

# LEADERSHIP ESSENTIALS

A NWS SR Newsletter promoting BLAST and the principles of leadership



Volume III, Issue 2, Nov-Dec, 2006

## THE LEADERS WE NEED

by Francis Hesselbein

Now is the time to develop our checklist for leaders of the future who embody the values, principles, and philosophy needed to lead from the front, right into this turbulent future, in a world at war. We need leaders who believe and embody in concept, language, and action that leadership is a matter of how to be, not how to do, knowing in the end it is the quality and character of the leader that determines the performance and the results.

We need leaders who believe and demonstrate that the people of the organization are the organization's greatest asset—making that a reality, not a slogan. These are leaders who build the richly diverse organization with powerful representation at every level, on all teams, in all groups, on all boards, in all management, and in all visual materials. They realize that rapidly changing demographics present enormous opportunities.

We need leaders who help distill the concept and language of the mission—why the organization does what it does, its purpose, its reason for being. These leaders invest in building the mission-focused, values-based, demographics-driven organization, permeating the total organization with mission and values, and demonstrating the power of reflecting the many faces of our country.

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## WHAT GREAT LEADERS DO DIFFERENTLY

BY WALLY BOCK

When I did the original research for this I identified 42 top performing sergeants from law enforcement agencies around the country. They were all rated excellent by their command, by their peers and by their subordinates.

Then I spent time with them to identify what they did that separated them from their less excellent peers. The idea is that if you can identify the top performers and learn what they do, then you can be a top performer, too. (continued on page 3)

## THE LEADERS WE NEED

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“...we need  
leaders who  
share successes  
widely while  
accepting  
responsibility  
for shortfalls  
and failures.”



Leader to Leader, No. 35  
Winter 2005; for complete  
unabridged article, visit the  
Leader to Leader website  
at  
[leadertoleader.org](http://leadertoleader.org)  
(Winter 2005): 4-5.

We need leaders who communicate with the people of the organization, the customers of the organization, and the many publics we engage—always reflecting in our communications that communication is not saying something, communication is being heard. Here the act of distilling language is one of the most effective skills the leader of the future can perfect. One sentence, one paragraph, one page—connecting, helping, inspiring, being heard.

We need leaders who practice the art of listening, who practice Peter's "think first, speak last." Leaders who are healers and unifiers use listening to include, not exclude—building consensus, appreciating differences, finding common concepts, common language, common ground.

We need leaders who in their own lives try to find work-life balance and make work-life balance a reality in the lives of their people. If you think that this is a lovely ideal but not realistic in today's tough world, try comparing the productivity and morale of a workforce that is encouraged and supported in finding this rare work-life balance with those of a dispirited workforce where work-life balance is not a consideration and "take no prisoners" is a valued management style.

Perhaps most of all we need leaders who share successes widely while accepting responsibility for shortfalls and failures. These leaders take a tough measure of their own performance, aware that their language, behavior, and action are measured against their self-proclaimed values and principles.

Tonight as I write this column I think of the difference in our society and the world since our last general election. September 11 had not yet changed our world. It was a different world, not a world at war. While the basic qualities of leaders that corporations, government agencies, and social sector organizations need remain constant, some of them may have new significance, may move up the list in importance because of our times and the new testing we face.

We are all challenged to lead in an era of discontinuity far greater than 10 or 20 years ago. So all of us try to be prescient in a rapidly changing world, as we try to peer into that future no one can describe with certainty. We try to describe the world of the future—"try to see what is visible but not yet seen," as Peter Drucker says, against the backdrop of our times. Only then will we be able to describe the qualities of the leaders we will need in the years ahead.

Are there qualities needed now more than ever, whatever the organization, the sector, as we move into 2005-2010? I propose that this is a time for leaders of quality and character, leaders who live the values, who are healers and unifiers, who bring hope to the people and the work of the enterprise. Bringing hope, healing, and unity within the organization and beyond the walls are essential qualities our times require of our leaders of the future. ■

*.What Great Leaders Do Differently (Continued from Page 1)*

Here's the list.

### Great Leaders Show Up a Lot

This is really simple and really powerful. It plays out differently at different levels.

If we're talking about supervision, then this is almost always showing up physically. The supervisory leader needs to be around enough to learn about his/her people and so that showing up is not an event.

When the leader is up the chain of command, showing up involves frequent communication and attendance to the most important things. When he was growing the Oakland Police Department into a great department, George Hart was always visible and giving feedback to the officers and others involved in what he felt were strategically important tasks: recruiting and training.

### Great Leaders Maintain a Realistic Picture

Fact is, the higher you go in the organization, the more folks work to tell you what they think you want to hear, rather than what you need to hear. The great leaders I studied all found a way to get their own perspective by bringing in information and opinions that didn't come through official channels.

The striking difference I noticed in my research was that the great ones worked to get a realistic picture of their own leadership performance. It was habitual for them to review what they did in a supervisory session and what lessons they could learn from it for next time.

The after-action critique is something that's common in law enforcement. But only a few leaders apply the principle of after-action critique to their leadership performance. Those few tend to be the great ones.

### Great Leaders Rehearse Mentally

We saw this first in Charles Garfield's study of "Peak Performance." He was looking at athletes, but his finding holds up in other research. Rehearsing mentally can take several forms.

Great leaders, like great patrol officers, play a lot of "what if?" in their head. They're constantly working to imagine what might happen and playing out how they'll respond.

Great leaders also rehearse leadership moments like speeches or supervisory interviews in their heads. They imagine what they'll do and how others might respond. They imagine how they'll respond to a range of different actions by the other person.

### Great Leaders Work Hard to Assure Understanding

Great leaders understand that understanding is hard to come by, so they do several specific things to assure it. They start with working hard to give clear instructions.

Giving clear instructions is devilishly hard to do. The problem is that we all think we're being clear, so we have to consciously work at clarity. In my supervisory training we do several exercises in giving instruction so that folks understand how hard it is and what options they have to improve.

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### *What Great Leaders Do Differently (Continued from Page 3)*

Part of giving clear instructions is checking for understanding. This is the “Active Listening” part of communication, but our great leaders work to do it all the time.

Great leaders take the time to assure understanding and they listen a lot. In one short study I did of supervisory interviews, I found that most supervisors interrupt their subordinates, on average, 18 seconds after the subordinate has started speaking. The great ones were different, their average listening time before speaking was over forty seconds.

### **Great Leaders Manage Consequences of Performance**

Great leaders understand like no one else that you’ve got to pay attention to the things you control and not worry about the things you don’t. Despite what some authors have written, you can’t “make” someone do anything. All you can do is set up the system so that they’re more likely to do what you want.

Great leaders understand that their job is influencing behavior. Behavior is what people say and what people do and nothing else. It sure isn’t “attitude.”

I teach new supervisors to ask a question whenever they’re tempted to say that someone working for them has a bad attitude. I want them to ask themselves, “What does that person do or say that leads me to think they have a bad attitude.” If you can answer that question, then you can concentrate on influencing the behavior. You do that by managing the consequences of behavior.

The consequences of behavior are praise and punishment. Years of behavioral science research have sharpened our knowledge of how to use them to influence behavior.

Use praise as a positive consequence and use it when you want someone to do something new or to continue to do something. If you can’t praise the final result, praise the effort or the improvement, or the attention to learning. Praise is best delivered inconsistently.

Use the negative consequences punishment or admonishment when you want folks to stop doing something. Be careful not to use them too much, though. If folks get dinged every time they try something, pretty soon they quit trying anything. Negative consequences are best delivered consistently.

There are two rules for delivering consequences. The first is that consequences should match performance. Phrased more Biblically: “the just shall be rewarded and the unjust punished in accordance with their deeds.”

The other rule is that consequences should be as inevitable as nature. Whether you screw up or whether you do wonderful things, you should receive the consequences.

### **Great Leaders Take Every Opportunity to Communicate the Key Message**

Great leaders understand that there are only a few things that are really important to get across and they make those the key message. They know that simple messages are more likely to get across and so they make their messages simple. They know that even a few simple messages need to be communicated over and over again to be effective. So they take every opportunity by word and deed to communicate their most important messages.

OK, now you know what great leaders do differently. How do you go about improving leadership in your agency?

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## LOCAL BLAST HIGHLIGHT WFO BROWNSVILLE BY JESSE HARO



“This paradigm shift in the local organization helped empower the staff and unlock creative possibilities not previously discussed or executed.”

### **Reaching out to the Spanish Speaking Customer**

Over the past several years, the Brownsville WFO has embarked on a series of innovative and aggressive outreach initiatives with the purpose of establishing a broader and more meaningful connection with the Spanish-speaking communities of Deep South Texas and northern Tamaulipas state in Mexico. These initiatives, while far from complete and constantly evolving, have been received very positively by these customers and the WFO has benefited greatly from improved relationships with these vitally important partners. In recognition of these efforts, the WFO in Brownsville was recently awarded the Department of Commerce Bronze Medal for this exemplary service.

This collective mind-set was not always present however, as outreach to this community was not always highly prioritized. This mindset ultimately supported an approach to the NWS mission in Deep South Texas that was at best, risky. Approximately 90% of the population of the region is of Mexican descent and an estimated 50% of the population speaks Spanish exclusively at home. To remain fixated on an operations paradigm that focused solely on English as the language of service in the region was to potentially invite disaster.

Fortunately, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, members of the WFO leadership began to place a high priority on addressing this deficiency. They added Spanish-speaking members to the staff and explored ways to provide Spanish-language training to staff already employed. While in the past, outreach efforts with this community were occasionally carried out by the few Spanish-speaking staff members, a comprehensive approach to serving these customers was never adopted until that time.

This paradigm shift in the local organization helped empower the staff and unlock creative possibilities not previously discussed or executed. The practical application of these aspects of “Enlightened Leadership” (Generating the Mindset Shift, Oakley and Krug 1991) allowed the staff the freedom it needed to address the needs of this demographic group without concern of reprisal.

Of course, the issuance of warning and forecasts products for Mexico is explicitly prohibited. Nonetheless, this freedom ultimately led to very successful projects outside of the scope of traditional product delivery such as international training and outreach workshops with Spanish media members; in-depth Spanish-language training for WFO staff members; a Spanish web presence prior to regional implementation; several collaborative outreach and public awareness initiatives; frequent support to national Spanish-language media outlets in the United States; support to the National Hurricane Center during tropical cyclone landfalls; support of EEO and Diversity initiatives by focusing on the recruitment and retention of “underrepresented” groups within the NOAA employment hierarchy, and most importantly, simply having the WFO operations staff understand that it was “OK” for them to serve this demographic segment after having not been sure in the past if it was appropriate to do so.

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LOCAL BLAST HIGHLIGHT  
REACHING OUT WITH NOAA WEATHER RADIO, JESSE HARO, BRO

(Continued from page 5)

In an article published in the Harvard Business Review (*The Human Moment at Work*, 1999), Dr. Edward M. Hallowell states that human moments require “*people’s physical presence and their emotional and intellectual attention.*” Furthermore, “*Human moments require energy. Often, that’s what makes them easy to avoid.*” While technological advances such as Spanish-language NOAA Weather Radio and Spanish-language NWS web forecasts are wonderful, efficient, and necessary, truly effective methods of message delivery to the Spanish-speaking community may ultimately hinge on the quality of the relationships and feeling of connection between these Spanish-language customers and the employees of its local National Weather Service office.

Current and previous members of the WFO Brownsville staff had the emotional intelligence and vision necessary to understand the importance of close personal and professional relationships with our Mexican and Mexican-American partners. The importance of these relationships within these cultures is not always easily understood by those unfamiliar with them. While this importance remains unquantifiable, it is reasonable to conclude that these relationships probably carry more weight in the process of establishing successful business partnerships than what is probably perceived by most Americans.

WFOs hoping to embark on such outreach initiatives with the Spanish-language communities along the U.S.-Mexico border would be wise to take such leadership lessons to heart. The rewards of such efforts can only help the National Weather Service carry out its mission of protecting life and property. ■

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*Colin Powell*

The day soldiers stop bringing you their problems is the day you have stopped leading them. They have either lost confidence that you can help them or concluded that you do not care. Either case is a failure of leadership.

Retired U.S. General and former Secretary of State  
(1937 - )





## BOOK REVIEW

# WINNING THE NFL WAY- LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM FOOTBALL'S TOP HEAD COACHES

By Ed Calianese, WFO Tulsa

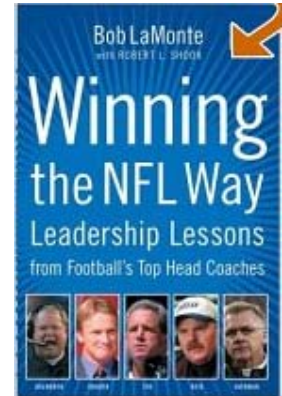
Bob LaMonte is a retired high school teacher and football coach who took a part-time sports agency job and turned it into a successful full-time, family business. Today, he and his wife represent several of the NFL's most successful coaches including Mike Holmgren, Jon Gruden, John Fox, Andy Reid, and Mike Sherman. Although their personalities and leadership styles differ to some degree, each of these coaches has excelled at the very top of their profession, and between them, they have won a number of Super Bowl rings. This book compares and contrasts the coaches' leadership styles and discusses some of the important leadership lessons they have each learned throughout the course of their lives. In order to reinforce the concepts, the author frequently uses real-life examples of each of the coaches' leadership in action, illustrating how each of them has positively influenced the people around them to achieve success.

One of the underlying lessons that I took away from this book was that there is no cookie-cutter leadership style or personality that perfectly correlates to successful leadership. Each of these coaches has his own unique personality, experiences, and background. As a result, each uses the leadership skills he has developed in different ways, emphasizing and relying upon the traits and styles that work best in each of their unique situations with their respective teams. In other words, they adapt their styles to the environment and to the people they lead.

Despite the differences, the five coaches also arguably have in common a number of core personality traits and leadership principles that they utilize, which have contributed to their success. The author focuses on these core similarities throughout the book. For instance, each of the coaches has developed a vision of where he sees his organization in the future, as well as a detailed plan to successfully pursue that vision. A vision without a plan will not be successful, as the plan is what produces the desired buy-in from others in the organization and provides the needed directional guidance that a vision alone cannot provide.

Another important similarity among the five coaches includes having a passion for what they do and the work ethic needed to push through the hard times that will always be part of the journey. They all believe in their visions, which is necessary to stay the course. Each of the five coaches understands the importance of building trusting relationships with others within the organization, as without that trust, leadership success is not possible. The coaches build this trust in a variety of different ways. The five coaches are excellent communicators and each understands the importance of being able to effectively reach every individual in their organizations. Since football is a team sport, it is important that the coaches develop strong teamwork within their organizations and each coach has proven to be effective in this skill. The author also discusses ways in which each coach successfully adapts to the changing environment within the NFL and how the coaches overcome adversity.

The leadership principles that are emphasized in this book are core principles that not only result in success in the NFL, but also are essential in order to be successful in any business or organization, including the National Weather Service. These principles are discussed in other books, including many of the ones in the Southern Region BLAST Library, but this book uses well-known, successful figures in the sports arena to illustrate effective leadership principles. As a sports fan, I found that I could easily relate to the author's presentation of the material, and as a result, I found this book interesting and informative.



Bob LaMonte and Robert L. Shook (2004). *Winning the NFL Way: Leadership Lessons from Football's Top Head Coaches*. New York, NY: Harper-Collins Publishers, p. 243.

“ ...there is no cookie-cutter leadership style or personality that perfectly correlates to successful leadership. ”

2007 Southern Region BLAST participants

Folks, I am pleased to announce the selections for the 2007 Southern Region BLAST (Building Leaders for A Solid Tomorrow) class. Many excellent applications were received. It was a challenging task indeed for the field evaluation team and myself to make the final selections. Everyone who applied can be proud of their accomplishments and I encourage those who were not selected to apply for the 2008 BLAST Program. In fact, several of the selections for 2007 were former applicants and we admired their persistence and their efforts to strengthen their candidacy. I also encourage all employees, including former BLAST graduates, to support your Local Office BLAST Program. A special thanks to the field leadership team processing the applications and to Jackson MIC, Alan Gerard (the Evaluation Team Facilitator) for their thorough evaluations and interviews. I also send my profound appreciation to SR Deputy RD, Steven Cooper, for his leadership in helping to keep this program so successful. Very special thanks also are extended to all of our outstanding instructors from across the region.

“I also encourage all employees, including former BLAST graduates, to support your Local Office BLAST Program.”

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|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Brian Curran</b>        | <b>Senior Forecaster, WFO Midland</b>        |
| <b>Ken Drozd</b>           | <b>Senior Forecaster, WFO Albuquerque</b>    |
| <b>Eric Howieson</b>       | <b>AWIPS Program Manager, SRH Fort Worth</b> |
| <b>Laura Kasper</b>        | <b>Forecaster, WFO Key West</b>              |
| <b>Curt Kockx</b>          | <b>ITO, WFO San Angelo</b>                   |
| <b>Eric Jones</b>          | <b>Senior Hydrologist, LMRFC Slidell</b>     |
| <b>Matt Moreland</b>       | <b>Forecaster, WFO Houston</b>               |
| <b>Steven Nelson</b>       | <b>Senior Forecaster, WFO Atlanta</b>        |
| <b>Rich Okulski</b>        | <b>WCM, WFO Memphis</b>                      |
| <b>Nick Petro</b>          | <b>Senior Forecaster, WFO Tampa Bay</b>      |
| <b>Doug Schneider</b>      | <b>Senior Forecaster, WFO Morristown</b>     |
| <b>Kristin Scotten</b>     | <b>Forecaster, WFO Birmingham</b>            |
| <b>Randy Skov</b>          | <b>Forecaster, CWSU Atlanta</b>              |
| <b>Kurt Van Speybroeck</b> | <b>SOO, WFO Brownsville</b>                  |

Please join me in congratulating these 14 individuals on their successful candidacy for the Southern Region BLAST Class of 2007. Remember, regardless of the position we hold, we can all be leaders in the National Weather Service and contribute to our proud 136 year tradition of vital life saving service to our Nation.

Most sincerely,  
Bill Proenza





See the **BLAST** section  
of the Southern Region  
website at  
[www.srh.noaa.gov/srh/  
blast/blast.htm](http://www.srh.noaa.gov/srh/blast/blast.htm)

If you are interested in  
contributing to this  
newsletter, please contact a  
member of the  
BLAST Newsletter team, listed  
below.

## LEADERSHIP LIBRARY



Southern Region Headquarters has established a **Leadership Library**, which consists of audio tapes, video tapes, books, and workbooks. This **Leadership Library** is a part of Southern Region's BLAST program. Any Southern Region employee (not just BLAST selectees) can check out a book or tape from the library through his/her office supervisor. This library is formulated around the interest of Southern Region employees on improving their leadership skills.

Some of the material has been rated by one or more reviewers. We ask that, upon return of any material you checkout, please provide a very brief review of the material. This will provide the next person with a better understanding of what he/she can expect from the lessons.

## LEADERSHIP ESSENTIALS

**This newsletter brought to you by the 2004 BLAST Class,  
and the BLAST Newsletter Team**

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