



IS IT TIME FOR A LEADERSHIP TUNE-UP!?!?

If you want to enhance your career . . . focus on your own leadership performance!!

Even the finest automobiles need an occasional tune-up. It's not that they're running badly --- in fact they may be running quite well. The critical question is whether or not they will continue to perform at a high level in the future. Without periodic road tests and diagnostic evaluations that analyze the current performance level of the vehicle --- and appropriate servicing --- there is no assurance that high performance levels will continue.

As a leader you are in the driver's seat for your organization. Your team, your employees, processes and technology are the complex engine that runs the organization. To ensure you are leading in a manner that guarantees superior performance in your current organization and enhances the likelihood of future success, how often do you calibrate your performance? Ongoing superior performance cannot be taken for granted --- maybe it's time to run some diagnostics and find out if your performance needs a tune-up!

You may question that a personal leadership tune-up is necessary. Consider the facts! Our research indicates that approximately 40 percent of the workforce is disengaged. Organizations routinely abandon 50 to 70 percent of key initiatives and strategies --- they don't take hold or they fail to attain the desired results! (Strategic Speed, Harvard Business Press, 2010). Odds are that, even as an effective leader, your organization may be experiencing these same issues.

As a leader, you would be wise not to assume a smooth road ahead. Develop a clear understanding of what is running optimally, as well as what you can and should do to enhance organizational performance by pursuing your own leadership excellence.

FOUR STEPS TO LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE:

- I. DIAGNOSE NEEDS**
- II. IDENTIFY OBSTACLES**
- III. DEVELOP STRATEGIES**
- IV. MEASURE RESULTS**

I. DIAGNOSE NEEDS

You probably know the saying: “The minute you become a leader is the last minute you hear the truth.” But as a Leader, you set the pace. You drive your organization and you influence how your team and your employees --- the engine of your organization --- achieve optimal performance.

So how do you determine what needs fine-tuning? The first step is to self-diagnose. To begin, dedicate some thoughtful time to candidly ranking your current performance on these 10 key traits in our LEADERSHIP Index:

RESPONSE SCALE for LEADERSHIP Index™					
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Mostly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

- | | <u>Your Ranking</u> |
|--|---------------------|
| 1. I actively build collaborative relationships throughout the organization. | _____ |
| 2. I discuss issues openly and candidly. | _____ |
| 3. I welcome creative ideas. | _____ |
| 4. I am open to constructive feedback, admit my own mistakes and work to correct them. | _____ |
| 5. I actively communicate the organization’s values, mission and vision. | _____ |
| 6. I have a positive attitude and encourage positive attitudes in others. | _____ |
| 7. I ask employees for feedback on creating more value and reaching goals of the organization. | _____ |
| 8. I am aware of “internal politics” and I strive to minimize this activity. | _____ |
| 9. I support and practice work/life balance and a healthy environment for everyone. | _____ |
| 10. I consistently achieve my personal goals and objectives. | _____ |

Your LEADERSHIP Index Score: _____

Compare your LEADERSHIP Index “Tune-up” Score:

- 60** Smooth Cruisin’ – no Tune-up required; whatever you’re doing, keep doing it!
- 50-59** Tune-up required – gets you there, but could run better.
- 40-49** Running Rough – inconsistent, call the repair shop.
- 30-39** Warning Light – diagnosis needed for trouble spots.
- 20-29** Breakdown – stalled, call for road-side assistance.
- 10 -19** Trade-in Suggested – are you driving the right car?

II. IDENTIFY OBSTACLES

When you have your score, take an objective look at the roadblocks preventing you from accelerating your performance as a leader. Interestingly, leaders themselves often create their own roadblocks again and again. How is this possible? Leaders typically achieve promotions through successes in previous positions utilizing well-established behavioral patterns. It is only natural to continue what you’ve always been doing -- especially if it has worked well in the past. It may not occur to you that indeed your LEADERSHIP STYLE may need an efficiency tune-up to produce increased results in today’s complex organization.

In order to identify “blind spots” you may have concerning your leadership style, consider asking members of your Team to rate you by responding to the same LEADERSHIP Index (above). Simply change the word “I” to “Our Leader” along with minor edits to each statement. You may discover roadblocks you have overlooked. Discuss the results with your team members to gain additional insights.

III. DEVELOP STRATEGIES

As a leader, you take care to drive with strategies that address opportunities and map the most efficient route. But strategies are not the end of the road trip. It is critically important that you prepare a realistic Action Plan reinforcing leadership strengths and addressing areas for improvement which, if not addressed, may put the brakes on your own optimal effectiveness. Your personal action plan should include WHAT you commit to doing, WHY you are going to do it, WHEN you will do it, and your targeted EXPECTATIONS.

For example, commit to openly admitting to your own mistakes and agree that you will do this by encouraging honest dialogue which will lead you to corrective action. Your team must be explicitly told that calling you out is indeed acceptable! The process may not be comfortable for you or for others, but if you’ve given your permission, you and your team can candidly address any detours ahead. You may be responsible for repeatedly creating your own roadblocks. As you honestly seek to enhance your leadership effectiveness, roadway obstacles must be identified and removed.

IV. MEASURE RESULTS

“What gets measured, gets done!” An integral component of the Develop Strategies process is to define expectations. These expectations must be revisited and reviewed routinely in order to be relevant and compelling. Map out when, where and how the results will be evaluated. Some steps of the Action Plan may be best addressed at team meetings, some in one-on-one meetings, or even all-employee meetings. Once commitments are set, drive toward them in order to measure success in reaching your destination. Failing to follow through on your Action Plan commitments will certainly steer you into the ditch!

THE ROAD AHEAD

Whether you are a leader in your organization, or aspiring to enhance your career, you contribute to driving your organization. Even though the organization may be performing satisfactorily now, there is no assurance that it will continue to run smoothly and successfully in the constantly changing future environment. What high-achieving leaders have done so far in their careers to accelerate success may not be what is required tomorrow and in the future. It may be time for a Leadership Tune-up to enhance your leadership performance and your career journey!

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“Is It Time For A Leadership Tune-Up?!?!” is a chapter from the book “101 Great Ways to Enhance Your Career” authored by Michelle and David Riklan, published in February 2011.

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