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From the Top

We're headed toward the end of Q2. This year – like all years, it seems – is rocketing by. Nearly halfway through 2011, are you halfway through your key plans, objectives, and targets for the year? If so, great! If not, why not?

Hope is a wonderful thing to hold on to for birthday gifts, sporting events, and lottery tickets. It does, however, make a really lousy business strategy.

Don't get caught later in the year with not enough minutes on the clock; in the immortal words of Larry the Cable Guy... *Git 'r done!*

Repeat Freebie Alert... I'm working on my remaining 2011 pro-bono plan as we speak. This is a major part of my consulting practice, and of my personal life. Please contact me if you know of a worthy, charitable not-for-profit that could use some help with leadership, strategy, coaching, or related challenges.

I generally select two organizations for the year. Local to Texas is probably best (to avoid travel hassles and expenses), but not essential. And I really do mean **pro bono**.

If you feel your leaders' skills may need improving, your leadership teams could be more effective, or your performance-based comp plans need tuning, don't hesitate to call. Or email. Or Skype. Or Tweet. Or smoke signal. Or... never mind, you get the idea...

Triangle Performance LLC's 2011 **Survey of Senior Leadership**

(www.triangleperformance.com/articles/seniorsurvey/2011_1_senior_survey.pdf) is finally available, and with almost 30% more respondents than last year, a rousing success (and quite enlightening)!

I did want to briefly highlight some of the survey key findings. For example...

1. Revenue/Earnings Enhancement and Management/Leadership Performance continue to be the top 2 "big deals."
2. Clear Vision & Strategy are more important this year than in 2010 (or, for that matter, since we began surveying).
3. Workplace Safety & Environmental Compliance made it into the Top 5 for the first time.

The summary results can be yours by downloading here

(www.triangleperformance.com/articles/seniorsurvey/2011_1_senior_survey.pdf).

Who are you, really?? Take a complimentary assessment. Find out more about candidates; create a benchmark for skills in your organization, and use as templates for coaching efforts. Click here to go to my assessments page (www.triangleperformance.com/assessments/); then click on the link to take and receive your complimentary assessment. See today's last article below for more discussion...



My recent client efforts include leadership development at multiple levels, executive and management coaching, and numerous facilitated sessions on various topics of leadership effectiveness, performance management, employee engagement, trust, and more...

Some newsworthy mentions:



The Houston Chronicle interviewed me for a business-section article on **Planning and Goal-Setting** (quite apropos given my comments above), and you can read that article here (www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/business/sixel/7358387.html). Wooty "dissed" me about my foreign-language goal, but she was fun to talk to nonetheless...



Monster.com interviewed me for an article on Compensation, specifically asking for expert input on 2011 pay increases, longer term trends, pay-for-performance, and google's ridiculous 10% across-the-board increase. You can read that here (hiring.suntimes.monster.com/hr/hr-best-practices/recruiting-hiring-advice/managing-hiring-costs/2011-compensation-planning.aspx)



The Houston Business Journal (www.triangleperformance.com/articles/newsletter/images/HBJ-article4-24.pdf) featured my firm (and a large, multi-year client) for an article on team-centric executive development.

He speaks... (Apparently I have a message that resonates with some... *who knew??*).

I delivered the keynote address to the American Society of Safety Engineer's (ASSE) East Texas Safety Expo (that's a mouthful!). (www.asse.org)



I also keynoted at San Antonio's ASSE chapter meeting last month, and presented The Necessity of Leadership to a group of power-generation managers.



Thanks to all above for having me. FYI to HR groups – my keynote and workshop are both approved through HRCI; the workshop 2.5 hours of strategic credit.

Speaking of speaking... I continue to present two favorite topics:

Leadership is Easy... until it isn't.

Successful leadership in challenging times...

(www.triangleperformance.com/kevinspeaks/leading_is_easy.pdf).

Backseat Driving:

Leading the business when not driving the bus

(www.triangleperformance.com/kevinspeaks/backseat_driving.pdf)

If you have a corporate, trade, or association event, I'd certainly enjoy speaking to your group. You can see more information regarding topics and details on my website (www.triangleperformance.com/kevinspeaks/index.html).

Further, feel free to download and read a few articles that may be relevant today:

NEW! Purposeful Leadership... It's not a technicality

(www.triangleperformance.com/articles/articles/purposeful_leadership.pdf),

Other Articles (peruse all at your leisure)

(www.triangleperformance.com/articles/),

...and don't forget to check out my blog (blog.triangleperformance.com); some interesting (I think) posts, like *Course Evaluations: Function or Flattery*, and *It's NOT The Economy, Stupid! Please comment, complain, or scream at me* if you agree, disagree, or just want your opinion read, seen, and heard.



But that's just me...

(blog.triangleperformance.com)

twitter

Check me out on Twitter
(twitter.com/TriangleKB).

If you'd like to know how I can assist you, your organization, or a colleague of yours, please fill out this form (www.triangleperformance.com/contactus/requestinfo.html) and I'll send you some specific information, articles, engagement results, and so forth.

As always, I hope this finds you well, personally and professionally; please give me a call if I can ever help in any way, and **feel free to forward this to anyone you feel may be interested.** (Really!) *I appreciate your referrals.*

Warm Regards,

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Strategy & Leadership

It's called *Leadership*, not *Jerkship*

-- *Just be nice...*

You can be a leader, or you can be a jerk. You can't be both, no matter what you think, and no matter how hard you try. (note: I didn't say you couldn't be a "manager." A business card doth not a leader make...)

Leadership requires vision, and the wherewithal to execute to that vision, convincing and motivating those following to do "more" (called "discretionary effort") in support and pursuit of that leader's vision.

Being a jerk is in direct opposition to that effort.

So, what's a leader to do, assuming s/he *wants* to avoid jerkdom? This ain't exactly rocket surgery, but here are a few tips...

1. **Do Ask, Don't Tell.** Yes, DADT does leadership. You really *can* ask instead of barking out orders like a drill sergeant. Any employee not living under a rock for the last 50+ years doesn't really believe that their boss' question "Would you please do this for me?" has an option of "no" for an answer.

Same results for you, better results for the employee.

2. **Show some love...** No, not literally, Casanova, so calm your jets. But leaders, you've got to show – actively demonstrate – real compassion if you expect to develop the trust necessary for a positive employee relationship. I hate to use the tired cliché, "employees don't care how much you know until they know how much you care," but it's true here.

Someone must look after the employees' well-being and best interests. If not you, leader, they'll simply turn to someone or something else.

Like a union. Or a chronic complainer/commiserator. Or your competitor.

3. **Be nice.** Those who know me know I'm not one of those soft, fluffy types. My leadership facilitation doesn't include kooshie balls and plastic gumby figurines. But you'll find if you just "act nice" with employees, good things will happen (and you may just enjoy your day a bit more, too).

In the movie "Roadhouse" (I'm old, I like movies, so shoot me...), Patrick Swayze plays Dalton, a "Cooler" – sort of a bouncer's bouncer – in a rough bar. When asked by some of his underling bouncer staff about what they should do when trouble erupts, he tells them simply to "be nice."

"Be nice until it's time to **not** be nice." Good advice.

I have this client (my typical story-starter), and I'm facilitating some of their teams, simply to help them realize the added benefits of working really well together toward common goals. This team's leader is a fairly senior manager, and he mentioned to me that one of his frontline leaders wasn't all that enthused about attending our sessions.

In fact, this leader told him that he "don't need no Dr. Phil telling me to make nice with my employees."

My simple question to that frontline leader (never mind the dubious-but-cool reference to Dr. Phil) would be: *I'm not sure about that... **do you??***

Thanks, Don.

Musings

Size matters... doesn't it?

-- *Are bigger leaders better?*

Some CEOs make a lot of money. Their Vice Presidents don't usually make as much, and the directors, managers, and other leadership positions still further down the organizational food-chain make even less.

I know, I know... you're thinking "Well *duh*, Kevin; did you come up with that 'blinding flash of the obvious' on your own, or did you have help?"

My question here isn't about the dinero, per se. And it's not about relative value among leaders. No, my question is about the **absolute** value of leadership. Is the absolute value of a senior leader greater than that of a less senior leader **to those s/he leads?**

I think not.

Like many of you, I travel frequently, and I thought about this question when I boarded a puddle-jumper for the 47 minute flight from Houston to Tyler, Texas (new client -- hello to Rick, Roger, and Ricky). It occurred to me then, that the pilot of this 24-passenger prop-job likely made considerably less money than the pilot of the 737 I'm on right now.

But if he screws up, I'm just as dead as if he had made twice the money.

In other words, to the recipient of the leadership behavior, it doesn't matter that some other leader may make more money, have a bigger office, or have a fancier title. In our selfish, singular worlds, what matters is how that leader leads... to *me*.

Think about it...

- All leaders must create and leverage relationships to succeed, and
- All leaders are responsible for developing employees so they can support and succeed at their vision, and
- All leaders personally and directly affect the total career and employment environment of those they lead.

Just like those pilots, regardless of the size of their aircraft or wallet, personally and directly affect my safety as a passenger.

So, then, if I were to continue my unsavory double entendre approach to this article -- all the while you keeping your mind out of the gutter -- I might say that it's not the **size** of the leader that matters, but what the leader **does** with that size that really counts.

But that's just me...