

President's Message



Working Together to Face Legislative Challenges by Michael Ruede, 2002 WTCA President

Rarely do you have a conversation with an associate concerning business in which you don't get into the people side of things. Most managers, from the CEO down, will tell you that this is the single, most difficult element of business to manage.

I don't profess to be an expert. I've read a lot of the same books and attended the same seminars as all of you. However, I have learned one valuable lesson from my reading and listening: You must first be a leader before you can be a manager; if you cannot lead you cannot manage.

Leaders share their passion and their vision for the future. They influence others to cooperate toward achieving the desired results by positive motivation, planning and tracking progress against goals. Leaders must implement and exhibit the kind of skills that cause people to rally around the plan and grasp goals with enthusiasm. Leaders promote the concept that teamwork will get things done.

In today's corporate world there are several reasons why managers fail first to be leaders. Often they are ineffective at planning and organizing; they are not process-driven; or they get bogged-down in details to the extent that they overlook the overall plan of the organization. In most cases today's managers fail due to their unwillingness or fear of change to try new ideas. Secondly, they fail to help others grow and develop, fearing they are growing and developing their replacements. In my opinion, the leader of any organization must be an inspirational example. Most everyone has committed the "Golden Rule" to memory; however, as Edwin Markham once said, "Let us now commit it to life." When leaders do this, then and only then will their team members trust them, and do more than is expected. Fear and politics will then be replaced by trust and cooperation. By being a good leader, you will meet your company's objectives and help your team members meet theirs. Employees want to know that they're being heard. It's important that they're heard, not only by coworkers, but also by the organization they represent. They want to be made part of both the process and the solution. Allowing them to have a voice in the process will help make the team's goals their own.

While I'm no expert, I do believe that for the future of your business it's more important than ever to find leaders for your organization. **Will Rogers** probably said this best, "Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there." I hope you enjoy this issue of SBC Magazine. As always, your comments and suggestions are always welcome. If you have a leadership story to share with the membership please tell us about it. Remember, sharing ideas and experiences is what it's all about!

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