

# LMI Journal



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## Accept the Challenge of Becoming an Effective Motivational Leader

By Paul J. Meyer

Every leader's role is unique. It differs from similar positions in other organizations and from individual roles in a particular work environment. Even the titles given to leaders vary widely. But positions of leadership, no matter how they differ in the details, have one important common denominator: They all must depend upon the fundamental need to work with and through other people.

Leadership is really about relationships. Leaders who work most effectively with and through others produce the most outstanding results. The extraordinary challenge facing leaders today in all areas of business and industry is that they must develop and maintain positive and productive personal relationships with associates and team members.

Most leaders are concerned about two types of results: their own personal success and the success of the team or organization. Although the two areas may seem distinct, in a practical sense they cannot be separated.

The purpose of a leader is to achieve positive results in coordination with the activities of others. These "other people," together with the

leader, make up the team or organization. If this group of individuals fails, the leader shares in that fate. If the leader fails, the organization's goals are not achieved. On the other hand, when the leader succeeds, the organization benefits directly; and when the team reaches its goals, the leader shares in the rewards.

### The Responsibilities of Leadership

Peter Drucker has said, "Leadership is not rank, privilege, title, or money. It is responsibility." For you to achieve optimum results through others, you must be willing to take on the following responsibilities:

◆ **Values** – A clear value system is the very foundation of effective leadership. Values define what we believe in, what we consider important, what we truly care about, and what we stand for. Team members will only follow a leader they trust and believe in. Trust is developed through a common or shared set of values that is adhered to with strict integrity. A shared set of values inspires and motivates people. When people care deeply about something – when they place a



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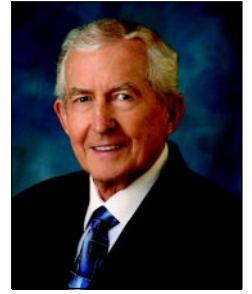
– Peter Drucker

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high value on it – they are energized to give their best effort. The most spectacular results happen when team members are motivated to achieve something that is consistent with their highest and most important values.

- ◆ **Vision and Communication** – A leader, by definition, is in the forefront of action. A firm understanding of the goals of the organization and a thorough knowledge of what must be done to achieve those goals are essential elements of effective leadership. In the context of the goals and vision of the organization, effective leaders have both the opportunity and the responsibility to give direction and purpose to the actions of team members. Real leadership goes beyond just giving orders and demanding unquestioning obedience. Genuine leadership involves gaining commitment from those you lead so that they understand their part in the overall vision of the organization and are committed to achieving success. Leadership involves the ability to communicate, to persuade, to encourage, and to inspire people to take meaningful and productive actions. Powerful results flow from team members who are enthusiastically committed to a clear vision.
- ◆ **Motivation** – It is sometimes believed that motivated people are born that way. Either a person is motivated or not and there's little that can be done to change that. Nothing could be further from the truth. There is no "self-motivation" gene that people inherit. Self-motivation is an attitude; it is a habit of thought. Like any other habit, self-motivation can be learned and developed. To be an effective leader, you must provide the right conditions, opportunities, and environment for your associates to develop self-motivation. More than any other quality, your ability to inspire self-motivation in team members will determine your level of success as a leader.
- ◆ **Learning and Development** – The most practical and cost-effective approach to increasing production is, in most cases, to become a developer of people. You could, of course, hire additional people in hopes of achieving greater production, but the results of this approach rarely justify the cost. The most effective leaders see development of associates as vitally important to the success of the organization. They recognize that people, not capital spending and technology, are the primary source of productivity. Effective leaders make their team members their priority. They fully realize that people are truly the organization's most important and valuable asset.
- ◆ **Empowerment** – The world of business is getting more and more competitive. Organizations are on a never-ending search for any and every small advantage over competitors. One of the most significant changes that

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– Paul J. Meyer

organizations are undertaking is a shift from a slow-moving, hierarchical, bloated, command-and-control structure to a quick response, horizontal, lean, interdependent, and empowered structure. The key to succeeding with this shift is empowering team members to share responsibility and take ownership of the success of the organization. Empowerment is the creation of a motivational climate that releases the power, resources, and responsibility of team members. Unfortunately, most leaders do not understand the necessity of this change and have not yet mastered the process of empowering team members.

- ◆ **Team Building** – Sometimes the people in an organization all work hard, they believe in the purpose of the organization, and they are committed to success, but the organization still fails to achieve its goals. Team members may possess a similar vision of the organization's ultimate goals, but they move along different paths toward achieving those goals. This is a sure sign that the people involved are not working as a team. Effective leaders are able to build a diverse group of people into a smoothly functioning team.
- ◆ **Change and Innovation** – If quality and efficiency were the keys to success in the last century, change and innovation have become the signposts of success in the 21st century. In today's hyper-speed world, the ability to adapt through change and innovation is crucial to survival, let alone to achieving success. In fact, the ability to change and innovate better and faster than the competition may become the only real competitive advantage. Change and innovation cannot just be the leader's responsibility, it must permeate the entire organization. Effective leaders develop an environment that fosters and supports creativity, change, and innovation from every single person.

## Act with Courage

When you set an example of courage to envision the future, commit to an exciting purpose, set worthwhile goals, and take action to achieve those goals, you inspire people to adopt the same courageous attitude.

When you believe in yourself and in your ability to succeed, your team members are eager to follow. As you become an effective leader, you motivate team members to greater productivity – and the vision of the organization becomes reality!

Of course, there will be occasional setbacks. But you must refuse to be discouraged and never think of yourself as a failure. Henry Ford once asked Thomas Edison if he had ever become discouraged in the long series of unsuccessful experiments to produce the incandescent light. Edison's reply was an emphatic, "No!" On the contrary, he viewed each unsuccessful experiment as a positive discovery of a way that his device would not work. Today, Edison is remembered for his successes, not his failures.

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# Leadership and Crisis



David Byrd  
President, LMI

Pick up any newspaper today and you will read about economic crisis. Turn your TV to any news broadcast, and you will hear about economic crisis. I was with a group of business executives yesterday, and we talked about economic crisis. We are being overwhelmed with negative news and fearful conversation regarding the issues of the current, global economic crisis. But with all the bombardment of negative news and fearful conversations leaders must still lead. How do we do that?

During times of crisis a leader's greatest enemy is fear. During crisis most people respond from the emotion of fear. This is a natural response that can be traced back to our ancestral roots. The emotion of fear was designed to protect us from any imposing dangers. However, many people have developed the habit of responding to any crisis situation from the emotion of fear, and that poses three significant problems for leaders:

*"During times of crisis a leader's greatest enemy is fear."*

- ◆ **Fear paralyzes productive actions.** Fear leads to negative attitudes which, in turn, get in the way of positive, productive actions.
- ◆ **Fear attracts and supports failure.** Negative attitudes find comfort in failure. They offer an instant and comfortable excuse to quit, point blame, or procrastinate.
- ◆ **Fear eliminates ownership of possible solutions.** Fear destroys creative energy. Fear causes us to think of ourselves as victims and victims have no solutions.

How do effective leaders respond to the natural, human emotion of fear? The effective leader knows that there are only two options in responding to crisis... **Positive Actions or Negative Beliefs!**

The leaders who respond with negative beliefs nullify their leadership position by joining the ranks of the fearful. When a leader responds to crisis from the emotion of fear, his or her position as leader is no longer effective. The leader has chosen to simply join the crowd, and any attempts at leading will be overlooked by those who are expected to follow.

The effective leader knows that there is only one productive option in responding to crisis... **Positive Actions!** You have to consistently fight your normal responses to fear because effective leadership demands positive, productive, and effective actions.

This current economic crisis will be managed by effective leaders. In challenging times, effective leaders step up to the plate and lead with positive action plans and consistent high pay off activities. I wish you Godspeed in your significant role as an effective leader!

With Positive Expectancy,

David Byrd  
President, Leadership Management Institute™

# Building an Effective and Productive Team

The team concept ... teamwork ... team building ... the team. Over the past few decades, these terms have become common buzz words to describe an environmental shift in business and industry. While many leaders have enjoyed success in implementing a smooth-functioning team environment, others have found it difficult to move beyond theory to the practical application of the team concept.

What marks the difference between those teams that are successful and those who are not? Even company leadership, managers, and employees whose attitudes are favorable for the success of a team environment are sometimes at a loss to pinpoint the specific behaviors that support effective teamwork.

In general, we do know that successful leaders, whether in sports or in business and industry, define the vision and mission of the team and its members, and they excel at setting goals and implementing a plan of action to achieve those goals. All members have the responsibility to motivate themselves, and they share the responsibility of creating a climate conducive for motivating their other team members.

## What Makes Up a Successful Team?

What exactly is meant by the word “team?” A team can be defined as “a small group of skilled people who work together toward a common goal or purpose.” The most effective teams are those that consist of no more than 20 people. If a team grows larger than that, it becomes increasingly difficult to get everyone in agreement to work toward a common purpose and goal. A team

also is composed of skilled people. If you think of a sports team, the most obvious example of teamwork, the coach strives to place the most skilled players in the appropriate positions. A person whose skills are insufficient for that position is either moved to a more suitable position or is removed from the team altogether.

An effective team also works together. Interdependence among individuals is a key characteristic of successful teams. If a group of people don't need to work closely together and they don't depend on one another to complete a task or reach a goal, then there really isn't a need to form a team. A team's success is largely determined by the team

members' ability to work interdependently. A key hallmark of a high-performance team is that all the members work toward a common goal or purpose.

While the characteristics and requirements for successful teamwork are most obvious when it comes to athletic teams, they hold true in any team building effort. **Use the following steps to build a successful team:**

- ▲ Define the team – Identify the members of your team and determine the role each team member will play in the success of the entire organization.
- ▲ Define specific team goals and an action plan – State the primary purpose of the team. Identify goals the team is to accomplish: • today • this week • this month • this year • this decade
- ▲ Identify specific behaviors that support team goals and a team environment – Specific actions and behaviors mark the most successful teams. Among these behavioral characteristics found in

team members are a positive attitude, commitment, persistence, and discipline. Team members who demonstrate these qualities are generally considered successful team members. Not only are they considered successful themselves, but their winning attitudes and actions have a positive, constructive effect on the other team members.



*“A team can be defined as ‘a small group of skilled people who work together toward a common goal or purpose.’ ”*

- ▲ Outline how you and others will be held accountable – Recognizing team members for their specific contributions to team success with positive feedback encourages continued high-

level achievement. Give verbal or written feedback one-on-one to the individual, or if appropriate, give public praise to individuals or the team for meeting goals. In contrast, consider the consequences to team members who fail to uphold certain responsibilities or attitudes. Address unmet expectations before they drive a wedge into working relationships and negatively affect the team. Some personnel issues, by nature, should be handled under the organization's policies. But be careful not to ignore the impact that unfulfilled responsibilities have on your team's morale.

# Handling Challenges Productively

Problems arise in all areas of life. Some can be prevented and some cannot. You cannot prevent a natural disaster, turn around the national or world economy, or wipe out crime, poverty, and disease. But through wise observation and planning, you can deal with global problems and minimize their effects on your business and personal well-being.

## Be Constructive When Handling Problems

No matter how much attention you give to prevention, some communication challenges will arise. When they do, view them with the attitude that they are opportunities for making needed adjustments and improvements. How you approach the solution of problems is best decided before they arise. When you anticipate the possible obstacles that could arise and plan solutions for them in advance, you are never paralyzed by surprise; you know exactly what to do.

**Follow these general guidelines for handling difficulties, challenges, or problems:**

### ▲ *Maintain a positive attitude.*

Your positive attitude about people and their worth, about your ability to communicate, and about the relationships you establish with people does much to prevent problems.

But when misunderstanding does occur, plan to keep your positive attitude and approach problem solving with expectations that any misunderstanding is unintended by anyone involved, and that it can be cleared up with investment of a little time and effort. When you approach problems with a positive attitude, other people find it easier to be open, to communicate, to trust you, to control emotions, and to join you in seeking a solution.

### ▲ *Use productive communication skills.*

Use skills at each point in the problem-solving process that help you and others move toward mutual understanding. At any one time, you may be using a combination of several communication skills. Knowing what communication skills to use is essential for overall communication effectiveness: Working through difficult situations always requires constructive communication.

### ▲ *Deal with causes, not symptoms.*

Knowing the cause of a problem makes it possible to deal realistically and effectively with the real issue involved – to cure the problem instead of covering it with a band-aid. It is human nature to want to avoid unpleasant situations or confrontations. While it is wise to avoid “making a

mountain out of a mole hill,” it is never wise to deny the existence of a problem in hopes it will go away. Whatever the size of the problem or in whatever stage of development it is, use all of your communication skills to determine the cause so you can deal with it, not the symptoms. Ask probing questions like these: What symptom indicates the existence of a problem? Who is involved in this problem? What effect is this problem creating? What is my responsibility in this situation? How is the best way to reach our shared goal?

### ▲ *Avoid arguments.*

Arguing wastes time and energy, fogs the real issues, creates resentment, interferes with sound reasoning, and destroys goodwill. So avoid arguments at

all costs! If you wish to persuade people to your way of thinking, you must first convince them you are their friend. To convince them you are their friend, you must be willing to listen to them and be open to their suggestions. Maintain an attitude that problem solving is a search for understanding and a win/win resolution, not a battle to be won. Be calm, reasonable, and willing to consider the

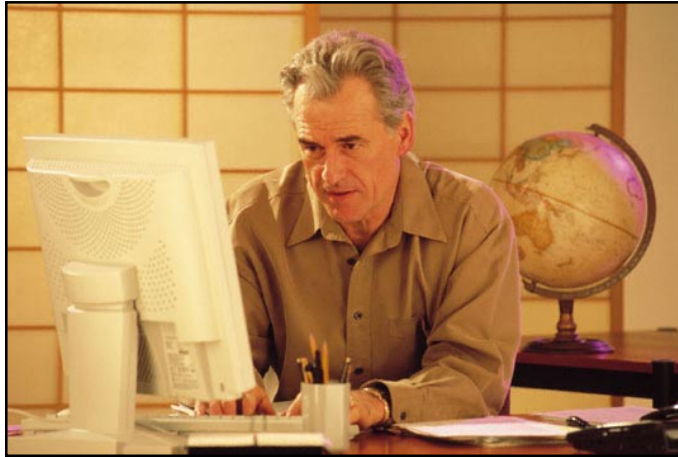
point of view of others. Remain flexible and avoid overreacting.

### ▲ *Accept responsibility.*

Be willing to accept personal responsibility for your part in solving any problem. If you find it necessary to change the way you communicate, make the changes that facilitate reaching your goal. Also encourage others to accept responsibility for contributing to the solution – by furnishing needed information or by taking whatever action is necessary to go right through the problem, around it, or over it – to reach your shared goals.

### ▲ *Focus on behavior or results.*

When you communicate with people about some problem that exists, focus on behavior or results – attack the problem, not someone’s personality. Trying to change people discourages them and frequently leads to additional problems. Instead, focus on the problem and encourage people to change what they do. Sticking to the issue and what the person can do about the problem removes pressure. When you insist on focusing on what needs to be done instead of who is to blame, everyone can remain objective and creative in seeking solutions.



# Personal Leadership: Basis for Success

By Magdy Mahmoud

Would you give up a one million dollar deal to take your mother to the hospital for pressing medical issue? Or would you drop your weekly spiritual lesson at your house of worship if it conflicted with your scheduled personal trainer session? If two educational sessions are held at the same time; one with the top-world expert in building up and marketing your business and the other with the expert of dieting and fitness, which session would you go to? Would you donate your \$1,000 charity to research leading to finding a cure for autistic children, homeless people, orphans or widows?

These questions are stimulants to our minds of what is important to us, or actually, what are our life priorities.

## What Is a Value?

A value is simply an important thing to us – tangible or non-tangible. For instance, a spouse, children, parents, honesty, integrity, sacrifice, helping people, money, power, educations, and connecting with God are all legitimate personal values. There are personal, as well as business, organizational, and even country values. “In God We Trust” is a value to the USA. Customer satisfaction, quality of products, seamless process, and integrity may qualify as business values. Values have five certain characteristics:

- ▲ Personal: Values are a unique set for each one of us. People may share small or big set of values, but they are never identical for two people.
- ▲ Hidden: Values are internal, within our hearts and brains.
- ▲ Evolving: Our values change with age, family, society, education, and experience.
- ▲ Abstract: Values must not be time-bound or situation-bound. That is what makes a value everlasting for us. Value is not a goal or objective.
- ▲ Subset or Superset of our religious values: Our personal values cannot contradict our religious values.

## Putting Values into Categories

Scholars divide personal values into six categories:

- ▲ *Mental and Educational* – • Skills • Degrees • Certifications
- ▲ *Family and Home* – • Marriage • Parenting • Childhood
- ▲ *Social and Cultural* – • Non-profit volunteering • Club and union memberships • Visiting family and friends
- ▲ *Career and Financial* – • Investments • Benefits and retirement • Promotions
- ▲ *Spiritual and Ethical* – • Connection to God • Rituals and meditations • Morality



- ▲ *Physical and Health* – • Exercise • Diet • Rest and relaxation

## What is a Value System?

A Value System is a set of consistent and priority-ordered values. Individuals, groups, organizations, businesses, countries must have a Value System. **The Value System elements (values) must fulfill two conditions:**

- ▲ **Consistent:** No contradictions between any two values within the system.
- ▲ **Priority-Ordered:** According to their importance.

The latter is especially important in case one has to choose one of two actions relevant to two values. Please refer to questions similar to those in the beginning of this article.

Most people are typically struggling between what they want to do and what they are actually doing. We are normally driven away from what is important to us, our values, by others' values. Peer pressure, culture, and the media are few external drivers. It is a continuous battle between the internal and the external motives.

## What is Success in Life?

Success in life happens when actions and values are aligned. Success is a journey, not a destination.

Of course, we know what are doing, our action, our profession, our current path, but do we really know our values, or our value system? Bringing out hidden and internal values is not an easy job; however, the process of discovering your personal values can prove to be a success.

# Crossing the Barriers to Understanding

For communication to be successful, it is essential that there be mutual understanding between the sender and the receiver. The vital link for mutual understanding to take place is listening. Listening, unlike hearing, fosters mutual understanding, which is the primary goal of communication. Mutual understanding often facilitates some change – in attitude or action, or in both. When the communication process includes listening to understand, change may be as likely to occur in the attitudes or actions of the initiator as it is to occur in the intended receiver of the message. Both individuals become senders and receivers of messages. That is what communication is all about – taking 100 percent responsibility for being a sender and receiver.

Fortunately, listening is a skill that can be learned. Listening opens the gateway to personal and professional success through the vast dividends it pays. Listening:

- Keeps communication channels open
- Provides opportunities for learning
- Enhances relationships
- Increases productivity by saving time and effort
- Reduces friction, misunderstandings, and conflicts
- Alerts you to opportunities
- Enlists the support and favorable responses of others
- Enables you to reach professional and personal goals you have set
- Develops insight into people's needs and desires so you can communicate better.

Everybody wants to be appreciated, and listening is one of the highest forms of appreciation anyone can show another person. Listening and trying to understand the other person's point of view develops rapport and trust. When people feel appreciated, when they sense an attitude of respect, and when they know that others are trying to understand their situation and how they view it, then they tend to reflect these same attitudes of appreciation and respect. This, in turn, fosters mutual understanding and cooperation, both essential for reaching professional and business goals.

## Levels of Communication

Listening is important to success on at least four different levels of communication:

**Casual Level** – Listening in a casual setting among strangers or acquaintances requires minimum concentration because the subject matter is usually simple. The purpose of the exchange is to indicate mutual willingness

for a friendly and open exchange of ideas and information. Of course, you will listen with enough attention to give reasonable responses. Casual communication keeps the door open for future dealings – if necessary – with the other person.

**Personal and Social Level** – Mutual interests are often the initial factor in establishing new relationships. Communication supports the development of such relationships. Communication in personal, social relationships may involve exchanging ideas and information, but the principal purpose is to enhance enjoyment of the relationship through giving and receiving personal acceptance. Listening on this level requires sensitivity to the feelings of others and genuine interest in people.

**Information and Idea Level** – Listening for ideas may or may not involve important personal relationships. It may take place in a large lecture room or in a small meeting; it may occur casually between people who are engaged in a project together. Listening for information focuses primarily on intellectual processes, but emotional factors as well are often involved.

**Disclosure Level** – The most rewarding experiences of listening and communicating occur when those communicating have the security and freedom to disclose their underlying needs and agendas. Candid disclosure reveals where there is room for give-and-take,



allowing the optimal, win-win results. The listening involved in this communication level involves genuine caring and ethical concern for others. Because of this, disclosure is not easy. It exists only in the presence of mutual confidence and trust. Listening on a disclosure level also requires the exercise of empathy and a secure self-image. Listening on this level is especially important when you disagree with what is being said. In such situations, put aside your disagreement – or your fear of not getting your needs met – and attempt to understand the other person's point of view. This approach is essential for eliminating some of the more difficult, intangible barriers to progress. Listening is the catalyst that makes it possible to achieve the two-pronged goal of communication – creating mutual understanding and motivating yourself and others to constructive action.

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The LMI Process™ ...

- Develops leaders who, in turn, empower their people to use their untapped talents and abilities.
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- Gives direction to an effective solution and delivers measurable results.
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