



**By Daniel E. Beardslee, LS**

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## Leadership—The Trust Initiative

**I**f you have at least one employee, you need to be a leader. If you are a leader, it's essential that you be trusted, otherwise, you will not be a leader. Maybe you'll be a manager, or a controller, or a director, but without the trust initiative, you'll never be a leader.

Management expert Peter Drucker writes, *"The leaders who work most effectively, it seems to me, never say 'I.' And that's not because they have trained themselves not to say 'I.' They don't think 'I.' They think 'we'; they think 'team.' They understand their job to be to make the team function. They accept responsibility and don't sidestep it, but 'we' gets the credit.... This is what creates trust, what enables you to get the task done."*

If you think of all the people in your life that you have considered leaders, it will become apparent that each and every one of them was highly trusted. So then, what makes trust so important to being a leader?

Trust, as it applies to leadership, can be broken down into three general parts:

1. Integrity—the way you are.
2. Competence—the way you perform.
3. Compassion—the way you treat others.

Integrity, competence, and compassion, applied consistently, build trust. Trust begets respect, and respect begets performance, and performance begets good business results.

The leader with integrity is consistent and predictable, always keeps commitments (she does what she says she will do), and maintains and communicates a clear set of well-established principles.

The competent leader is one who is technically capable of doing the work. In our business, this means that the leader is one who is an excellent land surveyor and demonstrates that by having a com-

plete knowledge of the subject. The competent leader also is able to consistently perform to the highest standard of the profession.

Compassion is manifested by being able to consistently consider the point of view of others. The compassionate leader also sets aside any personal agenda that might be counterproductive for those who are led, and seeks solutions that are beneficial to the company and to the employees.

To assess your leadership capability, answer some of these questions:

✓ Do you always do the things that forward your company's goals? Do you just talk about it or do you actually DO it?

✓ Are you willing to make clear, measurable commitments and stick to them?

✓ Do you always do what you say you will do? Every time?

✓ Do you prefer to accept responsibility rather than look for blame? Consistently?

✓ Are you an extremely competent land surveyor, or just "run of the mill"?

✓ Do you make it a policy to never ask your employees what you don't want to, or wouldn't do?

✓ Do your business decisions forward the stated objective of your company, or do you have an unstated agenda?

*continued on page 56*



*Beardslee, continued from page 55*

✓ Do you make clear the objective and goals of your company? Do you always state these ends in clear and measurable terms?

✓ Do you mentor and share your knowledge?

✓ Do you consistently treat others with dignity and respect?

✓ Do you seek the advice of your employees and give those ideas respect and consideration?

✓ Do you trust your employees to make good decisions and exercise good judgment?

If you can't answer all these answers in the positive, you need to think about your leadership skills. There is a huge difference between managing (controlling) and leading. Sure, you can get things done by making people do them, but if you can persuade them that those things are good ideas, you can achieve much better results. Make that happen and you will have long-term employees that make valuable contributions to the company.

Dwight D. Eisenhower once said *"You do not lead by hitting people over the head— that's assault, not leadership."*

You'll notice that the word "consistently" appears a lot in this article. Of course, there's a reason. Those who have children know exactly what I'm talking about when it comes to trustworthiness. At some point in our lives we all learn that we can't make people believe in us if we behave inconsistently. Any rational person knows that one lie is all that it takes to make all other statements questionable. Actions are the same way. If your actions aren't consistent, and I mean *really* consistent, then you will expose yourself as fraud. If you say you'll do something and then don't do it, the same is true. The significance of the promise doesn't matter; if you simply told someone you would return his phone call, and didn't, then all your future promises are going to be questioned. If you said you would have the job done on a certain day, and didn't, you will not only not be trusted, you will not likely have that person as a client for long. Do it twice and it's a sure thing.

The same is true of dealing with those whom you wish to lead. You have to be completely, unequivocally trustworthy if you have any hope of being a leader. A real leader is one who knows the way, walks that way, and shows the way. No one is interested in following a person they cannot trust.

Be trustworthy and be a leader. *A*