

Yes, You Can...Lead!

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Incredibly, I find many contractors totally inept when it comes to leadership. Talk about equipment...Great! Discuss direct costs...Got It! Perform job layout... "In my sleep, pal! "But lead today's worker? The move to the "back of the class."

Look, you can lead. "Yes, you can!" Certainly, there are many challenges for

today's concrete contractor; we must move positively ahead as it relates to leading our workers.

Let me briefly share three key ingredients to more effective leadership.

#1 Establish Your Own Clear Leadership Vision

Coaching construction leaders over the past twenty-years has displayed many examples of how "not to do" this leadership thing. In every situation that I observed great leadership being effectively demonstrated, there was always a contractor or field leader who had a clear viewpoint of his (or her) leadership presence.

More importantly, their vision was also observed, received, and embraced by those following. If you want to take your next step in leadership then you would be wise to begin by clearly establishing your vision and then living it daily.

#2 Get Rid of "Me"

One of the realities of leadership is discovering that just as you have "made it" to the leadership ranks, you must now realize that "it is not about me anymore!" Boy, this discovery is quite sobering for anyone who has worked hard to become the senior leader.

The best leaders in construction recognize that acquiring the leadership role, whether through promotion or purchase, that you must quickly and consistently lead via taking your personal pride, wants, and benefits out of the picture first and refocus greatly upon those whom will reward your leadership with performance success. Therefore, getting "rid of me" must be replaced with giving more to others in your time, availability, support, expectations, boundaries, and wisdom.

#3 Set the Expectations & Objectives

For the "Thoroughbred" employee all you need to do is to share your expectations about how you want to see work performed and the clear and measurable objectives for a

project or task. For the more "challenged" workers you will need to camp out a bit on what are your expectations for their performance and behavior and for your company's reputation for quality, safety, and organization. Likewise, you will need to develop measurable goals that can be monitored and integrated into daily and weekly conversations and meetings to help keep the entire workforce focused and on the right path.

#4 Practice the ACTS of Leadership

This simple acronym stands for Accountability, Consistency, Teachability, and Strategy. Briefly, being an effective leader begins with you being accountable to doing your job each day. Consistency recognizes that you must practice good leadership, show respect to others, be thorough in decision making, etc. over and over and over again...thus consistency!

To be "teachable" is to always be in a mode to learn. When your followers see you learning, and enjoying new lessons, then you may inspire your followers to also want to grow and learn. Finally, leaders must be more strategic in their decision-making, their scheduling, and their planning. Most laborers in construction are quite short term in their view and tactical in their approach. Whatever is the easiest to do is what many workers will choose.... Leaders must be strategic and capable of making the best decision, even though it may be the toughest decision to make.

There are countless other leadership techniques that exist. However, without establishing the leadership efforts presented here in your daily walk you will be leading as if walking on thin ice. Deepen your foundation and core as a leader by possessing a clear vision for your leadership, taking yourself out and refocusing on your followers' needs, project clear expectations and objectives, and...practice the ACTS of a leader!

Yes, You Can Lead...Now Lead!

Brad is President of Pinnacle Development Group, a consulting company specializing in the construction industry. Sign up for Brad's weekly column at www.thecontractorsbestfriend.com.

