

Step up, Shut Up: Pick One



BACK AT MY DESK after spending five days in Dallas for ASTD's International Conference and Exposition, I am a bit spent. But I came home energized by the many conference sessions I attended, as well as meeting so many T+D readers. Thanks for your comments.

Perhaps the big "A-ha" moment at the conference for me was during an address by author and big thinker Marcus Buckingham. He was a last-minute substitute for Jack Welch who was hospitalized just before the start of the conference.

Buckingham, who recently published *The One Thing You Need to Know: About Great Managing, Great Leading, and Sustained Individual Success*, got me thinking about my own skills. As a manager, I have occasionally struggled with knowing when to be a team player and when to step up and lead.

"You want to be part of a strong powerful productive team," Buckingham told the audience. "You'll figure out what your strengths are and you'll take them seriously. You'll stand up for them day-by-day, week by week. You'll figure out how to volunteer them for the benefit of that team."

I have to admit, that is a path I have not always followed. I know my own strengths and talents, and I am not loath to play to them. But in my career I have, now and then, "taken one for the team" by keeping silent or refusing to push my ideas for fear of causing disunity. And you know what happened? In every single case, I regretted that decision.

In addition to the universal message Buckingham reinforced—"play to your strengths"—I also think we need to remember an equally important idea. To be a good team player you have to stand up and be willing to fight for your ideas. It is nice when best-selling authors remind us of these important concepts at conferences, but when we get back to our own workplaces, it's up to each one of us to put those ideas into practice.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rex Davenport". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Rex Davenport
Editor
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This will be my last issue as editor of T+D. I am headed back to the Midwest. It has been my great joy to serve the workplace learning and performance profession and to get to know many of its fine people. I want to thank my excellent staff for the long hours and their dedication to the magazine. Anything I achieved during my stay was due in large part to their relentless attention to the hundreds of details and tasks required to produce this fine magazine.



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