



Transformational Leadership & Service Podcast

Episode 1 Transcript

Planning to Plan?

We went through the exercise in our office again yesterday. As a group, we sat down, put our heads together for a couple of hours and sculpted our professional plans and activities for the coming months. It was a good exercise – unquestionably productive use of our time. But, the exercise itself caused me to pause and think about other professionals I encounter who never seem to find the time (or the inclination) to plan their leadership strategy and activities. Such individuals are fairly easy to spot. They expose themselves by making statements such as, “We will just have to wait and see...” “Only time will tell...” and my personal favorite, “We’ll just have to cross that bridge when we get there.”

Horse feathers! Such statements serve as comfortable copouts, essentially robbing otherwise talented individuals of opportunities for meaningful influence and impact. The fact is we don’t have to “wait and see.” We can plan and work. “Time will tell.” It will tell if we planned and executed well. And, finally, we will have to “cross the bridges” we encounter along our personal and professional journeys. However, the wise among us plan their routes carefully, intending to avoid as many unpleasant obstacles as possible.

Here are some basic, common sense thoughts to consider if you are interested in being a better planner.

Know specifically what you are planning. Organizations need rock solid plans in place for competitiveness, innovation, productivity enhancement, wise use of available resources (physical, financial, technological and human), profitability, leadership and managerial performance and development, worker performance and attitude, and social responsibility, to name a few.

In like manner, individual leaders need formulated plans regarding their own physical and emotional health and fitness, financial stability, professional acuity, personal balance and spiritual significance. Each of these areas, as overwhelming as they may initially seem, demand special attention by all of us who call ourselves leaders.

Establish a crystal clear planning perspective. Rome wasn’t built in a day. Likewise, there is no need for you to believe you can fulfill all your plans in a day, a week, a month or even a year. The key is to have a clear perspective – and then get started! Perspective begins by knowing who is to do what; what the performance

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expectations are; and when completion is expected. Remember, these may be your plans, but there may be others better suited than you to institute them; strive for sustainable excellence, not unattainable perfection in the completion of these plans; and always have a realistic time schedule in place. I have found that most jobs are not that difficult to accomplish – it's just difficult to get started on them. So, schedule your time and then go to it.

Establish a system for tracking your performance progress. Planning should never be an end unto itself. Planning is done so that actual performance can be enhanced. Therefore, always track your performance progress. I believe in charts, graphs, reports, meetings and periodic inspections. Each a management tool we learned as students to indicate, by comparative means, the extent of our progress (or lack thereof.) Now is the time to put these tools to good use.

Time management gurus have conservatively estimated that for every unit of time spent planning, four or more units of time are saved in actual plan implementation and performance. In other words, if an hour, a week, or a month is spent planning a job or activity, one can reasonably expect to save four or more hours, weeks or months once you get started doing the job. So stop listening now and get started formulating your plans. How's that for a plan!