

TIPS FOR MIND SPACE: CREATING THE TIME TO LEAD EFFECTIVELY

- ▲ Leader's mind space is key to overall organizational performance
- ▲ Sharp distinctions identify mediocre, good and superior organizational outcomes
- ▲ 4 tips for leaders to move toward superior



My editor does the work that normally would require two people. She is usually going 90 miles an hour with her hair on fire with all the tasks she must complete. When I submit one of my blog pieces to her, she does a terrific job challenging me to be clearer and more relevant to the reader and points out where I can better express what I strive to communicate. So, it was thought-provoking when she sent me a note recently. In it she wrote, **“One thing I think about when overviewing these is how organizations actually accomplish all of this good stuff. It always seems like the day-to-day takes so much time and energy that nobody has time for the big picture things of mission, vision, values and goals. Also, it would seem rare that someone from the top of the organization would spend any time on a peon like me. Let alone if a middle manager is standing in the way. I’m wondering about the time it takes, the commitment, the actual doing and connecting.”**

She has a point. How do leaders of good organizations find the time to lead this way?

3 Steps to Greatness

Dr. Peter Fuda is a well-respected Australian leadership expert. He talks eloquently about what separates mediocre, good and top-notch organizations in a brief talk he gave in 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IbPUi-CoEYI> In it, he characterizes the mediocre performers as capable of understanding two important items: **where the organization is headed (vision) and what strategies need pursuing.** Great ones include a third item: how is the organization going to be in the pursuit of aims (culture, values and leadership)? The truly superior organizations embrace a fourth vital ingredient – **Why?** Why do we exist above and beyond making money? What is the unique contribution that the organization makes? (**Purpose**)



In mediocre organizations, the “day-to-day” occupies virtually 100% of leadership’s mind space. In good ones, leaders make different time choices to instill culture and values as an integral component of vision and strategies. Highly evolved organizations ensure that there is clarity around the purpose, the “why” of the organization and connects the dots. And they take pains to see it happen at every level. Now, the time limitations are identical among all organizations. The difference is clear; as Dr. Fuda would remark, **“There aren’t time management issues, only poor choices on use of time.”**



TIPS

What are some approaches that leaders can employ to be more effective? Leaders must remember that they earn their pay when they succeed in getting their employees to achieve goals. How much time they spend accomplishing that is within the leader's span of control. Here are some strategies to better leverage leadership choices.

T – TIP vs TIC – The origin of the TIP originated in an era when travel occurred by horse-drawn coaches. To secure a rapid change of horses at roadside inns, while passengers refreshed themselves, the coachman would provide a financial incentive to the grooms handling the horses “to insure promptness.” The modern leadership equivalent is TIC, “to insure clarity.” Huge chunks of time are ineffectively spent because there is a lack of clarity. Leaders need to be relentless in ensuring that expectations and goals are not only clearly communicated, but fully understood and appreciated. The gain in time and satisfaction for all can be considerable.

I – Insure Accountability – Accountability is a choice. In a prior post, I talk about this. (<https://www.l3ps.com/accountability-is-a-choice/>) True accountability occurs when people choose to take responsibility for their performance. Not only do expectations and goals need to be crystal clear, those charged with them need to be confident and capable in their execution. Leaders must spend time ensuring that their people have all the tools and training necessary and have been well recognized for prior successes as well as resiliency after setbacks. When they are confident about their abilities, they are likely to step up and choose to be accountable. The leaders can then turn their attention to more important concerns, because they know their team members have the responsibility and capacity to perform.

P – Purpose – The “why” behind the organization and why it exists beyond making money. In addition to being clear and ensuring the efficacy of the team members, leaders must help employees connect the purpose of the organization to their individual expectations and what they are expected to perform. When this occurs, employees understand that their work is meaningful and will engage freely in the effort. With engagement comes enhanced outcomes.

S – Set Aside Reflection Time – Because leaders are expected to get others to accomplish goals and objectives for them, they need to spend time regularly working “on the business” instead of “in the business.” Following Dr. Fuda’s advice about time choices, little can be gained by remaining forever in the day to day. Leaders must carve out time to consistently reflect on what is happening, where they expect to go and what choices they need to make to connect employees to the organization’s objectives. In creating space to reflect, they become more effective leaders.

Leaders who aspire to elevate their organizations to the superior group must constantly improve themselves and give themselves time to lead. These TIPS can help.