



# Excel Leader Advisory Letter

ISSUED BY THE EXCEL LEADERSHIP GROUP

August 2010

## Excel's Mission Statement

Help business leaders exceed their goals by creating a culture that unleashes the talents and creativity of all associates.

## Thought for August

"History has demonstrated that the most notable winners encountered heartbreaking obstacles before they triumphed, and refused to become discouraged by their defeats."

-B.C. Forbes



Effective leaders intentionally create a high performance work environment based on high levels of employee engagement and discretionary effort. Their cultures in turn contribute directly to producing sustainable world-class results and higher profits. Therefore, despite the current economic climate and all its related challenges to your bottom line, you should continue investing in the development of your own leadership skills and those of your management team.

I recently read a short article in the weekly magazine Parade entitled: "Workplace Bullying: Do We Need a Law?" The article cites a study jointly conducted by the polling firm Zogby and the Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI), an employee-advocacy group: "nearly 50% of the U.S. workforce is either a victim of or a witness to bullying on the job."

The article continues by citing two specific cases of workplace bullying. One described a California scientist who committed suicide after what she termed as "years of mistreatment by an abusive boss." The other involved an Indiana medical technician who sued and was awarded \$325,000 in damages after his boss shouted threats at him with clenched fists."

Obviously, bullying has no place in any organization. In addition to the negative results related above, bullying creates fear and anxiety and hampers or destroys the very creativity and productivity vitally necessary to compete successfully in today's world. While many states have proposed laws that would enable other bullying victims to sue for damages and the debate continues as to whether more these laws are actually needed, there is a more effective way of avoiding these destructive situations. Specifically, a better alternative is to raise emotional intelligence levels in the workplace, beginning with the leadership team.

One component of emotional intelligence, discussed in the January 2010 Leader Advisory Letter and tied directly to effective leadership, is emotional self-control. Although we refer to this competency as emotional self control, what we are really talking about is controlling or effectively managing the behavior that our emotions trigger. People with strong emotional self control are able to stay very composed and poised even under stressful situations. For business managers, this is an especially important competency to develop since the team will reflect the demeanor of the leader. If the leader often loses his or her temper, this will create an atmosphere of fear that hampers productivity. If, on the other hand, the leader is unflappable under duress, the atmosphere will be much more positive and supportive of creativity needed to solve today's complex business problems. Let's discuss a few coaching tips that you and your leadership team can employ to enhance your emotional or behavioral self control:

1. Awareness is the first step. Being aware of our feelings, in the moment, is the first step to more effective self management of our behavior. For some tips, please review the [December 2009 advisory letter](#).

2. Keep a journal. Make a list of the situations or events that "trigger" negative emotions such as anger or frustration. Then write out a strategy to deal with these situations in a more positive

and effective manner. Make it a practice to review these strategies often.

3. Pay attention to “self talk”. Tell yourself what it looks and feels like to be under control, focused and composed. Repeat this consciously each day until it becomes “automatic”.

4. Remember-you have a choice. You have the ability to choose your response to any situation. You can choose to “fly off the handle” in stressful situations, or you can also choose to remain calm.

I encourage you to try these steps to help strengthen your behavioral self control or self management as well as that of your leadership team. Let me know how they work for you. Also, if you have encountered any other “best practices” that have worked for you, please do share them.

As always, I encourage you to contact me anytime at [mike@excelleadership.net](mailto:mike@excelleadership.net) with your comments and questions. Also, please give me a call if I can be of assistance with your leadership needs. We'll talk to you again in September. Be well and best regards.

Join our Web-based “community” devoted to open and honest discussions on topics related to leadership challenges and solutions. To join, simply visit [TheExcelLeadershipGroup.net](http://TheExcelLeadershipGroup.net) and click on “Community.”



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