



# Excel Leader Advisory Letter

ISSUED BY THE EXCEL LEADERSHIP GROUP

November 2009

## Excel's Mission Statement

To help business leaders achieve higher profits by creating a high performance culture and unleashing the talents of all associates.

## Thought for November

"Thomas Edison developed thousands of filaments that didn't work before he discovered the correct one for the incandescent lamp. Abraham Lincoln lost more than a dozen elections before he finally got voted into office. Leaders do not view mistakes as failures, but rather as opportunities to learn something new."

-Lorraine R. Matusak



As an effective leader, you can create your own high octane culture based on greater levels of employee engagement and discretionary effort. Your culture will in turn contribute directly to producing sustainable world-class results and higher profits. Therefore, despite the current recession and all its related challenges to your bottom line, you should continue investing in the development of your own skills and those of your leadership team.

We have been discussing those competencies that distinguish outstanding leaders from their peers. Thus far, we have touched on thirteen: high integrity, visioning, communication, change agent or catalyst, resilience, personal power, initiative or bias for action, achievement drive, empathy, intentionality, powerful influence, organizational awareness and developing others.

This month, I'd like to talk about building trust and its connection to effective leadership. Building trust is one of the most essential ingredients to an effective, high-performance culture. As Stephen M.R. Covey points out in his book [The Speed of Trust](#), there are two key components to building trust in an organization: Integrity and Competence. On the one hand, leaders need to act with integrity. By the same token, leaders also have the opportunity to demonstrate their competence by delivering desired results consistently, on time and within budget.

With that in mind, let's discuss a few coaching tips that you and your leadership team can employ to build trust in your organization:

1. Focus on relationship building. Concentrate on developing the depth as well as the breadth of your relationships. Certainly, we want to establish as large a network of people as possible. However, at the same time, we need to make sure that we listen carefully to each individual that we interact with to insure we understand both thoughts and feelings.
2. Always deliver on commitments. Develop a reputation as someone the organization can count on to keep your word. For example, if an associate brings you an issue and you agree to "check into it", then make sure you follow through and give feedback to the individual on a timely basis. Even in these times, when leaders are being asked to take on more tasks with fewer resources, it is critically important to follow through with any commitments made to associates.
3. Make yourself accessible. Make time for your associates. Build a reputation as a leader that people can go to with their issues knowing they will get a fair hearing. Also, wear a smile ... even in the stressful times. It will not only help you get through challenging times, it will also

communicate to your team that you are approachable.

4. Admit to and “own” your mistakes. Don’t pass the buck or play the “blame game” when results are less than desirable or mistakes are made. People will gain respect and trust for the leader who is willing to take responsibility for their share of failures.

5. Protect interests. Make sure that the interests of those not present are protected and fairly represented as well. Also, protect information that people have shared with you in confidence. Finally, take special care that those with less power in your organization receive fair treatment.

These are a few of the many areas where an investment in coaching can really pay off. I encourage you to try these steps to help build trust in your company’s culture. Let me know how they work for you. Also, if you have encountered any other “best practices” that have worked for you in this area, please do share them. Next month, we will review another critical dimension or characteristic: emotional self awareness.

As always, I encourage readers to contact me anytime at [mike@excelleadership.net](mailto:mike@excelleadership.net) with your comments and questions. Also, if I can be of assistance to you with your leadership needs, please contact me. I’ll talk to you again in December. 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.”



phone: 309-370-5040

e-mail: [mike@excelleadership.net](mailto:mike@excelleadership.net)

website: [www.excelleadership.net](http://www.excelleadership.net)

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on your company's leadership team.*