

# LEADERSHIP ESSENTIALS



A NWS SR Newsletter promoting BLAST and the principles of leadership

Volume II, Issue 1, January, 2005

## In This Issue...

- Creative Leadership
- Team Effectiveness
- What is Servant Leadership?
- BLAST Workshop, 2005
- Local BLAST - WFO Brownsville

## CREATIVE LEADERSHIP

BY MAX DE PREE  
FROM LEADER TO LEADER  
INSTITUTE

King Lear tells us that nothing comes from nothing. So do scientists, for that matter. Everything in the world already exists; whatever seems new is only something old rearranged. So how do we explain innovation? The relatively short history of the United States glistens with innovation. Our open meritocracy has bred and nurtured innovative people with new ideas. Leaders in all sorts of organizations want desperately to encourage creative, innovative persons.

Creative persons stand out from the rest of us. Yet they function, for the most part, outside of or away from organizations. They work in all kinds of places -- in cafés, in airports, at home -- and they benefit from unusual relationships with the organizations they join.

They often have odd reporting relationships, but somehow they instinctively insert themselves into organizations wherever they are needed.

How Does a Leader Approach the Process of Creative Work?

A leader first makes a personal commitment to be hospitable to creative people and a broader commitment to open himself to contributions from many quarters. This commitment entails a number of ideas and guidelines. Let me give you some starters.

Continued on Page 2



## BLAST 2005 CLASS ENJOYS ATLANTA WORKSHOP

The 2005 Regional BLAST kicked off in Atlanta on January 30th. The group was slow to arrive due to a crippling ice storm that made air travel difficult Saturday and Sunday, the 29th and 30th.

The week included a variety of leadership training including discussions on servant leadership, empowerment, and the PIE concept. One of the highlights of the week was the trip to the Dr. Martin Luther King museum.

Darone Jones of Birmingham expressed it this way - *"BLAST was awesome! I never thought I could learn so much. And now that I know what my strengths and weaknesses are...it will be easier to build on my foundation of influence. What an emotional week. WOW!"*

We extend our congratulations to the new BLAST class and look forward to working with you as we all continue to learn about leadership.

## CREATIVE LEADERSHIP (CONT'D)

Continued From Page 1

“...creative persons need breadth of opportunity and the assurance of fair treatment rather than hierarchy and control.”

A leader protects creative persons from the bureaucracy and legalism so ensconced in our organizations.

A leader does not demand unreasonable personal or corporate loyalty, understanding that creative persons are loyal to an idea and often appear to others as nonjoiners. I realize that this is difficult; yet creative persons need breadth of opportunity and the assurance of fair treatment rather than hierarchy and control. Their work rises from discovering and connecting. People remember the story of Archimedes' discovering the principle of displacement while taking a bath because creative people have insights in all kinds of contexts. Art Fry realized the potential of Post-it notes while singing in his church choir. Hewlett-Packard began in a garage. Leaders understand the potential of connections like these and make it possible for creative persons to discover them.

A leader will be careful about measuring the contributions of creative persons. Return on assets has become a Baal in too many organizations. All things cannot and must not be quantified. Financial and legal matters are truly important, but they do not lie at the heart of our future. Resist the urge to structure all things alike. We also need to keep in mind that moving up in the hierarchy does not confer competence or wisdom. The discernment and judgment necessary to evaluate true innovation, to doom or give life to good design or breakthroughs in technology, lie with people trained in those fields. I can remember interrupting a discussion among our executive team about the relative merits of a graphic design with the following question: Who here is a graphic designer we trust? Of course, none of us was, and so we called in a competent judge. Sometimes leaders do forget what they don't know.

Both personally and organizationally, the results of becoming a good leader for creative persons are surely worth the effort. Leaders may expect a legacy going well beyond quarterly results. Organizations can expect new windows into territory -- both physical and philosophical -- that would not open without the gifts of creative persons. Products and services that deliver a truly competitive edge will appear -- innovations in the form of beneficial surprises, not merely predictable solutions or designs by committee. Change and renewal and hope will accrue. Higher levels of civility and robust institutional health are possible. Making the effort to be a leader to creative people and learning to follow such people signal both real leadership competence and the understanding that creative work comes from the heart and not from management handbooks.

Creative persons come in all shapes and sizes and fields, from graphic design and architecture to software design and human resources. The best are volunteers. They can find work almost anywhere, and they gauge the quality of their leaders as a way of deciding where they will contribute. Leaders make it possible for creative persons to make something out of nothing -- nothing, that is, but expressions of themselves.



Article used with permission from...  
Leader to Leader Institute

See their website at:  
<http://www.pfdf.org/>

## TEAMS — CAN WE USE THEM MORE EFFECTIVELY?

By Ed Calianese,  
WCM  
WFO Tulsa, OK

Do you cringe when you hear the words “team” or “teamwork”? If so, you are not alone. Many have experienced the frustration that can result from working with an ineffective team. The failure of a team and the subsequent dissatisfaction experienced by team members may be predetermined during its developmental process. This ineffectiveness may actually be a direct result of improperly implementing the team rather than a direct result of the team concept itself.

Some of the considerations that should be made prior to implementing a team that may help promote success are as follows:

*Would a team more successfully complete a task or make a decision in this situation than an individual?* There are times that necessitate a team and others that do not. For instance, if an individual does not possess the relevant information or expertise to accomplish a task or make a decision alone then a properly selected team, in which all team members possess a variety of complementary knowledge, skills, and abilities, would be more successful than an individual. The contrary is also true: a team would not be required and in fact, would likely be less effective, if an individual possessed the necessary information and expertise to make a decision or accomplish a task alone.

*What deadline do we have for the decision or task?* By definition, a team is a unit of two or more people working toward a common purpose. Since more people are involved, effective teamwork may take more time in order to make decisions or accomplish some tasks than an individual working alone. Short deadlines may not allow the time required for team interaction.

*Is more participation required to obtain the necessary commitment to a decision?*

An increased understanding of the nature of the problem or the reasons for the final choice of a solution helps team members commit more fully to a decision. Participation in the decision making process results in greater buy-in to that solution.

There are a number of advantages to teamwork including the achievement of synergy, whereby the team’s total output exceeds that of the sum of each individual’s output. Team decision quality can be higher by stimulating creative ideas among members and when it involves the pooling of relevant knowledge and expertise from different subunits. In addition, since team members evaluate one another’s thinking, the team is likely to avoid major errors that an individual working alone may overlook.



Because our organization is characterized by constant change and requires all of our employees to be capable of multitasking in order to address the requirements of our customers and partners, teams are and will continue to be an important part of our success. One of the NWS’s strengths is that it is made up of a diverse group of people each with varying knowledge, skills and abilities, and each capable contributing to our future success. A key to our success will be the effective utilization of this diverse skill set through the proper use of teams in order to take advantage of our strengths. Proper implementation and utilization of the team concept will be critical to this success.

Reference for this article: *Leadership – Theory, Application, and Skill Development* by Robert Lussier and Christopher Achua; 2001

# What is Servant Leadership?



**Greenleaf**  
Center for Servant-Leadership



“...the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served.”

Servant-Leadership is a practical philosophy which supports people who choose to serve first, and then lead as a way of expanding service to individuals and institutions. Servant-leaders may or may not hold formal leadership positions. Servant-leadership encourages collaboration, trust, foresight, listening, and the ethical use of power and empowerment.

Robert Greenleaf, the man who coined the phrase, described servant-leadership in this way.

“The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. He or she is sharply different from the person who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire

material possessions. For such it will be a later choice to serve – after leadership is established. The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature.

The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, will they not be further deprived?”

Taken from the *Servant As Leader* published by Robert Greenleaf in 1970.

Used with permission—The Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership  
<http://www.greenleaf.org/>



## *Abraham Lincoln*

“ If you would win a man to your cause, first convince him that you are his sincere friend. ”

16th president of the U.S. (1809 - 1865)



## BOOK REVIEW— THE TRANSPARENT LEADER

By Kerry Jones, Senior Forecaster  
WFO Albuquerque, NM

Transparency. In the workplace, it refers to being completely open and honest in everything you do. We learned these core values at a very young age. Yet all too often we read about companies whose unscrupulous leaders either didn't know how to incorporate these values into daily business practices or, more likely, knew better but did the wrong thing anyway.

Transparent leadership is not a trendy, new concept. It's a long-term lifestyle commitment that Herb Baum, CEO of the Dial Corporation, writes about in his book, *The Transparent Leader*. Baum's inspiration was "the lack of service in corporate America - something that stems from a lack of values, and a 'who cares?' attitude." In the book, Baum emphasizes the fundamentals of open and honest communication and he provides a nice framework for individuals that want to promote a culture of openness in their workplace through straight talk and accountability.

When I first picked up the book last November, I had envisioned a "transparent" leader as someone who motivates, inspires and provides direction and vision within a company or organization all the while shunning the limelight. That may be true in some cases, but according to Baum, "a transparent leader is someone who does the right thing regardless of the consequences and is honest and open with his/her various constituencies and communicates regularly to prevent the rumor mill from taking

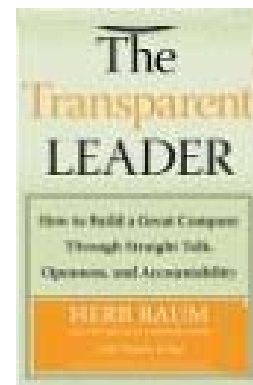
over." Communication, communication, communication. "It's arguably the most important facet of being a transparent leader," Baum writes.

Overall, the book is well organized and easy to read if not mundane at times. It's clearly geared toward the corporate executive, but its real world examples and basic principles can be applied to any workplace setting. Tips like: "Marketing is the world," "Tell it like it is, even if it hurts" and "Don't fall victim to the popularity contest" are sure to raise an eyebrow or two. Using examples from his experience at Dial, Campbell Soup Company, and Quaker State, Baum shows readers:

- The Power of Transparency -- the crucial components of a transparent organization, including the qualities of transparent leaders and employees and how they can benefit your team and/or organization
  - The Pillars of Transparency -- integrity, honesty, quality corporate governance, and effective communication
- How to execute transparency in the organization through real-life examples

The New Year is a time to reflect and look forward to new challenges and opportunities. If a unique book on leadership is on your list in 2005, then you might consider this one.

"Baum...provides a nice framework for individuals that want to promote a culture of openness in their workplace through straight talk and accountability."



Check out many more good leadership titles available in the Southern Region BLAST Leadership Library

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/srh/blast/library.htm>

Herb Baum with Tammy Kling (2004). *The Transparent Leader: How To Build a Great Company through Straight Talk, Openness, and Accountability*. (New York, NY: HarperBusiness, 235 p.).





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.

## LOCAL BLAST HIGHLIGHT WFO BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS



“...the group format provides a facilitated environment where diverse opinions can be expressed and where individuals have another avenue through which to contribute their ideas.”

### A Forum for the Open Discussion of Leadership Topics

By Brian Miller, BRO

WFO Brownsville’s local BLAST program is gaining momentum. Although the local BLAST program has been in place a long time, it now sports a new look and a new life. The purpose of the Brownsville local BLAST program is to provide a forum for the open discussion of leadership topics. To advertise the program, the coming month’s proposed activities are published in advance by local newsletter, sometimes with a pertinent leadership article attached. Usually, two or three meetings are held during the month.

The meetings are open to all and have been well received. The goal is to provide a variety of activities that will interest as many people in the office as possible. For example, in a series of meetings portions of the audio version of Stephen Covey’s book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* are being played and discussed. In one meeting, the group discussed leadership styles noted in the movie *K-19: The Widowmaker*. Mentoring also has been a recent topic of discussion. WFO Brownsville is integrating into office thinking mentoring concepts from the book *Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring*, authored by Margo Murray with Marna O. Owen and available through the Southern Region BLAST library. The bottom line is that the group format provides a facilitated environment where diverse opinions can be expressed and where individuals have another avenue through which to contribute their ideas.

A good BLAST program will ideally rely upon, and will likely further develop, good communication and trust among office staff. Future WFO Brownsville local BLAST seminars will include presentations by members of the management team. MIC Andy Patrick will develop Stephen Covey’s first habit, pro-activity, with clips from the movie *The Shawshank Redemption*. WCM Jesse Haro will talk about servant leadership and leadership styles using another illustrative movie, *The Castle*. Finally, SOO Kurt Vanspeybroeck will address his role as a mentor in the Advanced Weather Operations Course and as coordinator of the office training plan.

## LEADERSHIP ESSENTIALS

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

Team Leader/Editor - Jody James, Senior Forecaster, WFO Lubbock, TX  
BLAST Newsletter Team - Jeffrey Cupo, SOO, WFO Midland, TX  
Mark Fox, Senior Forecaster, WFO Lubbock, TX  
Kerry Jones, Senior Forecaster, WFO Albuquerque, NM  
Ed Calianese, WCM, WFO Tulsa, OK