

Tips For Leadership Success

Economic forecasts are a mixed bag regarding the outlook for this year. The only certainty is that we are in a period of uncertainty, which means that executives and managers face continual demands on their leadership skills. Some leaders will fail; they won't be up to the demands. Others will succeed and may look back on 2010 as a year that really propelled their career advancement.

In a recent article, executive and leadership coach John McKee provides five leadership approaches that he's seen used by very successful leaders to ensure that they are in the latter group.

- 1. Remember that it's not *what* - but *who*.** The most important decisions you will make as a leader are always about people. You may think they're about systems, things, or money, but they aren't. Surrounding yourself with the best people is important at all times, but during uncertain times - it's critical.
- 2. Don't tell. Ask.** One of the traits rated most highly by those reviewing their bosses is that they are most likely to use "open-ended questions." Those leaders who principally operate in a "telling" mode miss out on the opportunity to capitalize on new ideas. The current environment requires new ideas more than ever.
- 3. Step up to the plate.** Once you've heard everyone's ideas, suggestions, and concerns, then you need to act like a leader. As a leader, one of the things you're paid for is to make decisions and successfully implement them. Show your team that you're up to the challenge. It will result in your getting more opportunities at the plate. More times "at bat" results in more opportunity for "home runs."
- 4. Don't focus on one great success.** The best leaders, like the best organizations, usually do many things very well. The ones who rise to greatness based on one success story usually flame out. Learning to move forward in small steps that have strong foundations is always a sound approach - it's especially important during a period that's very difficult to forecast.
- 5. Don't let your industry dictate your success.** There are a lot of stories of failures today - individuals have crashed and burned, organizations have failed, entire industries are in chaos. And yet, even in high-profile sectors that have been ravaged, like the auto industry there have been great success stories. Check out Ford Motor's stock prices and the fact that they have the Car of the Year awards from several industry groups.