



Executive Reader

Ideas Into Action Guidebooks

April 2007 Edition



Guidebook Summaries from the CCL Press

Executive Reader

Ideas Into Action Guidebooks

Geared toward the practicing manager, this series contains proven, practical actions for carrying out a specific developmental task or solving a specific leadership problem.

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Active Listening: Improve Your Ability to Listen and Lead

Michael H. Hoppe

(Stock No. 430)

Listening well is an essential component of good leadership. You can become a more effective listener and leader by learning the skills of active listening. Working relationships become more solid, based on trust, respect, and honesty. Active listening is not an optional component of leadership; it is not a nicety to be used to make others feel good. It is, in fact, a critical component of the tasks facing today's leaders.

Executive Summary

Active listening is a person's willingness and ability to hear and understand. You can become a more effective listener and leader by learning the skills of active listening: paying attention, holding judgment, reflecting, clarifying, summarizing, and sharing.

By paying attention to your behavior and that of the other person, you create the setting for productive dialogue. Pay attention to your frame of mind and your body language, as well as the other person's nonverbal and verbal behavior.

Holding judgment makes it possible for you to be open to new ideas, new perspectives, and new possibilities—to understand how the other person sees the world. Practice empathy, indicate your open mind, acknowledge difference, and be patient.

Reflecting the other person's information, perspective, and feelings is a way to indicate that you hear and understand. Use paraphrasing to confirm your understanding. Don't assume that you understand correctly or that the other person knows you've heard.

Clarifying is double-checking on any issue that is ambiguous or unclear. Use open-ended, clarifying, and probing questions to do so.

Summarizing helps people see their key themes, and it confirms and solidifies your grasp of their points of view. It may lead to additional questions as a transition to problem solving. It also helps both parties to be clear on mutual responsibilities and follow-up.

As you gain a clearer understanding of the other person's perspective, it's time for sharing—introducing your ideas, feelings, and suggestions, and addressing any concerns.

Active listening can make a huge difference in our interactions with others. Working relationships become more solid, based on trust, respect, and honesty. Active listening is not an optional component of leadership; it is not a nicety to be used to make others feel good. It is, in fact, a critical component of the tasks facing today's leaders.

Adaptability: Responding Effectively to Change

Allan Calarco and Joan Gurvis

(Stock No. 428)

In today's business world, the complexity and pace of change can be daunting. Adaptability is a necessary skill for leaders to develop in order to respond effectively to this change. This guidebook contributes to a greater understanding of adaptability and the cognitive, emotional, and dispositional flexibility it requires. Leaders will learn how to develop their own adaptability and to foster it in others, thereby becoming more effective for themselves, the people they lead, and their organizations.

Executive Summary

Given the current complexities of work, the sheer volume of information flowing in, and the rapid changes taking place, leaders must be adaptive. Adaptability is no longer a nicety or a coping mechanism. Adaptability is a leadership imperative.

Change can be unsettling, unnerving, and intimidating. Even anticipated or welcomed change can cause fear, stress, resentment, and resistance. For leaders, these reactions to change are often viewed as a roadblock that must be overcome. But rather than denying emotions and negative reactions, or being tough and bulldozing through change, effective leaders allow the transition process to take place. Reactions to change often follow a series of stages: denial; resistance; exploration, questioning, and reflection; and finally, commitment. Through this process, people can develop greater adaptability in the face of change.

Adaptability consists of three kinds of flexibility: cognitive, emotional, and dispositional. Cognitive flexibility is the ability to use different thinking strategies and mental frameworks. Leaders with cognitive flexibility scan the environment to identify changes as they occur, develop a collective understanding of situations, and create multiple strategies to prepare for whatever may develop. Emotional flexibility is the ability to vary your approach to dealing with your own emotions and those of others. Leaders with emotional flexibility understand and manage their own emotions, connect with and address the emotions of others, engage emotionally to help others get on board, and maintain a balance between emotion and action. Dispositional flexibility is the ability to remain optimistic and at the same time realistic. Leaders with dispositional flexibility are genuinely and realistically optimistic about change, and they communicate that optimism to others. They balance expressions of uncertainty with a positive attitude, support others through the process of change, and know their own tendencies related to change.

Developing adaptability takes practice. You can practice cognitive, emotional, and dispositional flexibility and improve your overall adaptability. This will make you more effective for yourself, your people, and your organization.

Becoming a More Versatile Learner

Maxine A. Dalton

(Stock No. 402)

When it comes to developing your leadership skills, some of the best leadership lessons come from your work experience. But how do you make the most of those opportunities? By tapping into a variety of learning tactics and not depending on what's most comfortable and familiar to you.

Executive Summary

Lessons learned from job experiences are an essential element to a manager's leadership development. But if you rely too much on a preferred learning tactic you might not be able to learn from your work experiences.

There are four sets of learning tactics that you can use: feeling, action, thinking, and accessing others. Individuals who use feeling tactics are able to manage the anxiety and uncertainty that is associated with undertaking new challenges. They aren't afraid to question their motives when avoiding a challenge. However, such individuals can be so concerned about how others see them that they can become frozen in indecision.

Individuals who use action tactics learn by doing. They confront a challenge head on, dig in with both hands, and figure out as they go along. But their reliance on action and quick decision making means they can act without all the necessary information.

Individuals who learn by means of thinking tactics work things out by themselves. They recall the past for similar or contrasting situations. They can skillfully analyze situations, but can be prone to gathering too much information and not putting it to use. Others may see such managers as rude and standoffish.

Managers who learn by accessing others seek advice, examples, support, or instruction from people who have met a challenge similar to the one they face, or they learn how to do something by watching someone else do it. However, relying too much on others can make these managers reluctant to act. They may not trust their own judgment and be viewed by others as incompetent and unable to cope.

You can develop your leadership skills if you employ a variety of learning tactics. You learn the most when you have a strategy that coordinates what you want to learn with the challenges that are likely to teach those lessons, and with the tactics that enable learning.

Building Resiliency: How to Thrive in Times of Change

Mary Lynn Pulley and Michael Wakefield

(Stock No. 413)

It may be human nature to resist change—particularly when it's delivered as a hardship, disappointment, or rejection. But by developing resiliency managers can not only survive change, but learn, grow, and thrive in it. In fact, for leaders, developing resiliency is critical. Resiliency helps managers deal with the pressures and uncertainties of being in charge in organizations today.

Executive Summary

Resiliency allows you to recover quickly from change, hardship, or misfortune. Resilient people demonstrate flexibility, durability, an attitude of optimism, and openness to learning. A lack of resilience is signaled by burnout, fatigue, malaise, depression, defensiveness, and cynicism. Resiliency not only gives you the tools to handle hardship and disappointment, but it allows you to develop new skills and perspectives that lead to continued success at work and away from the job.

People often view resilient people as characteristically unflappable, strong, or unaffected. But being resilient isn't the same as being tough, even though dogged determination—especially the determination to learn from mistakes and successes—plays a key role. A resilient person gets that way by broadening his or her perspective, by being open to change, and by being willing to learn.

Resiliency is important because change is so pervasive. Today's organization typically encounters all kinds of change that can affect your leadership skills, your managerial performance, even your career. It can change its mission, its global focus, or its strategy. Changes can occur to the environment in which an organization works or to the marketplace it serves. You can survive and even flourish during such times of constant and complex change by building skills in resiliency.

Resiliency can be developed. It's possible to change your views, habits, and responses by modifying your thoughts and actions in nine areas: acceptance of change, continuous learning, self-empowerment, sense of purpose, personal identity, personal and professional networks, reflection, skill shifting, and your relationship to money. By becoming resilient you can absorb and learn from personal and career changes, making them key components of your leadership development.

Building Your Team's Morale, Pride, and Spirit

Gene Klann

(Stock No. 426)

To build morale, pride, and spirit, a leader needs certain characteristics and skills. This book will help you determine your current level of readiness. It describes two key factors: time spent together in shared experiences and communication among team members. The results of building morale, pride, and spirit include cooperation and loyalty from team members, enhanced productivity and efficiency, and tangible economic and relational outcomes. The leader is the key to the success of the process.

Executive Summary

When morale, pride, and spirit are present within a team, productivity is high, relationships are strong, and it is actually fun to go to work. Without morale, pride, and spirit, the situation is very different. There will be dissatisfaction, lethargy, negativism, friction, and a lack of cooperation.

People have a variety of needs: physiological, safety, and social. The social needs generally have two components: the desire to be validated by others and the desire to be part of something that is greater than oneself. Building morale, pride, and spirit helps to meet these social needs.

Two components must be present to build morale, pride, and spirit. The first is an easily understood and routinely emphasized vision, mission, and goals. The second is a uniform and clear set of operating rules, standards of performance, values, norms, boundaries, and conventions of behavior. These should be written, constantly reinforced by leadership, clearly understood by every member, and consistent with each other.

A leader trying to create an environment where morale, pride, and spirit can thrive should possess certain characteristics and skills. You can assess your current level of readiness and determine areas that you need to develop further.

There are two key factors in the building of morale, pride, and spirit: the time spent together in shared experiences and the communication among team members. It is the quality and quantity of both time and communication that bring success. Shared experiences cause team members to change from focusing on themselves to identifying with the team. Communication is a key link that bonds a team. It is fundamental to positive and lasting relationships.

Building morale, pride, and spirit is a challenging process. The leader is the key to its success.

Choosing An Executive Coach

Karen Kirkland Miller and Wayne Hart

(Stock No. 410)

As managers move higher in an organization, it can be more difficult for them to get accurate and unbiased input about their performance and leadership skills. Many recognize that to focus their personal development plans they need the uninterrupted time and attention of a skilled, objective professional—an executive coach. This guidebook is for managers who are considering executive coaching as a tool in their personal leadership development. It describes what executive coaching is and can help them decide whether coaching is appropriate. Readers will also learn how to locate and select a qualified coach with the professional and personal credentials and characteristics that can help them achieve their goals.

Executive Summary

Executive coaching has become an increasingly popular option for managers and executives who need individualized, unbiased input to help them make the most of their developmental experiences. In its simplest terms, executive coaching is a formal engagement that matches a qualified coach with an organizational leader in a series of dynamic, confidential sessions designed to establish and achieve clear goals. A good coaching relationship improves business effectiveness for both the individual leader and the organization.

Coaching works best when it's part of a development plan. Managers and executives looking to capitalize on their developmental experiences should carefully consider whether coaching is the best solution for their particular leadership challenge and situation. Although most executives can think of areas in which they could benefit from expert help or advice, executive coaches can't provide all the answers.

Coaching engagements usually begin with one or more lengthy face-to-face meetings in which the coach and the client build the rapport necessary for honest communication and establish realistic guidelines and expectations. Preliminary screening helps to narrow the coaching search. Be wary of prospective coaches who give vague answers to questions or concentrate more on a sales pitch than on initial communication. Executives in the market for a coach should also keep in mind that eighteen months is really the longest span of time that a coaching engagement is likely to last—if the prospective coach says it will take longer, then it's fair to ask how effective a coach he or she really is.

For coaching to deliver its promised results, executives need to find the right coach. Finding the right coach can be a challenge because executive coaching is an unlicensed profession. Executives should look for a coach with whom they are comfortable, whom they trust, who has business and organizational knowledge, and who brings to the working relationship excellent interpersonal skills.

Managers who have identified skill areas they want to improve can often benefit dramatically from coaching. Coaches can and should be selected to mesh effectively with the manager's personality and preferred learning style. In addition, a leader seeking a coaching engagement should be open to change, ready for growth, and willing to invest energy and time in learning to be a more effective leader.

Communicating Across Cultures

Don W. Prince and Michael H. Hoppe

(Stock No. 406)

The wrong word, the wrong gesture, the wrong impression—cross-cultural blunders can have serious business consequences such as lost customers, lost relationships, and lost opportunities. Managers can gain skill in communicating across cultures by reviewing their own cultural conditioning, examining their experiences with other cultures, watching for discomfort that can signal cultural differences, and modifying their approach to communication.

Executive Summary

Cross-cultural communication blunders can lead to serious consequences—lost confidence, lost customers, lost business relationships, and lost opportunities. Enhancing your effectiveness in communicating across cultures requires several actions. You should expect and identify cultural differences, draw cues from nonverbal communication, speak and write clearly for other cultures, learn the importance of names and titles, use humor judiciously, show your respect for other cultures, and become a lifelong learner of other cultures.

You can acquire these skills by concentrating on four points. First, examine your own cultural conditioning. Second, review your experiences with other cultures. Third, watch for discomfort that can signal cultural differences. Fourth, recognize and modify your communication approach.

The discomfort you feel when cultural boundaries collide can be used to your benefit by alerting you to cultural differences. When you feel uncomfortable, it's natural to retreat from that discomfort. To be more effective when communicating across cultures, resist that retreat. Stay with the discomforting experience and learn from it. Compare the unexpected and discomforting behaviors you experience when communicating across cultures and compare them to your knowledge of your own cultural expectations.

It's impossible to understand all the communication nuances from all the world's cultures. But in today's global business environment, if you want to present yourself as a citizen of the world and to work effectively across cultural boundaries, you must be able to communicate respect for the customs, habits, and rituals of others—especially for the people who work with you. As you become more aware of these differences and more skilled at communicating across those cultures, you become a better and more effective leader.

Communicating Your Vision

Talula Cartwright and David Baldwin

(Stock No. 432)

One part of your job as a leader is to create commitment to your organization's vision. In order to do this, you have to communicate the vision effectively. In this guidebook we suggest many ways to communicate a vision. We also discuss how to deal with a resistant audience and what to do in the event that you yourself are resistant. You'll learn how to communicate a vision to others in ways that will help them understand it, remember it, and then go on to share it themselves.

Executive Summary

A vision is an imagined or discerned future state that clearly captures an organization's direction and defines its destination. One part of your job as a leader is to create commitment to your organization's vision. In order to do this, you have to communicate the vision effectively.

One way of communicating the vision is by telling a story. A story gives life to the vision, helps people see and remember it, and grounds it in common values and truths. If you don't have enough time to tell a story, you can use an elevator speech—a concise and convincing statement that communicates the vision in the amount of time of a typical elevator ride.

The more channels you open, the better your chances of communicating. Your organization's vision should be out front on its Web site, as well as on coffee mugs, T-shirts, pencils, notepads, and anything else that will keep it in the minds of employees, stakeholders, and customers.

Another effective strategy for communicating the vision is to engage others in one-on-one conversations. Personal connections give leaders opportunities to transmit information, receive feedback, build support, and create energy around the vision.

In your efforts to communicate the vision, you may encounter resistance from your audience. Resistance usually represents a competing priority, so it's important to figure out a way to address that priority. Keep communicating in as many ways as possible, and be patient. If you yourself are the one who is resistant, you are the one you need to work on. Even though you're still bringing yourself along, you need to model full commitment.

A vision has to be shared in order to do the things it is meant to do: inspire, clarify, and focus the work of your organization. Your job as a leader is to communicate the vision to others in ways that will help them understand it, remember it, and then go on to share it themselves.

Critical Reflections: How Groups Can Learn from Success and Failure

Chris Ernst and André Martin

(Stock No. 429)

When people work together over time, certain key events stand out as having the potential to teach lasting lessons for the future. Leaders can use the Critical Reflections process to help their groups learn these lessons, whether the key event was a great success or a wretched failure. The goal is to affect future outcomes in similar situations: either to repeat the current success or to avoid repeating the same mistake.

Executive Summary

To capture the best repeatable practices and identify avoidable mistakes, groups need to be able to learn as they work. Critical Reflections helps you simultaneously achieve organizational results and new learning and growth.

Before calling your group together for the Critical Reflections process, you as the leader need to identify the key event (positive or negative), allocate time and space for the process, and prepare to orient your group.

The basic process includes three stages: exploring, reflecting, and projecting. In the exploring stage, the goal is to allow your group members to relive the event—to share perceptions, to appreciate differences, to identify overlaps and disconnects of personal experiences. The reflecting stage provides the opportunity to interpret the event. How was it possible for the event to happen, and why did it? Then, based on the group's understanding of what happened and how and why it happened, move into the projecting stage. What lessons can be learned? What should your group members keep doing, what should they stop doing, and what should they do differently? What do they need to do either to repeat the current success or to avoid making the same mistake again?

When you're familiar and comfortable with the basics, you may want to consider a more extensive version of the process. Advanced options include personal story writing and collage for the exploring stage, affinity mapping and gallery walk for the reflecting stage, and reframing and journey map for the projecting stage. You or your organization may also have tools of your own that will work well in the process.

By implementing the Critical Reflections process, you give yourself, your group, and your entire organization a powerful way to make continuous learning concurrent with the continuous work that must go on.

Developing Cultural Adaptability: How to Work Across Differences

Jennifer J. Deal and Don W. Prince

(Stock No. 422)

Dealing with cultural differences isn't just an intellectual exercise. For managers working in an increasingly global environment it's a pivotal skill for practicing leadership. Contemporary organizations demand an understanding of how to negotiate the complex social situations that arise when many cultures come together.

Executive Summary

The workforce is much more diverse now than it was in the past, and it is anticipated to become even more so in the future. Stretching your ability to effectively interact with others who come from a different culture than yours calls for a new kind of flexibility for handling differences and change—cultural adaptability. It demands willingness and an ability to recognize and understand cultural differences, and to work effectively across them. Those differences affect expectations, approaches to work, views of authority, and other issues. By developing the skill of cultural adaptability, your interactions with people who are different from you have a better chance of producing successful outcomes.

Developing cultural adaptability requires that you examine your own cultural foundations, that you expect to encounter cultural differences, that you educate yourself about different cultures, and that you learn from your cross-cultural experiences. For managers who want to be or to remain successful in a global environment, cultural adaptability is a vital leadership skill.

Developing Your Intuition: A Guide to Reflective Practice

Talula Cartwright

(Stock No. 425)

Leaders often have to make decisions without complete information, and those decisions are expected to be not only right but also timely. Using reflective techniques can help you learn to depend on your intuition for help in making good decisions quickly. Reflective practices may seem time-consuming at the beginning, but the time you put in on the front end is well worth the investment. It will pay you back both in time and in the quality of the decisions you make.

Executive Summary

Strategic and tactical choices can't always wait. Without the confidence to trust their intuition, less effective managers may analyze too long, second-guess their decisions, or change course midstream. Reflective techniques help managers understand that they have alternative ways of thinking about problems. Managers who are open-minded about using these reflective practices can boost their confidence in their intuitive thinking. They can learn to trust their instincts when critical situations demand quick decisions and when complex problems defy easy answers.

Reflective practices may be considered whole-brain activities. They work by connecting R-mode and L-mode thinking, and thereby provide access to data, facts, values, experiences, hunches, analysis, evaluation, intuition, different perspectives, and feelings. That connection and access make reflection a whole-brain activity.

One of the most helpful tools for reflective practice is a journal. Keeping a journal greatly improves the chances of remembering important experiences, and it also provides a place to reflect on them. You can use your journal for writing, drawing, pasting in photos and other visual images, and for recording your hunches. You can also combine journal writing with other tools for reflective practice: imaging, dreams, analysis, and emotions.

The paradox managers learn as they grow accustomed to using reflective practices is that even though these processes seem time-consuming at the beginning, they actually enable the savvy and seasoned leader to make decisions more quickly. The time you put in on the front end to strengthen your confidence in your hunches and gut feelings is well worth the investment, and it will pay you back in time and in the quality of the decisions you make and how effectively you solve problems.

Do You Really Need a Team?

Michael E. Kossler and Kim Kanaga

(Stock No. 412)

Teams are expensive and time consuming to launch, and leading a team is a full-time job. Teams can do a great job of addressing complex problems and issues that affect many parts of the organization and its people. But for decisions that must be reached quickly, or when a diversity of perspectives is not needed, smaller and more easily managed work units are a better choice. Before launching a team, analyze the task at hand to make sure that a team is really what you need to get the job done.

Executive Summary

Teams can address many business challenges, replacing individual effort with group strength. They enable some companies to take giant leaps forward, becoming faster, more innovative, and more responsive to markets and customers.

But teams are not always the best way to meet a business challenge. Teams are expensive and time consuming to launch, and leading a team is a full-time job. Before you launch a team to meet the tasks your organization has placed before you, consider whether or not you need a team to get results.

Teams are a good choice for addressing complex problems and issues that affect many parts of the organization and its people. But for decisions that must be reached quickly, or when a diversity of perspectives is not needed, smaller and more easily managed work units are a better choice. Before launching a team, analyze the task at hand to make sure that a team is the kind of work unit best fit to address the challenge.

Work units that traditionally exist in organizations include individuals, work groups, collaborative work groups, teams, and high-performance teams. The situations best suited for each of these work units depends on the complexity of the challenge and the degree of collaboration needed to meet that challenge.

Before you can decide whether or not you need a team you will also need to determine if your organization is going to support a team. Without organizational support, your team cannot easily achieve its objectives. If your organization can't back a team with development programs, financial systems, mechanisms to show company-wide support, and rewards, then it shouldn't form a team (which will likely perform poorly or fail to meet objectives).

Teams are innovation engines and often the best chance for building new ideas, products, services, and solutions. To get the powerful benefits that teams promise, managers need to be sure that a team is what is needed for any specific business goal, and that the organization will support a team in its work.

Feedback That Works: How to Build and Deliver Your Message

Sloan R. Weitzel

(Stock No. 405)

Effective feedback, whether it's meant for your boss, your peers, or your direct reports, is built around three ideas. One, focus on the situation. Two, describe the other person's behavior you observed in that situation. And third, describe the impact that behavior had on you. The result is a message that is clear and that can inspire action and productive change.

Executive Summary

Oftentimes managers who develop specific “what if” scenarios and examine business data with the intense rigor of a scientist use no such specifics or data when evaluating the company's most important capital: employee performance. Information about performance, delivered in a way that is clear, nonjudgmental, and specific, helps all employees identify ways in which they can improve. Effective feedback requires that you use the same attention to detail that you employ when analyzing business information to the development of your leadership skills.

During the course of giving feedback to tens of thousands of people over many years, CCL has developed a feedback technique we call SBI, shorthand for Situation-Behavior-Impact. Using this technique, you can deliver feedback that can help the recipient see more easily what actions he or she can take to continue to improve performance or to change behavior that is ineffective or even an obstacle to performance.

The SBI technique can be described by its three components. The first step in giving effective feedback is to capture and clarify the specific situation in which the behavior occurred. Describing behavior is the second step to giving effective feedback. The final step in giving effective feedback is to relay the impact that the other person's behavior had on you.

As you practice this technique and put it into action, there are some pitfalls of which you should be aware. For example, don't back out of the feedback with “second thoughts.” Don't cushion your feedback with such phrases as “You aren't going to want to hear this . . .” as it tends to put your audience on the defensive.

Review the situation, behavior, and impact steps that build effective feedback and practice those steps at every opportunity. Take time to reflect on your feedback efforts. As you become more familiar with the approach and more comfortable with the delivery, your feedback skills will become more and more effective, and the people around you will benefit from your improved leadership in this area.

Finding Your Balance

Joan Gurvis and Gordon Patterson

(Stock No. 427)

Balance isn't an issue of time, but an issue of choice. It's about living your values by aligning your behavior with what you believe is really important. Aligning your behavior with your values is much like any other developmental experience; the basic process involves assessment, challenge, and support. This book will help you determine where you are, define where you want to go, and then put into place the tools you need to get there.

Executive Summary

Balance is about living your values by aligning your behavior with what you believe is really important. When your life doesn't reflect the satisfaction of your values, you feel that inconsistency as some measure of imbalance. Aligning your behavior with your values is much like any other developmental experience; the basic process involves assessment, challenge, and support.

Assessment helps you understand and gain clarity about your current situation so that you can identify the gaps between your present reality and the future you desire. One simple form of assessment is to inventory how you spend your time. You can also seek input and feedback from those around you. Your definition of success is another fundamental element of your assessment.

When you have assessed where you are in your quest for a more balanced life, you will be in a good position to determine the challenges you will face. Three common challenges to making personal changes are time, supervisory behavior, and fear.

Another necessary ingredient of a lasting developmental experience is support. Recognize that you can't do it all. Know how hard you can push and when to step back and regroup. Your capacity to work is not boundless; building in enough time to relax and recharge is critical.

Balance is about more than how you spend your time. It's about how you live your life. It's about aligning your behavior with your values.

Giving Feedback to Subordinates

Raoul J. Buron and Dana McDonald-Mann

(Stock No. 403)

For whatever reason, managers find it hard to give feedback to their direct reports. To succeed in your leadership role, make feedback a part of developing your direct reports to their full potential. Learn how to provide effective feedback that is empowering, not damaging; that is constructive, not debilitating.

Executive Summary

Given its potential to bolster improved performance, managers should eagerly supply feedback to their subordinates. But it doesn't happen often. Most people work without the benefits of effective feedback.

Giving feedback often gives you the best chance of reinforcing positive behavior and of influencing change in unacceptable behavior. You should also give feedback in a timely manner, and not wait too long to comment on a direct report's behavior. Making employees aware of potential opportunities and providing constructive steps they can take to achieve those goals are key motivations for providing effective feedback to subordinates. Addressing a performance problem is also a good use of feedback.

When giving feedback to your direct reports, be specific, keep it simple, and steer clear of interpreting behavior. It helps if you can catch direct reports doing things right, so that all your feedback isn't focused on negative behavior.

Giving feedback can provoke an emotional reaction. In dealing with feedback's emotional impact, take into account the individual situation; recognize that people process information differently; factor in health, personal, and family problems; and draw on your direct report's problem-solving abilities.

Like the other leadership skills you have developed, giving feedback to subordinates may at first feel unnatural and uncomfortable. Don't be concerned if your initial attempts are awkward. Take that first step. The ability to provide feedback to direct reports is a skill that, with practice, you can carry out with confidence and with great effectiveness.

How to Form a Team: Five Keys to High Performance

Kim Kanaga and Michael E. Kossler

(Stock No. 414)

If you are a department head or project manager, or if you are the senior-level champion or sponsor of a proposed team, you need to understand the five factors critical to building effective teams and how to use those factors to lay the groundwork for successful teams.

Executive Summary

One of the first steps to take toward increasing team effectiveness is to pay attention to how the team is formed. You can head off most of the problems that beset teams during the formation stage by setting a clear direction, securing organizational support, building an enabling team structure, developing key relationships, and monitoring external factors.

For members of a team to work effectively together, they need to have a shared understanding of why the team exists and what the team members are expected to accomplish. Team members should be able to state the team's purpose in a simple, direct way and be able to communicate that purpose to all stakeholders in a consistent manner.

Make special efforts to ensure that your organization supports the team you're forming with adequate resources, organizational sponsorship, recognition of team member responsibility and team authority, a means of providing feedback on performance, and a team-oriented reward system.

The actual structure of the team also helps it to be successful. Designing a strong team defines, among other things, team member responsibilities (which team members will play what roles on the team) and determines what technical and interpersonal skills the team needs to accomplish its task.

In addition to selecting the right team members and building internal processes, you will need to identify important stakeholders in and outside of the organization. The degree to which you need to develop these relationships depends upon your team's tasks, but at the least your team should have some understanding of the necessity of building and maintaining solid relationships outside the team.

The team you form will be subject to environmental factors inside and outside the organization. Identifying and maintaining an awareness of environmental influences, demands, and changes can help you build a team that can achieve a higher level of performance. The team you form won't just react to change but maintains an awareness of change.

Organizations seek high performance from their teams. When you form a team using the five principles described in this guidebook, it has a good chance of meeting those expectations.

How to Launch a Team: Start Right for Success

Kim Kanaga and Sonya Prestridge

(Stock No. 417)

Getting your team off on the right foot is critical to its success. To launch a team so that it increases its chance of success, managers and team leaders should pay attention to four critical points: setting purpose and direction, defining roles and responsibilities, designing procedures and practices, and building cooperation and relationships. Understanding and implementing these elements is key to helping your team accomplish its mission.

Executive Summary

When an organization sponsors a team, it's usually to address a challenge deemed essential to organizational success. Meeting that challenge might mean implementing new ways of working, entering new markets, or developing a new product. Teams can produce innovative solutions to complex problems, enabling organizations to be faster, more responsive, more competitive, and more successful in meeting their missions. But these kinds of results aren't guaranteed. It's not always easy for teams to deliver high performance. A good start is crucial to ensuring that your team will function successfully.

To launch a team toward success, managers and team leaders should pay attention to four critical points: setting purpose and direction, defining roles and responsibilities, designing procedures and practices, and building cooperation and relationships. Understanding and implementing these elements are key to a successful launch and, in the end, essential to a team's achieving the organization's goals.

Setting purpose and direction hinges on your team's understanding its mission, creating its goals, and being able to act upon its goals. Defining roles and responsibilities requires team members to have a clear understanding of what they contribute to the team and what the team is asking of them. Designing procedures and practices means paying attention to how decisions are made on your team, working out how to handle team communication, and having the team understand and agree to team norms. Building cooperation and relationships during the team launch means establishing a sense of camaraderie, managing conflicts, reviewing and monitoring external relationships, identifying critical success factors, and defining the relationship between the team and its leader. Team members need to feel inspired by the opportunity, and confident that they will have the resources and support needed for success. A strong launch sets a clear direction, an inspiring challenge, and a cooperative spirit that will enable your team to serve the organization with exceptional performance.

Influence: Gaining Commitment, Getting Results

David Baldwin and Curt Grayson

(Stock No. 424)

Influence is an essential component of leadership. Developing your influence skills can help you gain commitment from people at all levels: direct reports, peers, and bosses. Some effective influence tactics depend on logic, others appeal to emotions, and others are cooperative appeals. Use every influence attempt as a learning experience, and you can enhance this crucial leadership capability.

Executive Summary

When looking for results, contemporary organizations rely less on hierarchy and more on a leader's ability to influence and win commitment. Influence tactics can produce three different outcomes: resistance, compliance, and commitment. The most desirable outcome is, of course, commitment, and developing your influence skills can help you gain commitment from people at all levels: direct reports, peers, and bosses.

The first step is to assess the influence tactics you currently use. Some tactics depend on logic, others appeal to emotions, and others are cooperative appeals. If you discover that there are tactics you rarely use, you can develop those tactics to become more effective.

When you need to influence someone, planning is important. Set your goals: determine what you want to accomplish and whom you need to influence. Consider any benefits and challenges you may have going into the situation so that you can capitalize on the benefits and address the challenges. Identify the influence tactics that are likely to work best, and think back to your assessment of your own skills. Pay special attention to the tactics you rarely use, and think about how you can develop them before the influence session.

When it's time for the actual dialogue, set the stage for your request and establish rapport with the other person. Then use your plan to help you focus during the conversation. Capitalize on points of agreement to move toward your desired outcome. Afterward, record what happened and think through what you have learned. In this way, every influence attempt becomes a learning experience, and you continue to enhance your capability.

Influence is crucial to good leadership. These suggestions can help you maximize your influence skills and achieve desirable outcomes.

Keeping Your Career on Track: Twenty Success Strategies

Craig Chappelow and Jean Brittain Leslie

(Stock No. 408)

What are the most common mistakes that threaten successful careers? Poor skills in interpersonal relationships, the inability to build and lead effective teams, an unwillingness to adapt, and the lack of strategic focus all contribute to executive derailment. Bolster your skills in all these areas to ensure your effectiveness and to keep your career moving forward.

Executive Summary

By comparing successful managers to those who derail, the Center for Creative Leadership has identified specific factors that lead to success and other factors that force once-successful careers off the track. Managers who are aware of those factors and conduct an honest self-assessment of their leadership skills can go a long way toward keeping a career headed in the right direction.

A successful manager has reached at least the general management level and, in the eyes of senior executives, remains a likely candidate for promotion. The most commonly mentioned characteristics indicating success describe leaders who: establish strong relationships; hire, build, and successfully lead teams; have outstanding track records of performance; and adapt and develop during transitions.

A derailed manager is one who, having reached the general manager level, is fired, demoted, or reaches a career plateau. In almost every case, a derailed manager exhibits high potential for advancement, holds an impressive track record of results, and holds a solidly established leadership position—until hitting the derailment trap. Five key characteristics have been observed in derailed executives. Leaders who derail: have problems with interpersonal relationships; fail to hire, build, and lead a team; fail to meet business objectives; are unable or unwilling to change or adapt; and lack a broad functional orientation.

Executives who rise from technical to managerial roles can face challenges in any of these five areas. Fortunately, they can also adopt strategies that take their cue from the descriptions of leaders who enjoy long-term career success. They can avoid the derailment track and work toward long-term success by developing, strengthening, and diversifying their skills among these four leadership qualities: interpersonal skills; team leadership; achieving business objectives; and adaptability and openness to change.

None of these success characteristics or fatal flaws is enough to control the outcome of an entire career. Still, most managers who have potentially derailing flaws but the ability to learn and develop can use leadership training, feedback, and developmental assignments to overcome possible career failure and prepare themselves for more senior leadership roles.

Leadership Networking: Connect, Collaborate, Create

Curt Grayson and David Baldwin

(Stock No. 433)

Leadership networking is not about collecting business cards or schmoozing. It's about building relationships and making alliances in service of others and in service of your organization's work and goals. This book will show you how to enhance your networks and become effective at leadership networking. By seeing networking as an integral part of your role as a leader and by taking action to develop and nurture related skills, you create benefits for yourself, your group, and your organization.

Executive Summary

Leadership networking demands authenticity. It trades in resources. It calls for a thoughtful and deliberate use of the power gained from your reputation, your alliances, and your position. Leadership networking requires skillful communication, negotiation, and conflict management.

In the process of building and maintaining relationships, you are likely to face a number of barriers, such as operational differences, level differences, demographic differences, and personal preferences. Other barriers include a lack of understanding of the big picture that your organization is working toward, time, location, previous relationship history, and change. Any one barrier can pose a challenge to effective networking; often a number of factors conspire to prevent good networks from developing.

In order to assess your network, think about your current priorities or leadership challenges. Create a network diagram directly related to your key challenge. Rank the people in your diagram in terms of their importance to you in facing your challenge, and in this way identify your most important relationships. Then diagnose any weaknesses and gaps in your network. Reflect and clarify your situation prior to setting networking goals.

Once you understand how your present network is structured, who is involved, and where you can push your network to the next level, you can take action using these eight strategies: learning from others, inviting others, inviting yourself, asking for feedback, working with others, being direct, being an information hub, and making allies.

Many of the roles and skills expected and required of leaders today are connected to networking. By seeing networking as an integral part of your role as a leader and by taking action to develop and nurture related skills, you begin to create benefits for yourself, your group, and your organization.

Leading Dispersed Teams

Michael E. Kossler and Sonya Prestridge

(Stock No. 423)

Dispersed teams are a necessary, strategic work unit in a world that continues to grow more interconnected every day. Guiding them to their full potential is a difficult challenge for even the most seasoned team leader. Solving potential communication problems and devising processes for making decisions and managing conflict are key leadership challenges for those managers. Creating an effective first-time meeting and securing organizational support are critical to success.

Executive Summary

Dispersed teams have members who are not in the same place; they come from different countries, cultures, and time zones. Like local teams, dispersed teams need a well-planned design and structure, the right composition, and teamwork and trust. But there are significant differences between dispersed and local teams, and leaders of dispersed teams must pay special attention to those differences in order to exploit the advantages of dispersed teams while mitigating their disadvantages.

Before launching a dispersed team, it's important to assess the organization's readiness to support it. To succeed, a dispersed team needs thorough planning and adequate support. It must have a defined purpose, clear and measurable goals and objectives, and tasks that require members to work together. Roles and authority must be carefully defined, and there must be timelines and performance measurement and learning systems. The team must have the right people and be the right size. The technology to maintain communication among members is essential.

If you determine that your organization is ready to launch a dispersed team, the next step is to carefully plan its first meeting. If at all possible, the first meeting should be face-to-face, giving the members the opportunity to get to know each other personally and thereby setting the stage for collaboration.

Once a dispersed team has been launched, there are three specific attributes of teamwork that must be emphasized: communication and information sharing, decision making, and conflict resolution. Since good communication is so important to a dispersed team, each member should understand the capabilities of each communication tool and which one is best suited to which kind of information-sharing task. Facilitating effective decision making is a complex challenge for the leader of a dispersed team; the team must formalize how decisions are to be made and communicated to the members. And since a dispersed team almost invariably experiences some type of interpersonal conflict, the leader must guide the team in planning a process for managing conflicts as they occur.

Dispersed teams present unique challenges. Organizations need to prepare for and support them properly to realize their full potential.

Learning from Life: Turning Life's Lessons into Leadership Experience

Marian N. Ruderman and Patricia J. Ohlott

(Stock No. 407)

What can you learn from nonwork experiences? Plenty. Private life encourages and enhances leadership development by providing opportunities for you to develop psychological strength, by providing support through family relationships and friendships, and by offering opportunities to learn.

Executive Summary

Most managers and executives will tell you they get the most influential and effective developmental training on the job. Too often, however, those same managers and executives discount what can be learned from experiences outside of work.

Although nonwork roles and responsibilities can limit and interfere with performance at work, there is another side to this story. Interests, roles, and responsibilities outside of work can also serve as creative and supportive sources for learning how to be a more effective manager.

What can you learn from nonwork experiences? For one, you can develop your interpersonal skills. You can also learn to handle multiple tasks. Another area you can develop from nonwork experiences is using relevant background and information to handle difficult work challenges.

There are three important ways in which private life encourages and enhances leadership development. The first is by providing opportunities to develop psychological strength. A second way is through the support of family relationships and friendships, which can encourage and advise you. A final way is through learning opportunities. The roles you play off the job can be your laboratory for mastering management skills.

Away from work, your personal relationships can provide support for handling leadership challenges. Your personal activities and relationships can provide motivation and opportunities to learn leadership skills. At the same time, work experiences can enrich your personal life.

Don't look at the division between personal life and professional work as a conflict but as an opportunity for learning and for building skills that can make you a more effective leader.

Maintaining Team Performance

Kim Kanaga and Henry Browning

(Stock No. 420)

Team success isn't inevitable. Leaders who monitor and maintain their team so that it operates at peak efficiency can ensure that it successfully achieves its goal. By assessing their team's effort, knowledge and skills, tactics, and group dynamics, leaders can diagnose problems and make corrections to bring the team back on track.

Executive Summary

Whether they have launched a team to achieve a business objective or have inherited one, leaders need to monitor the effectiveness of that team on an ongoing basis and make course corrections that keep small problems from becoming major disasters. Teams frequently run into obstacles and problems. Many fail to live up to their potential, fail to deliver expected outcomes, or fail to produce their results in a timely manner. Many of these failures can be prevented if team leaders assess their team's effectiveness at regular intervals and monitor their team's performance.

There are six key aspects, or dimensions, that are consistent across all teams. If all of these dimensions are strong within a team, the team has the means to conduct its work and perform effectively. Those dimensions are a clear purpose, an empowering team structure, strong organizational support, capable internal relationships, harmonious external relationships, and efficient information management. When problems emerge in teams, they can often be traced to a flaw in the team's basic foundation. Perhaps the team doesn't have a clear mission. Maybe it doesn't have the support it needs from the top level of the organization. Team members may not be clear about their roles and responsibilities. Maybe the team hasn't been given the time, the training, or the authority it needs to carry out its task.

There are four indicators that signal when a problem exists along one of the six dimensions. Even the best-formed teams can run into trouble when people leave, the market shifts, or the organization realigns for strategic reasons. By assessing their team's effort, knowledge and skills, tactics, and group dynamics, leaders can diagnose problems and make corrections to bring the team back on track.

Making Creativity Practical: Innovation That Gets Results

Stan Gryskiewicz and Sylvester Taylor

(Stock No. 421)

Creative solutions can be challenged and defended in the pursuit of profitability. But first, creativity must be demystified. The process of making creativity practical provides leaders with a problem-solving approach that produces high-quality ideas that are appropriate to the task—which means groups and organizations can implement them with less risk.

Executive Summary

Creativity is crucial to an organization's survival. Managers know this, and often they are responsible for instigating and implementing creativity in their organizations because they are called to solve problems and deliver results. A process of practical creativity can help leaders manage innovation in a way that produces answers that the organization can implement.

To make creativity practical, managers will want to carry out five related activities. One, they will want to state the problem in a way that encourages creative problem solving. Two, they should become familiar with different problem-solving styles. Three, they should learn and understand creative pathways connected to problem-solving styles in order to set a direction for their innovation efforts. Four, they need to lead their teams or work groups in generating ideas. Finally, leaders will want to evaluate those ideas to select those that are most likely to be effective.

Managers who doubt that the creative process can reliably produce results—that it can be made practical—are reminded that only the idea-generation stage needs to run without limiting interference. Managers are free, and are encouraged, to guide other parts of the process toward results that their organizations can support and implement. In essence, this is the core of practical creativity.

Practical creativity reconciles creativity with management and is linked to the context of problem solving, grounded in reality, and focused on productivity. Managers are often trained to minimize risks and to value predictability, but creativity is risky and unpredictable. Managers can use a process of practical creativity to solve problems efficiently and to manage the problem-solving process by altering it to more closely align with the organization's current challenges.

Managing Conflict with Direct Reports

Barbara Popejoy and Brenda J. McManigle

(Stock No. 418)

Conflict between managers and direct reports affects their work and influences how productive and effective an organization can be. Managers who can see both sides of a conflict can resolve it, but that means assessing the differences between themselves and their direct reports and finding out how those differences impact the conflict. With that knowledge they can make a plan to use before, during, and after a conflict resolution session that clarifies performance expectations and provides ongoing feedback for support and development.

Executive Summary

Changing demographics, a cross-cultural workforce, turbulent shifts in the global economy, new relationships between organizations and their employees, and other influences can define the conflicts that arise in organizations and affect strategies for managing them. Leading in such turbulent times requires managers to develop an understanding of multiple perspectives and to be willing to reshape their point of view. That skill—seeing more than one position—is crucial to developing a strategy that will help you manage conflict between you and your direct reports.

Conflict between managers and direct reports highlights two particular areas. One, it brings into play a power relationship that still exists even in this era of flatter organizations and empowered employees. Two, it affects the work itself—the tasks for which managers and direct reports share responsibility. In each of these areas managers can assess the differences between themselves and their direct reports to find out how those differences affect the conflict.

After that assessment, managers can devise a plan to use before, during, and after a conflict resolution session. That plan can include, among other things, being aware of emotional triggers, clarifying performance expectations, and dealing with differences. A focus on behavior and openness to new solutions will go a long way toward resolving a conflict between a manager and a direct report.

Managing Conflict with Peers

Talula Cartwright

(Stock No. 419)

Peer conflicts that arise from incompatible goals or from different views on how a task should be accomplished can usually be resolved. But peer conflicts that involve personal values, office politics and power, and emotional reactions are much more difficult to deal with. These seemingly intractable conflicts require careful attention if managers want to build effective relationships that will bolster their ability to achieve organizational goals.

Executive Summary

In any organization, conflicts are bound to occur between managers. Because they can't be avoided, effective managers learn to manage them by examining three key issues. They assess their emotional "hot buttons" that trigger ineffective behaviors and make conflict difficult to manage. They examine their personal values and how those might conflict with what their peers find important. Finally, they assess their own and their peers' power in the organization and learn how it influences the resolution of conflicts. Paying attention to these issues will help managers learn how to resolve conflict in a way that fosters and maintains effective working relationships.

There are several helpful tactics for approaching a conflict you are having with a peer. Try to understand your peer's point of view, motivation, and reaction to the conflict. Identify your motives, goals, and agendas and those of your peer. Look for points of mutual agreement. Express your emotions in a way that is helpful to resolving the conflict. Follow up with the person with whom you were in conflict. Note your initial reaction to a conflict and analyze why it occurred. Finally, always look ahead and don't dwell on the past—find the best in people and in the situation.

When you are in conflict with a peer, it can be useful to see the other person as a partner and not an adversary or opponent. Each of you has a different view based on such aspects as your values, management style, and power in the organization. Building awareness of and accepting the differences between you are good first steps in managing conflict. It may take more than one session of negotiation or discussion, but making the situation more comfortable and alleviating personal and political animosity will help move the conflict toward resolution—and that will bring the best results to your organization and build the working relationships you need to become and remain an effective leader.

Managing Conflict with Your Boss

Davida Sharpe and Elinor Johnson

(Stock No. 416)

Successful managers seek out, build, and maintain effective relationships with others. Managers who derail or are otherwise sidelined during their careers often mishandle interpersonal relationships. One common problem related to relationships is unresolved conflict with a boss or showing unprofessional behavior related to a disagreement with upper management.

Executive Summary

When conflict arises between people at different levels in the organization, the path toward resolution can be hard to see. Before you can manage a conflict with your boss, it's important for you to examine your own definition of conflict, your beliefs about conflict, and your behavior during a conflict situation. It also requires you to assess your boss's perception and expectation of your performance.

Your boss may also have expectations related to your style of creating and maintaining effective working relationships. Many bosses have a high regard for loyalty, openness, tolerance, and focus. If you fail to meet those expectations, conflict can result. Likewise, you should be aware of your own expectations regarding what you need from your boss in terms of performance, support, and feedback. When you understand the expectations on both sides you will have a broader understanding of the landscape on which the conflict rests and be better able to work toward a resolution.

A seven-step conflict management plan includes (1) building your personal awareness, (2) clarifying your view of conflict, (3) understanding the perspective of others, (4) brainstorming a solution, (5) creating an action plan, (6) implementing the action plan, and (7) reflecting on the process to learn what works and what doesn't.

Ongoing Feedback: How to Get It, How to Use It

Karen Kirkland and Sam Manoogian

(Stock No. 400)

Do you want feedback that will really do you some good? Consider the source. Think about who to ask, when to ask, and how to ask. But don't stop there. Learn to evaluate the content of the feedback you've received so you can use it effectively.

Executive Summary

Many managers know that they need feedback but are unsure about how to get it. To gain the feedback that can benefit you most, consider who to ask, when to ask, and how to ask.

When you think about who to ask for feedback, think of a person whose opinion you respect and who will encourage you to improve your effectiveness. It's also helpful if you ask someone whose work style is different from your own so that you gain access to a new point of view. The person from whom you seek feedback should be someone with whom you must interact in order for you both to get results—that gives both of you a vested interest in the feedback process.

In choosing when to ask for feedback, keep in mind that you should first identify your development goals. Another consideration is frequency. The more often you receive feedback, the more often you can put your goals into action.

You know who to ask and when—now you need to know how. CCL recommends using a method it calls the Situation-Behavior-Impact (SBI) model. This means of receiving feedback is very effective and simple, as it directs the person giving you feedback to stick to the situation in which he or she observed you, describe your behavior in that situation, and then tell you what kind of impact your behavior had.

Getting feedback is valuable in managing your own leadership development, but you have to know how to use that feedback to reach your development goals. First, evaluate the content of the feedback you've received. Is it accurate? What value does it have for you? How important is it to you?

With continued practice you will find seeking and receiving feedback easier to do, welcomed by others, and more rewarding both professionally and personally.

Preparing for Development: Making the Most of Formal Leadership Programs

Jennifer Martineau and Ellie Johnson

(Stock No. 409)

If you want to get a good return on your investment in a leadership program, make sure you have clear expectations, goals, and a plan to put what you learn into practice when you return to the office. If you follow those steps you can substantially increase the benefits to yourself and to your organization.

Executive Summary

Many managers, either through their own initiative or through company sponsorship, attend formal leadership development programs. But many of those managers show up for such programs without clear expectations, goals, or a plan to put what they learn into practice when they return to the office. Managers can substantially increase the benefits to themselves and to their organizations by preparing for any formal developmental experience they are scheduled to attend.

That preparation includes clarifying expectations, understanding and increasing motivation for attending, and making sure that the work environment supports the changes in behavior and perspective that lead to more effective leadership.

Managers can clarify their expectations by determining the content of the program and by mapping that content to their specific development needs, both in their immediate circumstances and with an eye toward their long-term career goals. Managers should also connect their personal leadership development goals to their company's strategic goals. Another way for managers to prepare for a formal developmental experience is for them to gauge their enthusiasm for attending and making sure they are motivated to make the most from the experience.

Participating in a formal development program is just the first step in building skills that can make a manager a more effective leader. When managers return from such a program to their established routine, they may find that organizational constraints hinder their putting into practice what they've learned. Managers can prepare their work environment so that it is more supportive of their developmental efforts by assessing any possible roadblocks to their development, sharing their goals with others, integrating what they've learned into everyday work life and personal life, setting aside time for practicing what they've learned, and asking for feedback on their new behaviors.

With the right preparation, motivation, and action a formal development program can provide managers with a deeper understanding of the skills and perspectives required to lead people and organizations.

Reaching Your Development Goals

Cynthia D. McCauley and Jennifer W. Martineau

(Stock No. 401)

Managers can use three strategies to develop their technical and interpersonal skills in their drive to reach their development goals. First, seek challenging assignments. Second, get targeted training when appropriate. Third, build relationships at work and off the job that provide support.

Executive Summary

CCL research and practice shows that managers who commit to pursuing goals immediately following a feedback experience are much more likely to capitalize on their strengths and set a productive path for growth. There are three strategies that you, as a manager, should fully use in your effort to learn, grow, and change.

One, seek challenging assignments. When you set a development goal, it makes sense to seek out challenging assignments that will force you to work toward your goal. This is a potent development strategy because it allows you to practice the skills and behaviors you are trying to improve. You learn by doing, seeing what works and what doesn't, and trying it again. This strategy also motivates you to improve. If you don't improve the skills and behaviors you've targeted, you'll likely not do well in the assignment. It will be obvious to you and others that you aren't reaching your development goals.

Two, you should seek training for targeted skills. In addition to choosing some challenging assignments, you will want to explore training opportunities. Training programs are most useful when you have identified a specific skill that will help you reach your development goal. For example, if your goal is to become better at influencing peers, honing your negotiation skills could help you reach that goal. Such programs also provide a safe place within which to practice the new skills.

Three, you should seek developmental relationships. As you work toward your development goals, you will need others to help you along the way. Begin by thinking about the kind of data, advice, pushing, encouraging, and supporting you most need to reach your development goal. Then think of who could best serve those needs. Don't think too narrowly. Seek people outside your immediate work group, family, and circle of friends. Once you have identified the needed roles and potential people to provide those roles, go to those individuals, explain how you need their help, and enlist them in your developmental work.

Self-development is a lifelong pursuit. There are always opportunities and reasons to improve your performance. Make it a point to revisit your accomplishments, monitor them, and consider setting new goals.

Selling Yourself without Selling Out: A Leader's Guide to Ethical Self-Promotion

Gina Hernez-Broome, Cindy McLaughlin, and Stephanie Trovas

(Stock No. 431)

Even high-performing individuals and groups can be overlooked and underestimated. The antidote is self-promotion—the act of generating personal visibility in service of your work and career. In this guidebook, we discuss how you can benefit from self-promotion *and* maintain your integrity and authenticity. We help you reframe common beliefs that get in the way of effective self-promotion, and we provide numerous strategies and activities that can become part of your repertoire.

Executive Summary

The purpose of self-promotion is to gain visibility for the contributions you and your group make to the organization. When used intentionally and strategically, self-promotion can be rewarding for individuals as well as the organization. Many leaders expect visibility and recognition to result from doing good work, but simply doing good work may not be enough to achieve those results. Self-promotion is an additional component that creates visibility and communicates value, and thus it is an essential part of being a leader. It is a key to effectiveness and long-term success.

The visibility created by effective self-promotion has benefits for the individual leader. Promoting yourself and your group provides many enhancements to your work life, including pay and promotion, rewarding opportunities, recognition and reward for your contributions, confidence, increased self-worth, credibility, and influence. Your self-promotion efforts can also have benefits for others: your direct reports, your boss, your group, and your organization as a whole.

Many leaders have beliefs or mind-sets that get in the way of effective self-promotion, and as a result, avoid promoting themselves, their work, and their groups. Unfortunately, they and their organizations miss out on the benefits of greater visibility. To overcome your hesitancy or aversion, it is helpful to reframe your limiting beliefs.

Techniques for promoting yourself include connecting with others, developing yourself, and creating opportunities. Connecting with others addresses strategies and tactics that help you build your network, create relationships, and gain visibility in the organization. Developing yourself focuses on skills and behaviors that are useful in your efforts to promote yourself. Creating opportunities is about the where and when of self-promotion—specific actions that lend themselves to visibility and self-promotion.

To develop strong, effective self-promotional skills, leaders need to find the sweet spot between bragging and being overly modest. To do so, stay focused on the value of the work. By focusing on the work itself, you will not go overboard with bragging, nor will your hesitancy to be in the spotlight become a liability.

Setting Your Development Goals: Start with Your Values

Bill Sternbergh and Sloan R. Weitzel

(Stock No. 411)

There are three main reasons why your goals may fail to inspire and motivate change. One, the goal isn't valued—you haven't committed your mind and heart. Two, your goal isn't specific—it's too broad and overwhelming. Three, your goal isn't supported—you don't have someone to be your coach, cheerleader, or mentor.

Executive Summary

When setting a goal, it's crucial that you motivate both your mind (what you think you should do) and your heart (what you value). If you bring both into the picture you're more likely to arrive at goals that are meaningful to you and that you can achieve. To bring your heart back into the goal-setting process, examine how your goals align with your values—the underlying life principles you believe are important. There's little motivation for success if you don't connect your goals to your values.

Of course, to make all this work you need to know exactly what your values are. How do you spend your time and energy? What are you passionate about? What do you need to do more of? What should you cut back on? What is missing? CCL suggests looking at five areas of your life—career, self, family, community, and spirit—and considering how in each of those areas you are living out your values. Gaining this perspective will give you some ideas about what you might like to change or improve.

At this point you're ready to cast those ideas into the form of a SMART goal. A SMART goal is specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timed. After drafting your SMART goals, you can take action to achieve them. Plan how you can break your goals into small, specific steps that will move you in the right direction. Ask friends, family, and co-workers for their support as you work toward your goals. Revisit your goals at regular intervals to make sure you're on track and to re-energize your efforts.

Choosing and planning your goals is hard work. It takes time. It takes commitment. The rewards, however, are great. By aligning your head with your heart you will set meaningful, attainable goals that will help you make progress toward what you truly value in your life.

Three Keys to Development: Defining and Meeting Your Leadership Challenges

Henry Browning and Ellen Van Velsor

(Stock No. 404)

If you want to develop your leadership capacity, look toward three critical elements: assessment, challenge, and support. Learn what your strengths and your development needs are. Challenge yourself with new assignments that stretch your abilities. And create a support network of people who can offer encouragement and feedback.

Executive Summary

For most people, the capacity for leadership must be continuously developed over a lifetime of experience. At the Center for Creative Leadership, we believe there are three key elements that drive leadership development: assessment, challenge, and support.

Assessment is information, presented formally or informally, that tells you where you are now; what are your current strengths, what development needs are important in your current situation, and what is your current level of effectiveness. Assessment is necessary whenever your situation changes. At a minimum, make an assessment when you take on a new role, when your job changes, when there has been a major organizational change, or when you haven't made an assessment for 12–18 months. As you plan your assessment, keep in mind these three guidelines: (1) assess yourself and your situation; (2) use formal and informal assessment techniques; and (3) balance self-assessment with data from other sources.

Challenge means you are stretched beyond your current capabilities. Depending on how much of a stretch it is, you may feel comfortable facing a challenge, or you may feel overwhelmed. Challenge may call for skills and perspectives not currently available to you, or it may create imbalance for you and provide an opportunity to question established ways of thinking and acting. A work situation that challenges you too little carries its own problems. After completing the same type of assignments over and over you are prone to boredom and burnout.

Support enhances self-confidence and provides reassurance about your strengths, current skills, and established ways of thinking and acting. It can guide your acquisition of new skills. Building support is key to your managing and even reducing the challenges you face, bringing them in line with your current skills. Increased support will help you reach the point where your situation is more balanced between the challenges you face and the skills you possess. From a strong balanced position you are better able to learn, to grow, and to build skills and perspectives that help you develop as a leader.

Using Your Executive Coach

E. Wayne Hart and Karen Kirkland

(Stock No. 415)

If you are a manager or executive who is beginning a coaching engagement or who is considering a developmental plan that calls for an executive coach, you need more than a desire to improve your leadership capabilities. You also need to understand how to get the most from your work with a professional coach.

Executive Summary

Executive coaching is an increasingly popular means of accelerating professional growth and enhancing managerial performance. Unlike most other training and development options, coaching is completely personalized and private. A long-term coaching relationship can deliver significant improvements to a manager's leadership effectiveness, but choosing and hiring a coach isn't a guarantee of success.

Readiness is key to successful coaching results. If you are considering working with a coach, you should first take stock of your attitudes, your work circumstances, and your time constraints. You should make sure that you are prepared to put in the time and effort that will be required to address the challenges that will be set for you throughout the engagement.

Coaching engagements usually last from six to eighteen months and are structured to result in significant, specific, measurable changes in behavior. Getting the full benefit of coaching will require working collaboratively with the coach in every aspect of the engagement, beginning with mutually determining the schedule, format, and guidelines for coaching sessions.

Coaching should focus on leveraging your strengths, rather than fixing deficiencies. The ongoing elements of the coaching engagement are assessment, challenge, and support. A coach that works with you within all of these areas can help you reach the development goals you seek by helping you gain the skills you need and practice the behaviors that reflect your ability as a leader.

Resistance to making behavior changes is to be expected and often surfaces as negative feelings about the coach. The most important attribute you can bring to your coaching engagement is receptivity to new ideas and openness to different ways of acting in the world.



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