



# Leadership Is Hard And It Is Supposed To Be

## Almost All Greatness Was Born From Adversity

by

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**W**hen the economic crisis became obvious, even to those not paying close attention, did business leadership act? Did they appropriately adjust business plans to accommodate various scenarios going forward, and without effecting core strategy? Not everyone wants to or is capable of leading, but talent really performs for a leader who can...

- ✓ Exhibit Calm: Truly powerful people have an air of calm about them. This helps those around them act more rationally and be more successful pushing the organization through hard times. Talent prefers working with a leader who is in control of their emotions. Exhibit calmness at all times, it will become your nature.
- ✓ Take Time: Too many mistakes are made by those who think that decisions need to be made quickly. This can be difficult for an untested leader to accept. The ability to make a decision is invaluable, but

don't get stamped into a bad one.

- ✓ Attract A Great Team: Surround yourself with members who know more than you. Acknowledge and give the team full credit for their ideas, pay them well, and you will encourage allegiance. Most all managers will admit to this being true, but for a lot of reasons they don't follow through, surrounding themselves with the best available talent. And, today would be a great time to reassess skills and contributions of those currently on board. Ask yourself this question; "Is he / she the future?"

Recently, I have heard the term Strategic Planning, used mostly by those who don't truly know what it is or how to produce such. Good Chess players know the difference; Strategy is the 'what' or the end game of the future, and Planning and Tactics the 'how' or design of today forward, which will obtain the strategy.

Too often leadership takes an accounting tactic (how) in response to an economic downturn, i.e. cut costs. They use an axe instead of a surgical knife to selectively reduce line item expenditures. This places huge obstacles in the way of existing business strategy (what), and allows for only one type of strategy, 'survival'. You cannot 'cut' your way to successful achievement.

There should be a preference to developing and implementing tactics to 'market and sell' your way out of a slump by using more relational marketing and sales tactics, and not placing the businesses focus on 'survival'. You can't take the marketing and sales talent of the company, whose very expertise is increasing market share and growth and then make them become some sort of calamity specialist?

All leaders should be focused on creating a well worked out written 'design /plan' resulting in the development and implementation of tactics to 'market and sell' your way out of hard times. You can't take the marketing and sales talent of an organization, whose very expertise is increasing market share and growth and then make them become some sort of calamity specialist?

"Opportunity has spread its wares before you. Step up to

the front, select what you want, create your plan, put the plan into action, and follow through with persistence. Those who pick themselves up after defeat and keep on trying, arrive." - Napoleon Hill

Why a documented plan? A plan that is not properly in black and white, is not a plan, it is a wish. I have heard it said, 'I the owner or the management team know what to do, know what the company goals are, can't we just explain that to the staff and have them deliver?

In a word, No!

You'll roll your eyes as I state an obvious anecdote, but what are the chances of your successfully driving to and arriving at Diamond Springs, California from Chicago without a map? Even if you happen to know where Diamond Springs is, without a map you will more than likely make many wrong turns, take the wrong roads or even be going the wrong way.

So, back to the why question.

First, a proper business plan or tactical adjustments to an existing plan, has as its inherent value the process itself. The planning process is the teacher to management and also to key staff.

I was in that place where my skills were tested; when inflation ran up to 20+% and the prime

lending rate was 18+%, which may repeat itself. Sure I had to make a few surgical cost cutting decisions, but the real focus was on new approaches to the marketing and selling of products and services.

If it were my client or my company in today's environment, the proven tactical orientations I would employ are...

1. Forget the future; plan around what you can predict.
2. Stop Listening and start looking.
3. Mistrust research; it rarely reveals what your customers really like or want.
4. Mistrust confidence; if you feel certain or someone else does, question it.
5. Avoid perfection; good beats perfect.
6. Beware of common sense; breakthroughs require real imagination.

Implementing these leadership traits and tactics for achievement you will become a better leader. If using them doesn't feel 'authentic' don't let that concern you. That feeling is probably because they may not be a usual part of your repertoire. Deal with it by taking this recommended tip from **Lance Armstrong** who uses coaches constantly; Listen to the coach, apply his counsel, prepare and practice often.