



The Role of Leadership

With an upcoming election and a lot of dialogue floating around regarding “rhetoric versus experience”, this is an interesting time to think about the role of leadership. Marcus Buckingham, author of *From Good to Great* and *Now Discover Your Strengths* summarizes it well.

In his book, [The One Thing You Need To Know...About Great Managing, Great Leading, and Sustained Individual Success](#), he states:

“Effective leaders don’t have to be passionate. They don’t have to be charming. They don’t have to be brilliant...They don’t have to be great speakers. What they must be is clear.

Above all else, they must never forget the truth that of all the human universals... our need for clarity is the most likely to engender in us confidence, persistence, resilience, and creativity”

“ Today’s most respected and successful leaders are able to transform fear of the unknown into clear visions of whom to serve, core strengths to leverage and actions to take. They enable us to pierce the veil of complexity and identify the single best vantage point from which to examine our complex roles. Only then can we take clear, decisive action.”

As far back as the early 80’s Roger Deprey put it in a slightly different context with his human resources pyramid.

He states that every employee at every level asks six questions in a very specific ascending order:

- What is my job?
- How am I doing?
- Does anyone care?
- What do we do?
- How are we doing?
- How can I help?

Richard Rumelt crystallizes these thoughts in his article, *Strategy’s strategist: An Interview with Richard Rumelt*.

“The most important role of any manager is to breakdown a situation into challenges a subordinate can handle. In essence, the manager absorbs a great deal of the ambiguity in the situation and gives much less ambiguous problems to others....In a highly focused organization, the CEO does this for the entire

organization by examining the overall competitive environment and providing enough guidance to let the organization get to work. The CEO defines the business problems for everyone else.”

- There is a “new role” for management at every level to make this happen.
- That role is to create clarity and answer Deprey’s questions.