

## ***The Leadership Bridge***

Peter Drucker was a celebrated writer, professor and management consultant who was hailed by *BusinessWeek* as the man who invented management. Among his many insights, he once remarked that “a leader cannot prevent a major catastrophe, but they can build an organization that is battle-ready, where people trust one another.”

Drucker's observation certainly resonates in light of the recent news about the Governor of New Jersey, Chris Christie and the lane closures on the George Washington Bridge allegedly ordered by members of his staff. This story has no shortage of plot lines, but for business leaders it is particularly instructive because it highlights the importance of creating an organizational culture that reflects the values and core beliefs of the person at the top.

Christie has lamented that the behavior of several key team members and their subsequent lying about this incident have been a major personal disappointment for him. It has caused Christie to examine his leadership style and wonder about the tone he might have set that signaled these actions were acceptable.

To be effective, a leader must be cognizant of their actions and the example they display for everyone in their organization, not just their immediate inner circle. A culture that at its foundation leaves no doubt between behaviors that are acceptable and unacceptable should be a minimum standard.

Unfortunately major catastrophes as well as minor ones do occur, but the critical part is how a leader and the team respond to these situations. Members of a well-functioning organization will already be of like minds and have the trust in one another that is essential to doing the right thing. In other words, it isn't necessary to cross a bridge, since everyone is already on the same side.