



Excel Leader Advisory Letter

ISSUED BY THE EXCEL LEADERSHIP GROUP

July 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 July

"There is little difference in people, but that little difference makes a big difference. That little difference is attitude. The big difference is whether it is positive or negative."

-W. Clement Stone



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

This month, I'd like to talk about intentionality and its impact on effective leadership. Someone strong in intentionality is very clear, purposeful and deliberate about the desired outcomes he or she wants to create. In other words, they know very clearly what results they want to achieve and are very consistent in their efforts to bring about those desired outcomes. They also make decisions and take actions that are very consistent with their goals and values. Now, let's discuss a few coaching tips that can help strengthen your intentionality and your effectiveness as a leader:

1. Be clear about your goals and values. Take the time to truly assess what you want to achieve in life. As well, define your principles and what you truly value. These will serve to be important guideposts to help you make important decisions on which goals are worthy of your efforts and talents.

2. Learn to become actively intentional. As an example, look at your week ahead. Do you have a meeting, conversation or other event that you are dreading? Take a moment and write a brief sentence to describe the ideal outcome of this event. What are a few steps you can take to affect this ideal outcome? Put the plan in action and evaluate the results. If the results don't quite meet expectations, don't get discouraged. Takeaway the positives as well as what could be done differently next time to better influence the outcome. After all, that is what continuous improvement is all about!

3. Avoid unnecessary distractions. Don't let the unavoidable interruptions and distractions of the day deter you from your focus on desired outcomes. Stay on course toward your ideal outcomes. Also, one approach that has worked for me is to take the time to clean and clear your desk or workspace. Get rid of the "clutter". Work on one thing at a time and make sure that "one thing" is tied directly to your goals and ideal outcomes.

4. Learn and practice the value of retreating. This need not be a formal retreat where

we go away to a secluded spot for a week. What we are talking about here is taking a few minutes before a big meeting or event to close your eyes and think about that ideal outcome. What is it that I want to see accomplished here? Write down a few ideas about some things you can do to positively influence the outcome to make it as ideal as you can. Even a small investment in “retreat” time to mentally prepare can make a big difference in how you are able to influence the actual result to match your ideal outcome.

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 strengthen your intentionality. Let me know how they work for you. Also, if you have encountered any other “best practices” for improving your intentionality, please do share them. Next month, we will review another critical dimension or characteristic: powerful influence.

As always, I encourage readers to contact me anytime at 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 August. 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.”



phone: 309-370-5040

e-mail: mike@excelleadership.net

website: www.excelleadership.net

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