



September/October 2011 - Leadership Letter (62)

TIMELESS TIPS FOR MANAGERS

Hello Clients, Colleagues and Friends ...

Several years ago, I came across a book for leaders of consulting and design firms by Mark Zweig. I liked his perceptions (close to my own) and his focus on **leadership** as the main differentiator for successful firms.

So, I sorted out some of Mark's thoughts that seemed to me to be particularly helpful for leaders and managers, regardless of the kind of organizations they manage or lead--and are most often overlooked or ignored!

Later, when replying to questions from an excellent leader in a client firm, it seemed appropriate to come up with part II of **TIMELESS TIPS FOR MANAGERS**, from a variety of sources ... Peter Drucker, Jim Collins, David Maister and others.

I hope you enjoy both versions of "**Timeless Tips for Managers.**"

Mel

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Don't forget that all past **Leadership Letters** can be found on our website at
www.henseyassociates.com.

REMINDER: If you need to reach me quickly, please do not email. Please **call** or **text** me on my cell at **513/919-7672**. I have my phone with me while consulting, traveling, planting trees, biking or canoeing!

TIMELESS TIPS FOR MANAGERS

Captured in *Management Ideas That Work!* by Mark C. Zweig, 1993

What separates the successful organizations from the mediocre ones? In our opinion, successful firms have one thing in common -- *strong leadership*.

These leaders have a clear mission of what they are trying to accomplish, which they articulate for every single person in the firm. They exude confidence in the future, and refuse to blame the business environment for problems. They make tough choices quickly and with consistency, making sure everyone understands the rationale. They are willing to confront problems with clients and staff.

Be a nice guy 97% of the time, but be a tough S.O.B. in the remaining 3%. People like to work for those whom they feel treat them nicely and with respect. But human nature being what it is, there are those who will try to take advantage of your good nature. When they surface, confront them swiftly and powerfully.

One bad apple can spoil the whole bunch. If you have a negative thinker, someone who is a lousy team player, or someone who has to belittle others to make themselves look good, you'd better straighten that person out or get rid of them.

Review every staff member's long-term job productivity. Cut staff where there are historical productivity problems. If someone hasn't been productive for three years, what's going to change? Work flows to the competent person. Many of these cuts are *long* overdue, and will get a positive reaction from staff.

Retire or lay off non-producing managers. Money formerly used for the non-performing managers' salaries, benefits, and perks helps fund the other needs.

Have a workable organization. *All* owners do not need to participate in *all* decisions. Everyone needs to be accountable to someone else. Too many managers results in *weak* management. Clarify role definitions and expectations for everyone.

Single out those who always put their own needs above the organization's and make it clear you aren't happy about it. I'm not talking about legitimate requests, like wanting a day off to attend the funeral of a loved one. I mean the people who take advantage of a boss's reluctance to be a "bad guy." They know it's usually easier for the boss to let things slide.

Excerpts by Mel Hensey
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MORE TIMELESS TIPS FOR MANAGERS

*From Folks Like Peter Drucker, Jim Collins,
David Maister and Others*

- A little too much work solves most morale problems.
- Hire carefully and well, based on a demonstrated track record. Fire poor performers quickly, as people don't often change.
- **Profit** is not something nice that's left over. Profit is an essential cost of staying in business, that pays for incentive comp, new systems and tools, education, reserves, and growth.
- More than three goals is like "no" goals; you can only focus well on three goals at most.
- Nothing happens until someone **sells** something; business development and entrepreneurial work are the critical functions.
- Most organizations' scarcest resource is **leadership**; be sure to have them in the best "seat on the bus" for their talents.
- True competitive edge comes from doing what others **do** not or **cannot** do and that clients find valuable.
- Promise employees nothing but challenging work and opportunity; advise them to ready themselves for the opportunity.
- **Teamwork** within and across disciplines and offices and personalities is a strong competitive advantage ... and difficult to do.
- The final act of a dying organization is to put everything into policies.
- Be obsessed with your goals and objectives, but creative about your strategies and actions to achieve them.
- The **committed** heart will find a thousand ways; the **uncommitted** heart will find a thousand excuses.

*Collected by Mel Hensey
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