The Leadership Challenge

Mark D. Hansen, CSP, PE, CPEA, CPE
National Director, Risk Control, Oil & Gas
St Paul Travelers
Houston, TX

Introduction

Leadership is a daunting challenge for industry and our country today. It is especially challenging for safety professionals who must deal with push back from CEOs to employees. The topic, I believe, is very appropriate for us safety professionals. We Americans have a love affair with leadership. Go into any bookstore and you will find almost as many "how-to" books on leadership as you will find on 10-step programs to lose weight – and you all know how seriously we Americans take our waistlines!

The reason for our national obsession with leadership is, I suspect, two-fold. First, as a free people, we believe that leadership is not a status granted to a few on the basis of birth, but a characteristic open to all on the basis of effort. Americans want to lead because we believe we can lead. Ironically, our longing to lead is an essentially democratic trait. And, second, as a fortunate nation, we have often, since the days of Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and Madison, enjoyed leaders who have been the envy of other countries around the world. Americans want to lead because we know that leaders can change or communities, nation, and the world for better. We prize leadership because we remain a fundamentally optimistic people.

I have found no better definition of leadership than the once recently put forward by James MacGregor Burns, a distinguished historian, who described leadership as a "commitment to values and the perseverance to fight for those values." Leadership at its most effective is grounded in both principle and pragmatism.

Another historian, Garry Wills, drives home this insight in his book on leadership, *Certain Trumpets*. The most important quality of leaders is so obvious, Wills tells us, that we sometimes overlook it. Leaders have followers. "It is not the noblest call that gets answered," Wills reminds us, "But the answerable call."

Principles are essential, but stripped of a practical way to achieve them, they reduce all too quickly to impotence, just as pragmatism, unless harnessed to conviction, can slip all too easily into cynicism. Balancing an idea about the way the world should be with an understanding of the world as it really is represents, I believe, the essence of effective leadership – whether Washington's, Lincoln's or one of the Roosevelts or Bushes.

This is as true for nations as it is for individuals. The United States is beginning this century as the richest and most powerful nation in human history. But there have been rich and powerful nations before. What is different – and what explains, I believe, our ultimate victory in the forty-year struggle called the Cold War – is that the world trusts America and trusts us because of our values. In short, America today is not just a great power; we are that unique historical phenomenon, the world leader. This is something of which all Americans, young and old alike, should be proud.

The Crisis of Values

However, with the end of the Cold War, the most serious threat to our national greatness does not come from outside, but inside our nation. I refer to our nation's crisis of values. I don't have to remind anyone here of the social pathologies besetting our country today. Ours is a society of rising crime, skyrocketing illegitimacy, and a degraded popular culture. It is a tragic legacy, one with which you, as tomorrow's leaders, will have to grapple for decades to come. Most of our social maladies reduce, I believe, to a fundamental rejection of personal responsibility, the idea that somehow, somewhere, someone else – perhaps even "society" itself – is responsible for our actions. We have, in the works of Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, managed to "define deviancy down."

Accepting behavior we would have rejected just a generation or two ago. There are excuses, it seems, for everything, even the most bloodthirsty of crimes. Somebody else is always to blame. Our nation has become a place where it is – quite literally – possible to get away with murder. This denial of personal responsibility precludes real leadership because leadership means, fundamentally, accepting responsibility, not just for ourselves, but for others.

To this extent – and it is a very real one – America's crisis of values has become a crisis of leadership. If Americans have a love affair with leadership, as I have suggested they do, it is today, a largely unrequited romance. The result has been an upsurge in cynicism – most tragically among our young people. It is no wonder that so many of the nation's institutions are held in such low esteem – and that Washington has become, for many Americans, a synonym for reckless action and fatuous rhetoric. American's public sphere has become impoverished, smaller, even dangerous. A society that must lock its doors will eventually lock its mind, and finally its heart. Already, we are a nation better at screaming past each other than speaking to each other.

Grievance politics, political correctness at its most extreme, and the cult of victimhood have created what the critic Thomas Hughes calls a 'culture of complaint," a state of affairs far from the civil society of individual responsibility and opportunity embodied in our Declaration of Independence. Given these circumstances, it is no wonder that so many Americans have withdrawn from the public sphere, and sought their solace solely in private life – in a personal faith, a successful career, a loving family.

All of these are important, even vital, parts of any life. Faith, family, job - these are what nourish us as individuals, that steel us to achieve, that give us strength in times of adversity. Parents and relatives are powerful testimony to the irreplaceable place of family in all our lives. But family is not enough.

The Call to Lead

Man remains, as Aristotle first observed, a political animal. By this he meant that we are social creatures. In a way, this ceremony today, in essence a public celebration of private achievement, reflects the duality of human nature. We are individuals, yes. But we are also part of a greater whole.

Any attempt to deny this fact is self-defeating. In our own nation, the more we try to isolate ourselves from society at large, the more it intrudes – in the form of violence on our streets, drugs in our schools and a mass media that appeals to the worst in us. The effort to escape from personal and public responsibility is ultimately a dead-end.

This, I believe, is one of the fundamental challenges of America today and one of the great tests awaiting all of us: to reinvigorate our companies by recapturing a sense of personal responsibility, to renew our commitment to America's values by rediscovering leadership.

But it also means a lot more, it means leadership! This is what President Theodore Roosevelt meant when he said that "The first requisite of a citizen in this Republic of ours, is that he shall be able to pull his weight."

This is a summons as old as our nation. It is a summons to serve in a time of self-absorption; A summons to citizenship in an age of cynicism; But, above all, a summons to lead at a moment when leadership – the true leadership that recognizes personal responsibility as a prerequisite to a civil society – is rarer, but all the more important, than ever before.

Similarly, successfully implementing safety requires strong leadership skills and is not for the feint of heart. Unfortunately, leader safety leadership is only taught in the school of hard knocks. Often success in safety leadership is the result of failures and trial and error over the length of one's career. Come and hear from a seasoned professional helping you weed out myth from reality discussing The Leadership Challenge.

Follower-ship

Everywhere I turn young professionals want to be leaders. Fresh out of school, they want to be the boss. They want to run the department, yet they really don't have a clue what they are asking. Without the career seasoning of the how to do safety and the experience of how to link them all together in an integrated fashion it is asking for failure to try and lead. In order to be a good leader, you must first be a good follower. No leader worth his salt would ever replace him- or her-self with someone who has not demonstrated good follower-ship. Mastering follower-ship is not easy and takes time. Many in the industry call it, "paying your dues." The dues refers to the requisite experience and mistake making that season you so that the hurdles that are thrown in front of you and your department can be easily overcome. Without experience as a good follower, you are doomed to failure in the role as leader. In fact, when I interview new candidates, I structure questions to capture the information I need to assess these characteristics.

So what are some of the characteristics of a follower. I have put some of these characteristics into a list below that summarize follower-ship. A good follower:

Has unselfish *humility*. When you are asked to do a task that appears to be beneath you, do it without complaining and whining. We may not realize the importance of such a task until later. Too many professionals today want to sit in an office and tell everyone what to do. When you are a follower, your job is to suck it up and do the menial tasks. Who knows it may make your boss and your department look better, just when they need the image enhancement.

I remember working in the aerospace industry, when the company hired a lot of retired Lt. Colonels. I referred to them as telephone colonels. They answered the telephone as Colonel So-and-so, but they weren't Colonels yet. The fact that they retired Lt. Colonels, generally meant that they got passed over enough that they had to retire. These guys were great at telling people what to do, but they lacked much of the technical depth to really know the detailed "how" of implementation. The result in many cases was abject failure of their projects. The lesson here is, it doesn't matter where you are in your career, early or mid-way, if you haven't done the tasks it is difficult to explain to someone else how to do the job.

Has unconditional *commitment*. Today, I dare say that there is little commitment, not to say unconditional commitment to your departments. Much of industry has brought this on themselves with down-sizing, right-sizing and sometimes cap-sizing. Without commitment to your boss and department, when you fail to come through when you are needed, may be just when they need you the most. Without unconditional commitment, you are doomed to mediocrity. If you cannot bring yourself to committing yourself to your boss or department, you will be found out and your career growth will be severely stunted.

Is *obedient* to your department and boss. When you are told to do something in the heat of the moment, don't question to the nth degree. By the time you get an adequate answer the whole facility or plant may be burned down. Just say, "Yes sir or ma'am," and ask questions later. If you go as far as arguing with superiors, this can easily be construed as insubordination. I have gone as far as relieving people during emergencies and replacing them with people who are cooperative. If you can't master obedience, I have no solution for you. If you are not obedient, your future in the business world may just be a short one.

***Anticipates* difficulty.** When you are asked to take a task to completion, assume that there will be problems. Schedule with some slack for delays. Anticipate that not all information will be readily available. Be ready to persevere and work a longer than eight-hour day. Prepare a Plan B, Plan C and a Plan D, if Plan A falters. Plan for the worst and hope for the best. Just don't be surprised when things begin to unravel because you have contingency plans to handle it.

Demonstrates *initiative*. How many professionals have you seen that have to be told what to do? This goes down to the most minute detail. And if you don't, they say, "You didn't say I had to do that?" Take the initiative and do things that you haven't been told. If you someday have aspirations to be a leader, initiative is a key ingredient. How many leaders do you know who wait around for someone to tell them what to do?

Knows his *priorities*. When I was in college, a professor approached me to sign up for a robotics class. He claimed it would be very interesting as he would be teaching it. I replied, "I could spend my life taking *interesting* classes. But I wanted to graduate on time. I set a priority not to deviate from my degree plan, regardless of how interesting other classes were. In the working world you must set priorities and only alter them when your superiors re-direct you with their priorities. This

will ensure success in your projects as well as show your superiors that you let their tasks take priority regardless of their own.

Has Loyalty. Have we seen the last of loyalty? Is everyone out to stab their boss in the back so they can get promoted? What has happened to our society when loyalty has been virtually eliminated from our vocabulary? When someone attacks your boss or your department, be the first to come to the aid of your colleagues. When you boss needs your help, give of yourself.

Has a *thankful* heart. Too many professionals look around at what everyone else has and wonder what don't I have that? I want what they have! Well, remember that those who have more generally have more responsibility and they earned what they have. You too must earn what you get. Be thankful for what you have. If you can't find anyone more needy that yourself, go to an inner-city, or a hospital, you don't have to look hard and you will see needy people. Once you see where you are in comparison, you will be thankful. So, stop your whining!

Is Persistent. I can't tell you how many professionals that make good money come to me and say, "I couldn't do what you asked me because ...." Every little hurdle seems a mile high. Instead of trying to find another way to do it they say, "Okay, I tried once, and it didn't work, so you tell me how to do it." I remember getting a call from the plant at 2 AM, when the site safety manager, called me and said, "A guy got hurt, what do I do?" It wasn't serious so I said, "What do *you* think you need to do?" After getting through his attitude that I was supposed to tell him how to do everything, he worked it out with my assistance. I ended the conversation by saying, "Next time, I want you to figure this all out and when you call me you will have several options coupled with what you did, and I will advise you accordingly." That is persistence.

Completes the task. Related to persistence is completing the task. Too many professionals today finish 90% of the task and assume someone else is going to finish it. They say, "Well, I did *most* of it." And they have no problem with that. As a professional, you were hired to complete tasks that are given to you, not mostly-complete every task. You are to make your boss' job easier not harder. If you always make it harder, you may wake up and find yourself fired and replaced with someone who will make your boss' job easier.

Well, these are the characteristics that I have identified that make up follower-ship. If you master these, over a period of time you may be considered as paying your dues and ready to be dubbed as a leader. But remember, even at the next level, you will always have a boss, and he/she is the leader and you are the follower. No matter where you go, unless you are the CEO you will always have some follower tasks. So keep these characteristics in mind as you scale the corporate ladder and move up in the food chain. Who knows how far you might go.

Being a Team Player with Intention

A team player must be intentional. This means making every action count. Principles of being a team player:

Intentionality must be connected to the big picture. Characteristics include having a mission-vision statement, identifying strengths and weaknesses and knowing your limitations.

Attributes of intentionality include: having a good self-image, being able to accept responsibility, having a positive mental attitude, and a thankful spirit.

Dependability. Dependability is more than showing up … it's intentional. You must go beyond the job description and be a "Go-Getter." There is a book entitled, A Go-Getter, How to be One." This book provides an illustration lengths one employee went to, to do the bidding of his boss. In this day of, stop at the first hurdle, they don't pay me enough or that is not in my job description, this book is an excellent tool to demonstrate how you define commitment in your organization. This is all done in an example of what is called the, "Blue Vase Challenge." For more mature employees the tool, "A letter to Garcia," may e more appropriate.

Delayed gratification is a sign of an intentional person.   The very nature of intentionality, within the context of teamwork, indicates that there is no such thing as, "add water and stir." All teams are committed to a process of becoming the best they can possibly be, and this doesn't happen overnight. It requires intentional effort to a focused cause and a willingness to forego some of the perks and privileges, as well as, long-term success and significance, that may become available.

Get control of your life or some else will. Just say, "no," to a random lifestyle. Without a plan and time management skills you will be at the whim of the latest breeze of thought, focusing on the current brushfires and really be hindered in accomplishing your goals, if you have them.

What a Leader Does When Arriving on the Scene

When leaders arrive on the scene, what do they do? Well, one thing they do is, assess the situation. They examine the OSHA 300 Log, Recordable and Lost Time Incident Reports, and Non-Recordable Incident Reports. They figure out what has been happening, determine what needs fixing, and begin to plan how to correct apparent problems. They determine what programs are in place. Are these programs up to date? Is accurate data being collected and distributed? Leaders also assess the corporate culture. This assessment will provide an insight on how far the company needs to go to get to an ideal safety culture. (Strike me blind if I use the phrase, "Paradigm Shift.")

Once all of the assessing is done, the leader formulates a plan. This takes time and effort and may require late nights during the formative stages.   What does a plan consist of? Well, for one thing a plan consists of a time frame that is long enough to show results. Personally I live by the 'five year plan' for everything from career planning, to financial planning, to job planning. Perhaps the five year goal may not be reached because it will change every year. You are changing it every year because you are reviewing it every year. Just writing it down and storing away a plan for future resurrection at the end of five years without revision, will have defeated the purpose of planning to achieve goals.

Next, set a goal that is achievable. Is the goal a certain incident rate value? Is the goal a certain percent reduction in incident rates? Is it improved productivity? Is it linked to quality? Is it linked to engineering design improvements? Is it linked to Process Safety Management? Is it attaining VPP status? You will need to set a goal that reflects your own corporate vision and the current regulatory environment (e.g., ISO 9000). Put together steps that will need to be accomplished along with a time frame. Assess progress every year.   Monthly performance assessments may be in order for critical items. Regardless, regular performance assessments must be made to ensure goal completion.

In the beginning, have a meeting with the people with whom you will be working closely. As you sit down with each person, ask questions like, "Where do you want to be in five years", or, "What do you see yourself doing in five years?" You may be surprised at some of the responses you will get.

Your job as a Leader is to help your team achieve their goals. You actually work for them! Wow! What a concept! It is your job to assist those working with you to achieve their goals so they will help you achieve yours.

A Tale of Two Companies Assessing the Corporate Culture

> "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, of was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going to Heaven, we were all going the other way…"

<div align="right">Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities</div>

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, incident rates were low, incident rates were high, management believed in safety, management paid lip service to safety, the corporate office provided leadership, the corporate office was ambivalent, annual budgets were required, budgets were not required, employees enjoyed working, employees abhorred working, policies and procedures were necessary for compliance, policies and procedures were necessary to get the employee's attention, design included safety, design shunned safety, audits were used to improve, audits were pencil-whipped.

Many of us have read, *A Tale of Two Cities*, by Charles Dickens, and experienced both of these types of companies. When interviewing or spending your first few months at your new company you will want to assess your new company culture. This will influence how you implement your safety program, whether with a hammer or with a feather.

As an engineer who spends more time with objective measures, evaluating subjective aspects was quite a change in thought and logic. There are no formulas, no number crunching, no table to validate a calculation, no black & white. Rather, I had to grapple with not only what people said but how they said it, what they said versus what they meant, rumor versus fact, in short, tons of gray. It can be quite frustrating if you are not accustomed to this type of activity. For an engineer who has spent more time eliminating the gray wherever possible, so that issues are truly black & white, this was an interesting undertaking to say the least.

What I have attempted to provide is a mechanism to assess company cultures both good and poor. How to be attentive to things said and unsaid. How to see things that those ensconced in the day-to-day do not see, but are indicators of the company culture.

The Best of Times

Companies with good corporate cultures can be assessed through examination and questioning. To ascertain how good the times really are, safety professionals need to examine the cold hard facts as well as the subtleties.

The OSHA 300 Log. The OSHA 300 Log will reveal relatively few recordable injuries for the number of employees and type of industry. The incident rate will most likely be lower than the industry average. But this is not always the case. For example, reported injuries may be high as a result of implementing an ergonomics program. The concerns take time to address and during this

time many additional injuries are reported. Once all these issues are addressed, the reporting drops of into the noise.   Problems are fixed once, across the board, especially those that resulted in injuries.

Management. Management is participatory but allows everyone the opportunity to perform. Management selects employees who fit the profile of model company employees. The practice of hiring bad apples is minimized. Management cares and does the right thing because they want to do what is right. Management invests in safety and understands the payback in productivity, return on investment, worker's compensation and goodwill. Management tends to throw pennies after dollars seeing the payback in the long run. Management places safety high on the organizational chart with the autonomy to unleash their potential. Even if OSHA did not exist, the facility would be safe.

Corporate Involvement. There is a hint of corporate safety involvement even though they are viewed as support services. They conduct annual audits, perhaps even surveys to see how things are going. Corporate requires reporting all injuries not just OSHA Recordables. The goal is to reduce all injuries. Corporate is the gatekeeper providing guidance from the top level. Corporate helps with activities those at the plant site do not have time to do like making sure that the programs are implemented consistently throughout the company.

Budgets. There are annual budgets for the foreseen and most of the unforeseen expenditures. Budgets are spent wisely and frugally, but the job is completed on schedule and on budget, perhaps even a few dollars under budget. There is also the ability to make mid-course corrections so that unforseen issues can be handled financially. There are budgets for the safety committee, capital equipment, safety training, PPE, etc.

Employees. Employees enjoy coming to work. Many of their friends work there, some are even fishing buddies. Employees speak well of the company when not at work or in the presence of management. Employees are willing to give more to the company because they have a vested interest in the company's success. Employees are willing to help others even when it is not in their job description. Employees have invested in the company. This investment goes far beyond merely purchasing stock. This investment is evidenced in length of service. When you see 10, 20, and 30+ years of service, employees are staying with the company in many instances because of the culture rather than in spite of the culture. Another indicator of a positive culture is when pieces of the company are spun off and sold. When employees scramble to find ways to stay with the current employer, this is an indication of a positive culture. Good cultures generally espouse a bi-modal distribution regarding length of service, those with 0 to 5 years of service and those with 20-30 years of service. Those with 20+ years of service usually include a large percentage of the employee population. Further, retired employees visit often to see 'old' friends.

Policies and Procedures. Policies and procedures are kept to a minimum. They are used to frame the concept and flexible enough to allow autonomy of implementation depending on the implementer. They are used to provide a path for guidance, not a barrier. An example is a company that I found that since its inception, had no policy for sick leave. Interestingly, even though there was no sick leave policy, no abuses were apparent. The indication is people like coming to work and look for reasons to come to work rather than to stay home. This illustrates a positive culture at the workplace.

Design. Safety is included in all design and acquisition activities. When the company is considering the purchase of a new facility, safety is included in the decision process. When a new process or product is being considered, safety in included. Further, if a company is required to perform hazard analyses (e.g., per Title 29 OSHA Part 1910.119, Process Safety Management of Highly Hazardous

Chemicals), the recommendations will be implemented through the course of business. These recommendations may require close discernment and a trade study to identify the optimum solution, but they are implemented. Some recommendations may not even be implemented at all. But the reasons they are not implemented is because they do not make sense (not everything OSHA says to do in the text make sense). The bottom line is that the company designs in safety for the right reason, to protect people from injury and illness.

Audits. First of all, safety audits are actually conducted. Secondly, safety audits have been fully executed. There may be action items still open but they have plans for closing them out in the future. The list may be lengthy but the company has assigned those closest to the action item to spear-head the response. Safety has responsibility only for those action items that clearly indicate a safety response. For example, a mechanical integrity action item would require someone from maintenance to lead the answer with only assistance from safety, while an action item on hazard communication would be led by safety.

The Worst of Times

Companies with poor corporate cultures can be assessed in the same manner. To ascertain how poor the culture is, safety professionals need to examine the same cold hard facts and subtleties, but the answers are different, quite different.

The OSHA 300 Log. The OSHA 300 Log will reveal several realities. It will reveal many injuries of the same apparent root cause and focus on employee re-training. What does this mean? It could mean several things. One, it could reveal a lack of engineering to design out the hazard to make the equipment inherently safe. Two, it could mean that there is a discipline problem with employees not following procedures. This may be true if the same employee is involved in similar incidents. Check out the industry average. Is the company incident rate above or below the industry average? This is a good indicator of the company attitude towards safety, as well as, employee's views of the company. What about the flip side? What if there are zero injuries or just one or two. Whew! That looks great! Hold it right there! Think about why there are no injuries or illnesses reported. Are employees fired before they hit the ground from an injury? Check the employee records to see. Are employees afraid to report because of retribution? Is there a company bonus that drastically outweighs the benefits of reporting? Answering these questions can provide clear indicators of the culture. The answers may not be pretty.

Management. Management is dictatorial, I am right you are wrong. There are two ways, my and the highway. Management is do as I say not as I do. Us versus them. The haves versus the have nots. Hiring practices do not take into consideration the employee's work attitude. If you can push a broom then you can work here. Management interprets OSHA to the nth degree trying to weasel out of the letter of the regulation. The common response to OSHA is, "Well, it doesn't say that we have to do that." Safety may or may not be placed high on the organization chart. But if they are, watch out for the re-engineering bug. If it catches on you may find yourself holding a sign at a street corner, "Will prevent injuries for food." If safety is placed high on the organization chart, the activities safety can be involved in are carefully restricted and reined-in so that it does not interfere with business. Safety is often referred to as the designated felon. If it weren't for OSHA, much of the workforce would be walking around with missing limbs. And when OSHA principles are implemented, the employees are required to, "goose-step" to the mantra, "Safety First," even though everyone knows production is first.

Corporate Involvement. If there is a corporate staff, but they do not carry much clout. They communicate very little with the sites. They are only interested in OSHA Recordables that need to be monitored for the OSHA 300 Log. They are more of a hindrance in the rare event that they are included in the process. They participate in making the chicken rules. The people at the sites may not even know who they are. Their attitude when they do visit is keep up the good work, see you next year!

Budgets. Budgets are bare bones or non-existent. When budgets do exist, they are difficult to locate. They are hidden in the quality budget, sometimes they are hidden in the human resources budget, or perhaps even subsumed in the training budget. Whenever money is allocated, for example, in Authority for Expenditures (AFEs), they are spent on everything possible whether needed or not. The idea is to spend the money because it finally got allocated on equipment or services we need. We may not get another chance to get what we need. If there are surplus funds they are usually used to buy those things that would never get approved. Mid-course corrections are allowed only when the line item veto is implemented. Adding to the annual budget is verboten. Budgets are designed to throw dollars after pennies because you are continually trying to catch up. As a result dollars are spent inefficiently. Budgets do not change in dollar value from one year to the next even though new and changing OSHA requirements should reflect changes.

Employees. Employees come to work to put food on the table. Because of potential retribution some employees don't complain about anything even when pointedly asked how to fix something. Employees with many years of experience whine incessantly because they know the company can't fire them. And when the item they complained about is fixed they immediately move on to the next item without saying thank you. When employees leave the company for another job, fellow employees refer to them as escapees. To get employees to attend anything outside normal business hours they need to be paid overtime. If you don't pay them, they won't attend. Employees espouse the attitude, "What's in it for me?" or, "What are you going to give me to do that?" Employees often try to find ways to be at work while still on the company payroll (e.g., worker's compensation). When they are out for injuries, work-related or not, it is like pulling teeth to get them back. They watch and believe those mid-day commercials by lawyers, "Have you been hurt and don't know it? I can help you out. I don't get paid till you get paid. By the way I get a third of what you get." They have OSHA on speed dial. When asked about procedures they reply, "Do you want me to tell you what I am supposed to do or do you want me to tell you what I really do."

Length of service is also an issue and there may even be a bi-modal distribution regarding length of service. However, there are several distinctions. The employees with 0 to 5 years of service usually leave the company within six months of achieving the five-year milestone. The reason usually has something to do with indications of stability on the resume. As the culture worsens this number approaches two years and sometimes even one year. Further, when a company institutes a policy that moving expenses must be paid back if the employee does not stay a full year with the company, look out. The employees with 20+ years of service are a different sort as well. Their investment is ostensibly monetary in nature. You will find these employees constantly tracking the stock market for their investments. You may even find hidden in their materials a countdown of how many days till retirement, like 200 with an "X" through it, followed by 199 with an "X" through it, and so on. You may not recognize it when you see it, unless you know what you are looking for. If these employees are not tracking their investments you will see them ensconced in things they do after work. You may even discover that these employees read the Sunday want ads religiously, always scanning for that ideal job that obviously eludes them. How do you find out if people read the want ads looking for the next job? Just listen, and during the course of conversation, it will eventually

surface however subtle it may be. Further, retired employees do not return and when they do, management makes the visits short because they do not want the employees to know how good it is outside the company. Who knows, these retirees may be bringing information on other jobs that can be pursued.

The best way to hear these comments is to *not* isolate yourself by spending to much time in your office. You will need to eat lunch in the lunchroom, take the time to drink coffee in the break room, visit the control rooms, stop, listen in on, and contribute to hallway conversations, walk around the facility and make yourself available to talk with employees. When you talk to employees, ask vague questions and allow they to go off on a tangent. These answers will reveal much about the company culture.

Policies and Procedures. Policies and procedures are often referred to Chicken Rule # 213. They are used to keep employees from interfering with management. They give management freedom and employees restrictions. They are the control mechanisms to justify firing for cause.

Design. Safety may or may not be included in design and acquisition activities. If they are involved in these activities, their impact on the decision making process does not fully come to bear. It may cost too much or is not completely justified or the response is, "We can't do that! It costs too much!" When the company is considering the purchase of a new facility, safety is alerted, perhaps late in the acquisition cycle where it is clear that if you don't sign-off on it will be your fault if we don't purchase the facility.

When a new product is being considered, safety finds out about it when the new assembly line is being constructed. When a new process is being considered, safety finds out about it when the new Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) shows up for approval and distribution. This is usually discovered in the process of doing business. You were never told that safety was not included in the design or that you were required to "rubber stamp" the MSDS for that new process, even if it is methyl-ethyl-death. When the question is posed, "Have we done a PHA or a PSSR?" the answer is, "Huh? Oh. Do we have to do that? We have to bring the unit up at 5:00 PM. Do you think we can do this later? If the unit isn't up at 5:00 PM you'll have to tell the Plant Manager." And the evasion goes on and on.

If a company is required to perform hazard analyses, the recommendations reveal the literal interpretation of the regulations. Some recommendations are implemented because they are too obvious to deal with otherwise. Some recommendations that require updating the policies, programs and procedures may even be resolved. But those recommendations that illustrate a real commitment to safety are put on the, "back burner," to think about the best way to do it. The company may even bring in a consultant to tell them because this safety guy may be wrong. If we are going to spend a boat load of money we are going to make darn sure that we have to do it. The bottom line is that the company designs in safety when it is easy to do it or there is absolutely, unequivocally, no other way to get around the requirement. The company may even say, "I'll take my chances and see what happens." Sounds like a great place to work.

Audits. What are audits? Are they required? Show me where they are required? These questions are sure signs that audits are avoided like the plague. Or if they have to blow the dust off the notebook where the audit checklists are kept and they are outdated, this is another sure sign that audits are avoided. If they are done, they are filled out like many self-assessment checklists. The answers are, "Yes, Yes, No (with an explanation), Not Applicable (NA) (with an explanation) and

only a few No's that require minimal effort. Whew! I'm glad that's over. Now let's get back to work. We're done with safety!" Generally speaking, almost every action item that is found that needs to be fixed, yes, you got it, safety gets to respond. The Plant Manager may say, "It's your job to make sure we are compliant not mine! I have to run the plant!"

Assessing corporate cultures in both of these instances requires asking a few questions and letting people answer them fully. It requires more listening and less talking. It requires watching body language, voice inflexion, demeanor, hygiene, and housekeeping of the facility. Tally up the responses to these questions in a good versus poor culture. A complete assessment of the culture may take as long as six months. It may even take longer. If you are astute, every day you will gather another data point as to the company culture, especially during the first year of employment. Hopefully, you will like the answers and confirm that you made the right choice of employer. If you don't like the culture, you will need to devise a plan to change that culture. Changing a culture takes time, sometimes a long time. It is like turning a battleship, you make some changes here and there and two years later you've completed a 180° turn. It's a lot like eating an elephant, every day you take another bite and eventually, over time the elephant disappears. The key is it takes time to implement changes, build trust and change the culture.

Good safety cultures tend to embed safety into every day business and system design. When safety is embedded in the culture it literally becomes invisible to the uninitiated observer. Whereas, poor safety cultures tend to follow the rule of check your brain at the door, we don=t want you to think, we want you to work. That's it. Safety by signage is often the alternative. Safety signage focuses on the, "Don'ts," of safety. Don't do this! Don't do that! Can't you read the sign?!

Correctly assessing the culture will allow you as the safety professional to, "... do a far, far better thing that you do than you have ever done..." That is, keep people from getting hurt.

Leadership

Do you have Leadership Potential?

Answer these questions honestly and determine if you have leadership potential.

- Have you ever broken a bad habit?
- Do you have self-control when things go wrong?
- Do you think independently?
- Can you handle criticism?
- Can you turn disappointment into opportunity?
- Can you gain cooperation, respect and confidence from others?
- Can you discipline without making a power play?
- Are you peacemaker?
- Do people trust you in delicate situations?
- Can you convince people to happily do things they would not normally wish to do?
- Can you accept opposition without becoming defensive?
- Can you make and keep friends?
- Do you depend on the praise of others to keep you going?
- Are you at ease with strangers?
- Are people who report to you generally at ease?
- Are you interested in people? All races? All types?

- Are you tactful?
- Is your will strong and steady?
- Can you forgive?
- Are you reasonably optimistic?
- Do you have a passion in your heart?
- Do you welcome responsibility?

Mott's Qualities of a Leader

There is much to learn from age-old leaders. Here are a few:

- Does little things well
- Has learned to focus on priorities
- Uses leisure well
- Has intensity
- Knows how to exploit momentum
- Continues to grow
- Overcomes discouragement and impossible situations
- Understands their weaknesses

Five Questions to Ask if You Want to be a Leader

To be a leader means you care about the people in your organization, sometimes more than they care about themselves. Here are a few telling questions to ask yourself:

- Do other people's failures annoy me or challenge me?
- Do I use people in interaction or do I cultivate and discipline people in interaction?
- Do I direct people or do I develop people?
- Do I criticize people or do I encourage people?
- Do I shun conflict or do I prudently confront conflict?

Seven Qualities for Military Leadership

The military provides much in the way of instruction for leaders. Here are a few:

- Avoid getting swamped in detail
- Do not be petty
- Do not be pompous
- Know how to select people fit for the task
- Trust others to do a job without your meddling
- Inspire confidence

Commanding vs Compassionate Leaders

Compassionate leaders like Norman Schwarzkoff and Colin Powell command respect. Here is how they command:

- Enforces policy from without
- Dictates as the superior over the inferior

- Head man with no compassion
- Interprets questions as personal attacks
- Influences people from within
- Directs as a part of the team
- A heart man with concern
- Interprets questions as an opportunity to teach

Good vs Bad Leaders

Good leaders tend to make good things happen and take a positive spin on everything. Bad leaders tend to do just the opposite.

Good Leaders	Bad Leaders
Always part of the answer	Is part of the problem
Always has a plan	Always has an excuse
Says, "Let me do it for you."	Says, "That's not my job."
Sees an answer to every problem	Sees a problem for every answer
Says, "It may be difficult, but we can do it."	Says, "It may be possible, but it's too difficult."
Has followers and is not concerned about title	Has no followers and is a leader in a leader in title only
Always strives to get better	Always tends to get bitter
Always seeks to add and multiply	Always tends to subtract and divide

Seven Leadership Traps

You know you are reaching the enf of your effectiveness when a leader:
- Stops growing
- Stops caring
- Stops listening
- Gets distracted
- Becomes complacent
- Becomes arrogant
- Fails to delegate

Are You a Mentor Or a Tor-Mentor

Today, there is a terrible shortage of mentors. No one wants to take the time to explain anything more than the bare minimum. Some of it is based on fear, some of it is based on apathy and some of it is based on a lack of time. Do you groom your employees for future success? Do you invest time in their careers? Do you mentor them? Or are you a tor-mentor?

I remember the first time I started mentoring a co-worker. I taught him how to conduct a hazard analysis. Once we had finished, he asked me, "Why did you teach me how to do a hazard analysis? Because now I can compete with you in the future!" My response was, "I taught you everything **you** know about hazard analyses, **not** everything **I** know about hazard analyses!" And the mentoring process ensued.

If you are considering the formidable task of mentoring people you may find these ten principles of use to you in this endeavor.

Persuasion. Do you have it? That is, are you persuasive? One reason someone would want to be mentored by you is that you are persuasive. When attempting to persuade your peers and superiors. You are able to make a strong case backed up with reason, logic and the appropriate rationale. You can be a role model for those who wish to learn how you do this in all aspects of company interaction. Also, closely allied with persuasion is your ability to listen to others. This does not mean that you are merely waiting for the other person to stop talking, but you are actually listening, not formulating a rebuttal or response. By listening carefully, you can use the other person's rationale to help you sell your own point. In mentoring you are teaching this gentle art. Where the young professional has the desire to "burn up the world" with their talent (as I did), you can teach them to pick their battles carefully and fight them to win.

Patience. Patience has been lost on my generation that the motto captures, "Been there, done that, got the t-shirt." My generation is the gotta have it not generation. There is no consideration for waiting for the appropriate time, I just want it now! You must have patience and you must be patience. How else can you teach patience. You are not only teaching patience but you are also being patient. In teaching patience you illustrate the ability to use your knowledge and leadership to intervene at the appropriate time. You are teaching the ability to strike with the elegant response at the best opportunity that, once you have responded, everyone agrees and wonders why no one else thought of it.

You must also be patient with the mentoree. You must realize that you did not get to where you are today without patience. Without a few critical events shaping your current character you would not be sought after to be a mentor. It will take time to shape the character of the one being mentored. Remember, you are making a long term investment in this person. Just like at a bank, it will take for that investment to multiply.

Gentleness. A mentor is meek, which is not to be confused with weak. You are teaching meekness in the mentoree. What is meek? It is controlled power. It is someone who has power but uses it judiciously. Gentleness is also wrapped up in humility. You are not wrapped up in yourself, and you are teaching your mentoree the same. Avoid being too harsh, gently guide the mentoree to the right answer allowing for mistakes along the way. You are also teaching perceptiveness to sensitivities, vulnerabilities,and other areas to tread lightly.

Teachability. Before taking on every person who wants to be mentored, you need to determine if they are teachable. Are they willing to learn and change their minds about particular issued or are they so prideful that they always consider themselves right. It was once said by, Ashleigh Brilliant, "My opinions have changed, but not the fact that I=m right.." Here again, humility plays a role. They are willing to be taught and are open minded to other people's experiences, judgments and viewpoints without being condescending.

Acceptance. Acceptance in mentoring means that you unconditionally accept the other person for who and what they are. This gives the mentoree a positive belief about themselves and their potential. Unconditional acceptance comes when you desire the best for the mentoree, without judging them and giving them the benefit of the doubt. What you will get in return, although you don't ask for it is loyalty.

Kindness. When mentoring, treat the mentoree with kindness. This means being caring and thoughtful, and acting with consideration, civility, and true concern. Sometimes this takes emotional

strength to not fly off the handle, to keep you r cool. You need the intestinal fortitude to give kindness when it is the hardest to give. Which is when they need it the most. Remember, you are also teaching kindness through your own behavior.

Knoweldge. You must really get to know the one you are mentoring. It is interesting, that we work in the same office with people, year after year, and really don't get to know them. You must invest in the relationship. This means that you meet over a cup of coffee without an agenda to just get to know the other person, their values, their beliefs, and their morals. How can you influence them if you do not know what makes them tick. To this day there is a colleague that I meet with on a regular basis to keep in touch with and see how things are going. I am sometimes asked for advice, other times I am a sounding board, and still others just for conversation. This is the investment that we are helping them reach their full potential as professionals.

Discipline. I have often said, praise in public, punish in private. This preserves the dignity of the mentoree. The effectiveness of discipline hinges on the timing, delivery and methods used. This is one aspect often overlooked by those mentoring others. If it is overlooked, it leaves the mentoree with an incomplete training. In discipline, let the punishment be commensurate with the crime. Don't overdo it and don't treat offenses too lightly. Admonish and caution genuinely. Be specific, precise, clear and prescriptive. Do so in such a manner that it is taken as constructive criticism not as a personal affront.

Consistency. I shouldn't even have to mention consistency. Many safety professionals realize that their safety programs would be unsuccessful without consistency. The same is true when mentoring. Inconsistency supplants our actions as manipulative with ulterior motives. Consistency also means that you look to your same core principles when you are required to act.

Integrity. Integrity is a lost art in much of the business world today. You are teaching the mentoree that they need to match their actions with their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs. This is none other than the familiar safety principle, walking the walk that we talk about. Of course this must be innately obvious in your own behavior. If you are disingenuous, your attempts to deceive will find you out and betray you. Remember, the greater the integrity, the greater the power.

Take a look, are you a mentor or a tor-mentor? Are you growing other professionals or stunting their growth? If you are mentoring others, consider these principles to ensure a quality product during the process. Because if you do it right, you are never done mentoring, it is a continual process.

Fire-Proofing Your Job

No matter where you are located in the food chain of your company's organization chart, getting *fired* is something that can happen to all of us. Even though our unemployment rate is hovering around 4-5%, you can get fired due to lay-offs, mergers, acquisitions, and sell-offs. You can also be fired as a result of downsizing, as some companies are not flourishing during these flourishing times. You can get fired as a result of your own actions, insubordination, fraud, mis-representation, a poor relationship with co-workers, subordinates or superiors. There are several things that you can do to avoid getting fired or being laid-off regardless of where you are placed in the corporate food chain. No matter where you are located in the food chain of your company?s organization chart, getting *fired* is something that can happen to all of us. Even though our unemployment rate is hovering around 4-5%, you can get fired due to lay-offs, as a result of mergers, acquisitions, and sell-offs. It can be from downsizing, as some companies are not flourishing during these flourishing times. You can get fired as a result of your own actions, insubordination, fraud, mis-representation, a poor relationship with co-workers, subordinates or superiors. There are several things that you can do to avoid getting fired or being laid-off regardless of where you are placed in the corporate food chain.

The Early Bird Gets the Worm. Try to get to work before your boss gets to work and if possible leave after your boss leaves. If your boss gets to work at 7:30 AM, you get there by 7:15AM. If you work downtown and want to beat the traffic, get to work even earlier, like perhaps 6:30 AM. It is amazing the things you can get done before 8:00 AM, when the phone rings and hallway conversations strike up. It also doesn't hurt to make the coffee for everyone, especially if your boss drinks coffee. He will most likely find out who makes that first pot. If he doesn't make sure he does, however subtle. Getting to work before your boss gets there demonstrates that you are serious about your job and committed to it. Perhaps this is a good quiet time to meet with your boss and discuss many issues he would not discuss with you otherwise with an office full of people. Perhaps even a little bonding will develop, endearing you as much as a friend rather than just a contemporary. For the mathematically and loyalty challenged, this means that you are probably going to be putting in more than eight hours a day. This goes a long way to fire-proofing your job.

Be Flexible. Some people have added another beatitude, blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be broken. Be ready to do something outside your job description, perhaps even outside your technological comfort zone. If you are asked to write an environmental report, research it, find some models, call some colleagues and figure it out. Don't say, "That's not my job!," or "I can't do that!" If you want to fire-proof your job and potentially move up the food chain, it is good to show that you are willing to learn a new discipline, especially if you are going to potentially manage that discipline.

Taking this a step further, periodically ask your boss if there is anything you can do to help him. Ask him for things you can do that he doesn't like to do, doesn't have time to do, etc. That way you can learn what he is doing and be able to act more responsibly in his absence. Also, be vigilant when your boss is stressed and needs help. Helping him meet a critical deadline can pay tremendous dividends in your future raises, bonuses, and promotions. This isn't a guarantee but your boss may very well speak well of you to others in your absence furthering your career. If you can do these things you can easily add another number to the R-factor to your fire-proof rating.

Speed it Up. When you boss gives you a task to do, **STOP** what you are doing and get on it immediately. Your boss needs to know that the tasks he gives take priority over your own agenda. When he asks a question you can't immediately answer, research it and get back to him within the day or first thing the next morning. Your boss needs to know that you are committed to working for

him and that you will sacrifice your own agenda to help him meet his deadlines. He is your customer first. Speed indicates that you are on top of your discipline and that it doesn't take too much time to find the answer to the question he is asking for. At a minimum, check your to make sure it is accurate and correct before submitting it to him.

Walk in Lockstep with Your Boss. This may not be popular, but agreement with your boss is very important. Your personal views may differ from his but when it does not need to be aired in public, even if they are of an ethical nature. Share your personal thoughts with your boss in private, but always support him in public. It is the analogy of praise in public, chastise in private for your boss that many use with subordinates. Don't make your boss look the fool. It can only hurt you in the long run. Also, remember that he is still the boss and may want to run the organization his way. You work for him. Think about your future. One day if you want to be the boss you will be able to run things your way. Until then, be patient.

Put Your Boss in the Best Possible Light. Not all bosses are liked by all employees and co-workers. However, your boss most likely hired you or had a direct input into your hiring. You need to support and defend your boss when he is not present to defend himself. There are certain positive ramifications.

One, people will know that what they say about your boss will get back to him if they say it in front of you. What these people are doing is commonly called backbiting. Knowing that you are direct conduit to your boss will force people to say less disparaging remarks about your boss in front of you. At one location where I worked, a co-worker would come into my office and redress the boss and tell me how bad he was. It was a touchy situation, this is the guy who just hired me! After a few sessions of non-committal responses on my part, I told my co-worker, "If you are looking for me to agree with you about how bad our boss is, you are barking up the wrong tree. This guy just hired me. If you have concerns regarding your job and your relationship with our boss, I suggest that you approach him rather than telling me your troubles. After all, telling me will not effect any change in him." This will avoid any human relations problems in the future. If your co-worker's problems escalate it may become a human relations issue. If you are later called in to the human relations department to attest to past comments you can say that you had no problem with your boss, rather than having to justify what you have said that may have corroborated with this employee's disgruntled comments. It is difficult to say to the human relations department that you really didn't mean to say this or that, or you really didn't agree with your co-worker when they said this or that. Be careful the job you save may be your own.

Two, it will build a sense of loyalty between you and your boss if he knows you will come to his defense in his absence, rather than feeding the fire. He will know that he can trust you to defend him rather than tear him down. Also, remember that these conversations sometimes take place in the hallways. The walls have ears and what you say make return to haunt you. Negative comments travel faster than good. These comments have an uncanny way of making back to your boss. If they do it can become embarrassing and can definitely affect your future.

Also, if you step up and make the right decisions extemporaneously, that will make your boss look good. When you make your boss look good it always pays off. Other ways to put your boss in the best possible light is to interact well with other people. You represent your boss, your department and when in public you represent the company. It is a small world out there and disparaging remarks have a remarkable way of getting to people that you had no intent of them getting to. If you can accomplish this you can boost the R-factor several numbers.

Mind the Store in Your Bosses Absence. Before your boss leaves for an extended vacation sit down with him and find out what the hot items are that may need attention in his absence. Make a list and check it during his absence to make sure you are poised for anything that happens. If those hot items surface, address them and write up a status report for your boss upon his return. Take the initiative to tackle and solve problems in his absence, while also getting your own job done. If you want to one day be promoted, this is will impress your boss' boss. Think on your feet. If something happens that appears to be beyond your ability check with other corporate resources, colleagues, etc. Try to take care of business so that when your boss returns, his to-do list can be shortened.

Bloom Where You are Planted. Too many people today want their boss's job so badly that is all they talk and think about. They appear to be obsessed with being promoted. It can irritate your boss and his peers and perhaps even your peers. Enjoy what you are doing and don't focus on your next promotion. I have seen more people promoted because they focus on their job rather than trying to figure out how to find the up button in their career elevator. I sometimes think upper management looks for those who are happy where they are to promote and avoid those who want it all now. When someone asks me how I like my job, I reply, "I feel like a mole on Marilyn Monroe's face. I'm just happy to be here." Remember, getting promoted is a lot like traffic. Once you pass the person in front of you, you still have a whole bunch of cars still in front of you. Later on, that car you passed may end up passing you again anyway. So, don't worry about getting promoted. If you are a performer, others will notice and take the appropriate action.

Keep Your Cool. People who keep their cool have a propensity for making it to the top in the long run. They are unflappable and can handle emergencies as well as pressure from the media. The cool cucumber ultimately gets the kudos for making the company look like they have their act together in front on the public, other companies and the media. Those who are easy to loose their temper often look the fools, making themselves look childish. Remember, it is not management by volume. Keep your cool even when you want to turn the volume up and your heart is racing. Keeping your cool can add value to your R-factor for fireproofing.

Zip Your Lip. If you are known as one who can't keep a secret, don't expect to make it to the top. To make it to the top, you must be known as someone who can be told anything in confidence. If you think you are impressing people when you share hot inside information, you are wrong. You will just look untrustworthy. If your boss discovers that you are the leak, he may decide to sanitize what he tells you, or not tell you at all, cutting you out of the loop. At one location where I worked, I discovered that I had a leak in the department. I had my suspicions which employee it was and set up a situation where I told only him a particular piece of information. I clearly indicated that my communication was in confidence. Once I heard that same information rattling around in the field, I cut him off. Later, he discovered that he had not been clued in on a major departmental activity that I wanted to keep under wraps until unveiled. He approached me and asked why he wasn't clued-in. I told him that he had proven himself untrustworthy.   It was quite an embarrassment for him. If this happens to you in the future, you may not be privy to some hot inside information that affects your job. Others will know more than you will. You just blew your opportunity to be on the inside. Don't be known as someone who shoots from the lip.

Look the Part. Wear the right clothing for the right occasion. When in the field, dress down in the appropriate casual attire. When in the office, match what your boss wears. Don't try to take fashion risks to make statements. Don't commit the fashion felony. Don't be the GQ person in the office. But be known for being a sharp dresser. It is kind of a conservative balance.   I'm not saying you

can't wear Rush Limbaugh ties. Just don't wear them everyday. Wear them occasionally on Friday (which is usually casual day). There is an old saying, dress for the job you want, not the job you have. Remember this and you will be okay.

Be physically fit. Anyone who is largely overweight will have a hard time scaling the corporate ladder.   Although this is not always true, those who are physically fit just present a more pleasing image. Have good grooming habits. This goes beyond combing your hair. Personal hygiene reflects on you, your boss, your department and your profession. If you don't care what you look like, others may not think that you care about what you do.

Address Thorny Issues. In safety there are literally tons of thorny issues and potential land mines. Be current on the issues and technologies and be able to speak extemporaneously on them. Don't side-step the questions. Address them head on. Give no room for rumors to creep in. Think before you speak so that you do not mis-inform. Show that you know the issues and all related areas of potential impact to safety.

Anticipate. Never expect that everything will go as planned. Have a Plan A, a Plan B, a Plan C, and perhaps even a Plan D. This takes time and careful thought. Don't say anything to the troops that you wouldn't mind your boss hearing. Find out what your boss's questions would be and answer them before he asks them. It is kind of like the Boy Scouts' motto, "Be Prepared."

Be Decisive. One thing safety professionals hate is decision-makers who waffle on making decisions. Don't be one of those people. Give the options thought and careful deliberation. But in the end make a decision. Many people try to wait until the last possible moment to decide and then put it off because of new information. Make the decision now, but be prepared to alter your course based on additional information.

Keep Getting Smarter. Readers are leaders. To get to the top and stay at the top you had better keep learning every day. You need to be plugged-in so you are clued-in to what is going on in the safety profession (e.g., regulatory and standards). If you don't, the other guy who will take your position will. It has been said by many at the top, "I'm only forty-one by I read at the forty-three year old level." Being known as someone who is "smart" on the issues helps keep you fire-proof.

Lighten Up. Everyone wants to be part of a positive activity. The converse is also true. Negative people tend to suck the energy out of you and give you a frontal lobe headache. Be the positive person that people like to see coming because you are a joy to be around whether or not you are bearing bad news. Also, when it comes time to fire people, I can hear them now, "AAAAAhhhh. Now I don't have to listen to that nay-sayer anymore." Strike one employee - YOU! Increase the R-factor by one.

Be Able to Speak on Your Feet. Most safety professionals speak well on their feet. However, this is not always the case. We all know how important it is to speak extemporaneously on a variety of safety-related topics. This will also help when you are called to speak to the Board of Directors or the company president. An example of speaking extemporaneously is the CEO approaches and asks, "In twenty words or less tell me why our safety program

Sing in the Rain. When you are handed a tough task, don't drop your head and trudge off to the salt mine with a bad attitude. Lighten up your attitude and attack it like you would any other safety-related task. Don't worry; be happy in <u>all</u> that you do. Bend over backwards to do it well. Don't act

as if it can't be done or you don't know where to start. Be like Nike, Just do it! The way you act gives you an excellent opportunity to create a positive impression to your superiors. Who knows, perhaps your name may now come to mind when they think about the next vice president. After all you've already shown that you can do technical tasks outside your stated expertise.

To survive the acquisitions, mergers, joint ventures, downsizing, rightsizing, bitesizing and potentially capsizing, fire-proofing your job is crucial. Keeping these things in mind can help you from getting fired in the long run by illustrating your corporate worth and keeping your boss happy.

Dealing with a Difficult Boss

As many people in industry today well know, the comic strip Dilbert skewers corporate life brilliantly. His self-impressed boss doesn't have a clue. He often demands ridiculous projects and kills sensible ones. Oh, I'm sure nothing like that ever happens at your company, but many people in the corporate world think it hits darn close to home.

Such managers are comical indeed-until such a person stands in the way of one of your major projects. That's when you begin to believe in humor. And your life is their latest sitcom. Surprisingly, Alost-in-the-fog@ managers are a relatively new phenomenon. Sure, there have always been incompetent managers, just as there have been inept plumbers, doctors, drivers, and the list goes on. But a dramatic thing began happening a decade or so ago.

Until that point, a person with many years experience tended to know just about everything in his/her particular field. The pace of change was manageable. You could even stay on top of fields where change was on-going, such as accounting, law medicine....safety and environmental.
This was even true about computer technology until the mid-80s. Think back to when you first started dabbling in PCs. There was a lot to learn back then, but a brilliant mortal like you was able to know it all. Today with the rapid change in regulations and governmental requirements, the Internet, and proliferating computer technology, it requires much more work to keep abreast.

No one said work was going to be fun all the time. Fun is sometimes a function of you, sometimes its your boss. Every now and then it happens, your boss leaves or retires and the person replacing your boss is a difficult (Dilbert) person. The end result is you have to deal with a difficult boss. Whenever someone changes jobs I always to them, "Pick your bosses well." If you don't you could be in for a lot of grief. Sometimes you don't get to pick your boss. If this happens, what do you do?

Have faith in yourself. Difficult bosses rarely give feedback and when they do it is negative bordering on castigating. You walk away feeling that you are incompetent. You have to believe in yourself that you can do a good job. After all, your boss isn't going to tell you. He will only tell you when you've done a lousy job, with feeling and volume (loudness).

I have never met anybody who feels 100% secure 100% of the time. Many of us at one time or another in our careers felt like imposters and that sooner or later we would be unmasked as not knowing what we were doing. Remember the first job you had? That first day at the staff meeting when everyone was talking technical and you were nodding your head like you understood, praying that someone wouldn't ask you a question because you hadn't a clue to what was going on? For many of us these doubts quickly fade away.

Difficult bosses make us feel this way much of the time. These bosses tend to be egomaniacal, domineering, derisive toward subordinates, and loners that do it all themselves. I have found that many bosses who are egomaniacal generally feel that they are themselves incompetent. The only way they feel that they can look good is to make you look bad. Being domineering goes hand-in-glove with egomaniacal. They are always in control wanting to know all the details and micro-managing your every decision, then complaining on why you aren't done yet.

Do a 360° audit and get a disinterested third party to do the same. I was once railed for my writing style and ability. After repeatedly getting beat about the head and neck about this, I sent a draft to three disinterested parties (a colleague, an editor and an English teacher) and asked for honest evaluations. All three had praises. It put all of the negative comments from my boss in perspective. Once you complete the audit build on your strengths and take definitive steps to improve your weaknesses. Then, don't just file it away, re-visit it every six months for progress. Believe it or not, this will build your faith in yourself. The bottom line here is faith.

Have hope in the future. Nothing lasts forever, good or bad. Persevere and hunker down and just get through it. One day your boss will change. During this time you got to have hope. What you think about the future affects you today. Believe that the future can improve, and you will do things to bring it about. Conversely, if you believe that nothing improves and you will do nothing to change it.

For example, I was in a planning meeting and one person kept illustrating how everything we suggested would not work and fail. This person had no hope of the future. On the other hand, when Thomas Edison had failed for the 990th time to discover a filament to work in the light bulb a colleague commented, "We will never find a filament that works." Thomas Edison retorted, "We have successfully discovered, with confidence 990 filaments that do not work. Soon we will know which filament will work." Thomas Edison had a positive view of the future even though the past and present were dim. The bottom line here is hope.

Trust in others. Many difficult bosses never develop a fundamental trust in others. As a result, they go it alone and do not depend on anyone else. In today's rapidly changing business world this dinosauric approach does not work. The truth be known, it never really worked in the first place. After all, Batman had Robin, the Lone Ranger had Tonto and Beavis has Butthead (just remember, I'm Beavis).

Today, most companies will agree that people are the company's greatest asset and resource. It is logical to then assume that trust in people is at the heart of good business. Those who try to do it all themselves are generally complain that no one else pulls their weight. They look for evidence to confirm this belief. It isn't too hard. Do you ever catch yourself saying that if you want something done right, you have to what, yes you guessed it, do it yourself.

To improve your own trust quotient, select something to delegate, choose someone to delegate to, and give them all the information they need to do a good job, and mentor them. You will be surprised what people can do if you give the freedom to be creative. The bottom line here is trust.

Here are the three strategies - faith, hope and trust. These three principles are at the heart of good personal and business relationships. In life and work, you do not have to make yourself out to be so big, because you are not that small in the first place.

Adaptability

The need to adapt never _____.
Change is not _____ or natural for _____.
A team player that adapts to the team is very _____.
Let the past be the _____.
Learn the _____ between when to adapt and when to hold steady.

How to know the Difference
If you adapt, does it move you off your _____? If so, hold steady.
If you adapt do you violate your _____? If so, hold steady.
Is the desire to adapt not in the team's _____? If so, hold steady.
Maintain an _____ to all possibilities of change.

Attitude

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company…a church…a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past…we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string that we have, and that is our attitude…I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you…we are in charge of our attitudes." - Charles Swindoll

Conclusions

Do you have what it takes to face the Leadership Challenge? Are you willing to take to take the time to learn how to be a better leader? Leadership is a journey not a destination.