

EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

The New Core of Leadership

Clark Aldrich

Aldrich talked with thousands of leaders from various industries to develop a leadership simulation, and discovered along the way these essential qualities among effective leaders:

Power. Leadership is accomplishment, and a leader needs power—formal or informal through influence—to motivate a group.

Ideas. Ideas need to be generated with the group so that the right issues are addressed.

Tension. The right amount of tension can foster a productive and even enjoyable work environment.

Commitment. Leaders must evaluate which ideas are worthwhile and will receive employee dedication.

Balance. Asserting selective, unbalanced aspects of leadership almost always ensures misuse of it.

Practice. Leadership skills must be practiced to become intuitive.

Aldrich concludes the study by noting that leadership is more a skill than a quality and that leaders need to be molded into effective role models.

For complete text, see page 32.

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A Boot to the System

Jim Ronan

When General Physics needed to shake up its system, it called on a West Point grad to help create a boot-camp-style leadership program for middle- and upper-level management. That unconventional approach was taken because executives knew that a certain level of shock was needed to get company leaders to wake up and pay attention, says Ronan.

For seven days, the “boots” (participants) completed a rigorous, more than 17-hour schedule of physical and mental activities, including many teamwork exercises. As the long days began to take their toll, a motivational speaker was brought in. Problems with the system were also worked out: Senior officers also needed training, so they joined the boots mid-week. By the end of the course, participants were proud of their accomplishment and were committed to change.

Now called Leadership Tools and Techniques, boot camp continues to be a success for GP and is now a requirement for anyone seeking a promotion to supervisor.

For complete text, see page 38.

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The Myth of Charismatic Leaders

Joseph A. Raelin

Why do we idolize our leaders? Maybe it is because our culture still admires individualism, or maybe because we fear what is to come. But either way, says Raelin, we must develop a shared management style in order to brave the future.

Following someone strictly for inspirational vision can be a waste of time and even dangerous, particularly when collaboration can yield better results. Charismatic leaders are often not as good in some situations as they are hoped or expected to be. In fact, many tend to be narcissistic, egocentric, or hard-driving. Followers often choose such “hero leaders” for psychological comfort during times of distress, rather than their ability to manage conflict. They see this person as a savior and the only person able to lead them through the trouble. The problem is, Raelin argues, that we often overemphasize a leader’s powers and expect one person to make all of the decisions, rarely considering anyone else’s contributions.

What’s more effective is a collaborative leadership, in which anyone can assume power when needed. That way, resolutions are based on merit rather than on blind faith.

For complete text, see page 46.

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Blue Sky, Red Earth

Karl Albrecht

According to Albrecht's Mindex model, people are classified by content and structure of thought into these metaphorical patterns:

Red Earth. The most common pattern, these type of thinkers are "intuitive and people-oriented, and they're inclined towards direct experience." They like tangible results, not theories or explanations.

Blue Earth. People with this orientation are logical, and they value structure and detail. They enjoy organizing things and problem solving.

Red Sky. These thinkers see things on a global scale and are more concerned with the *what* than the *how*.

Blue Sky. People with this thought pattern are drawn to academic fields and value abstract ideas, reasoning, and relational thinking.

Understanding where you and the people in your organization fit into this model can improve training, teambuilding, and interaction.

Albrecht explains how to detect these patterns in yourself and others, and how to use that knowledge for more effective organizational as well as personal communication.

For complete text, see page 55.

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