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*Newsletter Issue #27
What Makes a Great Leader*



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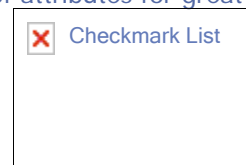
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Are You A Great Leader or Are You Just Running with the Rest of Them?

If you were to compile a checklist of attributes for great leaders, it would certainly include the following:



Visionary? Check. JFK's powerful vision of "We will put a man on the moon by the end of a decade" is a classic example of great leadership through a compelling vision.

Great communication skills? Check. Ronald Reagan's ability to inspire others through passionate oratory earned him the moniker "The Great Communicator".

Focus? Check. During the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln saved a nation (and changed the world) with his relentless focus on keeping the United States whole.

Courage under fire? Check. When things looked their bleakest for England in the early days of WWII, Winston Churchill rallied the country with his personal courage and bulldog tenacity.

Personable? Check. Despite his other character flaws, Bill Clinton had a charm and charisma that attracted people to him in droves.

Strategic thinker? Check. The business landscape is full of great strategists who have guided their organizations to positions of market leadership. Steve Jobs of Apple, Gordon Moore of Intel, to name a few.

If you asked people which of these is most important for a leader to have, many - at least those in the business world - would probably say strategic thinker. With so many competitors in every market and with change happening in the blink of an eye, it takes a great strategy to come out ahead. It takes someone who can look around, make new connections and connect the dots faster.

includes tips and tools on relevant topics such as *What is Trust & How Do You Maintain It?* and hints on how to overcome the biggest challenge facing today's business leaders. We also have a wide variety of complimentary resources in our [online store](#) including many worksheets and self-assessments which focus on everything from performance excellence to strategic planning. Feel free to check them out!



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But **creating a winning strategy is only half the battle**. In fact, it may be the easier part. Leading effectively in today's business environment requires the ability to think strategically *and* to implement according to that strategy. And that's where many leaders and entire organizations are falling short.

I firmly believe that the #1 job of today's leaders and managers is constant focus on both strategy and implementation. This represents a huge difference from a generation ago, when it often took several years for a good strategy to unfold. These days, speed, the rate of change, and universal access to information have created a whole new set of demands that require your daily attention.

The key is to balance your energy and attention across strategy and execution. Find a tool (or tools) that will enable you to develop the same sense of urgency around strategy and focused implementation that you normally devote to putting out all the "emergencies" that occur throughout the day.

These tools can be as low-tech as a sticky note reminder or as sophisticated as an automated scorecard or even just a "task ping" from your PC or laptop - anything that keeps you focused on the activities necessary to turn your plan into reality.

To stay focused on implementation, pause for a few minutes and plan out your time for the week ahead. Segment it into separate activity blocks, such as collecting data on strategy X, hands-on work on initiative Y, feedback sessions, customer meetings, communication events, etc. Really think about where you are spending your time and how much of it correlates to actually achieving your strategy.

Review the percentage of time you allocate to each activity block and ask: Does this align with getting us to our destination? Am I ignoring or missing critical areas? Are there areas taking up too much of my time for the anticipated return? **Of what I am doing right now, what will have an impact a year from now?**

Spending all your time contemplating the future might work for think tanks and ivory towers. But in the real business world, it's the day-to-day actions (communicating, providing feedback, realigning behaviors, recognizing others, etc.) *coupled with* the strategic thinking and doing that equates to success.

Many leaders can come up with a winning strategy. It's the follow-through and focus on getting the right things

done that separates the great leaders from the good ones. Don't just run, run in the right direction!

Answer to last edition's **Who said this?** "To expect the unexpected shows a thoroughly modern intellect." Oscar Wilde

This issue's **Who said this?** "Good business leaders create a vision, articulate the vision, passionately own the vision, and relentlessly drive it to completion." Find out who in the next newsletter.

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