



**DECEMBER 2008 - LEADERSHIP LETTER #33**

## ***USING THE PAST AS FUTURE GUIDE***

**Hello and Happy Holidays!**

We hope you are all ready for a restful, peaceful holiday and a prosperous 2009!

While digging through some book reviews recently, re “**scenario development**” for strategic planning guidance, I came across the following piece from 1995.

It seems quite relevant right now. I did tweak it a tad, but not much.

I hope you find it interesting and even useful!

Don't forget that all past **Leadership Letters** can be found on our website at [www.henseyassociates.com](http://www.henseyassociates.com).

All the best,

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## USING THE PAST AS FUTURE GUIDE

Three “futurists” have studied the past specifically to give us some guideposts for successfully coping with the current turbulent change as we move into the future.

**JOEL BARKER** studied the “power of vision” in the past for nations, people, and children, and then presented these highlights in his video *The Power of Vision* ...

- Vision must be initiated by the leadership group.
- Values provide guidance for the vision development.
- To engage others, a vision should be positive and inspiring.
- It needs to be shared and supported by the vision community.
- The vision will be most useful when it’s specific and detailed.

**IMPARATO AND HARARI** looked at 3000 years of human history and found only two other epochs as turbulent as ours. In *Jumping the Curve*, they suggest that we ...

- Look, think and plan a customer (or client) ahead.
- Build our systems around the customer(s) and our organization around our systems.
- Reward best those staff who live the values and meet the goals of our organization.
- Consider **really** making customers the ultimate judges of quality.

As we’ve worked with several client firms and agencies, they and we have discovered that Barker, Imperato, and Harari provide us with some useful implications for the future.

### SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR SERVICE BUSINESSES, AGENCIES, ASSOCIATIONS, INSTITUTIONS

<b>STAFFING AND HUMAN RESOURCES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hire the best people available, <b>when</b> they are available.</li><li>• Keep a core team of key staff stable over time.</li><li>• Supplement them with talented temporaries.</li><li>• Help all to understand <b>marketing</b> is part of the job.</li><li>• Develop partnerships with suppliers and <b>competitors</b>.</li></ul>
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<b>FINANCIAL SUCCESS FACTORS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set clear and specific financial goals and/or budgets ... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- for projects</li> <li>- for units</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Price services based on <b>value</b> whenever possible.</li> <li>• Develop effective and timely cost-tracking systems.</li> <li>• Fix under-performing ... staff, units, customers, partners.</li> </ul>
<b>SERVICE AND TECHNOLOGY EXCELLENCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have or develop top notch people in each service area.</li> <li>• Develop service niches that provide true customer value.</li> <li>• Benchmark the technology and customer service leaders in <b>any</b> business or service.</li> <li>• Bring in experienced hires from successful organizations.</li> <li>• Use strong technology to facilitate voice and text communication, conferencing, lessons learned, graphics, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>MARKETING AND CLIENT RELATIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be clear about who are the A, B and C clients, where ... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A's – want to work as partners.</li> <li>- B's – are generally easy to serve well.</li> <li>- C's – are difficult, requiring special procedures.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Develop ever stronger skills at listening to clients. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use creative approaches, such as Maister's "reverse seminars," where a key client is invited to talk to staff about their needs.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recognize the usefulness of client problems as opportunities to serve and "sell" as well.</li> <li>• Find new needs to address (before others do).</li> </ul>
<b>OPERATIONS AND SERVICE DELIVERY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For project-related services, develop able project managers.</li> <li>• Establish procedures with flowcharts rather than manuals.</li> <li>• Slowly but surely learn and apply TQM concepts and tools.</li> <li>• Encourage staff to be continually developing/improving your processes and their skills.</li> <li>• Cross-train and broaden skills; develop staff flexibility.</li> </ul>



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