

THE LEADERSHIP LENS Newsletter

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A monthly resource providing insight, opinion & practical information on leadership, creativity, balance & personal development

The Edge of Known Space

Photography can teach us quite a bit about leadership. Being extremely successful in photography requires passion, vision, patience, creativity and honesty among other traits. What makes a photographer successful will also make a leader successful. An example of an extremely successful photographer was Henri Cartier-Bresson. He captured some of the most memorable street scenes of Paris. He used his patience and creativity to allow for that 'perfect' moment to occur. One of his most famous black and white photographs shows a man leaping over a large puddle of water in mid-air with the man's reflection in the puddle below. His passion attracted students, aficionados, and collectors alike and made him a photography leader.

Henri Cartier-Bresson wasn't born with these traits; he developed them as his expertise grew. Warren Bennis, the author of "On Becoming a Leader," argues that leaders are made. "They possess real convictions – strong feelings that have built up within them over time. If those convictions match the requirements of a group of followers, then great leadership emerges." Gaining knowledge through travel, liberal studies, being exposed to unique and interesting ideas, self-reflection and even adversity allows for these convictions to grow and makes for a better leader. Great leaders aren't watching television nor are they confined to their own backyards.

Leaders must operate on the 'edge of known space' otherwise known as the bleeding edge. Operating on the bleeding edge means taking chances, making mistakes and forging a path where others fear to tread. It's called the bleeding edge for a reason, because if the standard doesn't stick or the product doesn't solve the challenges of the consumer, then the leader might get replaced or the company might go out of business. Taking chances requires an unshakable vision and the ability to create new things (or reinvent the old things). Space Ship One pushed beyond the known limits of commercial aviation by reaching the edge of space, 62 miles above the Earth's atmosphere, twice in two weeks to claim their \$10 Million prize.

Apple Computer pushed beyond the perception of how photographs are stored and shared with its' program iPhoto. It allows the user to produce a professionally bound coffee table book. While they advertise this as a great way to share family photographs, I took it a step further. I introduced my professional photography book as an affordable and attractive way for my customers to remember their events long after they have passed. I have sold dozens of these books to my clients. One client in particular used his professional photography books as sales tool. He distributed them to his sales associates to help their potential customers visualize concepts. With the help of these professional photography books, he secured \$40,000 worth of new business in two weeks.

While forging new paths through uncharted territory, leaders must also assuage the hearts and minds of their followers. This might involve staying the course regardless of the danger. Leaders must also have personal congruity by living a life that is in concert with their vision. They need to 'walk their talk.' According to the Workplace Section of *The Washington Post*, "People leave companies because of the boss. Either the boss is a jerk, doesn't treat the individual right, or won't empower the employee to do the work." The best companies, where you see leaders spending time with individuals, consistently show higher returns to shareholders than those who don't. It is an inherent desire present in all individuals to be understood and to be appreciated. If a leader doesn't make time for his employees, then they will begin to lose confidence in the leader's vision and in the organization.

Clay Parcells, regional managing partner of Right Management Consultants conducted a survey of 570 respondents. He said, "Twenty-four percent (the highest percentage in the survey), want honesty in a leader." It's no secret that somebody who is an honest individual will be more likely to carry that trait to her company. This is why the best leaders display a high degree of personal leadership and are very congruent individuals. When you understand key lessons from behind the camera, it will help grow your leadership, and it may boost the bottom line of your organization!

About Mark Sincevich:

Mark Sincevich is a photography expert who speaks professionally to organizations on creativity, balance, leadership and personal development. He is an active member of the National Speaker's Association and brings over 17 years of experience in high technology sales and marketing and public accounting into his programs. He doesn't just tell you how, he shows you how from having lived it himself. Mark mixes his diverse photography background with his business experience to create exciting and memorable programs such as keynotes, seminars, breakout sessions and facilitations for his customers. Mark has also been practicing photography for over 21 years and continues to sharpen his skills as an instructor at the Washington School of Photography. He has written two books and numerous articles. For more information on Mark's professional speaking programs, photography, books and CDs contact Staash Press at (301) 654-3010, info@staashpress.com or www.staashpress.com.

Make your next meeting productive, educational and enlightening by booking Mark Sincevich as your speaker.

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