

# Vision Quest CONSULTING

## LEADERSHIP COACHING THOUGHT



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Vision Quest Consulting provides leadership coaching, organizational development consulting, and training to top executives and their teams.

**“DEVELOPING TODAY’S LEADERS FOR TOMORROW’S CHALLENGES!”**

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### FEBRUARY 2007 LEADERSHIP COACHING NEWSLETTER

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#### **This Month's Topic: Why Should Anyone Be Led by You?**

Many aspects of leadership are fascinating to me, even after all these years. I have been studying leadership and what it takes to be a corporate leader for the last 20 years, and it's fair to say, I am still mesmerized by the topic. I love to look for ways to improve my own leadership abilities and the leadership capabilities of those I work with in my role as coach and advisor to senior corporate management.

A book that recently caught my attention is, *Why Should Anyone be Led by You?* by Rob Goffee and Gareth Jones, Harvard Business Press, 2006. The book's authors offer a convincing argument based on 25 years of research, consulting work and first hand experience, that leadership requires continual self assessment, taking stock and learning how to deploy your own personal leadership assets appropriately.

According to the authors and based on my own experience, to act in a true leadership capacity in a corporation can often be very challenging. Organizations say they want leaders; they even spend lots of money to develop them, yet they often operate in ways that kill leadership capability.

The most dysfunctional behaviors that lead to the destruction of leaders is the invitation to conform to the norm of the current leadership team; who they are, what they think, the way they think, and what they stand for. None of this conforming behavior serves the business or the executive team nor does it breed exemplary leadership. Instead this conforming behavior builds a senior team that looks and thinks alike, which in turn produces disenchanted cynical individuals that in order to be viewed by peer executives as successful must conform to the status quo. The individual is then left with the “no win” option of conforming, feeling frustrated, or eventually having to leave the company.

Hierarchy alone is insufficient as a condition for successful leadership. We all know of individuals who have gotten the corner office and the big title, yet they are not well respected personally or professionally. Often, in order to keep our jobs, we keep our mouths shut publicly but privately, we complain about their behaviors and actions. Aligning who we are and what we do in an authentic way develops significant trust in those around us. In addition, since the leader can accomplish his/her goals with a sense of integrity about themselves, they impart that to others around them. Then usually strange things begin to occur. Productivity takes a strong uptick. Morale increases. More is accomplished in a shorter time frame. And the added bonus is that the rumor mill gossip ceases.

So how do you get there from here?

This complex process can be started by answering the following questions:

1. Why should anyone be led by you?
2. What is special about you that means others should follow you?
3. What is unique about you that has the potential to excite, inspire and arouse others?
4. What is your personal experience with authentic leadership and with executives you have coached or mentored?
5. Who historically and/or experientially best demonstrates authentic leadership, and why?

Take some time to answer these questions. I spent time answering them myself in preparation for my master mind group meeting this past month, as the questions and following discussion were part of the focus of our meeting agenda. It was not an easy exercise but extremely worthwhile and more informative for my own leadership next steps than I imagined.

I believe there are certain characteristics and skills that, if mastered, can set one on the path towards exemplary leadership. Ultimately, it is important to remember that you must be yourself. Knowing what genuinely is different about you and how to leverage your uniqueness and strengths situationally and in context is one of the keys to successful leadership.

## **Recommendations**

Recommended reading: “*Why Should Anyone be Led by You?*” by Rob Goffee and Gareth Jones, Harvard Business Press, 2006.

Recommended Corporate Leadership University training course: “*Foundations of Leadership*”. A one-day course designed to help develop leadership talent and begin to create a cultural shift towards “level 5 leadership” in organizations through self assessment of individual leadership talents and beliefs.

Conducted by Vision Quest Consulting. Call or email us for more information. 978-692-4454, [wcapland@visionquestconsulting.com](mailto:wcapland@visionquestconsulting.com)

We offer leadership and executive coaching and consulting to help organizations develop a deep talent bench. We focus on giving good managers tools to use to make them into more effective leaders. Call or email us for more information. 978-692-4454, [wcapland@visionquestconsulting.com](mailto:wcapland@visionquestconsulting.com)

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