Leadership When The Heat's On
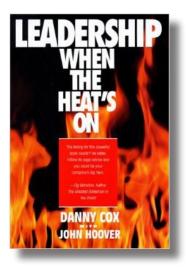## THE SUMMARY
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ABOUT THE
AUTHOR

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Danny Cox, a former supersonic test pilot, shares his high-performance system in convention keynotes, seminars, and sales meetings for organizations throughout America and around the world.

Chapter One: The Leader Feels the Heat

As leaders, it's not unusual to find ourselves breaking a sweat when the temperature is rising all around us. At such times, whatever has caused our internal thermometer to climb is not always clear. There's no shame in wiping perspiration off your brow as long as you haven't occupied that particular hot seat before. However, as I speak at business meetings all over the country, I hear the same confessions again and again about how individuals found themselves in the same predicament more than once.

What happens when the external pressure exerted by customers' expectations comes up against the internal pressures exerted by cost controls, suppliers' deliveries, and other productivity issues? Heat, heat, and more heat. Everyone, from individual entrepreneurs to the heads of multibillion-dollar corporations, feels the innate pressures of the business world, whether the market is up or down, whether the dollar is weak or strong, whether it is sunny or cloudy.

An effective leader will find ways to control the temperature by managing the causes of pressure. There will always be pressure—more on some days than others. If a manager's way of dealing with pressure is pushing back hard against whatever force is pressing in, it will likely turn a heated situation into a four-alarm fire. Too often, that's when my telephone rings.

If you study the principles of effective leadership, it's less likely that you'll ever need to make an emergency call. Instead, you'll find that when problems arise, you will have anticipated them and prepared to address the new demands with appropriate and effective solutions. You'll respond instead of react. Heat is a part of daily life for a leader. When properly attended to, warmth doesn't need to get hot.

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There is no way to lead when the heat's on without wrinkling your clothes a little. Wrinkled clothes and dirt under the fingernails never killed anyone. Just remember, when you roll up your sleeves you go to work on yourself first. Your continuous personal pursuit of excellence will set the agenda for everyone in your organization.

Ask yourself tonight, just before you drift off to sleep, "Who am I inspiring by the way I do my work?" Notice I didn't ask who you are impressing. When you impress someone with the way you do your work, they say, "You do great work." When you inspire them they respond with, "I wish I did my work as well as you do yours." Right now we need inspirations more than ever.

The methods, techniques, and principles of effective leadership must be woven into your fabric before anyone will follow and seek the same excellence. Any improvement you make as a leader will be reflected in your organization. Think of it this way: Somebody, somewhere, is going to get better because you took the time to read this book.

Chapter Two: The Emerging Leader's Process

The quality of leadership is not determined by the urgency or size of the task to be accomplished. Some of the greatest leaders I've ever observed or read about spent most of their time dealing with common details in order to achieve their vision. What made these people great was the uncommon way they dealt with everything in their lives, whether it was an ordinary detail or a major challenge. After studying many great leaders over the years, I've narrowed their most powerful qualities into my top ten characteristics of effective leaders.

Uncompromising Integrity: Although the other nine characteristics are in no particular order, integrity must be number one. Don't be misled by anyone who tells you that your personal integrity can be different from your professional integrity. Unless you're comfortable living a double standard, your professional integrity must match your private integrity.

High Energy: Great leaders do not get involved in petty issues. They know that pettiness is the biggest drain of energy in an organization. These people not only know right from wrong, but they also know the difference between interesting and important.

Good Working Priorities: It's important to dream and to plan, but all the dreaming and planning in the word doesn't accomplish a thing. The doer makes things happen. When the heat's on, I will trade you a thousand people who ponder possibilities for just one person who will make things happen.

Courageous: I'm not recommending that anyone act irresponsibly. There is simply a difference in the way the courageous person and the timid person approach life. The courageous one is willing to walk near the edge and do things slightly off-balance when necessary—not for the sake of living dangerously, but for the sake of getting the job done. The willingness to take risks and accept responsibility for their outcomes is a consistent quality among effective leaders.

A Committed and Dedicated Hard Worker: When the heat is on, and you need to be highly effective and efficient, you want to surround yourself with committed and dedicated hard workers. Dedicated, committed, hard-working leaders eventually develop dedicated and hard working organizations, regardless of whom they start with.

Unorthodox and Creative: Effective leaders are a bit unconventional, with an urge to create. It is also true they are also a bit mischievous. These people bore easily. They're not likely to stick very long with something that's not working. If you need something monitored for a long period of time that's not likely to produce much in the way of results, it's better to give that assignment to someone who is worried about saving his or her energy. The effective, enthusiastic ones won't have the patience to wait for a phone to ring before acting.

Goal Oriented: Great leaders also posses the goal orientation needed to face tough decisions. Tough decisions don't have to be big ones either. How about making a few simple changes in your life, like turning off the tube at night and inviting someone over for dinner who can teach you something? This might seem like an insignificant thing, but it can represent some of the subtle differences between the life of an immensely successful person and someone who can't figure out why they can't get ahead.

Inspired and Contagious Enthusiasm: As a leader, your people look to you for enthusiasm. Not that they need to borrow yours, it's just that it seems inappropriate to have more enthusiasm than the boss. They need permission from you to let loose. Enthusiasm comes from witnessing the accomplishment of your daily goals, which are part of a larger plan, not just your tasks.

Staying Levelheaded: Effective leaders are levelheaded people. They grasp facts in a hurry. They have the ability to organize chaotic situations. They see things as they really are, as opposed to how they wish they were. Effective leaders don't react to problems; they respond to them.

A Desire to Help Others Grow and Succeed: True leaders not only want their people to succeed, but also to grow and develop. When an organization functions in a nurturing environment where pettiness is eliminated and ideas are openly exchanged, the result is synergy.

On a leadership scale of 1 to 10, how do you stack up on each of the characteristics, and what is your total score? Would your employees give you the same score? If not, take a moment to analyze why you think theirs might be lower. Subscribing to the ten qualities of effective leadership will not only make you a better leader when the heat's on, but you'll also become a calming agent for your staff by never picking up a hot horseshoe for the second time.

Chapter Three: The First Step—Team Building When the Heat's On

If your goal is to develop a workforce or sales force that does exactly as they're told to do, you'll soon find out that they only do what they're told. Initiative and creativity will be stifled. In today's competitive world, that is not what you're after.

The greatest leaders go out of their way to recruit premier talent. It's logical. The organization won't get better any faster than the leader does, and one sign of good leadership health is the willingness to applaud the accomplishments of others. If others are never allowed to soar any higher than the manager does, there will always be a lid screwed over the organization's potential and the potential of every individual in the organization.

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People don't care how smart or talented you are. They really don't. What people care most about is your attitude toward them. Only after you have established credibility based on a genuine regard for others will they extend the same regard for you as a leader. Humility and equal regard are the ingredients for quality leadership. A fire extinguisher to battle the flames of jealousy and suspicion should be filled with the genuine ability to build other people up.

Many people talk in terms of management. I prefer to reduce management to its more basic component of *leadership*. Management, of course, must include some amount of leadership. The pattern seems to be that the less effective one is as a leader, the more one immerses oneself in managing. Remember, you aren't truly leading until the people under you award you the rank of leader. Until then, you're merely managing. I formerly subscribed to a very traditional definition of management that went like this: "Management is getting the job done through people."

Not anymore. Times have truly changed. When people aren't led properly, the job suffers. Management was simply not in the mood to accept responsibility for helping team members grow. The new employee we hear so much about needs to trust the people he or she is going to work with as well as the organization itself. Employees are much too valuable to treat like interchangeable parts. When team members soar, so does productivity. The pivotal point between people soaring and people being shot down is the quality of leadership they receive.

If I had an office full of happy, growing people, there's no telling what we could accomplish. With high morale comes low staff turnover; low morale leads to high staff turnover. With low staff turnover comes more bonding and team spirit. It's difficult to feel a part of an organization if the probability of losing your job is high.

All of this ties in with what was discussed earlier about your attitude as a leader being contagious. I believe that nobody in your organization is going to enjoy his or her job more than you enjoy your job as their leader. They will try. You often see renegade bands of merrymakers attempting to liven the place up. But if the experience of truly enjoying the workplace and all of its relationships doesn't emanate from you, the leader, it will eventually rain on everyone's parade.

Whether you're assembling a new team or adapting an existing group to a new leader or a new assignment, consistency in your announced values is critical. In short, I'm suggesting that you look for the same qualities in new people you expect from yourself as their leader. Are you cloning yourself? No. You're simply setting forth what you believe constitutes the highest ideals in business conduct and using those ideals as a standard measure.

If you're not afraid to hire people who might be better than you, and you're big enough to encourage all of them to realize their full potential, you're on your way to building the most effective team possible. If you use a different report card for your staff than you do for yourself, you've created a double standard. The closer people come to realizing their full potential, the lower the pressure on you and the greater the morale among your people.

If you feel that the thrill is long gone out of your leadership position, I guarantee that if you will commit yourself to identifying and developing strengths in your people, you'll experience a resurgence of excitement in your career. It will require you to observe, analyze, and study each team member's habits, actions, and responses to critical situations. It's a quest that will help you continue to discover new strengths in individuals.

Chapter Four: The Second Step—Goal Setting When the Heat's On

Don't let your personal goals and/or your team's goals live in "someday." Before defining specific methods and techniques for effective goal setting, it's important to establish goals that are achievable. Does that mean pick only easy goals? By no means. It simply means that a major goal can be intimidating until it's broken down on an individual-by-individual and day-by-day basis. The entire organization must see the goals the leader helps to establish as attainable, especially when broken down by an individual's daily commitment. Talking about goals without achieving anything reduces a leader's credibility and the organization's enthusiasm.

We need to begin by asking ourselves four questions:

1. What do I really want?

2. What will it cost me in time, money, and energy?

3. Am I willing to pay that price?

4. When should I start paying that price?

Question four is where the rubber meets the road- Answering the others is easy. If the time to start paying the price is someday, then the first three questions have little meaning. Someday never comes, and dues to be paid someday never get paid. Scheduling your start date on someday ensures you'll never get started. The time to start is every time you stand at the crossroads. The way to start is to take the road to tomorrow and not the one to yesterday. Take the road that demands the most of you. The only acceptable answer to question number four is now.

There's an undeniable risk in goal setting. However, the risks are far, far greater if you don't set goals. By not setting goals, you're truly leaving the future of your personal and professional affairs to chance. Going into the office each day to "see what happens" is a greater risk than going in and attempting to carry out a well-thought-out plan, no matter how ambitious.

An achieved goal is the new reality. We are headed into the future at the same rate the second hand sweeps around the clock, whether we like it or not. We can't hold back time. So, given that the future is coming, how are we endeavoring to shape it? What are we doing now that will leave our mark on our future? Here are my three steps to shaping a new reality.

Step One: Visualize Your Goal Vividly. You must clearly see what you are intending toward. Generalizations about your intended goals do you no good. The greater the clarity of your vision, the more focused and efficient your efforts toward it will be. The more diffused your vision, the less efficient your efforts will be. I don't know of anyone who wants to waste effort.

Step Two: Break Your Goals Down into Daily Tasks. When goals loom enormous on the horizon, it's natural to feel intimidated and to become reluctant to even approach them. Be realistic about what a human being can accomplish in a day, and don't expect any more of yourself or others. Realizing goals is far less dramatic that way, but you eventually get there.

Step Three: Act on Your Goals Every Day. I'm not suggesting that you work seven days a week, but don't let a workday go by without even a small step that moves you closer to your goals. If you don't know what to do on a daily basis to achieve your goal, then it's not a goal—it's a fantasy.

The following roadblocks might be impeding your progress without you being fully aware of their presence. An effective leader is vigilant and monitors the organization for signs of frustration and loss of interest among the staff. When roadblocks are detected, there are several remedies available.

Goals are not understood or they seem unattainable. If this is the case, look to your own presentation of the goals to team members. Did you take the time to think through, from their point of view, their possible reaction to these new goals? Did you break the goals down into doable segments for each person? How clear was your communication in the presentation itself?

The effort doesn't appear to have adequate rewards. If the team members feel the prize doesn't match the effort required, the leader must evaluate the equity of the situation and then either correct the imbalance or, if the effort and reward are in balance, frame the goals in such a way that the reward becomes clearer, thus increasing motivational influence.

Procedures for goal achievement are too rigid. Flexibility is one sign of a confident and creative leader. Too many people impose rigid structure on their organizations because they lack basic confidence in their own abilities and the abilities of their team. Focusing on results instead of methods will open the door for your people to contribute more of their own originality. Have the courage to let them run with the project, and apply gentle guidance at most. Good people will develop good methods.

Success is feared. Many people are much more familiar with mediocrity than they are with success, and therefore they lack the drive to pursue goals. Fear of success is natural if you have little experience with it. To contradict the frightening aspects of actually doing what your organization sets out to do, you can broaden the sense of accomplishment to include the whole team, and thereby reduce the uncomfortable spotlight on those who have a problem with attention.

As always, the more you involve your team members in forming the vision, the more passionate they will be in seeing it through. The greater the pride, the greater the passion. In order to know when the goals have been reached, you must set up completion criteria when you launch the project. When team members are involved in setting up milestones, they won't feel as if the benchmarks have been imposed on them. And don't forget to plan a celebration for when the vision is realized. People enjoy the anticipation as they work. My final thought for you on goal setting: If you don't have a goal, make finding one your first goal.

Chapter Five: The Third Step—Time Planning for Higher Productivity

I've heard it said that it's impossible to lead a successful life. The best we can do is lead one successful day after another. I personally think even that is too much to chew. In fact, people fail or succeed in 15-minute segments. That's right. We can all benefit from drastically reframing our sense of time. This is all a means of drawing perspective on the question we should all be aware of throughout the day: "What was the value to me and my family of my last 15 minutes?"

I believe the difference between a winner and the also-ran can be as little as two well-planned hours per day. I recommend you take at least 10 minutes at the end of the day to plan tomorrow's activities. Those who already engage in this practice know how gratifying it feels to wake up in the morning with a head start on the day.

Strive to make the first hour of your workday the most satisfying by remembering to swallow the biggest frog first. Another way to think of it would be to have a frog for breakfast every day. Hopefully, there won't be any left by dinnertime. Do the three things you least want to do first. If you leave unpleasant tasks for later, they tend to negatively flavor or just plain stink up everything you're involved in that day. Avoid the avoidance game.

If a problem interrupts your best efforts, don't simply bear down on it harder. Sometimes it requires getting away from it, not closer to it, in order to solve it. Back off and look at the situation from a variety of angles. Bend over and look at it backward and upside down between your legs. After gaining a broader perspective, break the problem down into its component parts and grade them in order of priority. Then move in and begin to work on the most important aspect of the problem.

Almost every successful person I know has a keen sense of profitability. In a practical sense, they're placing a value on their 15-minute intervals the way we discussed earlier. This doesn't mean we should become obsessed with profitability. It means we need to be driven, in part, by an awareness of how our efforts are turned into dollars and cents.

The great playwright Somerset Maugham advised us to "Live life, don't portray it!" To me, that means aspiring to the highest and best use of our time. The difference between the self-made president and the self-made pauper can probably be found in how each person uses his or her equally allocated time.

Chapter Six: The Fourth Step—Keeping Morale High When the Heat's On

A leader must plant his or her feet and commit to raising and maintaining the morale of the organization. A commitment to improving morale is a commitment to your people. The morale of your staff members is directly proportional to the quality of their experience of being a part of your team. In fact, the level of morale is a good barometer of how each of your people is reacting to your leadership. Keep in mind that you'll have no one working for you with a higher level of morale than yours. Show me the morale of the team, and I'll show you the morale of the leader.

Exactly which specific elements contribute to a high morale in your organization depend on your individual situation and the particular challenges facing the organization. No two organizations have exactly the same equation for high morale. However, there are some fundamental principles that apply to human nature, regardless of what your particular business is. These ten elements of a high morale environment are like primary colors and can be mixed and blended in a variety of shades.

Keeping jobs interesting: Some jobs are interesting all by themselves, while others are only important when considered within the larger picture of an organization's activities. An effective leader will be sensitive to the fact that some tasks are mundane and sometimes just boring. Why does the leader care? Because the morale of the workforce is at stake, and even the most boring jobs are vital to the overall success of the organization.

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Welcoming new ideas: The way some people are treated when they come to their managers with new ideas would make you think they're asking to burn the factory down. Don't simply keep your door open to new ideas, actively encourage and solicit them. Without new ideas, companies die.

Fostering a sense of accomplishment: The need to feel a sense of contribution never goes away. If people throughout the organization feel they're accomplishing something, and each individual has a role to play, your team's morale will be high.

Recognizing effort: The topic of affirmation is close kin to recognizing strengths and providing positive feedback in recruiting and retention. It's difficult to maintain an individual sense of accomplishment without some sort of recognition, especially over the long term.

Treating people fairly: People can handle all types of regulations and controls as long as they prove to be necessary and, more importantly, are applied justly across the board. Favoritism in any area will generate resentment and damage morale.

Assigning responsibility: Just as a feeling of accomplishment and recognition motivates an individual, he or she will respond with enthusiasm to the assignment of responsibility. It's important to specify that the responsibility needs to be assigned on the basis of the individual's ability and competence. Loading somebody down with responsibility that is too heavy or out of proportion with the rest of the team will not build morale.

Offering fair and appropriate compensation: Compensation is a litmus test of how honestly management backs up its expressions of recognition and fair treatment. Compensation, benefits, and incentive plans will either accurately reflect the relationship management has established with the individual team members or expose it all as false and misleading.

Supporting personal growth: An investment in the personal growth of your people is an investment in the morale and productivity of your organization—and ultimately your success as a leader.

Promoting a sense of belonging: People have a strong, innate sense of community. As individuals and as members of an organization dedicated to accomplishing something worthwhile, we want a sense of community. The sense of belonging not only improves morale, but also synergy.

Providing opportunity: Opportunity simply means an ongoing sense of being alive with hope for the future. When people sense they have nowhere to go and nothing more to accomplish, they begin to atrophy.

A combination of these and other elements will produce high morale. It would be a mistake to weigh each component of morale building equally or expect them to have the same meaning to individuals. However, the more of these elements you have and the larger the dosages, the higher the morale and the productivity will be.

Chapter Seven: The Fifth Step—Creativity When the Heat's On

When the heat is on, creativity is a necessity, not a luxury. If what you've been doing has not kept you ahead of the competition, you're probably in the hot seat. Treating creativity as an option is probably what helped create the pressure you're under.

Whether you're able to induce creativity, or it simply happens when the time is right, the following four-step process will help you gain the most from your creative experience.

Preparation: If your intention is to create a new product or method for doing something, it's important to learn everything you can about that subject. In other words, do your research. Too many people think the birth of a new idea is enough. To make the new idea more meaningful, you must prepare.

Incubation: The incubation period is a time when ideas take root or wither. Whether the idea takes root or withers is beyond our control. That's why, when an idea is incubating, we're not able to actively or consciously manipulate it. We will sometimes turn the idea around in our sleep. When the correct picture appears, we are awakened instantly.

Insight: Insight is the moment you receive a new idea. That moment when you bolt upright in bed is a moment of insight. We sometimes refer to insight as an innate quality some people possess. But what we're really saying is that person has discernment. Insight is that glimpse of the suddenly clear and illuminated answer.

Verification: Creativity flourishes in a mythical, mysterious environment with no boundaries. The process of verification brings it all back to reality and begins to establish boundaries. It's difficult to exist in both worlds at the same time. Fantasy and reality don't mix well. Nevertheless, any idea born in the realm of creativity must be brought into the world of reality before it can be of any use to anyone. Therefore, verification, although not very entertaining, is a necessary evil if we intend to benefit from creativity.

There are three steps to verifying a new idea:

1. Suitability: Will it solve the problem or simply be a stopgap?

2. Feasibility: Is it affordable and practical?

3. Acceptability: Who will support it?

Knowing what is blocking the creative process is helpful to any leader committed to being as creative as possible and to developing and encouraging creative growth in every team member. If an individual or group of individuals seems to resist creativity or simply won't engage in creative activities, chances are that one or more of these blocks to creativity is operating.

"We've always done it this way." Habits are hard to break, assuming we even want to break them. Habits mean hanging on to the status quo. The result is to continually repeat yesterday, which we've already determined is the opposite of growth and creativity.

"Why can't we leave well enough alone?" Fear of what might happen keeps some people immobilized far more than fear of something known. Talk of pushing the envelope can send these people into cardiac arrest.

"That won't work here." Fear and ignorance frequently team up to form prejudice.

"Don't rock the boat." If our fear is strong enough to immobilize us, we'll hesitate to make any move or shift our weight in such a way that might rock the boat. Heaven forbid if we should tip too far and get wet.

Creativity is a stimulant to growth, increased production, and enthusiasm. Organizations need new ideas to grow. Organizations without growth begin to die. There couldn't be a better time than right now to tap the vast reservoir of potential in you and your team.

Chapter Eight: The Sixth Step—Problem Solving When the Heat's On

Managers can be the number one source of problems in an organization. The problem-solving leader must remember that when the heat's on, for whatever reason, it's usually a result of unresolved or unanticipated problems. Make sure the people in your organization can come to you with problems before they get out of control. When they do come, listen!

The very existence of a problem, or, worse yet, a crisis, indicates that existing methods and techniques are somehow lacking, and that there is a need for new methods and techniques. Depending upon the severity of the problem, minor adjustments might be enough to provide lasting solutions. If the crisis is sufficiently threatening, an entirely new agenda might be in order. Crisis calls for something that doesn't presently exist or, at the very least, calls for a different dosage of the existing policy.

It's important not to get overwhelmed by the difficulties we face. We must become larger than the situations in which we're involved. We need to be constantly open to change. Flexibility is the other side of rigid indecision, and indecision never solved anything. We can't change the past; we can only change the future, which begins now. We shouldn't feel remorse about our problems; we must feel resolve. It is our duty to keep ourselves in condition to accomplish the biggest things possible in the moment.

To prepare mentally for problem solving, you must first commit yourself fully to solving the problem. This means making a strong commitment to yourself and your organization that the problem you're presently facing will not come back for lack of a sound solution. Second, clear your desktop of all distractions. This is difficult. The top of your desk looks like the inside of your mind. It's important to rid yourself of anything other than what's required to solve the problem at hand.

Lastly, work logically, step by step, from start to finish or from finish to start. Whether you work deductively or inductively, working systematically helps you avoid retracing your own steps. It helps establish goals that act as markers so you can pause in your process and pick up next time from a familiar, clearly defined point without losing ground. When goals are reached, appropriate rewards help to mark progress emotionally and launch the next stage of the process. Even if a goal represents a half-day or full-day effort, a week-long effort or a full month's work, the reward is an important part of a problem solving mindset.

Serious problems can often be recognized and action taken, but the root cause, perhaps several layers down, is not eradicated. Working on a symptom guarantees there will be a recurrence of the problem. The effective leader starts on the surface, but goes deeper, using the "Five Whys." That process is one of continually asking "Why?" of whatever answer we have just arrived.

When you ask "Why?" and sincerely pay attention to the answers, you'll find out valuable information about your competitors, the marketplace, and, most importantly, the barriers to productivity and growth within your own organization. The Five Whys process will give you valuable, useful information to fuel your strategic thinking.

The answer to the first "Why?" is never enough information. The answer to the second "Why?" is better, but still evasive and superficial. The answer to the third "Why?" puts forth the demand for truth and honest disclosure. The answer to the fourth "Why?" includes accurate and relevant information—even if some of it is unpleasant. The answer to the fifth "Why?" is the beginning of change; changes that need to be made in order to make your organization the most desirable place to work in the industry.

Turmoil often gives us not only strength, but new direction as well. Problems are not to be feared or avoided, but rather should be sought out and confronted with all the creativity we can muster. Problems and opportunities will always be with us. Take care of the problems before they take care of you. If you're planning to build your dreams of tomorrow, you must be honest with the reality of today.

Chapter Nine: The Seventh Step—Leading Change When the Heat's On (Not Just Managing It)

Change leaders are needed at every level of an organization, not just change managers. Too often we think of change management as giving into change slowly and watering it down as it goes. This is not to say that this means jumping in with both feet. It means that the change leader takes chances but leaves nothing to chance.

If something has been done in a certain way for two years, there's an 80 percent chance there is a better way of doing it. I'm not saying something should automatically or arbitrarily be changed, but expanding knowledge and resources will almost always create new and better opportunities. One way to test this is to look at an existing method or procedure that's been in place for two or more years and ask yourself how it would be done, given the current resources, if today it had to be implemented differently.

You might find out the existing methods and procedures do not need to be continued at all. A necessary effort one day might soon become a nonproductive tradition or habit. What makes the difference? Chance makes the difference. Knowledge seems to expand at a faster rate than understanding. Efforts to solve a particular problem often produce greater amounts of valuable information than is required to resolve the original problem. As long as there are problems, people will seek solutions. As long as people seek solutions, knowledge will expand. The good news for those who desire progress is that there will always be problems to solve!

Change can be frightening. Change means something new and different is going to happen. Laying the proper groundwork upon which new ideas can be sustained is tremendously important. There are two basic steps to laying the necessary foundation.

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No Surprises. The people in your organization need to feel they will receive sufficient notice before any significant change is made. In other words, your organization should discuss and think through new ideas before implementing them. People don't develop a sense of confidence when they get blindsided with something they weren't expecting. Even if the new idea is a good one, springing it on unsuspecting people will produce uncertainty, an atmosphere in which they tend to proceed cautiously and tentatively. What you want is a group of spontaneous people who have acquired a strong sense of confidence in your leadership through past changes.

Think It Through Thoroughly: The second step is much like the first. Time and energy must be focused in advance on the real challenges of a new idea or project. This will help create the atmosphere in which the new idea can grow and develop. People who always expect the worst will distance themselves from new ideas. People who haven't been prepared for the real ups and downs of implementing a new idea will do the same if they keep getting sold on the great possibilities of a new idea without the real nuts and bolts. I've heard it said we should plan for the best but prepare for the worst.

A leader in a world of constant change must be adaptable. If such flexibility doesn't come naturally, it can be learned. The future has no healthy place for those who insist on remaining rigid and inflexible. Note that adapting does not mean forcing change. Rather, it implies vigilance and open, informed acceptance of new and possible unfamiliar people and ideas. Adaptability is not an option in becoming and remaining an effective leader and remaining competitive or attaining competitiveness in the global marketplace. Change guarantees we will never lack the opportunity to be competitive.

Chapter Ten: Meeting Tomorrow's Leadership Challenges Today

No one is as interested in your career as you are. No one is more interested in your future than you are. Take the responsibility of becoming an island of excellence in your present company no matter what anyone else is doing. This will pay off for you in three ways:

1. You will become more valuable, perhaps even indispensable, to your present company. A sustained high-performance record of accomplishment can buy a bright future for you and your family.

2. The better you get at producing results, the more valuable you become to the competition. You're number one. You need to look after yourself and your family. If your employer won't compensate you for what you're worth, a proven record of accomplishment through sound leadership is valuable on the job market.

3. Finally, there might come a time when you want to strike out on your own. Every time you learn and improve as a leader, you become more skilled as an entrepreneur. And the more skilled you are as an entrepreneur, the better your choices of succeeding on your own.

Never be less than your dreams. Someday you may look back and ask, "Did I really build my dream, or is it too late?" Let me assure you that it's never too late. In business, we realize our dreams by building up internal and external customers. An organization is alive and vital when the leader helps people grow and climb over their walls.

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The ultimate reward is not the promotions, perks, and larger paychecks. As nice as those things are, the ultimate reward is the ability to go home at the end of the day and say to yourself, "I saw someone grow again today and I helped." That's what being a leader is all about. Seeing people grow is the only experience in business that brings your heart up into your throat. When your team members see their own growth along with your matching growth as a leader, their memory of you and the difference you made in their lives will be vivid and inspiring for years to come.

So, what do you need to get started on in the next 72 hours? Decide. Begin. Don't stop.

The Pastor's Perspective

Danny Cox covers a lot of ground in *Leadership When the Heat's On*. I found that a lot of his paragraphs could easily have been expanded into full chapters. I suspect there is something for just about everyone here. There were three particular insights of which I made note that I thought were worth particular attention.

First was this: *"Many people are much more familiar with mediocrity than they are with success, and therefore lack the drive to pursue goals. Fear of success is natural if you have little experience with it."* I've become increasingly aware of how common it is for people to fear success. Mediocrity is comfortable and safe—to pursue success forces us to stretch and grow, something many of us don't like to do. We have often never been challenged to do it, and our fear of failure can kick in at a whole new level.

I've also seen that some are afraid of success because of the increased expectations that follow. Once you are successful at a particular task, people expect that excellence, which creates a new level of pressure. Some people will sabotage themselves so as not to succeed—and then fail at a higher level. As leaders, we need to be able to walk people through those fears and help them step into a higher level of success.

The second thing that struck me was: *"To mentally prepare for problem solving, you must first commit yourself fully to solving the problem. This means making a strong commitment to yourself and your organization that the problem you're presently facing will not come back for lack of a sound solution."* Reading that made me wonder how often it happens that we really commit to fully solving a problem. Often we settle for putting band-aids on the problem—making it look better, or not be as bad, but not really solving it at a fundamental level. Of course, when we do that, the problem always comes back because it was never really dealt with in the first place. Being an effective leader means really addressing problems until they are resolved. That means we will likely keep pressing long after those around us are ready to move on, and they can even get annoyed with us for not letting it go.

The third thing was a good reminder: *"The people in your organization need to feel they will receive sufficient notice before any significant change is made. In other words, your organization should discuss and think through new ideas before implementing them. People don't develop a sense of confidence when they get blindsided with something they weren't expecting. Even if the new idea is a good one, springing it on unsuspecting people will produce uncertainty, an atmosphere in which they tend to proceed cautiously and tentatively."*

As leaders, we have often spent many hours thinking about an issue or planning a new initiative. By the time we start talking about it, or are ready to move on it, it's old news, but it isn't old news for the people around us. We need to be careful to walk them through the idea and the implementation so they don't feel blindsided. If they do, we will never have their full commitment or their best efforts at making it happen. Their confidence will be undercut, and they will act tentatively. On the other hand, people who know what is happening, and why, will give their best efforts and greatly increase the odds of success.

So what were your take-aways? And what have you learned about leading when the heat is on? Click here to post your comments and join the conversation.