



Excel Leader Advisory Letter

ISSUED BY THE EXCEL LEADERSHIP GROUP

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Excel's Mission Statement

We help executives create and sustain a high performance, values-based culture that fully engages the talents of all associates to consistently deliver world-class results and achieve higher profits.

Thought for November

"Next to physical survival, the greatest need of a human being is psychological survival—to be understood, to be affirmed, to be validated, to be appreciated."

-Stephen R. Covey



In the September issue, we talked about the critical connection between effective leadership, an organization's work culture and profitability. The main lesson for all executives is that effective leaders create high performance cultures which in turn produce better results and higher profits. Therefore, prudent executives would do well to place significant emphasis and resources on the recruitment and development of their leadership teams in order to improve their bottom lines and secure a real, sustainable competitive advantage in today's global economy.

In last month's issue, we began looking at the primary characteristics which make effective leaders "extraordinary" by introducing the first and certainly the most important trait or characteristic of an "extraordinary" leader: high integrity. We also talked about why integrity is so vital to building trust in an organization. Further, as Stephen M.R. Covey points out in his book *The Speed of Trust*, a high trust organization has a significant high speed and lower cost advantage over its competitors.

This month, let's discuss a second important characteristic of "extraordinary" leaders: visioning. That is to say, "extraordinary" leaders possess the ability to create a clear and compelling vision that maps the company's future direction. The key words here are clear and compelling: it must be very clear and understandable to each person in the company. There can be no doubt as to what the company's direction is as well as the reason why it is pursuing that particular path. Everyone in the organization must be able to both relate to and embrace the company's vision. Just as important, everyone must be able to clearly identify how they can contribute to the achievement of that vision. In this way, the organization is well aligned to reach its goals.

The second criterion for a good vision is that it is compelling. More specifically, the journey toward the vision must be worthy of everyone's effort. The vision must be a very aspirational as well as ambitious goal. To be sure, it must inspire people to stretch their capabilities and put forth their best efforts to help the company attain its goals.

Finally, the "extraordinary" leader must continually communicate the vision with real passion. It is the leader after all that makes the vision credible, worthwhile and attainable. People then are drawn into the journey and commit to making it happen!

To summarize then, the "extraordinary" leader's role here is to create and articulate a clear and compelling vision for the organization that people will understand, relate to, embrace and support with their commitment and best efforts to achieve. What is your company's vision for the future and how well is it understood and supported by your team?

Thus far, we have discussed two of the most important characteristics of "extraordinary" leaders: high

integrity and visioning. Next month, we will discuss a third critical characteristic: communications. As always, I encourage readers to contact me anytime at mike@excelleadership.net with your comments and questions. Remember also that despite the economic challenges that we currently face, we have much to be thankful for as we enter this holiday season. Have a safe and joyous Thanksgiving and we'll talk to you again in December . 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 and click on "Community."



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