



NEWSLETTER

August 2006

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“It is a terrible thing to look over your shoulder when you are trying to lead – and find no one there.”

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Collaborative Leadership

“Collaborative leadership” is how my businesses have worked for over 20 years. I’ve always introduced myself as, “I’m president and she’s boss.” That isn’t just a joke. “She’s boss” is Millie, my partner, and we collaborate in every way. It doesn’t slow down decision-making because some decisions are made individually; we have our responsibilities – but vision, direction, and major decisions are made by consensus. It doesn’t cause finger pointing. We are both equally responsible. It works even though we are opposites on every personality profile, which explains why diversity is such an important issue. Our combined capabilities create a whole greater than the sum of us individually. If we were the same, we would just be one two-headed individual rather than two individuals forming one whole.

At the IAF Conference in June, an opening discussion was held concerning the future of facilitation and, consequently, the future of the IAF. People brought up that naming the association “of facilitators” was limiting and it should be changed to “for facilitators”. Then we discussed whether it was for facilitators or for leaders. After all, facilitators practice facilitative leadership, though even that is limiting because

facilitation is only part of it. As I see it, a more complete view is that it is collaborative leadership, so I recommended that a more encompassing name would be *International Association for Collaborative Leadership*. Because what I teach revolves

Continued on page 2...

August 2006 NEWSLETTER

This newsletter describes Collaborative Leadership and announces our Total Training Packages.

- **Collaborative Leadership** – Pages 1 – 4
- **ANNOUNCING – Total Training Packages** – Page 4
- **Our Public classes** – Page 5

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Collaborative Leadership, continued

around collaborative leadership, I wanted to share this article with you.

Background

Today, leadership is viewed as a role. It is associated with one person. When someone is viewed as a leader, that person is also viewed as the boss or the front-runner, but always as an individual. This is reinforced in popular media with the “reality” shows on television. These game shows emphasize the individual winning. Even shows touting “leadership” such as *Martha Stewart The Apprentice* show that becoming the leader is an individual effort – even though they are teamed together to accomplish a task. This sends the wrong message – teamwork doesn’t count, it’s every man (woman) for himself.

In society, too, we look at one person as a “leader”. From the president of a country to the president of a company, the leader is one person. The others are apparently incidental. We give tremendous bonuses to successful leaders and we fire leaders who fail. But all those people behind them, the ones who did much of the work, whom the leader depended on, those people are forgotten. Without those people, though, could the leader have succeeded or failed? As Franklin D. Roosevelt said, “It is a terrible thing to look over your shoulder when you are trying to lead – and find no one there.” President Roosevelt realized that leadership is not about one individual, yet we continue to reward and punish leaders as one.

The Problem

The major problem with viewing leadership as an individual is that we never get to the root cause of success or failure. Our systems of reward and punishment in society

are skewed. When an organization succeeds, it’s because of the efforts of many, not just one individual. So why does the leader receive such a larger bonus? When an organization fails, did one individual cause the failure? We replace an executive when an organization does poorly and don’t understand why it doesn’t immediately respond. We elect a new president when we aren’t happy with how the country is being run, but fail to change the senators and representatives – laws are created by both the Executive and the Legislative branches, not just one. Is it that much simpler to blame one individual? Why do we assume leadership is an individual effort? We end up tackling the symptom, not the problem. The root cause, good or bad, includes the entire system, the entire team, not just the one we view as leader.

A New Model

I believe that everyone is equal, and I know that we all have unique and different knowledge and capabilities. No one person has all the knowledge and capabilities to be a leader without a team behind him or her. That is why diversity is so important. The greatest “leaders” of the past were great because they surrounded themselves with people who had the knowledge or capabilities that the leader lacked. We need to define leadership to include the whole, rather than the part. The whole, then, becomes greater than the sum of its parts. For the whole to work it must work together; it must be collaborative.

Collaborative Leadership

Collaborative leadership is the ability of the whole to work together transcending the sum of the parts. For this to happen the

Continued on page 3...

Collaborative Leadership, continued

collaborative leader ensures that the necessary tools, knowledge, and capabilities are available to be successful. And since no one individual can do this alone, it is the responsibility of the collaborative leader to make the whole work as one. Looking back at my earlier article on *The Need for Leaders*, individuals need skills such as:

- Active listening
- Managing Conflict
- Decision Making
- Strategic Thinking
- Empowering their followers
- Building teams

These skills help a team achieve its mission. That mission is to:

- Define a Vision

Then:

- enable
- make possible
- make it easier for the team to:
 - communicate effectively
 - feel part of the whole
 - successfully achieve the vision

If only one individual in a team had the above skills, the team would fail. A collaborative leader brings together the team **and with the team**, defines a vision then enables, makes it possible, makes it easier for the rest of the organization to communicate, feel part of the whole, and successfully achieve the vision. This teaming is repeated at all levels of the organization so that there is not one individual dictating the vision. The entire organization

becomes part of the vision and the vision becomes theirs. A leader is not successful unless the team is. **The leader must be judged on the ability of the team. That means that every team requires facilitative and collaborative skills to succeed.** The team needs to ensure that the necessary capabilities and knowledge are included and that it is not an individual effort. The team gets rewarded or punished as a team – equally. No one individual receives a greater bonus than any other. No one individual is replaced in failure; the entire team is replaced. Instead of one individual taking the blame or credit, the entire team does. *This is collaborative leadership.*

Collaborative leadership doesn't slow down decision-making because some decisions are still made individually; we have our responsibilities – but vision, policy, process, and major decisions are made by consensus. The collaborative leader facilitates the team to develop the vision, policies, processes, and major directions. The collaborative leader is not a neutral facilitator, but uses facilitative skills to engage the team and enable them to reach consensus. If the team doesn't reach consensus, then instead of the leader deciding, they find out why they don't agree. Maybe there isn't enough information. Maybe someone sees something the others don't. If the team reverts back to having the leader make the decision, they are avoiding fixing the root problem. The decision may be expedient, but it could also be poorly made and it also doesn't have the support of others. When the team makes the decision it has full support. That filters down creating an atmosphere of collaboration and cooperation.

Continued on page 4...

Collaborative Leadership, continued

The Benefits

The greatest benefit is in better decision-making. Finger pointing and blame won't exist. The whole becomes greater than the sum of the parts. Responsibility no longer rests on the shoulders of one. This

collaboration filters out to the rest of our lives. Maybe we'll learn to work together as a society instead of competing one against the other. We'd recognize that we need diversity. We'd recognize that when we work together collaboratively we accomplish much more. ☸

MGR Consulting takes the lead in *Total Training Packages*

When your organization is looking to train a number of employees who require a variety of skills, we can ensure that you receive the best. Since we don't view the subjects we cover as stand-alone, we view them as part of a whole; we are taking the lead in bringing you *Total Training Packages*. This *Total Training Package* consists of customized *Design*, *Delivery*, and *Follow Up* to meet your goals and make the most effective use of your training budget.

Leadership Skills, Strategic Planning, and FAST classes for targeted employees. That way, in addition to the needed leadership skills; those who will lead the strategic planning efforts receive the needed strategic planning skills; and those who will facilitate the efforts receive the needed facilitation skills.

This *Total Training Package* enables your organization to achieve its goals while making the most effective use of your training budget.

Our Abilities

Our training programs are experiential so that students complete training with the needed confidence to implement what they have learned. In addition, our training programs are complementary – they build off of each other allowing complete programs to be designed.

Delivery

Once we have designed the training package, Gary Rush will deliver the training. Depending on your needs, a Train-the-Trainer program can be developed.

Design

We will consult with your organization and develop a proposal for targeted employees and designed to meet your goals. For example:

Your organization may want to develop leadership skills for your employees but requires strategic planning and facilitation skills for some of them. We will design a training package that includes a series of

Follow Up

Once the *Total Training Package* has been delivered, we recommend periodic *Review Workshops* to assess what worked and what needs to change to ensure that training remains effective and that your employees use what they have learned. We also recommend *Refresher Classes* to keep the material up-to-date. Alumni are placed on our email mailing list and receive newsletters discussing relative issues.

Continued on page 5...

Total Training Packages, continued

Benefits

Our *Total Training Package* ensures that the training you receive is targeted to the

appropriate employees, that it is used effectively, that it remains fresh, and that it enables you to meet your overall goals. ¶¶



PUBLIC CLASSES

Class	The FAST Facilitator Workshop	Leadership Skills	Diversity – How Business Succeeds
Description	Our 5-day class that provides the finest and most comprehensive facilitation training available. The audience is candidate facilitators. This class confers 32 PDU's.	A 3-day class providing leadership skills and tools for the budding leader. This audience is anyone looking to become a leader. This class confers 18 PDU's.	Our newest class is a 2-day class that enables students to understand diversity and “inclusivity” as well as implement or support diversity programs. This class confers 12 PDU's.
Cost per student	\$2600	\$1890	\$760
Class Dates	September 18 – 22 October 16 – 20 December 4 – 8	November 6 – 8	November 9 – 10

Gary Rush teaches all classes.

All class fees cover training, materials, continental breakfast, lunch, and breaks. Hotel room reservations at the Majestic Hotel, 528 W. Brompton, Chicago, IL 60657 are made through MGR Consulting. Student pays own hotel and incidentals – a credit card is required to hold a room. Room rates and terms are listed on our web site (Public Classes). If you do not want to stay at the hotel, please let us know so that we don't make a reservation for you.

See our web site for: Facilitation & Consulting Services, Classes, Newsletters, and Articles

**Call to register, discuss, or schedule a class.
Call Gary at (773) 330-2064 or email at grush@mgrconsulting.com
www.mgrconsulting.com**