beliefs, attitudes, and feelings of others
- ❖ Is as good as their word
- ❖ Lives the Golden Rule as their yardstick in relationships
- ❖ Possesses an abundance of heart and common sense and uses them creatively
- ❖ Is supportive rather than critical
- ❖ Takes the time to be kind and puts forth the effort to care