

# A Compass for Captains

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LEGENTER, LLC CLIENT NETWORK

HELPING LEADERS CHART A COURSE TO THEIR VISION

## Are Teams Really Effective?

One of the most common examples of team effectiveness can be seen on a cool day in the fall. As you look up into the sky, you can see a flock of geese embarking on their southern sojourn. The “V” formation that they fly in, as a group, actually benefits each individual bird. As each goose flaps its wings, it creates an updraft for the bird immediately behind it. By flying in a “V” formation, the entire flock can fly 71% farther than each member of the flock could alone.

When the lead goose gets tired, he or she rotates back into the “V” and another goose flies the point. The geese honking from behind are believed to be cheering the point goose to keep going and to maintain speed. If a goose falls out of formation from weakness or wounds, two other geese will follow to help and provide protection. They will stay until the goose is either able to fly again or dies. Then they set out on their own to catch up with the original flock or find another formation.

People have the same advantage when they are a part of a winning team. On any given day the strong take over the leadership while others, perhaps those who have already made major contributions or who are not feeling well, take a rest. The momentum of the team keeps a project going so the probability of success is enhanced. Their collective power is much greater than that of any one individual.

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### Motivational Quotes

*You cannot build a better world without improving the individuals. To that end, each of us must work for (our) own improvement.*

– Marie Curie

*Always behave like a duck – keep calm and unruffled on the surface but paddle like the devil underneath.*

– Jacob Braude



*Ok team,  
I'll take lead first!*

## The Silent Side Of Communicating

Whether negotiating the biggest deal of your career, coaching your team, or describing a project, keep your ears open. Otherwise, you may talk yourself right out of the room.

*To be a better listener:*

- **Try not** to judge. Even if you disagree with what's being said or the way it's presented, resist planning a rebuttal. Focus on understanding the message, not critiquing the messenger.

- **Commit your** full attention as soon as the other person starts to speak, not just when you hear a word or phrase that interests you.

- **Do whatever** it takes to limit distractions.

*Examples:* Suspend incoming phone calls, remove unnecessary papers from your desktop, or meet in a neutral area, such as a conference room.

*Tip:* If you're entering a room, ask the speaker to wait until you're both comfortable to start the conversation. In addition, extend the same courtesy when someone comes to your office.

Source: *Negotiate Like the Pros*, by John Patrick Dolan, Berkley Publishing Group, New York, NY 10016.

### Inside This Issue

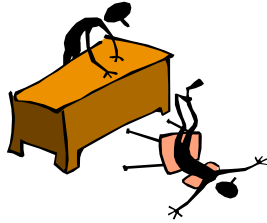
1. *Are Teams Really Effective?*
1. *The Silent Side Of Communicating*
2. *Deciding Where To Sit / What To Wear*
2. *Define Success*
3. *One-Minute Ideas*
3. *Can You Start A Memo Right?*
3. *Web Site Of The Month*
4. *Musings from the Masthead – Memorable Missions*
4. *Legenter Announces new Entrepreneur Program*
5. *Sales – Closing Tips*

## Deciding Where To Sit

You enter a room to attend a meeting. Two seats are empty. One would put you on the same side of the table as your opponents and your boss. The other would put you across from them. Which do you head for?

*Suggestions:*

- **Think opposite.** The power positions are *opposite* your competition or chief decision maker. Don't sit on the same side of the table or next to someone you want to influence.



*Reasons:* You can't make appropriate eye contact. You also nullify the benefit of facial and hand gestures. It doesn't matter if the table is square, rectangular, oval, or round. Sit opposite.

- **Consider table "weight."** If there's too much contention on one side of the table — you and your opponent — table weight is unbalanced. The meeting leader may silence your side of the table just to get the other side involved. In addition, you may lose some opportunities to press your points.

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## What To Wear

You're about to dress for that important presentation. However, you don't know much about the culture of the audience or the organization. You don't want to overdress or underdress. To avoid a needless and possibly embarrassing blunder:

- **Check the organization's culture** before your presentation. Culture varies from audience to audience, even in the same organization. Secretaries probably know. Your contact *should* know. However, don't bet on it. Get a couple of opinions.

- **Visit with your audience** beforehand, if you can, and check for yourself.

*Guideline:* It's not important that the audience thinks you're a snappy dresser. It *is* important that the audience thinks you're one of *them*. Shed cherished self-images. Be a chameleon. Dress like your audience. If in doubt, overdress. It's easier to shed unnecessary articles "offstage" or even in the parking lot than it is to borrow a tie or scarf when you arrive.



## Define Success

Make it clear to your employees what constitutes success and how they should measure their achievements. Goals must be realistic. The people who do the work, for example, must set project schedules. People will accept a "bottom-up" deadline they helped set but they'll be cynical about a schedule imposed from the top that doesn't map to reality. Unachievable goals weaken an organization. At my company, in addition to regular team meetings and one-on-one sessions between managers and employees, we use mass gatherings periodically and e-mail routinely to communicate what we expect from employees. If a reviewer or customer chooses another company's product over ours, we analyze the situation carefully. We say to our people, "the next time around we've got to win. What will it take? What's needed?" The answers to these questions help us define success.



– Bill Gates, Microsoft

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## Humor Is Healthy...

Two snakes were crawling along when one snake asked the other, "Are we poisonous snakes?"

The other replied, "That's right, we are! We're rattlesnakes. Why do you ask?"



To which the first replied, "I just bit my tongue."

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*Do you like what you are reading?*

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## Why Is Taking The Consequences For Something Called “Facing The Music?”

This expression almost sounds like the name of a quiz show, but what it describes is hardly entertaining. When you face the music, either you’ve done something wrong and now have to “pay” for it, or you’ve made a tough decision that will result in some negative consequences for you. Either way, you’re not headed for an evening of dining and dancing.

The phrase originates in a military tradition. You’ve probably seen a soldier in the movies “drummed out” of the service. He’s done something dishonorable, so he’s stripped of his rank and has to pass through columns of other soldiers who may look away from him while drumbeats mark his passage through the ranks. The drums are the music he’s facing and the source of the phrase.

Source: *Why You Say It* by Webb Garrison

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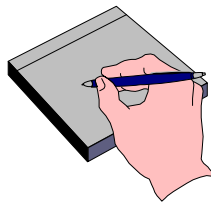
## Can You Start A Memo Right?

Rate your ability to seize and hold the attention of those who receive your memos by picking the best opening statement:

1. “Kevin Donaldson and I recommend that we cancel the Carstairs account.”
2. “Kevin Donaldson and I met yesterday to discuss the Carstairs account.”
3. “Kevin Donaldson and I recommend that we cancel the Carstairs account for these reasons:”
4. “I’ve been asked to reply to your request for more information on the Carstairs account.”
5. “You’ll be glad to know that we finally got the results on the Carstairs account.”

**Suggested answer:** Your memos will rivet readers if the first line includes at least one of the three R’s: *Recommends* an action, choice, etc., *requests* that someone act, or *reveals* information.

Both 1 and 3 recommend, but 3 is better because it includes “for these reasons”—a phrase that explains “Why,” which urges people to keep reading. All the others are too vague. In addition, although some reveal information, such as “met yesterday” and “finally got results,” the information lacks specifics.



## Web Site Of The Month

Government  
Info Site

It’s never been easier for U.S. citizens to keep informed about the activities of their government. Everything **from legislative affairs to intelligence studies** is only a mouse click away at this info-packed Printing Office site.

Check it out at: <http://www.access.gpo.gov/>



## ONE MINUTE IDEAS

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### A Priority Setting Plan

Manage your time better by dividing tasks into four categories:

1. **Direct value.** High priorities: making a sale, presenting to your staff, writing a report.
2. **Indirect value.** What pays off later: learning new skills, setting goals.
3. **Necessary nonvalue.** Things you must do that have no value for you: filling out government forms, taking many phone calls.
4. **Unnecessary nonvalue.** These include things such as writing routine reports that co-workers no longer read.

#### How to categorize:

- **Log your** daily activities for at least one week. Review what you did and classify each activity according to the value definitions.
- **List the** most important internal and external customers who should get most of your attention. Then compare your list and your log.
- **Determine how** much high-value work you think you’re doing for your most important customers.
- **Ask those** customers to tell you which of your activities they consider to have the highest value for them.
- **Use what** you learn to plan your days, weeks, and months around the high-value activities those customers have identified.

Source: Larry Hart, *Atlanta Business Chronicle*, Atlanta, GA 30309.

*Musings from the Masthead:*  
***How Memorable is your Mission?***

**When** I ask my clients' senior executives "Can you tell me your Mission Statement?" most responses are interesting, at times amusing, and range from fumbled words with furrowed brows, to rummaging through the desk drawers to find the last marketing brochure, to complete embarrassment. The occasional blatant admission that no mission statement exists is offered in an apologetic tone, as every company is supposed to have one, right? Very rarely a recitation of the actual mission statement is forthcoming, and even then, many times it is only a rough approximation of that written in the organization's strategic plan.

As the famous saying goes, "If you don't know where you are going, how will you know when you get there," or it's corollary, "Without a clear destination in mind, any course is the right one."

Your Mission Statement is your standing charge to your executives, managers, and staff. With a skillfully written one, an empowered workforce exerts its energy and imagination toward a common cause, with executives confident that their guiding principles are consistently implemented in the best interests of the organization. With an ambiguous or weak statement, oars pull frantically in all directions and a frustrated crew never delivers the goods to the destination.

A well formed Mission Statement serves as a guiding beacon that leads to realization of the organization's long term Vision. It must first be derived from well thought out, enduring Core Values, while allowing for flexibility and adaptation to the challenges of a dynamic business environment. Secondly, the Mission Statement must be written in easily communicated language. Finally, it must serve as an incentive to all employees in all levels of the organization, from the executive office to the shipping room, to perform their duties on a daily basis that will make the success of the organization inevitable.

At the best organization I had the pleasure to work in, the Mission Statement was the heart of every action, every decision, every client relationship, and every accomplishment, and was built around four key tenets: "1) We will enhance our reputation as an internationally recognized company, by 2) developing and employing state of the art solutions, 3) in the best interests of our clients and 4) for the benefit of our shareholders." These guiding beacons were emblazoned on everything from coffee cups to wall hangings to coasters, so that they were constantly in sight and continuously reinforced. As an executive, manager, professional, or support staff, everyone knew that if their actions were founded in those four principals, then the company would stand behind them. And why not? By far, actions based on the Mission Statement meant satisfied clients, profits, and contented shareholders, and not surprisingly, awards, accolades, raises, and bonuses for the staff.

Despite that experience now being 20 years in the past, I can still recite that Mission Statement as if I were reading it off the first cup of coffee in the morning. Clearly, that organization not only had a memorable Mission Statement, but the workforce took ownership of it and lived by it.

A well-chosen, well-written Mission Statement invigorates your workforce to work toward a common cause. Executives will be certain that their guiding ideology is consistently implemented in the best interests of the organization. With a strong statement, the oars will pull in one direction and the crew will deliver the goods to the destination on many successful voyages.

Jack Legler, President and CEO, Legenter, LLC

***Legenter Announces  
New Program for  
Entrepreneurs***

Are you a struggling business owner struggling with the changing competitive environment? Are you having difficulty identifying whether to chart a new direction or to stay the course? If you have your basic direction, how are you measuring your progress toward it? What's getting in your way? Might some of these challenges revolve around leadership of self, plan definition, and/or follow-through measures? Legenter, LLC is pleased to announce that it will now offer ***Entrepreneurial Leadership and Strategic Thinking*** to its clients, using newly released support materials exclusively from the RAC-TQI network.

Here are the chapter titles:

- Building a Successful Business
- A Passion for Succeeding
- Developing a Competitive Edge
- Business Planning and Execution
- Generating Customers and Profitability

Now what fledgling (or even experienced) business doesn't need some of that? PLUS, the process includes a comprehensive workbook with the measurement tools every entrepreneur needs to turn their dream of a successful business into reality.

Legenter will offer ***Entrepreneurial Leadership and Strategic Thinking*** to corporate clients or in sponsored group facilitations. For more information on this and dates for upcoming open enrollment groups, contact Jack Legler at Legenter, LLC, Phone: 571-748-3955, or email to [jlegler@legenter.com](mailto:jlegler@legenter.com).

## *Sales - Closing Tips*

### *Body language that means it's time to close –*

Professional closers wait until their customers are “hot.” Then, when the timing’s right, they strike, and the customer willingly agrees to buy.

*Suggestion:* It’s time to close when the customer:

- **Nibbles** or bites at his lip.
- **Stares** away with a thoughtful – not a blank – expression.
- **Looks** continuously from the sales material to the salesperson.
- **Asks** “What if...” questions.
- **Repeats** a question he asked before.



– *One On One*, Ian Seymour, Pelican, P.O. Box 3110, Gretna, LA 70054.

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