

# Special Edition

## What Constitutes a Good CEO? Part 3

Over the last several weeks, I've discussed leadership skills and their importance. I've stated that as you take a "hard look" at your people, it is vitally important that you also look at yourself and focus on your strong points and don't dwell on your weak points.

Unfortunately, that real leaders have been added to the "endangered species list". Leaders are like a basketball point guard; they're absolutely necessary but frequently unheralded heroes of winning basketball games. Leaders know where they are going and convince others to go with them.

Today, leadership is vitally important to a company's survival;

- Our economy continues to sputter.
- Trucking continues to have challenges.
- Freight rates continue to plummet.
- The world economy is still struggling.
- The federal government has the largest deficit it's had since the Great Depression, and;
- Trucking still has additional financial challenges to deal with.

This doesn't mean that our economy is going to collapse; but it does mean that now, more than ever, leadership is important. People forget to realize that when we're faced with economic challenges, particularly as large as they are today, people go through periods of depression;

- They lose confidence in themselves.
- They lose confidence in their companies, and;
- They fear the unknown.

There is a not a day that goes by where I don't hear from someone that says;

- When is this nightmare going to end?
- Am I going to lose everything I've worked for my entire life?
- How do I protect my family?
- I worked so hard to prepare for retirement and a future for my family and now it's all gone.
- Our future is doomed!
- I've lost many hours of sleep and I just don't have a solution to the problems.

Don't feel alone! Many in our industry feel this way. However, it's also important to realize;

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- Challenges make us strong.
- Challenges make us resourceful, and;
- Challenges force us to do things that, normally, we would not consider in a strong economy.

**You don't have to be a PHD in finance to recognize that:**

- You need to "slash" every operating expense that's not essential.
- You need to control your cost wherever possible, and;
- **You constantly have to keep "changing your model" until something works, but at the end of the day; you can never give up. Never!**

**It's also important to remember that the first premise of running a successful business is profits; profits must be your first item of expense.** If it's not, then you don't belong in business!

**During these difficult economic times, is when employees look to their leaders for reassurance that:**

- The company is going to survive.
- The company is going to profit, and;
- The employees are going to have jobs.

**This is what leadership is all about. How should an effective leader lead? For any company, you have to look to your managers to become great coaches** and that starts with you. In any company, success is a team effort. Star performance cannot carry the ball alone. Owners (today) must realign their job function from being the boss to being a coach;

- As a coach, it's your obligation to raise the effectiveness of average performers, and;
- As a coach, it's your job to maintain peak performance in your stars.

**There are 6 essentials to success for coaching:**

1. **Establish personal goals;** teach how to make plans with regular targets and how to evaluate progress, address problems and questions.
2. **Discuss team objectives;** performance coaching is making sure that each team member understands how he/she contributes to the success of the company.
3. **Hold the team and each member accountable for goals;** coaching does not include threatening, but inspiring. Inspire the efforts by reminding employees of their importance to the company.
4. **Be supportive;** at the same time, you must hold yourself accountable.
5. **Listen to the team;** when a coach holds the team accountable for results, the same holds true that the coach is held accountable for helping the team.
6. **Share and recognize progress;** it's always motivating to see the results of hard work and progress; the "coach" must share these successes no matter how small or large with his team.

**In closing, as a coach or a leader, it's your responsibility to:**

- **Challenge your employees** to learn more and improve performance.
- **Actively listen** to your management team and provide feedback.
- **Respect** individual employees and their goals.
- **Hold people accountable for results,** but provide them input to help them succeed.

- Encourage growth and development, and;
- Exchange ideas between management to enhance their self confidence and productivity.

**In other words;**

- Recognize good work.
- **If someone does a good job, tell them!**
- **Make them feel that they're important** and that they're instrumental in making changes necessary for the company's success, and;
- Treat your employees fairly.

**According to an analysis that was completed some time ago, when workers were questioned about what they were looking for in satisfaction and job performance they stated;**

- They want a supervisor or someone at work that cares about them as people.
- They want to know that their opinions count.
- They want to be with a company which they have the opportunity to learn and grow.
- The mission of the employer is to make the employees feel that their jobs are important.

**Next week, I will discuss the greatest unknown expense of a business; turnover.**

**QUOTE OF THE WEEK: “A person should be like a watch; open-faced, busy hands, well regulated, and full of good works”.**