



Excel Leader Advisory Letter

ISSUED BY THE EXCEL LEADERSHIP GROUP

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Excel's Mission Statement

To help business leaders create a high performance culture that unleashes the talents of all associates and achieves higher profits.

Thought for September

“Leadership derives naturally from a commitment to service. You know that you’re practicing servant leadership if your followers become wiser, healthier, more autonomous — and more likely to become servant leaders themselves.”

-Jim Stuart



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 eleven: high integrity, visioning, communication, change agent or catalyst, resilience, personal power, initiative or bias for action, achievement drive, empathy, intentionality and powerful influence.

This month, I'd like to talk about organizational awareness and its connection to effective leadership. Organizational awareness can be described as the ability to recognize both the social and political dynamics that occur on teams, in businesses and even communities. People with this skill can accurately read key power relationships and make effective use of these relationships to accomplish desired results.

With that in mind, let's discuss a few coaching tips that can help you and your team strengthen organizational awareness:

1. Seek out a good mentor. Having a mentor can certainly be very helpful in providing guidance and support. In this instance, pick someone who has a proven track record in recognizing and using power structures effectively to get things done.
2. Recognize the unwritten and unspoken culture. Ask yourself these questions: What actions and behaviors tend to get projects approved in your organization? What about those actions and behaviors that result in rejection?
3. Understand informal structures. Determine what procedures and practices tend to support getting positive results in your organization.
4. Identify successful people. Take some time to list the people who have risen to higher levels of responsibility quickly in your organization. Get to know them and ask them about their “success formula”.
5. Employ your empathy skills. Remember that organizational awareness is, at its core, empathy on an organizational scale. Listen to what is going on in your organization and

consistently demonstrate commitment to success.

These are a few of the many areas where investing in coaching can really pay off. I encourage you to try these steps to strengthen your keen awareness of the political and social currents in your organization. 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: developing others.

As always, I encourage readers to contact me anytime at mike@excelleadership.net with your comments and questions. Also, if I can be of assistance to you with your leadership challenges, please give me a call. I'll talk to you again in October. 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 and click on “Community.”



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*Experience what coaching can do for you and others
on your company's leadership team.*