

## CREATING A CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT (PART 2)

Last month we talked about how management's only job is to manage an effective culture. In this month's Part 2, we will show you what it takes to conduct "heavy-lifting" to ensure a solid transformation.

### **First things First – Check Your Ego in at the Door**

Utah State University recently discovered that their definition of who the customer is was creating a HUGE barrier to placing students into great jobs in the business world! The University approached the long-held tradition of "The Student" as the customer. The problem with this kind of thinking as it turns out, is that the University failed the grade in placing graduates in meaningful jobs. Graduating lots of students, but no jobs to go to.

By changing the paradigm...(Oh no, not another "Paradigm Shift" message!)

Yes, by switching the paradigm, or point-of-view to "The Business world" as the customer and the student, as the "by-product, or the Output" of education, the University has been significantly more successful in placing the right type of student in the right type of job, given market demand for the type of student.

The same Paradigm Shift goes for executives that think their job is to "run the organization," rather than becoming more strategic and leading the direction of the organization.

### **Leadership at the Heart of the Matter**

Leaders are the heart of a business. The essence of leadership means inspiring people to come together and work toward a common goal. Leaders motivate, coach and work with people to keep them bonded and eager to move forward. That means setting a direction, communicating it to everyone and keeping people motivated, even in tough times.

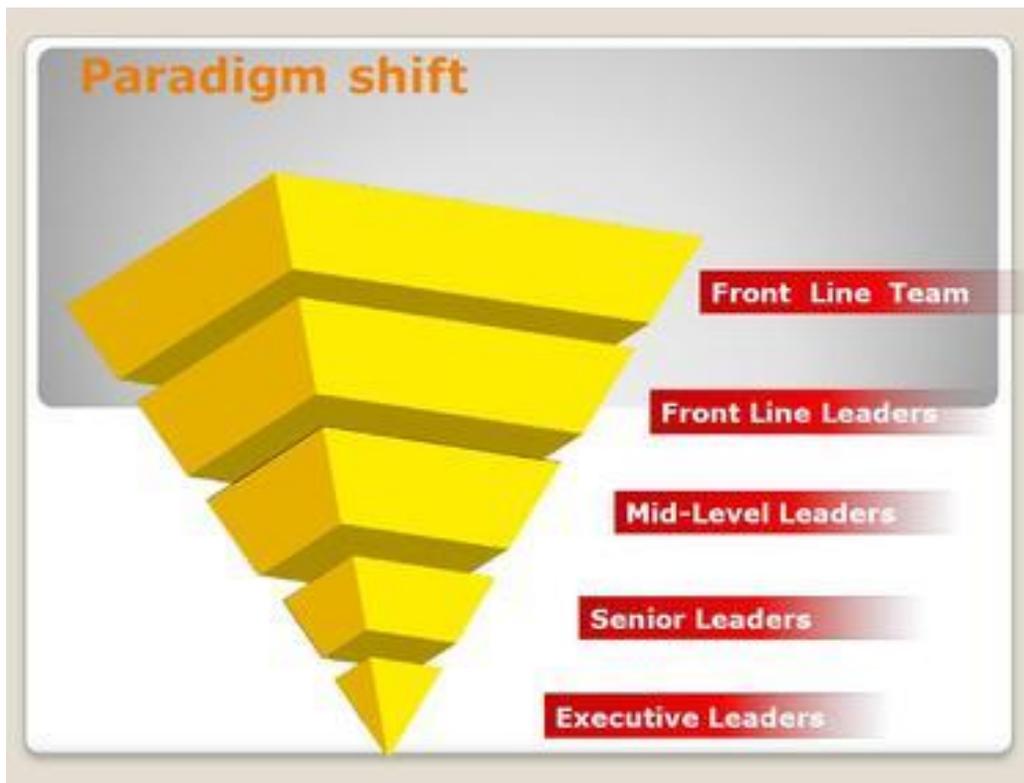
Leading effectively means turning the traditional top-down pyramid upside down in order to develop other leaders who can help run the organization and give it a

meaningful and sustained direction to thrive. This is called growing your “bench-strength.”

There’s nothing scarier than having great plans to change the world and looking out over the horizon for help only to realize, there’s no one else on that bench but you!

Leadership along with Human Resources needs to take on a holistic approach and assessing organizational skills and skills deficits and helping and supporting the management team has in creating and implementing a solid Workforce Development Plan for shoring up skills at all levels of the organization: Executive, Senior, and Mid-level, Front-Line supervisors and Leads, and finally the Front-Line Team, those that are closest to the customer.

This is what the new Pyramid may look like.



In this new world the Executive team becomes mentors, teachers, and coaches that facilitate and support each level up above in order to better satisfy the critical needs of the customer. Front line workers are fully engaged and empowered to “manage up” to each level below that is supporting their efforts.

Each of these levels then helps to create an effective management system, utilizing a standardized methodology like Lean Six Sigma to establish effective procedures and operating systems, with meaningful metrics and rewards based on positive behaviors that include open and honest communication and Root Cause-based problem identification and elimination of waste.

Leadership skills provide the direction, management skills provide the systems that let a company grow with success.

Carlos Conejo

Lean Six Sigma Master Black Belt

<http://mculture.net>