



LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS: MAINTAIN 20/20 VISION IN 2020

Ask anyone how they are, and most will say, “Busy.” “Busy-ness” is not good for your business. You have to see your priorities clearly and make time for *leadership*. This takes discipline and commitment as well as clearly delineating what only you can do from what you should delegate to others.

The discipline of leadership definitely includes placing a high priority on the coaching and development of people for both individual and team effectiveness. It also includes strategic time management, living the organization’s and your values, self-awareness, and maintaining your well-being.

We recommend two articles published by HBR, which were written by Michael E. Porter and Nitin Nohria: [How CEOs Manage Time](#) and [The Leaders Calendar-What Do CEOs Actually Do?](#) Consider that seventy percent of CEOs’ time is spent with internal constituencies. It is hard to discern from Porter and Nohria’s work how much of that time is spent on actually coaching and developing people. One of the greatest investments of time for leaders is developing their direct reports into high performers who live the values and are team players. At EXCN, we believe that coaching frees up a leader’s time and creates a culture of accountability. Even at the senior-most levels, learning is an equal opportunity advantage. The more leaders learn, the more competent the organization becomes. Having said that, many leaders do not view their role as that of being coaches, but rather as individual contributors or doers.

We know an executive (John) who has seven direct reports that really want coaching from him. Unfortunately, John is so busy delivering for his boss that he doesn’t make the time required for coaching his people. His best people resent this deficit and his poor performers continually get away with lack of delivery. This dynamic sets up a vicious cycle of lack of guidance, resentment, and poor delivery, leading to dismal results. Sound familiar?

Another example...Melissa managed external relationships excellently, yet never made the time for her direct reports. When she did meet one-on-one with her people, she often pointed out what they were *not* doing rather than focusing on their good work and contributions. Needless to say, there were issues of morale, engagement, productivity, and innovation on her team, also leading to lackluster results and a negative perception of Melissa’s leadership effectiveness.

The discipline of leadership demands that leaders put time on their calendar to ensure they meet the demands of being a leader. This includes:

1. **Managing time strategically.** Leaders need to prioritize wisely and strategically and not waste time on what they should have coached others to do. They also need to do what only they can do.
2. **Growing their people.** Perhaps most important to the future viability of the organization is a leader’s role in developing, coaching, and mentoring the next generation of leaders. Even senior executives benefit from being coached; coaching is not only for those further down the organization. Usually, leaders have to consciously build their own effectiveness and skills at delivering coaching.

3. **Being aware of and clearly understanding their own impact on others.** Everything a leader does and says may as well be in neon lights. The example set from the top cascades through the ranks. This self-awareness is part of a leader's emotional intelligence.
4. **Walking their talk.** This goes to credibility and to trust. If people do not trust a leader and do not believe he or she is credible, why would they follow that leader? How would they be inspired? Leaders need to live the organization's values if they expect anyone else to.
5. **Taking care of their own executive vitality and being supportive of others' efforts to attain/maintain vitality.** If leaders are not energetic and in good health, nothing else really matters. Or is possible.

In our 2013 [*Leadership Effectiveness: Making a Difference*](#) Breakaway Performance tip, we highlighted Jacko Maree, former CEO of Standard Bank Group, South Africa. Jacko Maree's "did I?" leadership questions provided inspiration as well as guidelines for leadership to his people. Under Jacko's leadership, the Standard Bank share price increased from 21 rand (\$1.37 US) to 118 rand (\$7.79), the dividend per share went up almost seven times, and the group's market capitalization grew from 30 billion rand (\$1.96 billion) to 190 billion rand (\$12.41 billion). The bank operates in 18 African countries.

As you enter 2020, how clear is your vision regarding your own discipline of leadership? Is it 20/20 or not so clear? How can you refocus so that you are putting your time and effort where they will have the greatest positive impact?