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Leading By Design

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ISBN-10 1-60145-002-8

ISBN-13 978-1-60145-002-9

First Edition - 2006

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Printed in the United States of America

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LEADING BY DESIGN

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Part One: Reconstructed Leadership

I divided this book into seven parts. Part One, consisting of the first eleven chapters, moves into the 21st Century by describing the new world facing those at "the Pinnacle of Decision Making. Introducing a new model of leadership action and executive practice, Part One illuminates the path to Reconstructed Leadership, the secret ingredient in the recipe of meaningful success. Part One provides the foundation for Part Two.

The first several chapters discuss the changing world of the C-Level executive. In total, they present a model of the executive team as an appreciative Evolutionary Guidance System. This model describes the crucial dimensions of executive action and lays the foundation for a renewed experience of executive life.

While chapter one, two and three describe the new executive, his or her vision, and the transition from Electronic Commerce to Virtual Commerce, chapters four, five six, and seven discuss 21st Century leadership strategy, the environment of Electronic Commerce program management, design inquiry, and the relationship between the Chief Information Officer and the Business Intelligence Group. Part One concludes with chapters eight, nine, ten, and eleven in which the book discusses the transition from manager to leader, the scope of the changing leadership world, the new role of executive life, and finally the need to move well beyond 20th Century executive thinking and management practice.

Chapter One: The New Millennium Executive

Introduction

Management is a difficult profession at best. At its worse, it becomes an unbelievable nightmare. Recently, I had the misfortune of suffering through an unbelievable nightmare, a really tough experience for me and everyone involved. It was the proverbial project from hell. You know, the one that compels you to constantly look over you shoulder as you move from one crisis to another.

This project reaffirmed many of the principles I had learned throughout my life, re-taught ones that I should never have forgotten, and introduced several new lessons I probably would have never learned had I missed this great experience. Doubtlessly, I enjoyed the satisfaction of succeeding against all odds. Our team snatched success out of the jaws of defeat. My greatest satisfaction, however, came from helping others expand their professional horizons by rethinking how they should design complex projects as we enter the 21st Century.

As with many things in life, the project was not all bad; it had a few redeeming qualities. For one thing, it contributed to the growth of my team. We experienced every conceivable management contradiction and clumsily tripped through numerous shortcomings disguised as success. For some of us, life does not get any better than this. The problem in this situation, of course, is the emotional pain we are forced to endure to enjoy such hard won growth. In the high-tech industry, emotional pain characterizes the workplace. Although individuals are resilient, endurable, and capable, believe me when I tell you, organizations are fragile.

Usually, I enjoy visiting book stores. But lately I have become bothered by the great number of new management titles that come out every year. How can a society produce so many experts with so little to say? The glut of ideas sold today discourages me from writing this book. But I do not offer yet another fad nor do I intend

to experiment with you, your organization, or your professional future.

In this book, I simply present an executive model for effectively, efficiently, and profitably engaging in business at the dawn of the 21st Century. Unlike the trends and fads of the last few years, I do not advocate re-engineering, downsizing, business partnering, outsourcing, jumping the curve, estimating the cycles, riding the wave, challenging the boardrooms, or inflicting chaos. Rather, I merely encourage executives and others within their sphere to take care of the basics effectively to successfully guide and grow their businesses intelligently. With the advent of modern information technologies, their complex networks, and the rapid commercial acceptance of the Internet, executives gain a much improved opportunity for success than at any time in history - if they would but understand the strategic value of these new business tools.

Hypergrowth Through Virtual Commerce

Recently, a few highly influential business leaders have begun to seriously discuss the fallacy of re-engineering, downsizing, and right sizing. Echoing Andy Grove, the former Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Intel, they realize that a great company cannot shrink to regain leadership success but must stay on top to remain great. You are a rare executive if your company loses its leadership position only to regain it later. Too many competitors hunger to replace you. Great executives understand that, regardless of the short term euphoria associated with downsizing, companies must grow to enjoy success.

Rapid growth challenges the entire organization. Over the last ten years, Dell Computers has grown phenomenally. But working there could easily shorten your life. The current Chief Executive Officer is beginning to appreciate this as he moves his company to adopt less painful approaches to management practice and seek new insights into leadership.

It is not lost on me that top flight companies, especially in high technology industries, produce even more stress than revenues.

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Paradoxically, if the Chief Executive Officers of such high stress organizations guided their enterprises as appreciative systems, they could possibly achieve even higher profits while simultaneously reducing stress. It all comes down to vision. Guided by an innovative, noble, and in-depth vision, your enterprise will move from growth to hyper-growth, the golden apple of only a few. Lacking such a vision, your success will overtake you. For the uninspired executive, success ultimately breeds personal and business failure, if they attain success at all.

Thought Break One

People can be difficult to get along with, even when their managers look out for them. Implementing an appreciative human systems environment does not mean that staff appreciation will follow. On the contrary, if the design of the human activity system is under-conceptualized, the executive insight over idealistic, or the political acumen inexperienced, the appreciative human activity system will be anything but appreciative.

Regardless of one's intention to implement the most exciting and responsive work environment possible, people will be people. Remember Agency Theory? It reminds us that people work in an organization for many different reasons and competing values. While management may project goodwill and appreciation for those in the organization, they should remember that some of the best people may care less about the management vision of an organization than their own hidden wishes which may conflict with those of management. In this situation, management needs to realize that organizational influence may reside elsewhere than in the Boardroom. While individuals are very strong, organizations are indeed very fragile. It is vital that management engage in an appropriately developed design inquiry during the design of the appreciative HAS. Do you know what an HAS is? Do you know how to engage in design inquiry? Think about it.

Chapter Two: The New Millennium Vision

Introducing The Vision

The concept of Vision remains controversial even today. Probably we all have heard about the supposed comments attributed to President Bush the Elder regarding this “vision nonsense.” I do not know whether he really uttered such words, but I know from experience that a number of executives just do not get it. They speak of values but ignore vision. In so doing, they reveal their personal limits. True enough that values are the foundation of vision; but lacking vision as an instrument of action, values remain disconnected from action and are relegated to the junk heap of controversy, becoming the mere fuel of corporate discussion groups.

Vision illuminates both the mission and goals of the enterprise. Vision grounds the mission by clarifying what the organization aspires to be. It defines the goals by identifying the desired achievements that form the numerous action plans of management. Thus, from executive vision emerges the components of all organization processes for which strategies and tactics become the drivers. Constrained by the vision, strategies define the path management is to follow to achieve long term goals. Tactics outline how management is to achieve short term programs to support the related strategies. In this sense, then, vision represents the synthesis of all tactics since it is both long term and strategic.

Vision conveys values, illuminates the mission, and defines the goals. It introduces strategy and enables tactics. Without vision as the organizing framework of executive success, management drifts about and lacks guidance. Soon arbitrariness, negative chaos, ineffectiveness, and growing inefficiency emerge. Inevitably, lacking an in-depth and noble vision, companies begin to retort defensively that they are at their best when things are at their worst. I have heard this groan of anguish so often that I cannot forget it even though I would like to.

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Vision means excitement, excitement about something in one's life offering greater possibilities for the future. Although visions ignite the present, they inflame an entire lifetime. Vision means connectedness, connecting the past with the future through consistency in thought and action. Visions demand more than dreams. They require an organizing view based on considerable knowledge, experience, and wisdom. Authentic visions enrich the human heart, fuel the imagination, and ignite action.

An authentic vision can be felt and experienced as well as known and articulated. Real visions appeal to the intellect and the emotions. They are creative. Visions offer solutions and actions. They can be ignoble or noble, shallow or deep. A noble Vision links the visionary with the beneficiary, and when noble and deep enough, transforms past failure and the present situation into success.

Lacking a noble and in-depth vision, success denigrates into failure. Since noble visions can never be nightmares, they exceed dreams. While dreams freely stimulate conversations, enliven psychoanalysis, and often induce more sleep, visions change worlds and fully awaken the visionary. Dreams require passivity, fatigue, and the dreamer's retreat from reality; visions demand activity, courage and advancement. True visionaries are wide awake.

Visions require the visionary to be fully awake. While dreams impact only dreamers, visions impact entire cultures. While dreams require only sleepers, visions require leaders and participants. Dreams require individuals, visions require teams. Executives who dismiss the value of visions often capitulate to fear or ignorance. Unlike dreams, visions inspire courage and hope. Lacking a noble and in-depth vision, executives remain incomplete. And we all know that incomplete executives never get the job done.

If noble and deep visions fuel the genesis of executive success, why do we have so many skeptical executives? Perhaps this occurs because the idea of success is so personal?. One person's success is another person's failure. Probably the skeptics themselves lack a noble vision that articulates the need for others with whom to enjoy the fruits of success? Too many executives really do believe their own hype. MCI WorldCom and Enron have become the archetypical

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models of such executive hype. Noble visions humble the great leaders. Since great leaders focus more on their visions than themselves, they do not even realize that they are great.

Shallow visions inflate the pretenders who focus more on themselves as great leaders than on their visions. I have heard too many executives claim that they alone accomplished turnarounds. Even when they shared credit with others, they did so as a technique of manipulation rather than as an expression of gratitude.

Visions provide the overarching purpose that
link the many dimensions of executive life.
Visions really are indispensable to success.

Skilled executives communicate their visions to their entire organization at an appropriate level of priority. Since the organizing vision becomes the driver of enterprise-wide change, executives empower managers to act on the vision so that each executive achieves immediate results as (s)he formalizes the new approaches to business operations necessitated by 21st Century strategies such as e-commerce. During the project implementation process, operational managers group all gains by type and carefully evaluate them against the all-important cost to profit ratios. Vision organizes the operational activities and gives direction to management action.

Electronic Commerce and Your Vision

Over the years, so many people have told me that visions are a lot to do about nothing. A vision and a dollar will get one a cup of coffee, they lament. Or better yet, they tell me that the time spent on discussing vision could have been better used to get something done. Such expressions always leave me dumfounded. I wonder if the critic fully understands what (s)he has just said. More often than not I give the critic the benefit of the doubt by assuming that (s)he fails to fully grasp the nature and power of the authentic executive vision, and its associated processes. I am not sure, but perhaps the critic's

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previous experience with the visioning process was poor. Or maybe the critic just does not get it.

I then go on to mention that the leader's vision gives the organization its formative reservoir of power. Management will discover that its reason for action lies within the vision and flows from it. Since the vision contains the operational values of the enterprise, as the formative elements of the vision, skilled managers turn to the vision to examine all progress and to verify the integrity of management decision making.

Beyond this, I remind the critics of vision that it is the vision that gives direction to the mission statement and illuminates both long and short term goals as elements of strategy. Indeed, I remind the critics that management is fully incapable of moving the organization toward measurable action via strategies and tactics without an appropriate vision. Moreover, since the leader owns the responsibility for defining the most formative components of the vision, managers exist in a leadership vacuum without it.

Visions may be global, national, corporate, and even personal. Occasionally a personal vision may be global, national, and corporate simultaneously. Fundamentally, however, visions precede strategy. Without a doubt, they are the formative source of all leadership power. Fundamentally, the vision is the key attribute of leadership.

This book offers an organizing framework for developing your own 21st Century executive vision. If you have gained the experience to see into the future only a little, you will understand that Electronic Commerce should occupy a central place in your new vision. Executives can benefit from the efficiencies of Electronic Commerce by framing this desire for E-Commerce within his or her in-depth and noble vision to develop a hyper-growth company by engaging in Virtual Commerce.

As one might suppose, this vision is immense. It calls for a radical change in the way executives, as persons of great business, personal, and social responsibility, view their roles in the world of enterprise, roles now changed by Electronic Commerce (also termed EC, or e-commerce).

When I speak of e-commerce, I mean the business strategies, leadership visions, management approaches, structures, and human and technical systems consisting of the intelligence, knowledge, information, data, repositories, computers, networks, software, and other information technologies that make the efficient, tightly integrated, modern business processes possible.

Moreover, when I speak of Virtual Commerce (also termed v-commerce), I mean the infusion of e-commerce with a noble and in-depth vision designed to attain profitable business operations globally, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Hypergrowth occurs whenever an enterprise grows from nothing to one billion dollars or more in revenue in five years or less. By Vision 21[®], I mean an enterprise-wide, multi-domain, information management and strategic action approach that assists executives in articulating their postmodern v-commerce enterprise visions.

The Vision Building Process

Visions emerge as our personal response to the urge to do things better or to make life better for ourselves, and hopefully others. At the executive level, visions frequently form within the environment of competitive necessity, that is, they emerge from the competitive desire to do better than the next guy.

Visions are not high-level dreams or under-conceptualized yearnings. They emerge from personal depth, intelligence, wisdom, and visionary acumen. When we adequately articulate our visions, we tell others not only how our vision will work, but how well. We also tell others what things must come together and how these things might or might not go right. In this sense, visions become real whenever we can clarify them from top to bottom. In visioning, if we do not know what to say, we do not know what we mean. Like Aristotle would remind us, if we cannot say what we mean, we do not know what we mean.

Leaders commence the visioning process by producing an initial vision statement. Here leaders reveal how the vision will work and design the detailed visioning process. They then begin to

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articulate the core characteristics of the process to establish how well the vision will work. These characteristics define several core factors that influence the visioning process. These include the flow of the process, desired output to be achieved, performance requirements, technology involved in the vision, organization of the vision itself, and the organization to be involved or impacted by the vision.

Next, leaders identify the performance measures and define the objectives well enough to clarify the things that have to go well. Some of these may include the cost of the vision and its quality, cycle-time, and responsiveness objectives. Along with these, leaders articulate the specific critical success and failure factors of the vision to prepare for eventual trouble. The visionary should be wise enough to think about the things that might not go so well and the reasons for these failures. Interestingly, success and failure factors are associated with people, technology, and products - or matter, energy, and information, the only types of inputs human systems encounter.

Also, the visionary thinks a lot about the many potential barriers to vision realization. After all, a great number of implementation problems shadow even the most successful visionary. History reveals that resource allocation, corporate culture, technical constraints, production issues, market conditions, skill levels, timing conflicts, and a host of other factors may inhibit the full expression of the vision.

Strategies, Processes, Vision, Objectives, and Attributes.

Although authentic visionaries revel in the big picture, they clearly understand that success explodes from the details. Beginning with the big picture of the new world, the visionary quickly moves to the art and science of strategy building. After all, vision implies strategy. In business, vision implies a business strategy. While Efficient Consumer Response may be a grand vision, for example, Efficient Promotions is a single business strategy of that grand vision.

After selecting the most appropriate and reasonable strategy, the visionary selects the relevant process. From here, the visionary formulates the operational component of the vision to design the

processes that ultimately animate the grand vision. This more narrow operational vision establishes the objectives and attributes that correspond to the previously selected processes. In the 21st Century organization, the visionary generates a vision that optimizes the interfaces between the social and technical systems that define the workplace. Here in this respect, the visionary presents the vision as a conceptual design model, specifies the business rules linked to the design, and analyzes the needs of end-users and the many impacts on the workflows forming the organization.

The visioning process establishes the enterprise change process. In the social dimension, the vision moves from departmental objectives, to organization redesign, and then on to information technology job design, and the eventual formulation of personnel policies. In the corresponding technical dimension, the vision moves from conceptual design to the construction of an information repository, and eventually to system development, operational evaluation, documentation, and maintenance. The business-rule specifications, human-computer allocations, graphical user interface specifications, workstation designs, and implementation support processes link the social and technical systems.

Visionary Passion

Since they are more than dreams, visions do not materialize out of nowhere. They require an abundance of knowledge, informed intuition, and insight. Analytical skills are helpful, but intuition and synthesis are the building blocks. Beyond these prerequisites, however, the visionary is driven by something quite a bit more significant than facts and knowledge. Passion is the thing that forges visionaries. Passion drives the vision, captures the audience, and empowers those who make the vision a reality. Communications without passion is soon forgotten. With passion as the driving force, brick walls crumble, road-blocks become the path to greater advantage, and the repository of solutions deepens.

Passion is the stuff out of which leadership arises to build the basic elements of the vision. From these elemental building blocks,

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visionary passion becomes the fuel which drives the evolutionary unfolding of the vision building process through which the visionary attracts the team that moves the vision from concept to reality.

Ignited by the vision, the visionary selects and prepares the core group that refines the vision. Here the leader articulates the vision, establishes the strategic consensus, communicates the vision globally, links the vision to the strategic plan, and ultimately realizes the vision. It is the leader's passion for the vision that enables the core team to define shared values, draft the mission and goals, assign other task oriented teams, plan projects, learn new skills, and grow and survive in the self-guided and unfolding environment now being formed by the vision. It is the leader's passion that enables the team to make the vision a reality and commit to in-depth planning, engage in near-term tasks, and succeed in the long-term roll-out. Table 2.1 below guides the visionary in the formulation of an in-depth and noble vision.

Table 2.1: Strategic Program Evaluator

#	Factor
1.0	Do we have a program with great leverage?
2.0	Is the need real?
2.1	Is the rationale real?
2.2	Is there a need/want?
3.0	Can the personnel be trained?
3.1	Will the personnel be trained?
4.0	Is the plan real?
5.0	Is there a program idea (the art of the deal)?
5.1	Can we develop it?
6.0	Will it meet the need?
7.0	Can we do it?
8.0	Can our plan be competitive on design and performance?
8.1	On promotion to personnel and customers?
9.0	Is the price right?
10.0	Is the timing right?

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11.0	Is it right in employee and customer presentation?
12.0	Can our plan be efficient in complete distribution of content?
12.1	In management acceptance?
12.2	In new development?
12.3	In corporate marketing and promotions?
12.4	In planned logistical and replenishment cycles?
12.5	In other considerations?
13.0	Is it worthwhile?
13.1	Will it be profitable?
14.0	Can we afford it?
14.1	Is the R.O.I. and I.R.R. adequate?
14.2	Is the capital risk acceptable?
14.3	Does it satisfy other company needs?
14.4	Does it support company objectives?
14.5	Are external relations improved?
14.6	Is there an overriding factor?
15.0	Is our plan effective in defining the right I/T path?
15.1	In enabling the core business processes?
15.2	In facilitating management decision making?
15.3	In growing the business?
15.4	In improving the bottom line?
16.0	Have we defined our development environment?
17.0	Have we designed our corporate structure?
17.1	Is it hierarchical?
17.2	Is it horizontal?

Thought Break Two

Have you ever noticed that communication without passion is soon forgotten? Think about all the dully communicated visions you can not remember. Better yet, have you ever seen leaders so passionate about their vision that they sell their passion but overlook their vision? These people just feel strongly about everything and may by chance have a vision.

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Visions are not dreams however. They are more complicated than wishful thinking. Since passion can infect an entire team and give it a life of its own, it is important to ramp up our thinking whenever we encounter the passionate vision of the inspired leader. Likewise, whenever we encounter the dull expression of a leader with the next great vision, we should also ramp up our intellectual horsepower and ask what is going on here? If the visionary is bored with the vision, chances are it is a boring vision - but it may be valuable. Stranger things have happened. But understand this: the passionless leader will not succeed in bringing the vision to reality. (S)he will require the assistance of those on the team until eventually the team provides its own vision. In this case, the leader will become a silent echo lost in the memories of team members. Think about it.

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