



# Excel Leader Advisory Letter

ISSUED BY THE EXCEL LEADERSHIP GROUP

August 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 unleashes the talents of all associates.

## Thought for August

"I am convinced that leadership is the single most important ingredient in business management, and that those attitudes of the chief executive which inspire his people to stretch and to excel contribute as much as 80 or 90 percent of a company's success."

-Harold S. Geneen



As an effective leader, you can create your own high performance culture which will foster higher levels of employee engagement and discretionary effort. This in turn contributes directly to producing world-class results and higher profits. Therefore, despite the current recession and all its related challenges, you should continue investing in the development and retention of their leadership talent.

We have been discussing those characteristics that distinguish truly extraordinary leaders from their peers. Thus far, we have touched on ten: high integrity, visioning, communication, change agent or catalyst, resilience, personal power, initiative or bias for action, achievement drive, empathy and intentionality.

This month, I'd like to talk about powerful influence and its connection to effective leadership. Today's complex organizations compel leaders to be more consensus builders and less directive in their styles. Successful leaders know they must convince or win people over to their positions rather than dictating. Moreover, we know that employees today are not satisfied with explanations that merely cover the "what to do's". They want to know "the whys" as well.

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

1. Develop a strong rapport. Make networking and connecting with others purposeful goals. The more bridges you build with those in your sphere of influence, the more open others will be to your positions and points of view.
2. Timing is everything ... well, almost. Practice using your intuitive skills to know when it is the right time to be assertive with your position, when to make suggestions and when to ask questions and listen.
3. Frame your messages. Know your audience and tailor your message to them. Use language that they will understand and identify with. Become a good storyteller as stories can be a very useful tool in making a key point.
4. Use credible sources. Don't hesitate to employ data and statistics to make your case. Real life testimonials where your approach has actually worked can be effective as well.
5. Practice, practice, practice. The more you use influencing and persuading, the more

adept you will become. Seek feedback from others on your performance, especially from those known to be effective at this skill. Use this feedback to strengthen your performance.

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 ability to persuade and influence others. 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: organizational 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 Excel can be of assistance to you with your leadership challenges, please give me a call. I'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.”



phone: 309-370-5040

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

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

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