

LMI® Journal

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Capitalize on the Power of Change

As a decision maker and problem solver, be prepared to risk change. Be willing to pay the price of disturbing your own psychological comfort by choosing to change. It may become necessary to defend yourself against traditional ways of thinking and acting, and you may have to do without social approval for a time. You may also encounter resistance, especially if you are young and new at the job. Not only do people instinctively resist change, they may actively insist that they are unable to learn a new procedure or change an old habit. When you believe in your decision, simply insist, even if you must do so repeatedly. As a leader, you are a role model. Remain calm and unemotional, but determined.

People will be more likely to accept change when they see you embracing it with enthusiasm. When they see you not only survive, but thrive, they will be more willing to take the risks associated with a given change. Let your team members know that change is inevitable, and your organization can either capitalize on change or be swept away by it.

Because actions come from attitudes, increasing productivity may require reshaping some of the attitudes that now dictate how you use time. Consider these time use practices

that affect productivity and see how attitudes are involved:

▲ Concentrate on high priority activities. The quickest and most effective route to increasing productivity is to spend time on tasks that advance important goals. Make certain you spend your time on work that really matters; otherwise, you may be completely consumed by trivial details. Hours may be spent solving problems that can be solved by others. Respond to concerns expressed by various

team members through empowering them to solve their own problems. This approach saves you valuable time and gives others the opportunity to develop commitment, a sense of ownership, and skill to solve significant problems. Help others spend their time on their high priority activities, and concentrate your time and effort on high priority activities that lead to the achievement of your goals.

▲ Exercise self-discipline. Self-discipline enables people to stay focused on a task and work on it until it is complete. Establish your priorities and then refuse to let distractions, interrup-

tions, or happenings of the moment destroy your concentration. Discipline yourself to give tasks only the amount

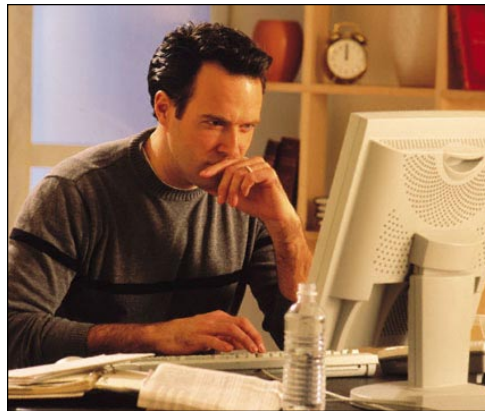


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of time and effort they truly deserve from you, or delegate them to other appropriate team members. Either alternative requires thoughtful evaluation and consideration – and conscientious self-discipline. Perfectionists especially must learn to exert the self-discipline to delegate selected jobs to someone else who may not do the job quite as well as they would but who can still meet essential quality standards. How else will another learn to perform this job? In such cases, perfectionists must learn to accept less than perfection in the interest of increasing the contributions of others, creating new opportunities, and maintaining overall effectiveness and productivity.

- ▲ Be persistent. Careful planning and goal setting, determination to achieve, and recognizing the benefits of reaching a goal are all vital to personal productivity. This combination of factors enables one to be persistent, and persistence is always characteristic of the successful individual. Many people eagerly take on new jobs, new responsibilities, and new assignments, starting with a great splash and making quick progress, but they soon lose momentum, never finishing the job. In contrast, productive people set definite goals, plan carefully, and concentrate their attention on the action required to meet each goal. Persistent individuals keep their goal in mind and work tenaciously toward it until they savor the success of achieving it.



- ▲ Get started! The best way to guarantee completion of a project is to get started on it – now! Two reasons account for failure to accomplish important jobs – people either never start, or they never finish. Both of these unproductive time patterns fall under the debilitating umbrella of procrastination. Several patterns of faulty thinking account for most procrastination. Following these guidelines will enable you to avoid these pitfalls:

- Begin on required work and continue without relying on “feeling like it.” Getting started is often the most difficult part of a project; once begun, “inspiration” often follows. Thomas Edison, the famous American inventor, put it well when he said, “Genius is 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration.”
- Face the fact that some jobs will never be “easy” – now or later. Break the job down into logical steps to make it

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more manageable at each stage. Get started on the job, working in a systematic method, and you will enjoy a sense of mastery that enables you to complete the job!

- ▲ Strive for results – not perfection. Overemphasis on perfection nearly always renders negative consequences – immobilizing fear of making mistakes, discouragement, and preoccupation with what others think rather than genuine productivity. Productive people distinguish between what is important and what is not. They set aside a reasonable amount of time to accomplish a specific task; then they stick to their deadline. They recognize some tasks simply are not important enough to lavish too much time or effort on them. Even on genuinely significant projects truly productive individuals simply strive for results – not perfection.

The goal-setting process offers the most effective method for putting into practice time patterns that produce results. Goal setting enables you to identify the accomplishments most important to you, to establish priorities, and to put into action the steps required to reach your goals.

Finding New Frontiers to Conquer

Once you have tasted the joys inherent in realizing your full potential, in developing personal leadership, and in savoring the rewards of success, you will never be satisfied to slip back into the brooding gloom of mediocrity. You will continue to grow and to explore new possibilities. You will push on past the horizon of today’s vision with eager anticipation of finding new frontiers and new worlds to conquer. There is never a need to share the experience of Alexander the Great, who, it is said, wept because “there are no more worlds to conquer.”

Building Strong Relationships

Here are a few characteristics of strong working relationships:

- The leader and team members are mutually committed to working together to achieve the goals of the organization.
- The leader and all the team members care about one another's needs and goals.
- The leader is an attentive listener and uses both formal and informal channels to hear messages coming from all directions.
- The leader and all of the team members communicate openly and constructively about job-related questions and issues.
- The leader is consistent in words and actions, and when policies and strategies change, works to build consensus and understanding.
- The leader has a thorough knowledge of each team member's talents and abilities and respects each one's motivational needs.
- The leader is respected by team members.

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Create a Positive Environment

Effective leaders at every level of the organization foster positive and creative work environments, deliver measurable and sustainable results, and maintain the ethical integrity of the workplace.

Positive and creative work environments usually describe a productive, corporate culture. I often hear the term culture but almost never hear it defined. My definition of organizational culture is this: A measure of the positive or negative quality of interpersonal support, communications, values, ideologies, behaviors, and relationships that exist within the organization.

On a scale of one to ten, with one being the lowest and ten being the highest, I have observed organizations with almost a ten in culture. I have also observed many organizations with barely a one. Of course this is only a subjective measure; however, you need only to experience it to actually feel the tension and pressure within an organization with a low culture rating versus the high expectancy and passion of an organization with a high culture rating. Those organizations with a high quality of culture are usually led by effective leaders.

Another measure of a positive work environment is the measure of climate. Organizational climate is a measure of the degree of positive or negative energy, attitudes, spirit, synergy, and team work that exists within an organization.

While culture is a measure of the quality of interpersonal organizational support, climate is a measure of the degree of energy and spirit. They are not the same, but they are interrelated; one fosters the other. When I observe an organization with a high-quality culture and a high-energy climate, I always find effective leaders at the helm.

Creativity is a vital resource to any organization and is a byproduct of a positive work environment. However, creativity is not always recognized by leaders as a resource; in fact I have worked within some organizations that actually discourage it. Creativity is stimulated through a process of higher level thinking which I call "best thinking." Best thinking comes from the individual thought processes of the people who make up the organization. This process of best thinking drives the total creative thought of the organization. Those organizations whose leaders consider creativity as a process exclusive to top leadership unknowingly deprive themselves of a vital resource. Effective leaders foster creative work environments because they develop opportunities to involve everyone in the thinking process of the organization. When leaders gain access to the individual thoughts and ideas of those who make up the organization, a higher level of best thinking is reached from which creativity is spawned. An effective leader is aware of organizational creativity as a vital resource and will encourage it in their organization to enhance a positive and creative work environment for their employees.



Developing the Skills of Your Team

Developing people and developing dynamic work teams are closely related skills. To ensure long-term productivity in the organization, plan ahead and anticipate the development needs of those who report to you. Developing people must go hand-in-hand with empowerment at all levels of the organization. It ensures future progress because it prevents leaders from becoming overworked or burned out.

Adequate training of new employees and those assigned new tasks or procedures reduces the need to spend large blocks of time answering questions and telling people what to do next. Nearly all people enjoy the personal satisfaction and success derived from being productive. When someone performs poorly, the cause is usually either inadequate knowledge or lack of motivation. Both indicate the need for training and development.

When inadequate job training is a problem, many managers and supervisors tend to say, "If I want something done right, I have to do it myself." They fail to acknowledge the need for training and instead add to their own work load another team member's responsibility. If it's appropriate for a person to do a certain job, then it's important to provide adequate training. Adding the job to your own work schedule is a poor substitute.

When you realize training is needed, provide it as soon as possible. The longer you wait, the harder it is to change established habits. One of the most helpful tools in maintaining job training is a current job description for each team member. Job descriptions clearly define expectations for team members and those to whom they report. If your organization doesn't currently use job descriptions, consider developing them with your people. Keep everybody on track through periodic updating of job descriptions.

Train all new employees immediately upon hiring. Always instruct them thoroughly in job re-

quirements. Putting a new employee on the job to "sink or swim" results in frustration, sloppy work habits, and omission of important details. Reinforce the attitudes and behavior patterns you want. A new employee is usually highly receptive to suggestions and eagerly assimilates and readily accepts the organizational vision, mission, and goals.

Another time to train people is when introducing a new procedure or



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type of work. Careful instruction and supervision ensure that everyone involved understands each step and accepts appropriate responsibility for producing the desired results. Encourage people to ask questions; show that you're willing to repeat yourself until everyone clearly understands.

Although skill and knowledge are essential to the success of a work unit, equally important is motivation. No matter how capable your people, no matter what potential they have for productivity, they accomplish little

without the motivation to work successfully. The most effective motivation is, of course, the inward desire to achieve and contribute. You can't, in one sense, instill self-motivation within others; but you can create an empowering, motivational climate. Such a climate is one in which growth and initiative are rewarded, recognition for achievement is given, and taking personal responsibility is encouraged.

An effective ongoing training and development program includes not only technical knowledge and information, but also motivation and goal setting for all employees. The organization that provides motivational training and learning opportunities for people at every level of the organization is an organization that enjoys long-term productivity and success.

Share Responsibility with Your Team

Although work environments, products, and services differ widely among organizations and work groups, the responsibilities of any manager at any level generally fall into four areas: planning, organizing, leading, and monitoring organizational resources. So the overall goals of any leader are basically similar. Effective leaders impart vision, set direction, and clarify expectations with their team members. Effective leaders manage the work environment rather than the daily routine. They make decisions, delegate authority, and encourage others by creating a sense of shared responsibility.

When effective leaders help formulate the goals of their department or work group, they communicate challenges and opportunities to their team members. Depending on their own position of authority, effective leaders also serve as spokespersons or liaisons among various individuals and groups in the organization – first-line workers, middle managers, executives, shareholders, and, in the case of not-for-profit organizations, the volunteers and contributors.

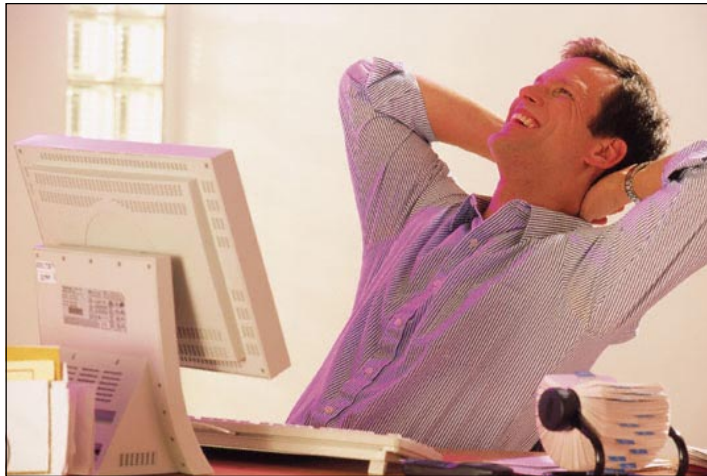
Leaders and managers empower teams by teaching about self-responsibility and processes for creating, improving, and distributing products and services. Team members are encouraged to think about how work in the organization gets done and the best way to do it.

As practitioners of the principles of human relationships, effective leaders also build strategic alliances with people outside the organization. With good communication skills, they form relationships with clients, the general public, suppliers, vendors, and many others who influence the success of the organization. To bring out the best in others, leaders treat all people with dignity and respect.

Because they're concerned with productivity, efficiency, and profitability, effective leaders focus on achieving results. They make decisions and judgments that affect the lives and destinies of other people. In their pursuit of goals that are greater than one individual, or even a small group of individuals, effective leaders build genuine relationships with people.

In general, leaders earn their position because they demonstrate to some degree some of the following leadership abilities:

- ◆ They have what it takes to be a team player. They demonstrate the ability to listen, to accept responsibility, and to cooperate and communicate with others to accomplish the goals of the work group. Their attitude displays a genuine respect for others and the recognition of the importance of following as well as leading. They can follow instructions; this ability is a starting point for learning how to instruct and guide others.
 - ◆ They're organized and can help others organize their activities. They demonstrate a high degree of job knowledge, competence, and practical judgment, or "common sense." They're able to set priorities and discipline themselves to put first things first. They demonstrate their ability to encourage others to participate constructively in getting the work done.
 - ◆ They succeed even if needed instructions or materials are not readily available. They figure out how to get the work done even when the procedure isn't obvious or clear. They solve problems even when unexpected obstacles arise. They're resourceful and creative. They're flexible and can make changes when the situation requires them.
 - ◆ They're motivated and enthusiastic about their work. They're optimistic and exercise initiative. They like what they do and enjoy the challenge of responsibility. Getting the work done well and on time is important to them and provides a great deal of satisfaction.
 - ◆ They achieve results. They focus their energy on the goals and priorities that produce the highest payoff for their organization. Their commitment to achieving tangible results creates persistence. They set a positive example of consistently pursuing the results necessary for their organization to survive, grow, and succeed.
 - ◆ They're a leader. In every assignment they're given, they set a positive tone and pace for the work climate. By their example, they instill in others the desire to do their best. They fill a position of leadership by empowering others to assume responsibility on the work team.
- How far you advance in your career is limited only by your commitment and enthusiasm, your desire to learn and improve, and your willingness to make the adjustments and changes that can accelerate your career development.



Gaining the Commitment of Your Team

As a leader, a primary responsibility is to gain your team's commitment and support to the organization's vision and goals. Getting total agreement from each team member on how to reach those goals is not always possible. But if a team is to work together, there must be some consensus on how to proceed. The first step is to get team members to put aside their personal preferences and agree to the specific goals they want to achieve, as well as agree on the methods to achieve them.

You, as the leader, are responsible for bringing about such a consensus. The tool for accomplishing this purpose is the power of persuasion.

Accepting the role of leader ethically binds you to use authority, influence, and logic in leading others to act in the best interests of the organization. Persuasion is clearly the preferred choice of the effective leader. **Consider these techniques for becoming more persuasive:**

- ◆ **Build a solid reputation.** Establish a reputation for honesty and integrity. The ancient philosopher Aristotle recognized the importance of character when he said, "Character is the most effective agent of persuasion." Character is best observed in attitudes and actions. Character is demonstrated by doing what you say you will do. Character is the Golden Rule of persuasion. Strengthen your character, and you strengthen your power to persuade.
- ◆ **Create a climate of mutual trust.** In addition to establishing a reputation for honesty and integrity, do all you can to create a climate of mutual trust. Be a team player, be patient, be fair, be objective, be tolerant, be forgiving. Distrust in an organization creates game playing, blaming, "politics," and other destructive behaviors. But when everybody in the organization knows they can trust what you say and what you do, they tend to model



their behavior after yours, and they are more likely to follow your leadership.

- ◆ **Listen attentively.** Most people will only open their minds to your ideas after they feel you have listened to them and acknowledged their opinions. When associates feel understood, they are much more willing to consider your ideas. Careful listening is often more persuasive than polished speaking. In addition, you gain many good ideas that may not have occurred to you. Be willing to compromise and incorporate some of the ideas of others as long as your objectives can still be met. Achieving the

goal is your purpose — not imposing all of your ideas about how to achieve it.

- ◆ **Prepare to persuade.** Have all the facts and issues clearly in mind before attempting to persuade. Anticipate possible objections and prepare for them. Be supportive if defensiveness or hostility surfaces in the reactions of team members. Be sure that you are right most of the time. If you customarily speak be-

fore you are fully informed, people soon begin to react defensively to everything you say. Prepare your case and present it with brevity and clarity.

- ◆ **Demonstrate positive attitudes.** Plan every action with the intent to produce the best possible results for the organization, for your peers, and for team members. For persuasion to be effective, it must be beneficial for all. When you adopt a positive attitude toward your own responsibility as a leader, every action you take benefits the organization and creates goodwill with your coworkers.

The ability to persuade works best when you sincerely care about your team members. True concern ensures that your persuasive powers are directed toward mutual benefits for both individual employees and the organization.

Communicate Authentically to Others

People are the wellspring of productivity; dealing with associates through integrity and authenticity is imperative from both a human and a business standpoint. Successful leadership depends on communicating your organization's vision to team members and gaining their support and commitment to that vision. The best way to accomplish that goal is through clear, effective, and authentic communication. Begin today to become an authentic communicator!

Observe Behavior to Mold Success

Knowledge about basic behavioral styles helps you to understand employees better and to implement the approach that most effectively motivates each one. Personalities can be categorized according to four basic styles observable in the behavior of most individuals. When you understand these styles, they serve as a basis for choosing your approach to motivating your team members. Consider these four basic styles as you interact with people:

People who are action oriented know what they want, and the approach seems to imply an attitude of “let’s get it done right now – and get it done my way.” Action-oriented individuals concentrate primarily on the task at hand, rather than on people. As a result, they’re often perceived as uncommunicative, detached, independent, and competitive. They initiate clear-cut actions, but the reasons for their actions may not be obvious to others because they seldom share personal motives or feelings. Action-oriented people are so busy “getting things done” that they tend to neglect building close relationships. Action-oriented individuals appear to work with others only when it’s necessary to do so to achieve their objectives.

When you have a team member who is action oriented, communication needs to be directed to the task at hand. If there’s a problem and you need information, ask questions that are pointed toward the task itself, how it can best be done, and what actions can be taken to gain the desired result. Listen carefully to the answers you receive from one who is action oriented. You will get the bare facts, but those facts will go to the heart of the problem. Be willing to accept the information offered even though it seems to lack tact and concern for the feelings of others.

At the opposite extreme from those who are action oriented are relationship-oriented people. Setting a high priority on cooperative behavior, close relationships, and friendships, they lend freshness and warmth to any situation. They interpret the world on a personal basis; they tend to become involved in the feelings of others and in relationships between people. Although power over others doesn’t motivate the relationship oriented, being accepted by others is vitally important to them. People who are relationship oriented like to get things done through others; they depend

upon understanding and mutual respect rather than authority, force, or threats to gain cooperation.

Managing relationship-oriented individuals can be pleasant even when it’s unproductive. Be aware of the need to show concern for the opinions and needs of workers with this style. Give instructions and seek cooperation by appealing to their current personal concerns. When you take the time to be caring and tactful, you can count on the commitment and loyalty of these team members.

Intuition-oriented individuals are sometimes called unpredictable; they appear communicative, approachable, warm, and competitive. They want others as friends, but they like them best as followers and supporters. Placing value on power and politics, intuition-oriented individuals are motivated to gain personal recognition and to rally support for their own causes. However, intuition-oriented people change course of action easily and often fail to bother with the specifics of who, why, what, and how. They sometimes are undisciplined in their use of time.

The most difficult part of leading intuition-oriented people is knowing what to expect from them. They have great energy, initiative, and desire to be productive. When you communicate with them, ask their opinions and then lead them to relate those opinions to facts before they take action. You can coach them to be a little more practical and logical without losing the advantage of their creativity.

Thinking-oriented individuals live life according to facts and principles. They show minimum concern for relationships and focus on organizing and to getting things done. Those who use this style are often regarded as cold, detached, and indifferent. They’re cautious about showing personal warmth. They sometimes seem more concerned with getting things done rather than with personal involvement or regard for feelings.

When you’re responsible for providing leadership to thinking-oriented people, give them time to think through the task at hand. Give them good reasons for the orders and instructions you give. Be especially careful to provide them with a personal tracking system so they can know at all times how their performance measures against organizational goals or standards.



Bridging the Gap Between Potential and Performance

Since 1966, Leadership Management International™ has been bridging the gap between potential and performance by helping organizations and individuals evaluate their strengths and opportunities through implementation of the unique and proven LMI Process™.

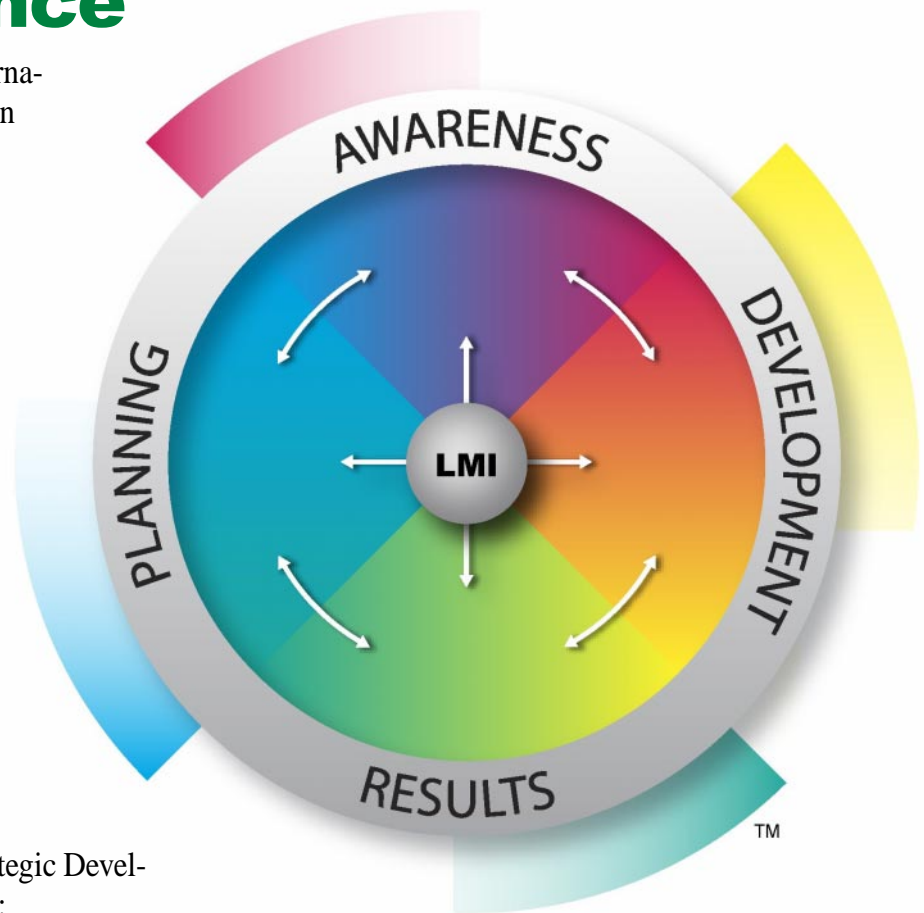
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