

Behavioural Digest

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Leading From The Front By Collette Murray

Because I work in the area of leadership development and happen to own a couple of ponies, I'm fascinated by the research behind equine assisted learning. One of the concepts is how leadership happens in a herd and how that relates to the world of business leadership:

Leading from the front - the alpha mare leads and sets the direction, pace and direction. What we often see in business is leaders who are so far out in front they've left their team trailing behind them struggling to keep up or dispersing and doing their own thing.

Leading from the side – each member takes responsibility for everyone staying together. In business, leading from the side is a coaching position where curiosity, inquiry and support are given to ensure that all members of the team are able to deliver the requirements of their role.

Leading from behind – ensuring that no member is left behind. The benefit of this role in business is the ability to take a big picture view of what's happening in the organisation, to maintain momentum, energy and flow.

How do you adapt your style, leverage your team's skills and work with those around you to ensure that your "herd" is moving forward with you?

"Just Get On With It" By Walter Hufnagel

This is the clarion call of the classic impatient manager that does not have the ability to explain properly what they wanted in the first place. Ferdinand Fournies' research explains why 'people don't do what they're supposed to do'. He states that 50% of people don't do what they're supposed to do because they don't know what it is! The observable 'tell' in this case is the impatient managers response when the things they expected to happen didn't happen. Phrases like "just get on with it" are an outburst of denial that this managers act of failure is not his or her fault.

On the more upbeat side, another famous behavioural savant, Dr Aubrey Daniels talks about 'how to bring out the best in people'. This starting point requires the manager to see their result-based request from the performers perspective. This act of understanding the viewpoint of the performer requires the manager to have thought about the creation of the performer's workplace environment at the outset of the working relationship. What follows in this scenario is usually a successful result.

History is littered with people trying to control other humans & getting more and more furious when it doesn't all work out their way, it doesn't have to be like this, there's a better, smarter way.

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Put Your Own Mask On First

By Howard Lees

A few people fed back to me about last month's piece 'a dearth of self awareness'. The general gist was that it is sad these people don't think they can say anything about their manager's poor leadership quirks. These leaders are recommending that their people view articles and videos that demonstrate great leadership while exhibiting poor leadership themselves and I guess getting zero feedback on it. The journey to high performance is best done if it starts from the top, which means that these seemingly-deluded leaders need some sort of a wake up call: A difficult prospect for the folks looking up at the ugly underside of the sunflower. Hope is not a strategy so I have turned to the great philosopher Edward Sheeran; I am paraphrasing here - "Before you can save someone else, you've got to save yourself."

Waving or Drowning

By Helena Rudge

Susan Prebble's piece in the December issue of the 'Behavioural Digest' argued that sending Christmas cards is partly guilt, partly habit: I would argue that we send cards as a way of reconnecting to old friends or relatives because it's beneficial to both parties. If Covid-19 has taught us anything, it's taught us that connecting to other people is important. Sometimes we just wave, smile and get a smile back. But other times it allows us to notice whether people are waving or drowning.

The Best Leader I Worked For

By Howard Lees

The number one lesson in leadership I learned from the best leader I worked for was the importance of personal integrity. He honoured his obligations, he always turned up early, he always insisted on meeting agendas, he always returned calls; he still does. His principle was, if you can't organise and be reliable then how on earth could you lead the delivery of a complex project. The certainty he created by insisting on these basic standards spilled over into everything and everyone. The troops loved the discipline; clients loved it too, it was infectious. Everyone likes certainty, everyone likes being respected, everyone appreciates integrity. Projects get delivered, talent gets developed, business is successful.

Shades of BMT

- Threat-free feedback is like gold, it can be very easily gathered anonymously.
- An awful lot of turmoil in organisations occurs when people feel obliged to answer a question with "yes" when they know the real answer is "no".
- Don't be dismayed when your people act like they didn't hear you. Calm and persistent patience will get you there.

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The Best of Both Worlds

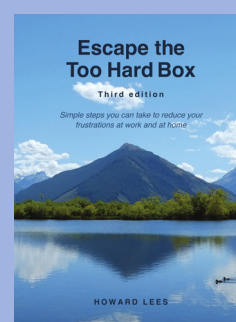
By Susan Prebble

Scott Geller has explained many times to amused conference audiences the test to detect the difference between education and training: "Ask yourself," he says, "Do you want your children to get sex education or sex training?" For sure, knowledge workers get lots of education and manual workers get lots of training. Both get qualifications; over time, both gain reputations based on their individual performance.

Manual workers are rated by the speed and quality of their work. Many manual workers produce results that can easily be measured. Some manual workers get paid bonuses, usually calculated weekly; the time delay from 'work to pay' is short. When asked, manual workers commonly rate their pay as the most important aspect of their job.

Most knowledge workers do not get a weekly bonus; the nature of their work makes that difficult. Some may get a company bonus which will usually be annual, and therefore delayed. Over time it will become an expected extra part of overall income. Knowledge workers like to utilise their education and most of them like to work in a positive environment. If the leaders in their organisation are also educated, they will realise that the key is to create a good place for people to work.

The traditional perspective for knowledge workers is very different from that of manual workers but it doesn't need to be. The high performing workplace can be created for everyone if the leaders understand how to create that 'great workplace' for everyone. It's not the money, it's the workplace environment, the education and the training.



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