

Leading For Results



By Michelle Braden

An



Leadership Resource

INTRODUCTION

“Man cannot live on bread alone, he must have peanut butter”

- President James A. Garfield

Similarly (though less funny) leadership does not stand alone. It must get results, and that means achieving well formulated goals. By definition, a destination is inherent and you MUST know where your are going or, as oft quoted Yogi says, “If you don't know where you're going, any path will get you there.”

Practicing behavioral leadership without a goal is like drilling for a football game only to find out you're playing basketball. It makes a difference. Yes, there are many universal truths ... trust, teamwork, listening for example ... that are important frameworks in general, but insufficient of themselves. You need to know the “rules of the game” to LEAD your team to the GOAL.

Hundreds of books have been written about leadership with much good advice. However, with 7 Laws, 9 Essentials, or 5 Rules it's time for a time out!

1

LET'S START WITH YOUR TEAM

Your team is as different from one playing football than one playing basketball and as developing a software is from managing a retail outlet. What is highly important to the first is not as important to the second and the other way around.

Each team is different because they:

HAVE DIFFERENT **GOALS**



USE DIFFERENT **TECHNOLOGY**



EMPLOY DIFFERENT **PROCESSES**



ARE MADE UP OF PEOPLE WITH UNIQUE **ABILITIES**



And because the goals are different...

...the leadership, although underpinned with some universal principles, will be different. Each leader must be CREDIBLE which means each must relate to the unique abilities of these very different team talents in a way that helps each member achieve their unique objectives.

2

ABOUT GOALS

No matter how talented the team, without clearly articulated **GOALS**, it will not achieve its potential. It will probably get somewhere, but (ala Yogi) even the members may not know where, nor will they arrive at a destination as desirable had they really thought it through from the start. Knowing your GOALS are as important to success as knowing whether baskets or touchdowns are your objective.



GOALS
need to be
simple, clear, and
a valid measure
of success.

GOALS inform everything else you do from selection of:

- The **technology** you will use to produce your product or service
- The **processes**, practices and procedures you'll need
- the **knowledge**, skills, and abilities of the personnel you select
- the **strategy** and customer (internal and external) feedback you need to continuously improve performance

And to continuously improve, you must routinely reassess your goals and refine them to provide your team updated sets to strive for that will improve your business.

AN IMPORTANT PERSPECTIVE ON GOALS

Each GOAL cannot be viewed in isolation from another. In their book “The Balanced Scorecard”¹, authors Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton illustrate this well. For example, if you are overly focused on your financial performance, other important aspects of your business will suffer. Similarly, if you refine a goal in one area, it is likely to require adjusting one in another area. You must balance your goals and how you score them.

Of course your business may have more, but the four prominent goals and measures dimensions outlined in “The Balanced Scorecard” are:

- 1 Financial
- 2 Processes
- 3 Learning and Growth
- 4 Customer

3

The Final word on **Goals**

Unless each goal is understood by the newest employee (in terms of what they DO) you will not have the engagement needed for a high performing team. Bottom line goals embraced by the owners and executives mean little to the rest of the team unless they are “translated” in terms of what each member does ... their individual daily activities. They have to know what they need to DO to score a point.

In summary, leadership in a vacuum is like getting in your car and driving without a destination ... you'll get somewhere, but the chance it is where you really want to be is unlikely.

Goals are essential. The more clearly defined and engrained throughout your organization the better.

Goals must be balanced. An inordinate emphasis on one set at the expense of another is a prescription for long-term decline.

Goals must be embraced by the team, not just the leader. It is one of a leader's highest callings to communicate, persuade, and engage each employee in achieving well balanced and aligned goals that give life and health to reaching the highest potential of your organization.

References

1. Kaplan, R. S., & Norton, D. P. (1996). *The balanced scorecard: Translating strategy into action*. Boston, Mass: Harvard Business School Press.



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Michelle has coached and trained leaders and teams for over 20 years. She is the founder of the Authentic Leadership Summit, the Emerging Executive Leadership Program and has served as a panelist for the World Coaching Conference. Michelle is a certified coach with ACC credentials from the International Coaching Federation and the author of three leadership books: *Stand Out*, *Dare to Make a Difference*, and *Bottom Line*. She is also a long-term thought-leadership contributor to several blogs/publications including: *Thought Leaders*, *Lead Change* and *Leadership Courseware*.

Michelle is committed to partnering with leaders to identify their motivators, drivers, values and principles that increase their awareness of who they are and how they want to be known as a leader. She works with leaders to uncover both productive and challenging behaviors that may be enhancing their leadership or holding them back from being the leaders they want to be. Ultimately, leaders are motivated to set and achieve their highest goals.



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