

MARK FRITZ



LEAD & INFLUENCE

Get More Ownership,
Commitment, and
Achievement from Your Team



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Senior Business Consultant and Partner Mercuri International, Sweden

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Head of Legal SABMiller Poland;
President of Polish Company Lawyers Association seated in Warsaw, Poland

“Mark Fritz’s *Lead & Influence* is a powerhouse tome focusing on individual, team, and corporate ownership, commitment, and trust. Chock-full of examples in easy to understand and relatable terms, Mark’s work is comprehensive, well-reasoned, and a solid contribution to the art and science of leadership. You should read this book, understand it, and leverage the insights and observations for field use.”

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“Mark has been instrumental in helping us to develop the leadership development program for Global Leaders in Law, and we have been privileged to have him as one of our leadership speakers. In this book, Mark brings together many of the ideas, stories, and knowledge that he has shared with us over the last five years. He provides an excellent reference source for those who have attended his lectures as well as an introduction to some of his experiences of leadership throughout his career. I am sure Mark’s new book will be a great success across the globe.”

—**Meena Heath**

Founder and Global Ambassador, Global Leaders in Law

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This book is dedicated to all the leaders who, over the years, have provided me with inspiration, insights, and ideas to take my own leadership and influencing skills to higher levels. I have learned something from everyone, and the more I have learned, the more I have noticed how important core leadership skills are when guiding others. These skills provide the foundation that enables leadership success.

1 Thinking and Discussing in Outcomes versus Activities

There's a great story I like to tell that highlights the power of encouraging your people to take an outcomes-over-activities mind-set to their work. Many years ago, General W. L. "Bill" Creech took over the Tactical Air Command (TAC) in the US Air Force, which, at that time, was a team of more than 100,000 people across the world. Their job was to repair and maintain the airplanes.

When General Creech took over, the team was organized by function and computer notifications directed workers to aircraft in need of repair and maintenance. Believing in the power of teamwork, he reorganized the entire staff into teams and assigned these newly formed small teams specific airplanes to maintain. The teams focused on keeping their planes flying and shared best practices with one another. The result was that *all* the teams' performance increased dramatically. After the team restructuring was completed, General Creech visited his teams throughout the world and asked his staff how they liked this new way of working. On one occasion, a team member replied with a question back to the general:

"When is the last time you washed a rental car?"

That may sound like a strange response, but it indicated that the teams were now taking real ownership for ensuring the planes were safely flying—they were owning the outcome, a stark difference from their attitude before the restructuring. Before the restructuring they were focused on their own individual activities and not on the outcome—the plane safely flying.

Before: The teams were *activity*-focused, focused on whatever their individual tasks were for that day.

Now: The teams are *outcome*-focused, asking the overarching question, is the plane flying?

Being outcomes-focused, versus activity-focused, makes a huge difference. When staff focus on the activities, their focus is on staying busy. There is no force driving them to do anything differently than they did the day before. But when staff are focused on *outcomes*, their focus is on achievement—and with an achievement focus, they are motivated to look for better ways to reach the achievement faster.

It's no surprise then that successful leaders think and communicate using the *language of achievement*. They bring an outcomes mind-set to everything they do and focus on instilling that mind-set in their people, too.

Here are a couple of comparisons between the language of achievement versus the language of activity:

Language of Achievement	Language of Activity
<i>Talk in . . .</i>	<i>Talk in . . .</i>
Outputs	Inputs
Deliverables	Tasks
Decisions	Discussions
Milestones	To-do lists

A leader of a global virtual team noticed the power of the language of achievement with her team. She began every conversation she had with her team, both one on one and as a group, with the outcome that needed to be achieved and the date it was needed by. Then they discussed how they would tackle the activities and meet the

milestones. They always finished the conversation by reconfirming the outcome and key dates. She found that by always bookending the conversation, starting and ending with what needed to be achieved—the outcome—she was constantly reinforcing the achievement in her team member's minds.

Ownership for Achievement (Outcomes)

The general's team member comment about rental cars indicated that the teams now took ownership for the outcome (the plane flying), and they helped their fellow team members fix the plane faster. After all, if the plane had five problems and only four have been fixed, it's still not flying! With a focus on the outcome, the team members pitched in to help one another efficiently fix problems as they arose. In fact, they painted their team names on the side of the airplanes, which signaled real ownership.

Outcomes drive ownership, and ownership drives commitment.

The general did two things that are absolutely crucial for a successful team, especially when you are leading across distances and cultures:

1. *He injected positive competition (peer pressure) into the group.* He made team performance visible to everyone and fueled competition among the teams by tracking which teams could repair the planes the fastest and with the best quality. He had a strong quality and performance focus and instilled that focus in everyone in the teams. The importance of this positive competition and peer pressure is discussed further in Chapter 11. But suffice it to say, every successful team has some element of competition within it.
2. *He had teams share best practices (continuous improvement).* The general drove the teams to share their best practices with the

other teams so that the good things people were doing could be replicated across the entire organization. This best practice sharing drove better overall quality, performance, and pride throughout.

The general knew the importance of posing and answering the question, *Would you rather your people own or rent their jobs?* You'll see a big difference in their behavior depending on which of these they choose. There's also big difference based on whether people own what they are *doing* or own what you ask them to *achieve*.

Would you rather your people own an activity or own an outcome? This is another crucial distinction. When your people own only the activities and you discuss only these with them, you are speaking in the language of busyness. When you can compel them to own, and therefore talk about, outcomes, everyone is speaking the language of achievement.

That doesn't mean activities are never discussed. But smart managers always frame these activities' discussions with what needs to be achieved—the outcomes that those activities create.

Outcomes Are Both Visible *Results* and Visible *Experiences*

Consider the example of the teams repairing airplanes; the obvious visible result is the successful flying of the planes. But the visible experience or experiences might be the way the team interacts with the pilot. This is important in two particular situations: the team wants to *get the right information* from the pilot to fix any problems with the plane, and the team *wants the pilot to be confident* that the plane is in top working order and that all problems have been fixed.

The same applies to *your* team. You have both visible results you are focusing on achieving and targets for the *experiences* you

want others to have (to feel) in achieving those results. You have both internal experiences (team experiences) and external experiences (for example, those involving customers, vendors, and partners).

Think about the experiences in your own life, such as flying somewhere. The result for you is getting from point A to point B. Your experience, on the other hand, is determined by the effectiveness of the service and how the airline personnel treat you—the things that affect how you *feel* about that airline. An experience creates a strong impact, because it is the feeling that stays with you long after you have forgotten the details of the flight.

A customer services group has both visible results and experiences. It must successfully process all customer orders while also successfully resolving every customer problem. From the customers' perspective, their experiences—their interaction with the customer service representative and how it made them think about the representative and the company—is what they will remember. To be successful, it is key that customer service representatives focus on the experience as well as the result.

So ask yourself, and ask your team: *What are the most important experiences that we deliver?* Sometimes, the outcomes that drive the largest influence with others are the visible experiences, because the successful outcome is always engaging people's feelings. Sometimes, however, the most important things aren't visible.

A Clear Direction and Pace

Successful leaders are focused on *direction and pace*. They know clearly where they want to take the team (the direction or goals) and want to get there as fast as they can (the pace). These leaders create a sense of urgency that drives the pace their people's work. Direction and pace

are the most important criteria they use to decide whether to say yes or no to new initiatives or projects.

Successful leaders ask themselves, “Is this taking us in the right direction at the right pace?” These two elements determine the leader’s focus and therefore the team’s focus as well.

----- Direction ----- ►
 (Pace)
 How fast can you get there!

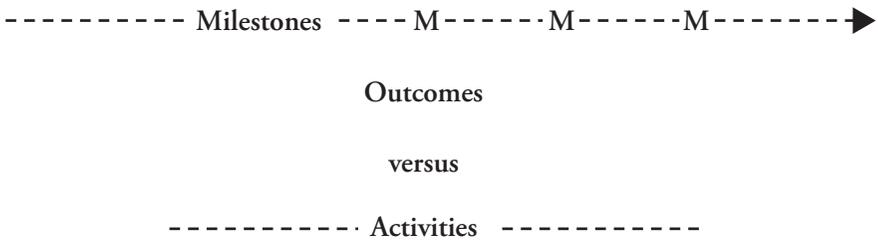
When the direction is clear, the entire team feels the same sense of urgency; everyone takes more action and is clear on what they must do. In fact, *clarity* is probably the most important word in any language. Think about it: when you are not clear on something, it stops you from taking action. And if, as a leader, you are not clear on something, you will not communicate as clearly and effectively to your people.

There is a great saying: “If it is a mist in the pulpit, it is a fog in the pew.”

In other words, if something isn’t understandable in *your* mind, it will be even less so when you start speaking about it to others. Successful leaders create clarity in everything they do and say. You could even say that a leader’s job is to bring clarity to their people, helping them to always see a way forward, and keep them moving in the direction of the teams’ goals.

Define Outcomes to Achieve and Monitor Milestones

Successful leaders unambiguously define what needs to be achieved, or they *jointly* define this with their teams. They then ask their staff to report on the milestones throughout the journey toward this outcome.



Will your people have more ownership for their milestones or yours? Obviously, theirs. Therefore, asking your people to discuss *their* milestones motivates them to take more ownership for the pace of progress toward the achievement, and this is extremely important when leading across distances and cultures. Because it's so difficult, almost impossible, in fact, to manage activities at a distance, you lead by following up on the achievement of *milestones* versus activities. And getting your employees to describe and feel enthusiasm for these milestones is what compels them to feel ownership for the pace of the achievement.

Of course, not all of your people will want to take ownership for outcomes. Some simply want to come to work and complete the activities they are told to do. Every organization has activity-focused people who aren't motivated and want someone else to do all their thinking for them. These are not the right people to have on your team; they lack that essential desire to own achievement.

However, they're not a lost cause entirely. Giving these people small outcomes to achieve and then gradually increasing those outcomes is one way to start motivating them—and testing to see whether they will ever start embracing that sense of ownership.

Small outcomes (o) to larger outcomes (O)

If, however, you find that some people never want to take ownership for the outcomes—small or large—you likely have to work on moving them out of the team. If you or other team members always have to do the thinking for these people, then they'll keep everyone else from achieving *their* own outcomes. It takes strength to do

something about these people, but it's necessary for the good of your team.

Your People Reveal How You Need to Lead

There is another benefit in asking your people for their milestones: it helps you gauge your own leadership effectiveness. The quality of their answers will reveal to you how successful you have been in leading them and what you may need to change.

Team members who set milestones that make sense and link to other initiatives can be trusted to deliver without having to be closely monitored. Conversely, team members who provide milestones that don't connect to the team's initiatives likely require close monitoring to ensure they successfully deliver. This kind of assessment allows you to be a more effective leader, which helps you and your team deliver more—and *saves* you time.

What are the most important criteria for setting milestones? This is important, because the clarity and quality of the milestones drive both the achievement and the pace that the achievement is delivered. The right milestones:

- Mark a clear achievement that is visible within and outside the team.
- Are measurable (quantitatively or qualitatively) in some universally agreed-upon way.
- Timed to match up with other key initiatives where there are shared milestones.

Your real power of influence as a leader comes from your *questions*, not your answers. The more you ask, the more you understand your people—and the better you can determine how to lead them in ways that prompt their best performance. Remember, without asking

questions, you're merely guessing, which is not a sound strategy for anything.

There are three key questions you can ask to uncover some important information to lead your team well:

1. What's the plan?

What will you achieve, and what are the milestones to get there?

2. Who's in charge?

Which individuals, team, or teams are responsible for delivering it?

3. Compared with what?

How are you defining good performance? What are you comparing it against?

The last one was of particular interest to General Creech. He knew that "good" is only good by comparison.

So ask yourself, *What comparison am I using to understand whether my team is delivering good performance?* People take more ownership to improve their performance when it is clear what good is and why it's crucial to reach that level of performance. If they don't have a benchmark or a target, they miss the incentive to use their creativity to look for new and better ways to do their job and improve their performance.

One of the most important jobs leaders have is to set the right expectations for their team's performance, and that starts by making it clear what they are using to compare good and bad performance. Successful leaders are constantly seeking external benchmarks and best practices in order to give their employees a performance comparison that will both stretch them to higher levels of performance *and* demonstrate that it is something within their reach, making it *achievable*.

Ownership Enables Pride

The general's target went beyond outcomes, ownership, and commitment; it also included pride. He knew that people who take pride in what they do will do it well and continuously search for ways to do it *better*.

In the airplanes example mentioned earlier, team members were first focused on only their activities (fixing the engine, loading the weapons, etc.). That brought them some satisfaction if they did it well and were recognized for it. However, after they began working as a team, focusing on the outcome of the plane flying, they felt more pride in their own work because it went beyond just a single person's activity; it was a team effort. Successful teams have team members with both individual and team pride.

Your staff will take more pride in achieving an outcome than simply fulfilling a task. This is why it is so important to maintain a focus on outcomes. Your employees will be prouder of what they do when you *focus*, *monitor*, and *recognize* their achievements.

Unfortunately, pride can get a bad rap in today's world because it's often confused with ego. However, ego is different; it is *pride without humility*. Pride + humility = *magic*, and *that* is when you get the top performance from the people in your team. When you instill pride in your people and team, they will truly deliver magical performance for you.

What are the ways you can create pride in achievement for your team? In every team, what you talk about comes about. Successful leaders continually recognize and celebrate their people and teams' accomplishments. Pride, like trust, is not a given; it's something that you must constantly reinforce through recognition.

Recognition comes in many forms, but there are some key ingredients that create stronger pride:

- Provide timely recognition. Give it when the achievement was accomplished.
- Be specific, and highlight good behaviors that enabled that achievement.
- Recognize both individuals and teams. It takes both personal and team ownership.
- Link the achievement and recognition to the team's goals and vision.
- Be consistently different. Recognition in the same ways all the time becomes boring.

Drive Outcomes-Focused Meetings

Meetings are common in all organizations and industries. Chances are, if you were to ask your staff, they would say that they attend far too many meetings. In fact, they might be rushing off to the next (often unproductive) meeting and not even have time to answer.

How often do you hear someone say, “We need a meeting to discuss this”? There is probably a smile (or a scowl!) on your face right now, since you've likely heard that expression many, many times. Consider this as well: Is discussion an activity or an outcome? It's an activity—which is why meetings are often so ineffective.

When you're framing your meetings with an activity focus, all you get is more and more discussion. Successful meetings are focused on *outcomes*—and meetings can really have only three outcomes:

1. An agreed-upon decision
2. An agreed-upon action
3. Consistent understanding (meaning staff will take consistent action after the meeting)

What are you thinking when you leave a poorly run meeting?

Probably something like, “What a waste of time *that* was.” And that’s not something your organization can afford. So many leaders create problems for themselves because they’re not able to run good meetings. If you happen to be one of these visionary leaders who does not like the discipline and structure involved in organizing meetings, then get somebody close to you to run the meeting for you. You can’t afford to have your people leaving your meetings thinking, “This was a waste of time.”

This seven-step process will help you run more outcome-focused meetings:

1. *Successful outcome:* What’s the outcome for everyone?
2. *Key topics to cover:* What needs to be discussed to achieve the outcome?
3. *Right participants:* Who needs to be there?
4. *Pework needed:* What work must be done before the meeting to achieve the outcome?
5. *Participants to talk to:* What individual alignment is necessary for faster meeting alignment?
6. *Agenda:* How can we structure the timing to achieve the outcome?
7. *Follow-up:* What do we need to do after the meeting to take follow-up action?

Do you ever need to lead conference calls with people in different locations around the world? If you do, you know how challenging it can be to keep everyone’s attention on the call and away from e-mail. Experienced conference call leaders do one thing to keep their people’s attention: they say the names of people in the different locations throughout the call. They know that when people hear their names,

they stop checking their e-mail and doing other tasks and immediately return their attention to the call—often wondering what was said about them. These leaders find a way to refer to their people's input—and by saying people's names throughout the call, they command their attention the entire time.

The first question you should always ask when you're invited to a meeting is: "What's the successful outcome for this meeting?" It will force the meeting holder to articulate what he or she really wants to achieve, versus only what he or she wants to discuss—and it may cause the leader to realize that a meeting might *not* be necessary, after all.

When you speak in outcomes (the language of achievement), including during meetings, you get more ownership, commitment, and achievement from your team.

What Stops Leaders from Taking an Outcomes Focus?

It is all about what a leader needs to feel in control. People like certainty. They don't like drastic change that leaves them uncertain about what to focus on—what they need to do and how they need to do it. Leaders are the same; they want to feel that they're in control. Unfortunately, the higher you rise in a team, the more uncertainty you're faced with and the more ambiguous your job's focus will be. You don't have as many bosses above you, and you're expected to define your own work and motivate yourself to do it.

So what do you need to feel in control? This question drives a lot of our behaviors, especially as leaders. If you're the type of person who needs detailed information on the status of every project, your inbox will always be full and you'll be constantly inundated with questions from people who are relying on you for the answers. They will rely on your micromanaging to prevent them from making bad decisions. This way of working becomes impossible for leaders across distances

and cultures, unless you want to give up more of your personal and family life to do it.

Leadership Behaviors Are Shaped by This Need for Control

Although a great number of leaders perceive access to information as a way of being in control, others know that they can gain the same level of control by looking at whom they put in charge of things. In other words, if the people they put in charge or allocate to their teams feel ownership of the outcomes (the achievements), they can take responsibility without the leader needing to micromanage their activities. They achieve a sense of control by putting trust in key people and monitoring the achievement of outcomes rather than managing and controlling activities.

Real control is through *people*, not information.

When your people own achievement, you have more control. There's a big difference between gaining control through monitoring achievement and milestones and doing so by managing activities and dealing with a constant stream of updates.

What Do Your Inbox and Calendar Say about You?

Other people can infer a great deal about your leadership style simply by looking your received and sent e-mails, as well as the appointments and meetings you have in your calendar. There are two key factors that drive them both: one is control, which we've already discussed; the other is choice.

Choice—Driver's Seat or Passenger's Seat?

Your leadership and your life are driven by your choices, and your most important choice is whether to take the driver's seat or the

passenger's seat. With respect to e-mail, there are far too many people who let their inbox drive their day. It's always your choice as to what meetings you choose to attend or not. Successful leaders know that their greatest power is their power of choice, and they never surrender their power of choice to their people or others around them.

What It Takes to Feel in Control?

As discussed earlier, the knowledge you must have to feel in control propels many of your daily and weekly behaviors. It prompts the e-mails you send and the information you request, as well as your need for more meetings to stay updated on everything you feel you need to know. With so much information available to all of us these days, the key is deciding what specific information you need to take action. Said in another way: you can take more action and achieve success faster when you decide what you *don't* need to know.

First, let's take a look at what your inbox reveals about you:

- If you look to your inbox to decide what to do next, then others drive your day.
- If you ask to be informed about everything, then you will be informed about everything.

Second, let's look at what your calendar might reveal:

- If your days are booked solid with meetings, you're letting others drive your day.
- If you have 1-hour meetings, you tend to become discussion focused instead of outcome focused.
- If you don't block off your best times for you, you're surrendering to others' priorities.

What would your inbox and calendar say about your leadership style? Do they indicate that you're outcomes or activities focused? And what do they say about your need for control? It's a good exercise to review these and ask yourself those questions. The answers will indicate how you use your power of choice and what it takes for you to feel in control.

*Thinking and Discussing in Outcomes versus Activities
(Takeaways)*

- Package all your conversations in the language of achievement; that is, speak in terms of outcomes.
- Ask your people for the milestones. Their responses reveal to you how they need to be led.
- Drive outcomes-focused meetings; you cannot afford to waste your people's time.

Your Key Reflection Questions

- Have I focused all my conversations and meetings on achievement and outcomes?
 - What are the most important visible results and experiences that my team delivers?
 - How would my people know, based on my behaviors, that I'm in charge of my inbox and calendar?
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2 The Ultimate Outcome Is Success (And the *Why* behind It)

I've spoken to a fair number of executives over the years, but one conversation stands out in my mind. This particular individual talked about how he achieved all of what he wanted for his career but didn't really have any type of family life. When I asked about his professional goals, he told me, "I had crystal clear goals for the career I wanted." But when I asked whether he had goals for the journey or how he wanted to live his life, what do you think he said? You guessed right. He said, "I had no goals at all."

When you take an outcomes focus, the ultimate outcome is success. Therefore, the way you *define success* both for yourself and your team is key. Personally, it provides the target for you to use your potential; it also provides the target for your team to achieve the performance you want from them. The most successful leaders look at success as an *and*, not as an *or*.

Success Is an *And*

Success is both a destination and a journey—it's about achieving what you want and enjoying the trip while getting there.

----- Journey ----- ► Destination

However, some people think of success only in terms of the destination. These people tend to ignore and neglect their personal and family lives to achieve their career objectives. Others concentrate *solely* on the journey and spend a lifetime trying to figure out their destination. True success is really about both the journey and the destination.

Is success an and or an or for you? For the executive in the opening story, success was an *or*.

Successful and happy executives—and their teams—*always* view success as an *and*. It is both the results you want to achieve, and the behaviors that are going to enable those results. So how do you treat it?

----- Behaviors ----► Results

Many leaders and members of the corporate world often want a job or an assignment for just 18 months. They want to create an annual plan, drive their people hard to deliver the great results defined in the plan, and then get promoted. With this approach, they don't have to worry about improving people's behaviors or the culture. You can push people for a year to deliver great results, but you cannot repeat it and drive consistent great results for three or more years unless you also expend efforts to improve the behaviors, culture, and processes.

The Why Powers Ownership for Success

When you have a powerful reason—a *why*—for what you want to achieve, you take more action. Your team and your people need a *why*, too!

The success equation is simple:

Why > How

In other words, the *why* will always be larger than the *how*.

Don't believe it? Think about how this equation relates to your own life. How many times have you wanted to do something but the *how* was difficult and your *why* just wasn't strong enough to drive you to take action. You didn't take action, did you? But I bet you

can think back to those times when your why was so strong that you would do anything (take any action) to achieve it.

Look at the person who wants to quit smoking. He wants to quit, but the why and the how are having a battle with each other. The person may quit and start again, quit and start again, never quite being able to make the change permanent. Then, he goes to the doctor, and the doctor says, “You have a spot on your lung.” Suddenly, the person quits just like that. In other words, the why (“If I don’t stop, I could die”) just dramatically became greater than how (the difficulty of quitting).

If you ask one of your team members to do something difficult but she doesn’t know why, she will likely put off getting started on it. She may even wait until the last possible moment to work on it or wait until you remind her to do it.

There are three keys for creating the why: clarity, passion, and visibility. When leaders create a *clear* direction/goal and their people are *passionate* about it, this creates the energy to do whatever it takes to achieve it. However, there are times when passion is not enough; in these cases, leaders need to create the energy in their people to do it anyway. That’s where visibility of what is being asked to achieve is important. When others in the team know they need to achieve it, then they focus themselves to do it, because they don’t want to look bad in front of their peers by not delivering. This peer pressure and how to create it is discussed in Chapter 11.

Your team also suffers when this equation is out of balance, when why < how. When your people find the how difficult and don’t really have a why or understand it, they simply avoid doing whatever *it* is. And you’re not there to see them not doing it if you’re leading people across distances and cultures. You cannot be there all the time to push them to do it.

Which drives you to take more action: getting it emotionally or intellectually?

If you're like most people, *emotion* drives more action. The why > how equation does not take an intellectual or logical view but rather an emotional one. When your people stop taking action, they likely feel that the difficulty of the *how* outweighs the *why*.

One of the most important jobs of leaders is to define and communicate the why for their teams. You know the acronym CEO, chief executive officer; the *executive* could easily be replaced with *explaining*.

CEO = chief explaining officer

CEOs have a strong leadership team that can create the what and the how, but the why is the motivating force that drives the direction and the pace that powers the organization's success.

The real power of why comes when you align your team's why with your key people's personal whys; your key people want the chance to showcase their talents to others. This is the perfect time to give them opportunities to lead projects that provide them visibility beyond your team and ideally even outside the company, both with vendors and customers. The more visibility you give your key people, the more motivated they will be.

Team why ← ----- Aligned ----- → Personal why

Everyone thinks of money as the key motivator. But money doesn't really motivate; it focuses people. Therefore, the why becomes important to provide something beyond a focus: the motivation.

Having a very clear focus and a powerful why behind it will engage your entire mind to help you both see and take more action. Consider the following example on the power of the subconscious mind and having a very clear focus.

Think about when you bought your last car. You studied the brochure, took a test drive, and fell in love with the idea (the picture) of

you owning that car. You were building *why* you needed to buy that car. By the time you bought that car, the *why* was so big that you would have felt terrible if you *didn't* buy it! You probably started to notice, as you were driving around at that time, many more cars just like the one you just bought. There were just as many on the road a few months before, but you never noticed them. Why? Because you built the *why* so strong on needing that car that your subconscious mind was pointing them out to you everywhere you drove. You didn't get up in the morning and decide to go look for that type of car all day long, did you? Your subconscious mind pointed them out without you even thinking of it.

The same thing happens when you have such a strong belief in something; it becomes a powerful focus for your subconscious mind to act upon. As you go through your day, your subconscious is pointing out people you meet who can help you reach what you want. If you believe strongly enough, your subconscious mind will help you see it and achieve it. You can imagine the power behind building the belief to achieve what you want. The more time you invest in building this belief and getting what you want, the more opportunities you will see to achieve it.

Successful leaders understand this power of the subconscious; that's why you see them constantly reinforcing the focus for their team in all different ways. It can be through regular updates or those subtle questions leaders ask their people throughout the day. These leaders know that the more their people maintain a strong focus, the more the entire mind (both the conscious and subconscious) will help them see opportunities and drive them to action to deliver the results within that focus.

The subconscious controls more of your daily behaviors than you think. Need proof? *Tell me your next thought.* You can't . . . because it's your subconscious mind that is triggering your next thought. You enlist your subconscious mind in helping you by constantly giving it a very clear focus on the outcome(s) you want and then repeating the

focus in your mind. Your subconscious uses that focus to trigger more thoughts and ideas to achieve it.

When you give your people a strong focus, and both explain and personalize the why for them, they begin to see more chances to take action. And all of a sudden, just like the car in the previous example, the opportunities are everywhere.

Pull and Push Power

Successful leaders use a combination of pull and push: they communicate a powerful why that pulls people toward wanting to do what they need to. The push power comes from the leader and generally makes people feel as though they *have* to do something.

But push can be overused. When that happens, leaders will lose a portion of their powers with each successive use. Successful leaders know this and use a combination of both pull (the why) and push (their position) to drive their people to achieve the outcomes and deliver their performance commitments.

Why Power ----- ► Pull your people to perform ----- ►

Goes up with use

Position Power ---- ► Push your people to perform ---- ►

Goes down with use

This concept of pull and push is especially crucial when leading across distances and cultures. Let's look at an example. Marybeth, a customer service leader in a multinational company, was promoted and took over two more teams in addition to her original team. She was used to leading people only in her own location and was suddenly leading employees in two more locations. She would tell them only what needed to be done, thereby essentially using only push.

Marybeth knew instinctively when she began managing these new teams that she couldn't push all three in the same way. However,

she also thought she didn't have the time to invest in explaining the why. So, she simply tried to use the same approach she had with original team—and she was burning out very quickly as a result.

Marybeth's boss coached her about the need to explain the why and to make better use of her key people to help lead and manage her teams in the other countries. (You will read more about the importance of empowering your key people in Chapter 7.) It took three to six months before Marybeth was able to fully engage her key people, but it made a huge impact on her leadership. With her boss's support, she was able to explain the why and use more of a pull approach with her most critical employees. She began to trust her key people and let them make more of their own decisions about details (the activities). This freed her of managing all the activities and gave her time to contemplate and plan all three teams' future—to be a leader.

Ask yourself: *How was my use of pull and push this past week?* Use too much push, and your influence with your people plummets. Without sufficient pull, leaders are left feeling as though they must invest a great deal of their time to managing day-to-day achievement.

Doing What's Necessary

Most effective leaders will tell you that the key to their success comes down to doing what is necessary . . . *when* it is necessary.

Which are more successful: the leaders focused on enjoyable activities or enjoyable results? You would be amazed at the variety of the answers people give to this question. And it's actually a trick question; the correct answer is both. You need to enjoy 80 to 90 percent of what you do, or you will never realize world-class experiences or results. However, your clients and customers don't pay you to enjoy yourself; they pay you for enjoyable results. Therefore, you need both.

For most leaders, there is something in the middle that creates most of your headaches: the nonenjoyable activities, or what you may call necessary evils.

Enjoyable activities --- Nonenjoyable activities --- ► Enjoyable results
(Necessary evils)

Do you have to motivate your people to do what they enjoy? Not really. You have to motivate them to do what they *don't* enjoy: the necessary evils.

These necessary evils can range from uncomfortable conversations to data collection to reports that require especially detailed and difficult thinking to get clear on the right approach.

Those who lead at a distance can't see when employees are routinely avoiding the nonenjoyable activities. And for every day they procrastinate working on them, there's a loss in productivity. This is why making it clear what needs to be achieved—and why it needs to be achieved—is so crucial: it will help people power through tasks they don't enjoy, because they want to get to the achievement (the results) on the other side. The more visible you can make your desired outcomes, the more tangible—and accessible—they'll feel to your employees. You want them to feel the need to do those necessary evils *without being told to*.

Successful leaders tend to tackle do the nonenjoyable tasks at the beginning of the day. They know how important it is not to avoid these activities—because if your people see you avoiding them, it sort of gives them permission to avoid them, too. As a leader, you are in show business, and your personal ownership is visible to your people every day.

Many leaders turn doing these necessary evils into a game. One person I know gives himself a time limit to complete them by and then plays special productivity music in the background to create the right environment to just do it. Another writes down the necessary evils on sticky notes and puts them on her desk. The desk looks messy with all those notes on it, and that drives her to complete the necessary evils before receiving her first visitor.

What's your best method for tackling your necessary evils? Remember, your day can only get better when you get these out of the way as early as possible.

Don't Wait for the Inspiration

Every successful leader shares a habit in regard to necessary evils to how they treat those nonenjoyable activities. They don't wait for *inspiration* to take action on them; they focus on creating a habit to do them without needing the inspiration. These leaders know that:

Action precedes inspiration.

It is not the other way around; inspiration isn't required to take action. You must invest the time to make a habit of doing the necessary. Smart leaders don't make too many changes at once; they focus on only one or two key habit changes at a time.

If you're waiting for the inspiration to take action, you might want to turn that around and focus on creating the habit for action. Once successful leaders take action, their own internal drive and inspiration kicks in to keep going until they reach the outcome. Success in business and in life is about taking the first action.

Conditions That Create the Success

A successful entrepreneur once remarked about success in a way that might seem strange at first. He said, "Entrepreneurs do not set out to create success. They set out to *create the conditions* that create the success."

If you think about this, you see how true this statement is. If you are an entrepreneur who is focused only on your company's success and you need to be there all the time to keep the success going, then

when do you have time to start your next company? You don't. This concept is as crucial for leaders as it is for entrepreneurs. If you cannot find a way for your team to perform without you always being there, then you are going to have to always be there—which means you can't be anywhere else.

This is, of course, never the case for entrepreneurs who have started several successful companies. It is impossible for them to personally lead the day-to-day outcomes that are necessary for all their companies' successes. They have learned to develop the conditions that create the success.

What conditions have you established that enable your people to create success? This could be your highest leveraged focus—the more you put these conditions in place, the more your team creates the success without you having to be there all the time. For most leaders, it involves:

1. Having the *right people* in the right places.
2. Establishing the *right culture* that reinforces the right behavior and performance.
3. Providing the *right offering* that customers love and that challenges the people to be their best.

It's crucial to invest some time *today* to think about the conditions that enable your people to create the success for your team, because this could become your highest leveraged focus. The more you focus on establishing these conditions, the more time you have to focus on the strategy and direction for your team, as well as for a personal and family life.

When you invest time to define success for your team and the conditions that enable them to create that success, your focus as the leader of the team becomes much clearer:

1. To continuously communicate to the team what success looks like and why
2. To enable the conditions so that your team can go create it

The Importance of the Culture

Success comprises the results you want for your team and the behaviors that will deliver it, both today and in the future. A team culture is really just a set of group behaviors, the sum of your team member's behaviors. If people share more of the key behaviors needed for the team to collaborate and create the success, then the more success your team will have.

How would you describe the culture you need for your team's success? What shared behaviors will help your team deliver success now and deliver even greater success in the future? These are important questions to consider when building a strong team that can deliver beyond today. There is ongoing debate about the difference between leaders and managers; I don't want to get into that here. However, there is one focus that is consistent with every successful leader I have interacted with or observed: they all had a strong focus on building and reinforcing the right culture for their teams. In other words, they treated success as an *and*, and they knew culture was important for the team to deliver consistent results.

What are you doing to both build and reinforce your team's culture each week? I often ask this question in my mentoring or discussions with leaders, and there is one thing I have noticed. Successful leaders can respond instantly, because they have focus on the culture they need to build and reinforce and are taking actions on a weekly basis to make that culture a reality. Other leaders, however, have to stop and think a few minutes in order to respond.

----- Behaviors (Culture) --- ► Results

Remember, success is an *and*: it's about not only delivering the team's results but also developing the people in the team and the culture of the team to deliver even better results every year. Good leaders deliver results. Great leaders deliver results and cultivate a culture that will deliver results even after they leave the role.

The Ultimate Outcome Is Success (And the Why behind It) (Takeaways)

- The equation of success is why > how; that is: Every leader is a chief explaining officer.
- Focus on creating the conditions that enable your people to achieve success.
- Successful leaders know that action precedes inspiration, so they complete the necessary evils early in their day.

You Key Reflection Questions

- How did I use pull and push this past week to get things achieved?
 - What are the conditions that enable my people to create success when I'm not around?
 - What am I doing to create and reinforce the right culture for my team?
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