

Improvement Initiatives

“Management works in the system; leadership works on the system.”
– Stephen R. Covey

May 2011

Carrot, Stick or Velvet Covered Brick?

by Albert J. Perotti, III

Several years ago, my boss – a young, energetic and motivated Vice President of Manufacturing type- handled each of his staff members a red-velvet covered brick and I still have mine today.

With puzzled faces around his conference room table that day, he instructed us to lead like this: “soft on the outside” – smooth and easy to work with and if and when pushed (from quality or engineering) “be firm” on the inside... true to your convictions and steadfast in your mission.

Professional and Personal:

The Velvet-Covered Brick type of leader maintains an aura of professionalism in the workplace at all times. Such a leader stays poised in the most heated moments and keeps control of his or her emotions. While approachable, they



reserve part of themselves (their fears, knowledge, insights) so that they can effectively motivate the team from a place of authority.

At the same time, leaders don't want to come across as aloof, distant, or plastic. The best leaders are warm, genuinely interested in their teammates, and intentional in understanding what makes each person unique. Additionally, to connect with the team, they may show selectively disclose information about themselves or even let down their emotional guard during a meeting.

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Lean: it isn't everything, it's one thing. – from the blogs

“Nobody working for Womack is going to call you up and place you on a pedestal for being a pure Lean guy. Nobody at ASQ will reward you for being a pure SS guy. Your customer is the company you work for. You owe them the most efficient and effective deployment they can get. That methodology has been through the integrated approach not through dedication to some set of tools.” – Owen

“Having studied Lean for sometime, I'm convinced you cannot implement Lean and sustain the gains unless management is willing to change both their attitudes and skills. The organization needs to move from a traditional bureaucracy to becoming a Learning Organization which values its human capital. If this is not happening Lean will fail in the long run. The myth that Lean focuses on flow and 6-Sigma on variation is not quite correct. Take a look at any Lean tool (kanban, error proofing, work balancing, 5S, etc.). They all have one thing in common: differentiating the abnormal from the normal, and making it visible so it can be addressed immediately.” – Ron

Learn more at: http://www.isixsigma.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=1511:six-sigma-versus-lean&Itemid=111#

Velvet Brick, continued ...**Take Criticism and Serve the Critic:**

Leaders who aspire to be Velvet-Covered Bricks develop thick skin and bypass the desire to retaliate against critics. Instead, they graciously accept criticism and welcome confrontation. Then, they take pains to win over their critics by reaching out to them. They go the extra mile to wade through conflict until resolution can be reached.

Respected and Approachable:

A leader earns respect on the basis of what he or she has done. More often than not, respect is gained on difficult ground. Adverse circumstances test the mettle of a leader and show a leader's true merit.

For a Velvet-Covered Brick leader, respect is balanced by approachability. An approachable leader has a consistent mood, is quick to forgive, willing to apologize, and shows authenticity. A leader at ease with himself puts others at ease. Secure leaders aren't constantly seeking validation from others, and, as such they are free to add value to those they lead rather than deriving value from the approval of those around them.

People are drawn to leaders who value them. They will approach a leader who makes them feel encouraged, helps them grow, and treats them honestly.

Learn more at:

<http://my.opera.com/Ladella/blog/2008/01/31/velvet-brick-leaders>

**Take a MINUTE for SAFETY!**

Take steps to protect your home and family from burglary, fire, and intrusion.

Below are some basic tips to keep yourself and your loved ones safe.

<http://www.securitychoice.com/20-tips-for-home-safety.html>

**The Power of Self****Confidence: 8 Tips**

1. Be reasonable in your expectations.
2. Surround yourself with the best people.
3. Develop skills and talents.
4. Don't be afraid to stick up for yourself.
5. Exercise or take on some new physical activities.
6. Go ahead and reward yourself while you achieve.
7. Don't neglect about constructive affirmations.
8. Don't dwell on the past.

Learn more at:

<http://growandimprove.com/8-great-self-confidence-boosters/>

**LISTEN TO QUOTES**

of Dr. Norman Vincent Peale at:

<http://video.yahoo.com/watch/6907460/17966679>

Read more:

<http://eqi.org/peale.htm>

List(less), Do more! – www.LIFEHACKER.com

Looking for a personal productivity system that doesn't suffer the rigidity and unwieldiness that have thwarted your best efforts to adopt other systems? Autofocus offers simplified task management and emphasizes getting stuff done instead of getting stuff filed, organized, and tagged.

“Go ahead and have a To-Do list. But, you should look the list over, mark off items that are no longer list-worthy, add new items if you have them, then choose the most important item and attack it. DO NOT waste time prioritizing everything on your list!!!

Once that item is done, mark off items that are no longer list-worthy, add new items if you have them, then choose the most important item and attack it. It's just that simple.”

For more information:

<http://lifehacker.com/5704856/the-autofocus-productivity-method-stop-maintaining-to+do-lists-and-start-getting-stuff-done>

Black Belts, Leaders need Constant Coaching

From the 2011 Sherpa Executive Coaching Survey - <http://www.sherpacoaching.com/survey.html>

Coaching at all levels - not just the C-level executives.

In this 2011 report, we see a complete reversal of the last two years. Coaching for leaders at all levels is back to where it was three years ago, providing more resources for, and more ‘power to the people’. Executive coaches report that they provide services across the chain of command almost half of the time.

Delivery methods for coaching.

81% now say that in-person coaching is the most effective method, up from 71%, in the first survey. Phone coaching is seen as the most effective delivery method by just 19%, down from 26% five years back. In-person meetings constitute 10% more of total service delivery at larger companies (100 employees+) than at smaller firms.

The value of coaching.

In 2006, almost 90% of HR professionals and coaching clients felt the value of coaching was either somewhat high or very high. ‘High value’ perceptions now exceed 94%.

The philosophy behind Sherpa Coaching resonates with what I have learned over the years: clients have to do the work, and coaches need to stay out of their way."

~ Marshall Goldsmith, world's leading coach

THE BOTTOMLINE: A veteran coach from the Netherlands says coaching is: “still an emerging profession with great initiatives underway to professionalize and clarify processes, procedures and standards.”



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- *"Jay has brought many new ideas to our company, ideas that we can utilize in our daily business. We are learning what to correct and how to go about in today's market. Jay has an ability to let us think it through and to learn on our own."*
- CEO and President
- *"Over the last 3 months, Jay Watson has provided me excellent mentoring support and project guidance. His willingness and enthusiasm was exactly what I needed to be successful. Having a mentor like Jay had a positive influence on my success."*
- Engineering Director
- *"I worked with Jay Watson to evaluate, prioritize, and measure the impact of our department project list. Jay is an excellent mentor, that has provided guidance, while we discover how to continuously improve."*
- HR Manager

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