

LEADERS EAT LAST

by Mike Lecak, Collaborative Consultant Group

Leading change from the Top Down.

“Leaders eat last”. It’s a leadership mantra that’s been used for years and years. It’s basic premise is that as a leader you are committed to make sure your team has what it needs to survive and move forward. This level of selflessness is quite often the difference between success and failure.

As our business climate changes we are all called to change too. It’s imperative today to focus our efforts on the here and now. Managed Print, Managed Network Services, Solutions, Solutions as a Service. This is just a peek at the oncoming traffic we now face in our business. Some have been very adept at navigating these waters. They have prepared and pulled together their team of managers and advisors and done all they can to stay ahead of the “technology curve”. Others have lagged behind. The reasons are many. Things like Manufacturer quotas, lack of sufficient funds to start down another path, Internal expertise, “we already tried that, doesn’t work here”, our customer base is not the right target. I could go on, the reality is all of the reasons above are valid. The way around this, and I believe, the only way is by a full and total commitment from Leadership.

Leading change is truly an art. It takes a clear understanding that first, change is required to better the business or the people in the business. It also requires that you understand what is needed for your employees to be ready for what is coming at them and you are committed to provide the resources, training and support they will require during this time of change. You will also need to know what results will come from that change and what must be done to ensure that the change

actually takes place. A clear understanding by all involved will help ensure that your message is being heard and the necessary support is evident.

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Change efforts in organizations often don’t take hold (fail) because leaders don’t go “all in”. Leading change of any kind takes effort, communication and consistency. Leadership cannot be a situational event. As leaders we must always support the change we are trying to institute. If we are striving to become a services driven business, one that is moving in the direction of managing environments and not selling equipment, we must ensure that all of our processes support that model. Are your sales teams sufficiently trained to enter this space and realistically impact the decisions that will be made? Does your management team completely understand this model and are they engaged in the sales motion? Does your compensation support your message? Or like most others, does it simply pay a “bonus” if they “get a Managed Network Services order”? Is there a high level of understanding of what this model represents to the business moving forward? Do they understand what not changing could possibly mean?

Change provides businesses with a great opportunity. That opportunity takes

shape in many forms. It allows a business to become relevant in their respective markets. This can be called “forced greatness”. It also allows for us to begin to develop new leaders. Leaders that are capable and ready for the challenge. By expanding leadership, it gives businesses the ability to see things through a fresh set of eyes. It also provides your new leaders with a purpose that is tied directly to the businesses success. This purpose is a driving force in establishing a leaders position as well as promoting change within.

When this change is set in motion it is the actions of the Leader that will be most observed. Is this really where we are going as a company? Are the actions being taken as loud as the words being recited? Can the change be felt throughout and is the support significant enough to make it stick? These and many other questions will be asked, the problems come when they are asked silently. Most will simply observe the actions of Leadership and decide if “they are serious, or if this too shall pass”.

“Leaders Eat Last”, in order to facilitate change in your organization, make sure the table is set, the food prepared and all have been invited. When all of this has been done, you then can sit and enjoy the fruits of everyone’s labor.



Mike Lecak is the principal of Collaborative Consultant Group LLC. Mike focuses on the people challenges that face all organizations including those brought by underperforming individuals and teams. Key engagements include improving the functioning of senior managers, developing leaders and hiring top performers. Mike has 32+ years of experience in organizations ranging from small businesses to Fortune 100 firms. He has helped both individuals and teams get better at what they do. His areas of specialization include Managed Print Services (MPS), Sales & business enhancement and sustainability... as well as, individual and organizational assessment and targeted intervention. In addition, Mike has been in the industry since 1983, starting with ComDoc in Pittsburgh, Pa., then the largest independent dealership of both Ricoh and Lanier copier/MFPs in the East. After a successful 15-year career, he joined Toshiba as a district sales manager. Later, after a period of running his own consulting practice, Mike joined Print Inc. in 2004 to managed sales for the company's channel-focused Print Value Solutions program. His team was responsible for all facets of bringing MPS practices to Print Inc.'s channel partners, including sales, service, training and sales compensation models. In 2009, Mike joined Konica Minolta to manage the West Region for managed print services. He currently serves as president of Collaborative Consultant Group