

LEADERSHIP: COMMON SENSE OR COMMON PRACTICE

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Organizations should not be "built to last" any more. They should be built to change. Changes in technology alone make it impossible and undesirable not to change. The winds of change are always swirling particularly in the midst of economic downturns, violence, tragedies and other unexpected occurrences. The key to the future is continuous improvement. The key to continuous improvement is being nimble.

Keeping an organization nimble takes a new kind of leadership. This new kind of leadership eradicates complacency, mediocrity and negativity in the organization. Enjoying the people you work with becomes more desirable while giving the employees the opportunity to use their instincts in innovative ways becomes essential. Give employees the opportunity to stretch themselves. Give them the opportunity to fail occasionally. In the middle 1800's William Thomson, a scientist, said, "Radio has no future. Don't waste your time with that. It will never go anywhere." With the competitive nature of organizations today, vision has very few boundaries. Every mistake made is one more step toward innovation.

The act of moving the organization forward while tightly managing it's scarce resources in today's environment takes a different skill set. Multi-tasking is critical. The need for short term goals has always been important, because leaders want to survive. The importance of short term goals will be more prevalent in the future because the life cycle of long term goals will become shorter and shorter. Thus, the importance of the organization being nimble.

"Built to last" in the future will mean built to lead change. For this reason leaders will have to be "comfortable in their own skin." Optimizing the talent of your employees has become the number one skill. Being comfortable as your employees excel is crucial. There is no room for jealousy.

Nothing stays the same and during this information age, organizations and their leaders are being watched all the time. It is not always how you handle success that is important, it is how you handle loss, grief, disappointment, and failure. People will be watching how you treat your supporters and how you treat your enemies. The light of the leader shines everywhere, all the time. It will shine when and where you may least expect it. "Big brother" will always be watching. Leaders be aware.

A leader has to be true to him or herself. In the future, the greatest leaders will not be great without being good people. The measure of a person's greatness, may in large part be his/her goodness. A person's past successes or failures will not determine his/her future successes or failures.