

89 Seconds to Leadership Success - Foreword

Leadership is a lonely place. I know. I've been there. Nothing like relaxing behind a big (or small) desk and wondering what the hell is going on with the group/project/business/family/life you're supposed to be the resident visionary for.

Ever have the feeling that the people you work with are in fact circling you? Like hungry sharks, they lie in wait hoping to sniff a drop of blood and then swoop in for the kill. As Frank Sinatra sang, "One minute you're up..." and the next minute you're carrying a storage box filled with your professional belongings out the front door. I know. I've been there.

That's the paranoid, obsessive vision of leadership. Wish I could say it helped me navigate the waters of corporate life. What that vision resulted in was an obsessive, paranoid boss for the people who reported to me.

Not fun for the boss and not fun for those around him. One night I came home and huddled in the corner of my master bedroom and wept. Something wasn't clicking for me, and the corner office, nice plants, four weeks of vacation, and additional perks didn't add up to happiness or fulfillment on any level.

What you'll read in the following pages are the lessons I have learned in more than twenty years of sales and leadership roles. It's not the Bible. It's just things I wish I'd known then that I happen to know now. The intent is to help you bypass many of these mistakes. No visionary quest to the top of a tall mountain led me to these ideas and answers—just a lot of questions. Some of these insights come from the corporate boardroom or my current role as an executive coach and keynote speaker. Some come from a summer spent selling ice cream out of the back of a '62 Impala. Value isn't gauged by where perspective originates but by what you do with that perspective once you have it.

The perspectives shared in this book have value in the action you take. That means you own what comes next. The thoughts on the pages ahead mean nothing unless you commit to acting on those thoughts. As you

read, use the margins or a notepad to write down the specific actions you'll take to effect the change you need and how you'll measure the impact of that change.

Oftentimes in my years as a leader, I've intended to write a book on leadership. Each time I sat down at my desk, what came out was drivel. All the fantastic authors who have come before me on the subject wrote wonderful books on how to be an effective leader. Unfortunately, they wrote those books in a logical progression from point A to point B right on through to Z. I don't know about you, but frankly I haven't the time to read many books in a logical progression. If you're looking for logic, choose another book, and perhaps loosen your mantle of leadership. Logic and leadership rarely walk together because we lead humans.

89 Seconds to

Leadership Success is a book that looks at mistakes leaders make and provides perspective and strategies on what you as a leader can do to make your team stronger.

Here's what you can expect from each of the fifty strategies that follow.

- Reading a chapter will take you no longer than eighty-nine seconds, assuming you read at the adult norm of two hundred words per minute.
- You will get tangible benefit from each strategy—something you can use right away to make you a stronger and more compelling leader.
- Anytime you want more—an idea or tool or resource to put into action—simply register your email address at www.89Success.com and you'll receive at least one dynamic action step each week specifically related to the scenarios and stories in this book.

Since leadership is a voyage of discovery, these action steps will be updated frequently to stay a step ahead of changes in business, economies, and the world.

Leadership is a labor of love. You can't force being a leader no more than you can force yourself to grow an extra appendage. Admire and love the people you're charged with leading, and they'll follow you to the ends

of the earth. A leader I had the pleasure to work with in the 1990's always made me feel like I was the only person alive (in a room of one thousand people) when we talked to each other. She'd grab me by the forearm and look me square in the eyes. It didn't matter whether we were talking about business, family, or Szechwan cooking. That ability to rivet my attention and lock out all distractions let me know in no uncertain terms that at that moment, I was the most important person in her life. That is leadership.

Each of us defines leadership as it resonates most strongly for us. I was willing to follow that leader across the proverbial hot coals because she clearly valued me first as an individual. In a massive corporate structure or in a three-person basement office, it's easy to feel like just a cog in the machinery. As you browse, devour, or simply read through the following pages, reflect and then act to influence and inspire the individuals you're privileged to lead.