

Not Quite ... Leadership Coaching.

I am not going to coach you on the attributes of being a better leader but rather about Leadership itself and some pointers for daily reflection ... many of these thoughts are attributed to passed-down learnings from my father ...

Employee Parking Lot ... is actually the reflection of your company culture and will speak more volume than what will be witnessed inside the building. As you cruise the parking lot ... what is the general condition of the vehicles? Are they in good shape?, relatively new? And appear in good repair? ... if YES, an assumption can be concluded that in general the employees have faith with management, the strategic direction and hence feel comfortable absorbing personal risk and investment within their personal life. This starts to make sense that after housing a vehicle is typically the second biggest personal purchase.

In your role are you balanced between being a **teacher or a student?** On the surface it seems like a very simple question. However it is a good daily reflection question ... no matter what kind of situation you may have been thrust into there is always something for you to learn ... even if it is something simple like how a task is being performed. Of course your role is typically to be the teacher but if you do not understand what your organization is attempting to learn or needs to learn your role as a teacher will be ineffective ... can you remember a boring and totally unproductive course in high school?

So it is definite value to take a daily inventory of what as an individual have you learned? (which may be primarily product or technical based) and what guidance and coaching did you provide ? (Process, Communication or Technical).

In conclusion ... if your day is spent entirely being a student you have been a burden to your organization by draining resources and capacity ... so you were of no value, conversely if your entire day was being the teacher ... at the end of the day you will feel tired and wondering about absorption rate of your teachings within the organization. Indeed some days you will feel more dominate in either the role as a teacher or student but for effectiveness strive for a balance between the two.

Maintenance Tool-Boxes can be the eyes to within the soul. Maintenance crews are an interesting bunch that have many attributes worth considering. Typically they are considered your on-call paid fire department ready to resolve any "Disturbance to Flow" ... they typically travel in pairs (if you can afford that many) and when asked they are always busy.

But it is their other attributes that are insightful !! Like all people they are naturally lazy so glance inside their tool-boxes ... if they are messy your organization is messy, do they carry spare parts ... you have a significant re-occurring issue that is an opportunity for improvement. Do they have custom modified tools ... same situation you have an opportunity for improvement.

Don't overlook the holy grail of opportunity ... The Maintenance Crib ...

Where Lean Thoughts can become Reality

Not Quite ... Leadership Coaching

Typically most customers and financial institutions are immediately attracted to your value creation process(s), equipment and technology typically while walking past the maintenance crib.

So once again let us reflect about our maintenance technicians ... 1) they are lazy (a very good thing), 2) They know that their value is based on their history of resolving Disturbances to Flow and hence they are 3) Pack-Rats ...

So as you explore the maintenance crib you will find all sorts of parts and modules that have to be kept "just in case" or items that are frequently required as replacements. Also the maintenance crib is typically like my former accountants' desk ... messy. But most important ... all the contents are typically paid for and are not necessary on the books listed as an asset.

The contents of the maintenance crib will provide you with hints on where to allocate your energy for potential permanent improvement ... electrical. Mechanical, automation ...

Need Cash? Send items back for credit since you can most likely source them within hours and open up capacity and space for expansion of your true value-added process(s). Plus since most of this stuff is not on the books it will be like harvesting free cash ... in some cases I have paid for acquisitions just by liquidating maintenance crib inventories.

Just in case you think that I don't love Maintenance Technicians ... you would be wrong. Instead I like to force them to operate a machine for an extended period of time during a work week. Maintenance Technicians have a much lower tolerance of inept process contents and they will find ways to implement improvement.

Strategic versus Tactile ... This is always a tough balance to understand within the organization and how each level in your organization needs to balance between the two.

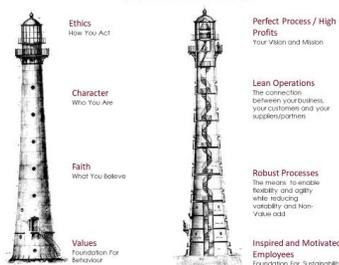
Yes you have the product or service that is created through your Value Creation Process and you have orders that need to be processed. Your people know and understand the importance of processing orders in a timely manner (Tactile) with the implied quality demanded by the customer. Hence the focus of the organization to ship their 100 tons of coal daily ...

80% of organizational sales in many cases are from a product or service that introduced within the past 5 years. It now becomes very important to keep your offering fresh with an ongoing Strategic Differentiator (Strategic) ... but this takes time for thinking, development and deployment. Unfortunately, Supervisors are the group stuck in the middle and most likely the most stressed ... as a leader you want them to validate your new ideas by sitting in meetings ... but while there they are there, their minds remained focused on getting that 100 tons of coal out today.

Understand the role your people are playing in the game of business and respect their mind allocation towards either Strategic or Tactile initiatives.

The Lighthouse ... I give credit to the former Don Soderquist who illuminated me towards this icon about leadership. As a lighthouse you need to be established on a firm base that can withstand all forms of storms and turbulence while remaining as a beacon within your organization providing safe direction or how to avoid destruction. But the beacon and the base are connected by a strong infrastructure based on your people, process and operations. As the Beacon (Leader) you need to have faith in both the infrastructure (keep shipping the 100 tons of coal) and a solid base or foundation that secures and grounds your organization.

THE LEADER AND THE ORGANIZATION'S PILLARS FOR BUSINESS EXCELLENCE



Richard Kunst

President and CEO

Tel: 519 651 2341 E-mail: rkunst@kunstartofsolutions.com

Web: www.kunstartofsolutions.com