

# Beatitudes of Leadership

BY GREGORY P. SMITH



Leadership expert James O'Toole said, "Ninety-five percent of American managers today say the right thing. Five percent actually do it." Today's complex and changing business environment requires a special style of leadership. Like yesterday's newspaper, traditional leadership styles are outdated ... no longer effective. Everyone today, no matter what job he holds, must improve his leadership skills. Whether you are a meeting planner, an association executive or the CEO of a large corporation, leadership is the key ingredient to organizational success.

The most critical ingredient needed in all organizations today is action-oriented leadership based on a whole new set of attitudes. Uniquely equipped for this task is the innovative leader who possesses the Beatitudes of Leadership.

### *Be Bold and Challenge the Status Quo*

Conformity and status quo are the first steps down the staircase of business ineffectiveness. People become comfortable doing the same things the same way, copying everyone else. The innovative leader is always looking for ways to improve what is being done, never satisfied with just being good. In today's chaotic business environment, good is no longer good enough.

### *Be a Risk Taker*

The innovative leader understands that progress depends on change and change is risky. The leader creates an environment allowing people freedom to experiment and take risks without fear of reprisal. The innovative leader provides support and encouragement to his or her people even if a person fails in trying to do something new.

### *Be Authentic and Approachable*

Creating an open and supportive environment is important if you want your people to become innovative. One way to make yourself approachable is to talk openly about your own mistakes and your limitations. Once viewed as taboo and poor leadership, it

is now more acceptable and no longer thought of as a sign of weakness. In fact, many people find it a sign of strength and authenticity, a way to gain respect and trust from your people. After all, who doesn't make mistakes — it's only human.

### *Be a Role Model*

The old saying goes, "Actions speak louder than words." This saying is more true today than ever before. Change begins at the front office, the top floor, the corporate boardroom. Workers are not fooled by posters, slogans and speeches such as, "People are our most important asset," or "Quality comes first." Management's actions show the people in the organization what is truly important. You must walk the talk.

### *Be Out and About*

In this high-tech, non-stop world, meetings and conferences become vampires slowly draining the life out of the business. Change occurs so rapidly that by the time a problem is brought to a staff meeting, it's too late. Solutions to problems and innovative ideas are found on the front line with the workers. Leaders must get out of the office and spend time talking to workers and customers in and about the business.

### *Be Inspirational*

Horst Shultze, CEO of Ritz-Carlton Hotels, delivered one of the most inspiring and motivating talks ever heard. The vision for his company unfolded like an artist painting a canvas. He spoke of his dream of creating not just good hotels, but the best hotel chain in the world. He recounted how his workers told him what the hotel industry needed, what was important and how to do it. The audience seated in the auditorium became part of the transformation process. They felt the workers' pride and enthusiasm. They could see the difference this leader brought to his organization.

Throughout his talk he kept the audience sitting on the edge of their seats. He did not read a prepared text written by some speech writer but he spoke from his heart. The difference between his talk and other speeches was that you could feel his commitment and caring. It wasn't the words he used, but the tone of his words and his physical movement that made the difference. He was passionate, he was inspiring and he planted a seed in all of us. It was clear to the audience that Shultze possessed all the Beatitudes of Leadership. **NRB**

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