



# Excel Leader Advisory Letter

ISSUED BY THE EXCEL LEADERSHIP GROUP

May 2009

## Excel's Mission Statement

To help business leaders consistently deliver world-class results and achieve higher profits by creating their high performance, values-based culture that fully engages the talents of all associates.

## Thought for May

"There comes a special moment in everyone's life, a moment for which that person was born. That special opportunity, when he seizes it, will fulfill his mission—a mission for which he is uniquely qualified. In that moment, he finds greatness. It is his finest hour."

-Winston Churchill



We have been discussing the critical connection between effective leadership, an organization's work culture and profitability. As we have emphasized, the main point is this: Effective leaders create high performance cultures which foster higher levels of employee engagement and discretionary effort that in turn produce world-class results and higher profits. Enlightened executives, therefore, would do well to place significant focus and resources on the recruitment, development and retention of their leadership talent in order to enhance profitability and secure a real, sustainable competitive advantage in today's global economy. We have also been discussing those dimensions or characteristics that distinguish truly extraordinary leaders from their peers. Thus far, we have touched on seven: high integrity, visioning, communication, change agent or catalyst, resilience, personal power and initiative or bias for action.

Another characteristic that sets extraordinary leaders apart from their peers is achievement drive. Simply put, extraordinary leaders have a proven track record for consistently meeting or exceeding established standards of excellence. What's more, they get things done; and in doing so, they also help others see themselves as valued contributors. In addition, the results that extraordinary leaders achieve are well aligned with the organization's strategy and goals. Here are a few coaching tips that can help you further develop and hone your achievement drive:

1. Understand your mission or purpose. Review the quote above from Winston Churchill. Recognize what it is in life you want to accomplish and why. This is always one of the toughest things for any of us to sort out, but when we do ... the rest of the suggested steps fall in line. Take the time to not only understand your mission or purpose, but go a step further. Understand the emotional "pull" that lies behind your stated mission or purpose in life. In other words, describe how you feel when you envision fulfilling your purpose. Emotions are very powerful motivators and will help keep you moving toward your true purpose.
2. Set clear SMART goals to get there. SMART is an acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time/Resource constrained. I strongly suggest that you ensure that your goals are very specific and measurable ... in other words, make sure you will know when you are "there".
3. Actively seek feedback. Enlist an accountability partner to work with you. Review your goals with that person as a good "reality check" to ensure targets are achievable and resource/time constraints are carefully outlined.
4. Measure your progress. Make it specific and visual. Consider using a Gantt chart similar

to what you would use in managing any project in order to track your goals and accomplishments. Keep your chart available and refer to it often.

5. Celebrate key milestones. Recognize your achievements and “wins” and acknowledge your success. I always ask my clients to keep a journal and request that they log all accomplishments. This can be a real confidence builder, especially when the path to your goal seems overwhelming.

I encourage you to try these steps to augment your drive to achieve. Let me know how they work for you. Also, if you have encountered any other “best practices” for increasing your ability to consistently get things done through others, please do share them.

Thus far, we have discussed eight critical characteristics of “extraordinary” leaders: high integrity, visioning, communications, change agent or catalyst, resilience, personal power, initiative or bias for action and achievement drive. Next month, we will review another critical dimension or characteristic: empathy.

As always, I encourage readers to contact me anytime at [mike@excelleadership.net](mailto:mike@excelleadership.net) with your comments and questions. Also, if Excel can be of assistance with any of your leadership challenges, please give us a call. We'll talk to you again in June. 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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