

## Leadership in Changing Times

*“The skills, abilities and competencies to win the battles behind us, may not be the skills, abilities and competencies to win the battles before us.”*

As the needs of our businesses and communities change and the dynamics and demands of leadership increases, I would suggest there must be a corresponding adjustment in how leaders operate their businesses, mobilize community resources, build community capacity and interact with staff. All combine to ensure that today’s leaders are fulfilling their roles in building strong (both figuratively and literally), sustainable businesses and thriving communities, for today and into the future.

If we see and understand the changed “ecosystem” in which we live today, we clearly understand that the “command and control” autocratic approach to leadership is not what the times require. It is not the approach that will get best from our people nor will it be the approach that solves the complex and multifaceted challenges that we face today. The days of the individual on the white horse swooping into town to save the day are long gone, the challenges we face are too much for any one person to solve. Instead, I would suggest the times actually require a “command with limited or even no control” approach. In short, I believe the leadership approach the times require (and the one we I think many long for) is what I to refer to as a “*Community Builder*”!

The Community Builder has the ability to marshal all the forms of human capital (among them intelligence, passion, effort, creativity, compassion, and pride) of the various stakeholders they interact with and move them towards a common goal. Rather than one who *requires*, they are leaders who *inspire*.

The Community Builder brings significant value to those they serve and those they lead. They channel the energy of stake holders by acting as a catalyst, convener and force multipliers. The Community Builder has the capacity and skill to tap into the collective intelligence of all stakeholders to create great plans that have deep buy-in and actually produce meaningful solutions and tangible results.

Community Builders understand that the times not only require them to marshal the human capital within their Departments/Organization but also across the community. They can mobilize community resources, engage and build trusting relationships with elected officials, business leaders and everyday citizens, to ensure that they and their Departments are fulfilling their vital role in the communities they serve.

Community Builders are ***Agents of Change*** who understands the dynamics of how to effectively change themselves and effect positive change around them. They have tools in their tool kits (both tangible and intangible) for effecting this change. They understand that to carry out change today they must know how to build trusting relationships. They use their credible influence to act as a catalyst for change within in their organization and in the community. The Community Builder also understands that moving others into action today isn't about flower words or fiery speeches. I would suggest that it is not about "Rah, Rah" but more about helping someone see the power they have within themselves to get things done and make things happen. A Community Builder takes an “asset based” approach to motivating others; helping us see our true potential, they help us build a critical path to that potential; they encourage and support us on that path, and celebrate us as we moved towards our full potential. All the while, making us believe that it was all our doing!

The Community Builder is a ***Proactive, Holistic Systems Thinker*** who utilizes a proactive, system thinking approach to maximizing the use of time, managing the performance of others, problem solving & engaging stakeholders. As an example the Community Builder has set aside “the open door policy” of communication for a proactive system that taps into the collective intelligence and energy of all the stakeholders, a dynamic system for

the two way exchange of information. One that; gathers thoughts, ideas, concerns, prioritizes those thoughts, ideas and concerns, implements and brings to fruition the best of the thoughts and ideas as well as addressing the deepest concerns. Such an approach creates greater alignment between our Departments “say-do” gap, it creates effective ideas and innovative solutions, cultivates a greater sense of self determination, and increases morale.

The Community Builder is a *Catalysts for Responsibility*. They cultivate a sense ownership in all stakeholders; those they lead, work with, work for and the communities they serve. They realize that there are proven ways to improve efficiency, effectiveness and get more with less. And that these ways are often intangible, take for example Pride. Pride is a proven force of human capital that when instilled, cultivated and deployed creates significant impact. Investing time and energy into building both organizational and individual stakeholder pride will provide greater dividends than any other tool in a leader’s tool kit. Deep Organizational pride leads to innovation and creative ideas, increased participation in problem solving, a sense of ownership that creates a “the Department is a reflection of me” attitude and higher morale. Individuals with a deep sense of pride regularly exceeded job expectations, they take ownership their specific task, they live out the spirit of their job description and not just the letter and they need less supervision. The cumulative effective of increased pride is more done with less!

The enlightened leader not only gets that change is here but is doing something about it. Because they understand the critical nature of their work and its impact, they are willing to do the changing that makes the greatest impact first, change themselves! Not because they are “sick”, because you don’t need to be sick to get better (as the old adage goes) but because it is what the times require. They are not changing their values or principles; they are looking at the changed ecosystem around them and adjusting their leadership approaches accordingly.

I believe every individual, every department, every neighborhood and every community is one idea, one voice, one action – one person – away from being better tomorrow than it was yesterday. By understanding the leadership approach the times require, you can be that one person!