

LMI Journal



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Organizational Apathy: A Universal Issue for Leaders

Leaders often identify the people problems within their organizations with common “tags,” such as lack of productivity, burnout, indecisiveness, lack of creativity, lack of motivation, etc. Those leaders, however, usually are not aware of the fact that those “tags” are only symptoms. Focusing on symptoms exclusively often leads an organization on a wild goose chase, fixing symptoms but never solving the real problem.

The word “apathy” is an unfriendly and threatening word to most people, and that is probably the reason you never hear leaders use the word to describe problems within their organizations. Instead, you hear the listing of symptoms that may sound more professional, academic, clinical, or forgiving. Effective leaders, however, must focus on the real problem, and not just the symptoms.

David Byrd, president of Leadership Management®, Inc., in his new book, *The Tripping Point in Leadership: Overcoming Organizational Apathy* (Slight Edge® Publishing, Feb. 2008), shares what leaders must do to overcome the natural forces of apathy that affect every organization.

Byrd defines apathy as a natural, human instinct, and as a natural instinct, how it affects the organization through its common denominator... people.

“Apathy is at work at every level of every organization in the world,” Byrd explains. “This book is a common-sense guide to help leaders recognize the declining affects of apathy and how to counterbalance those forces of apathy within the organization.”



David Byrd, President of LMI

“Apathy is at work at every level of every organization in the world...”

The Tripping Point in Leadership also includes Byrd’s personal experiences in leadership, along with real case examples that demonstrate the declining affects of organizational apathy. The book explains how certain, inherent, creative, human powers were strategically included in our human design and that those powers hold the key to counterbalancing the natural forces of apathy. Those creative powers which are available to every leader include:

- ◆ The Power of Choice
- ◆ The Power of Vision
- ◆ The Power of Attraction
- ◆ The Power of Courage

In addition, Byrd’s new book includes a description of the effective leader model and the six characteristics of the effective leader which are based on statistically, validated research.

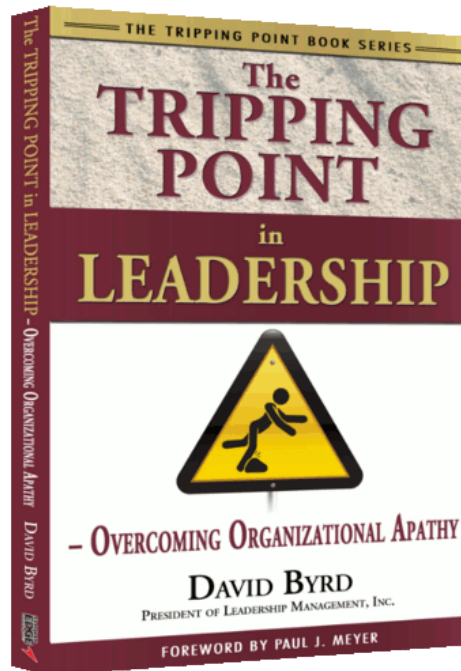
Byrd says, “*The Tripping Point in Lead-*

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ership is a common-sense guide to effective leadership and should serve as a wake up call for aspiring and existing leaders in all walks of life. I have learned from experience that there are only two options for organizations and their leaders, grow or decline. There are no other options for an organization in planning its future. When an organization's leaders choose growth, that growth must come from enhanced overall performance. That enhanced performance can only come from the development of untapped potential. Doing more of the same only delivers similar results. Effective leaders are aware of this vital necessity.”

Every now and then a book comes out that really nails an issue with common sense answers to practical, everyday issues. *The Tripping Point in Leadership* is such a book. The book shows both aspiring and existing

“Effective leaders foster positive and creative work environments, deliver measurable and sustainable results, and maintain the ethical integrity of the workplace.”



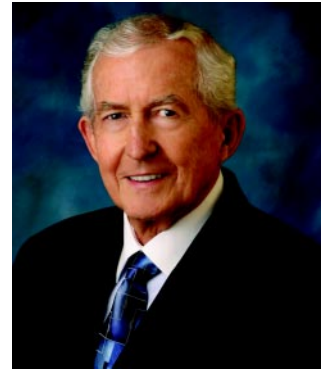
leaders that without an awareness of the natural forces of apathy, people become stuck in ineffective and unproductive comfort zones of their own design, while ineffective leaders focus on the symptoms of their people problems. Obviously, the problems are never “fixed” because the organizations are only working on the symptoms, never the real problem.

The only true measure of leadership quality is “effectiveness.” Effective leaders foster positive and creative work environments, deliver measurable and sustainable results, and maintain the ethical integrity of the workplace.

When asked “What is the most significant message in your new book?” Byrd said, “You may be an aspiring leader, a seasoned veteran leader, or somewhere in-between... it makes no difference. The ideal of the perfect leader is a myth. As a leader you must choose the appropriate, effective actions to continue to grow regardless of your level of tenure or degree of success. There are no in-between positions in life where growth is no longer necessary.”

“This is no cotton candy, pat-you-on-the-fanny approach to leadership. Before you finish the first chapter, it will hit you in the gut!”

– Paul J. Meyer



With over 28 years of experience in working with top leaders and their organizations, Byrd credits his work in the field of leadership development to the influence of Paul J. Meyer, the founder of LMI and a pioneer in the leadership development field.

Mr. Meyer comments about the book, “This is no cotton-candy, pat-you-on-the-fanny approach to leadership. Before you finish the first chapter, it will hit you in the gut!”

Byrd completed both his undergraduate and graduate work at the University of South Carolina in 1969. He currently resides in Waco, Texas with his wife Mary. He has two daughters and five grandchildren.

To purchase the book go to www.thetrippingpointinleadership.com.

“You may be an aspiring leader, a seasoned veteran leader, or somewhere in-between... it makes no difference. The ideal of the perfect leader is a myth. As a leader you must choose the appropriate, effective actions to continue to grow regardless of your level of tenure or degree of success. There are no in-between positions in life where growth is no longer necessary.”

– David Byrd

Act with Courage

Effective managers strive to set an example of courage and self-confidence for their team members. When you set an example of courage to envision the future, to set worthwhile goals, and to take action to achieve them, you inspire your people to adopt the same courageous attitude.

When you believe in yourself and in your ability to succeed, your people are eager to follow. As a result, they grow and develop as well. Just as your productivity increases as your self-image grows, so does theirs. As you become a more effective leader, your team members become more productive—and the vision of the organization moves closer to reality.

Act upon whatever amount of courage you have today. Refuse to quit. Determine that you will go over, around, or through all obstacles. Give yourself the courage to try and try again. Give yourself courage at every level of your life from the smallest responsibility to the greatest challenge.

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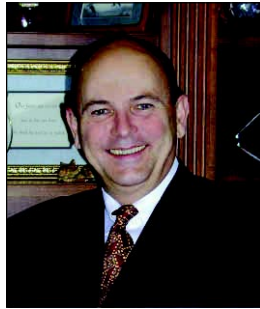
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Knowing What Works



David Byrd
President, LMI

Appointed leaders fill the halls and offices of every organization in the world. However, being delegated the role of leader does not automatically qualify someone as an effective leader. Effective leaders are unique. Their uniqueness is demonstrated by their consistency. They know what works, and they know what does not work. As a result, they consistently deliver measurable results, build positive and creative work environments, and maintain the ethical integrity of the workplace.

In 2002, Leadership Management, Inc. acquired the exclusive license agreement for the products and assessment tools of Teleometrics International. All of these products and assessment tools were developed from the statistically validated research of Jay Hall, Ph.D., at the University of Texas. This research was reported in his classic *Achieving Manager* study. This study is the largest body of research ever compiled in the field of leadership/management development. According to the study, an effective leader:

- Has high belief and expectation in people.
- Attracts employee involvement rather than building buy-in.
- Practices good communication.
- Uses real motivators of human behavior.
- Exercises power by sharing it rather than misusing it.

“More than anything else, effective leaders are aware – aware of what works and what does not.”

Effectiveness is the only true measure of leadership quality. Effectiveness is a constant process of multiplying what works and eliminating what does not. More than anything else, effective leaders are aware – aware of what works and what does not.

The statistical research of Dr. Hall’s work demonstrates that effective leaders represent less than 14% of the leadership ranks. Highly effective leaders are rare. We also find that effective leaders are developed not naturally born. Every appointed leader needs a proven and consistent leadership development process to hone his or her effective leadership skills.

**An excerpt from David Byrd’s book “The Tripping Point in Leadership: Overcoming Organizational Apathy”*

With Positive Expectancy,

David Byrd
President, Leadership Management Institute™

The Problem-Solving Process

Problem solving and decision making are closely related. When a problem arises, the preliminary steps lead up to a decision about which a possible solution will be implemented. Like decision making, problem solving may involve a relatively insignificant item, or it may concern a serious issue with the possibility of a major impact on the entire organization. The larger and more important the problem, the more time and detail go into each step of the problem-solving process. For minor problems, several of the steps may be accomplished mentally in only a few seconds. **But the process always includes all these steps:**

1. Define the problem.

Take time to discover the nature of the real problem when something is obviously wrong. Sometimes the visible element is merely a symptom. Define the problem clearly in terms of one or more organizational or personal goals.

2. List criteria for selecting a solution.

Establish guidelines for evaluating possible solutions and making a decision by referring to specific organizational goals and priorities. This involves determining the rules by which the most workable solution will be selected and the standards the solution must meet. The criteria might include impact on product quality, cost limits, personnel changes, the leader's time allotment, and a target date for choosing a solution to be implemented.

3. Collect information.

Considering time and expense, identify the particular type of information that must be assembled and set a deadline for collecting it. Determine the best approach to use in collecting the useful information. Asking open-end questions and listening carefully are generally good information-gathering techniques. Ask others how they would solve the problem and why they would take that approach. Attempt to see the problem or the tentative solution through the eyes of others. They may see the problem itself and the information about it in a light entirely different from your view.

4. Develop possible solutions.

Examine all of the data collected and record all possible

solutions suggested by the data. List as many possible solutions as you or the group can generate by brainstorming, a process by which several people work as a group to develop a list of ideas. The brainstorming process is most effective when it is completely uninhibited and free from any critical analysis. Continue the brainstorming session as long as new alternatives are being generated; then move on to the next step in the problem-solving process.

5. Analyze possible solutions.

Allow time for ideas to "incubate." Work on other problems and come back to the original one with a new perspective. In one instance, think primarily in terms of profit. Another time, think in terms of team member development or other objectives. Analyze all assumptions to be sure you are not accepting artificial limitations. When you accept traditional assumptions about what can be done, you limit the ability to find creative solutions. Alter assumptions about what can be accom-

plished, and you open your mind to new possibilities for solving specific problems and for meaningful personal development.

Once a list of possible solutions is developed, apply your critical judgment to each suggestion. Many creative, but impractical solutions will fail to fit the values and decision-making criteria you have established. Applying these criteria helps you remain objective. Apply the criteria one at a time, with appropriate weights, to each solution.

6. Make the decision.

When as much information as feasible has been gathered and considered, assume the responsibility for making a decision, or for leading team members to choose the best possible solution.

7. Implement the solution and follow up.

Since the process is problem solving rather than decision making alone, a plan for implementation must be developed to carry the job through to completion. Assign responsibility for each action step. Set up a schedule and follow it to make sure the problem is being solved. Make appropriate adjustments along the way to ensure successful problem solving.



Using the Power of Informal Groups

You are the leader of your group or department because that position is delegated to you by the organization. You might be called a “formal” leader. But often others function as “informal leaders” for smaller groups. When you recognize these informal leaders, you can use their power and influence to enhance the results and productivity of the group.

Although informal leaders are not designated by the organization, they frequently wield extensive power and influence because of their ability to help other team members satisfy needs and reach goals. They are automatically sought out for advice and help when a colleague experiences a problem. They often are outstanding team members with common sense and loyalty to the company. They can contribute a great deal to your success when you delegate to them and help them develop their abilities even further.

Occasionally, however, informal leaders are troublemakers who seek followers to satisfy their own desire for power and glory. They may work against the goals of the organization. Still other informal leaders are competent and possess a great deal of undeveloped potential. Whether they become an asset or a liability to your department depends on your ability to help them find a constructive way to satisfy their needs for personal growth. Otherwise, they may become disgruntled troublemakers, or may move on to another job in an attempt to cure a vague dissatisfaction with the work situation.

In a department or work group of any size, smaller groups begin to form along the lines of common needs and desires. You can often observe these groups during breaks or lunch time. Workers enjoy being together because of similar interests, problems, work, or other factors. You can antagonize informal leaders and their followers and see productivity sabotaged, or you can harness the power of informal groups to increase productivity.

In an atmosphere where people are motivated to produce at their peak, a great deal of friendly competition evolves. Usually 10 to 15 percent of the people produce significantly more than anyone else because of their superior abilities. Respect and look to these outstanding individuals as leaders, for they are prime candidates for accept-

ing delegation. Not only will they perform well whatever tasks you assign, but they also encourage among the other team members an attitude favorable to accepting delegation. Because of the influence of this outstanding person, other team members are also willing to learn new jobs and accept new responsibilities.

In contrast, people who feel mistreated and fearful may distrust high producers. They fear that management expects everyone to produce at that high level. Groups of disgruntled individuals sometimes follow an informal leader

in using various pressures to force the top producer down to a lower standard. Derogatory terms are powerful demotivators when applied to those who exceed group standards. One of the worst punishments of all can be rejection by other team members. In such situations, you need to identify their informal leaders and find a way to neutralize their power. These leaders may be people with high potential



whose basic needs and goals are not being met. As a leader, you are responsible for knowing these people well enough to discover their unsatisfied needs and helping them motivate themselves to become productive.

Directing the energy of these groups into constructive work can turn the force and authority of informal groups into a benefit for the organization. **You can enhance your career success by reinforcing your formal authority with appropriate action to fulfill these leadership functions:**

- ◆ Acceptance by the group
A leader is trusted by the group members to have genuine understanding and empathy for their problems.
- ◆ Risk taking
A leader takes whatever risks might be involved in expressing group grievances to management and seeking solutions for them.
- ◆ Communication
The leader contributes to the security of the group by providing information. The informal leader may provide inaccurate information based on rumors. You are, in contrast, a channel for accurate information and thus give employees the feeling of security they need.

Welcome the emergence of informal group leaders. Win their loyalty and support. Delegate meaningful responsibility to them. Using these powerful strategies expands your influence and encourages maximum motivation among your team members.

Overcoming Obstacles to Leadership

As you grow in personal leadership, the excitement you experience in achieving new goals is so fulfilling that you will never want to give up the rewards of this way of life. The gratification you receive from exercising personal leadership makes it hard to believe that it would be possible to live any other way. But new habits and attitudes require alert monitoring to insure their continuity. Old habits and attitudes still lurk in the recesses of your subconscious and will reassert themselves if you are not vigilant.

Two motivation blocks that stem the natural tide of creativity are so frequently encountered that it is good to have a plan in advance for dealing with them should they occur. **The two blocks are:**

▲ Negative habit patterns

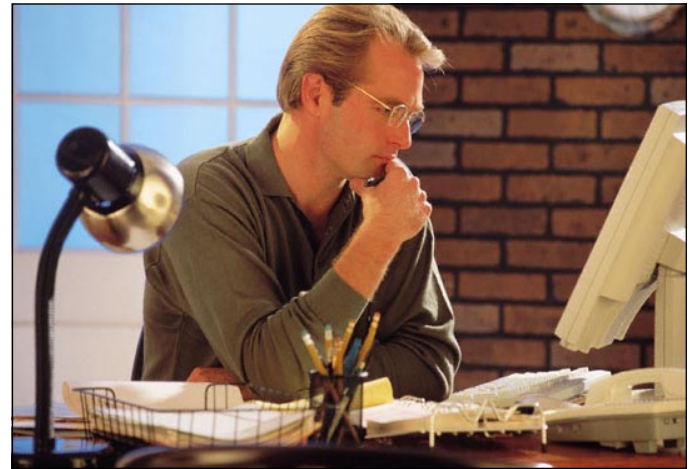
Negative habit patterns arising from negative thinking often cause a motivation block. Some children grow up in an atmosphere where every suggestion or request is met with an automatic negative response. As a result, it becomes natural to concentrate on why things cannot be done instead of how they can be done. The result is procrastination or making excuses.

Remember that there is always the danger of unconsciously slipping back into the habit of thinking negatively and blaming circumstances for lack of progress. Remain constantly aware of how you respond to suggestions, ideas, and new experiences. If you realize that you are responding negatively, let this awareness strike the emotional cords needed for making the desired personality changes instead of acting as a motivation block.

Set up a strong program of affirmation and you will gradually replace negative habit patterns by substitution. As your new attitudes grow stronger, they dominate your pattern of thinking and the old negative responses gradually subside. Success is the inevitable result. Associate primarily with people who think and live positively. Read material that feeds your mind with positive ideas. Listen to personal development and self-improvement CDs. The real key to growth is confidence and belief in your ability to change yourself and your attitudes.

▲ Reliving past failures

The second serious motivation block often encountered is the practice of reliving past failures. Failure is relatively unimportant. History's greatest progress has been



achieved through trial and error by individuals who dared to fail and try again. Failure is tragic only when it is allowed to create a motivation block to future effort – when it becomes so emotionally laden with embarrassment, fear, or doubt that it affects the total personality.

Mistakes are neither blemishes on your record nor indications of weakness. As you develop personal leadership, you learn to view mistakes as an inevitable part of life, an opportunity for growth, and a part of the process of maturing. You can actually enjoy analyzing a mistake to find all of its potential good. It then becomes a victory and an opportunity for growth. Face life realistically and without fear; refuse to deny life, to shrink or hide from it.

These two motivation blocks to personal leadership are most quickly overcome through the practice of goal setting. If you know where you stand and where you are going, you can quickly destroy the effect of either of these motivation blocks because you have already fashioned the necessary tools in your “Plan of Action.”

In conclusion, James Allen, author of the immortal book *As a Man Thinketh...*

“In all human affairs there are efforts and there are results, and the strength of the effort is the measure of the result. Chance is not. Gifts, powers, material, intellectual, and spiritual possessions are the fruits of effort; they are thoughts completed, objects accomplished, visions realized.

The vision that you glorify in your mind, the ideal that you enthrone in your heart – this you will build your life by; this you will become.”

“As you develop personal leadership, you learn to view mistakes as an inevitable part of life, an opportunity for growth, and a part of the process of maturing.”

Saving Time with Efficient Procedures

The strength of efficient procedures lies in the fact that, once established, they become automatic. Well-planned procedures for paper flow, for processing orders, and for other routine matters save time and increase the productivity of everyone. Ongoing evaluation and adjustment of procedures is the responsibility of the entire work group. **Whether in a group or on your own, as you look for ways to save time through efficient procedures, consider these four major steps:**

1. Identify routine activities.

Evaluate any routine activity that occurs with relative frequency and according to an established pattern. For example, most orders from the sales department are routine. The supervisor or manager reviews orders only to approve credit for a new customer or to handle some unusual feature of an order. Examine the various activities performed by your department and determine where a time saving could occur through revising current procedures.

2. Study existing procedures.

Look at the procedures now being followed to accomplish a particular task. Ask pertinent questions like these:

“Who does the work?”

“When is the work done?”

“Where is the work done?”

“Who uses the results produced?”

Learn everything about the purpose, the people, and the procedures involved in the task.

Ask questions about each activity. Is it necessary? Many reports and procedures can be eliminated entirely or combined with other activities. Be willing to question all procedures in the interest of responding rapidly to changing needs.

3. Develop a new method.

Once you understand the need and know exactly who has been doing the work and how, develop an improved method for achieving the task in a time-efficient manner.



Eliminate obsolete tasks. Combine several routine activities that can be done by one person. Place vital information on the computer network for immediate access by the appropriate people who need to make efficient, timely decisions.

Rearrange the order in which work is accomplished. If, for example, the shipping department complains that it does not receive sales orders soon enough to ship on time, consider rearranging or simplifying the order in which sales are processed. Distribute multiple copies of

orders or cut time by directly entering orders on a computer information system so everyone receives order information sooner.

Solicit feedback from those who will use a new procedure. Although you cannot use every suggestion, you can use some of the best. But always be sure to respond in some way to all suggestions. Responding to the suggestions of people gains their commitment and belief in the organization. People give even more to an organization in which they feel their input makes a difference.

4. Apply the new procedure.

After designing the new procedure, put it into operation. Institute adequate training. Be sure all your people know where they fit into the new procedure. Explain their duties and responsibilities, and ask

for their commitment.

While a new procedure or work method is being implemented, watch it closely. Question people about how well it is working and ask for their comments about improvement. Once you are satisfied that the routine is well established, turn supervision over to someone else and free your time for other work and future productivity.

Procedures are merely formally established habits, and habits – both good and bad – develop through repetition and become fixed through reinforcement. Reinforce desirable actions through appropriate praise and recognition, and discourage bad habits through immediate correction. When given constructive feedback, people quickly develop the desired habits for handling routine matters. The result? Efficient procedures.

Bridging the Gap Between Potential and Performance

Since 1966, Leadership Management Institute™ has been bridging the gap between potential and performance by helping organizations and individuals evaluate their strengths and opportunities through implementation of the unique and proven LMI Process™.

The LMI Process™ ...

- Develops leaders who, in turn, empower their people to use their untapped talents and abilities.
- Identifies key areas the organization should focus on in order to reach the next level of success.
- Gives direction to an effective solution and delivers measurable results.
- Practices a 93 percent effective leadership model.

The LMI Process™ is designed around a Strategic Development™ model with four vital components:

- Awareness
- Development
- Planning
- Results Management.

LMI® tools and processes have been making a difference in organizations and individuals for 40 years in more than 60 countries.



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