

CCI Explores the Many Faces of Leadership

The new, quality-focused organization depends on leadership to create the internal conditions necessary for success. Of course, the ultimate success of the enterprise will depend upon the ability of all members of the organization to creatively work together toward a common goal. But here again, leadership is required to nurture and promote the requisite skills and attitudes.

The styles (and substance) of leadership appropriate to these new conditions are not necessarily intuitive. Leadership is no longer a simple matter of telling an employee how high to jump. Moreover, the leadership behavior of a manager on the shop floor (or the leader of a self-managed team) may be different from the leadership characteristics of a general manager or a chief executive officer.

Recognizing both the central importance of leadership issues and the bewildering complexity of the variables surrounding those issues, members of the Council for Continuous Improvement (CCI) address this topic at many levels and from many angles. From CEO Forums to the special interest group on management leadership to keynote speeches, the *Proceedings of the Council for Continuous Improvement* are filled not only with ideas and opinions, but with real leadership tools.

Frontline Leadership

On a very practical level, the leadership of managers in the workplace is essential to eliciting outstanding performance from workers. At a recent CCI General Session, **Robert Damelio** of The Bottom Line Group and **Bill Englehaupt**, a regional director for CCI, addressed the elements which contribute to an individual's performance. Knowledge of those factors can help managers positively influence employee behavior. "Individuals improve quality; companies don't improve quality," Mr. Damelio emphasized.

For managers, leadership is a matter of very specific guidance and direction. To better enable managers to achieve the results they desire, Mr. Damelio offered "The ABCs of Performance," a framework for performance management developed by **Aubrey Daniels**. A, B, and C stand for *antecedents, behavior, and consequences*. Antecedents are efforts to influence behavior before it occurs. Consequences try to change the probability that the behavior will recur in the future.

"Start looking at your work world in terms of the antecedents and consequences associated with a particular behavior," Mr. Damelio suggested. "It gives you insight into how the people perceive being asked to do a certain task. Once you understand the elements — the antecedents, the behaviors, and the consequences — you can identify the actions that you can take as a manager. You can vary the antecedents, vary the consequences, or do a little of both. In most companies, you'll find forces in the environment — which will turn out to be either antecedents or consequences — that are currently acting to preserve the status quo."

According to Mr. Damelio, the six most common types of antecedents are job aids, training, tools and materials, policies and procedures, work environment, and meetings. Of these, training is used most frequently, although it is not necessarily the most effective.

Antecedents are designed to *start* behavior, whereas consequences *maintain* behavior. “Every behavior has a consequence,” Mr. Damelio said, “so managers must understand how employees *perceive* the consequences of their behavior. Those consequences will affect performance, whether they are managed or not.”

Consequences can be categorized as positive or negative. However, each individual experiences consequences differently, so consequences must be analyzed on an individual basis: what is motivating for one person may be demotivating for another. The influence of a given consequence can be evaluated in terms of its perception (as positive or negative), the timing of the consequence (relative to the behavior), and the certainty of the consequence.

Mr. Damelio presented a tool for applying this type of analysis to specific situations: the “Balance of Consequences Worksheet.” This form prompts the user to identify a specific behavior and provides columns for listing the antecedents and consequences associated with that behavior. Consequences are further identified as positive or negative, immediate or future, and certain or uncertain. Two worksheets should be filled out for each individual — one for undesired behavior, and then one for desired behavior.

By understanding the dynamics that influence behavior and tailoring the analysis to the individual, managers can effectively lead cooperative employees to the behaviors necessary for implementing quality improvement. Consequences that are Positive, Immediate, and Certain (PIC) will reinforce the behavior with which they are associated. Consequences that are Negative, Immediate, and Certain strongly discourage repetition of the behavior. Consequences that are uncertain and in the future — whether positive or negative — will have less influence on the behavior. Comparing the consequences (negative and positive) of the *desired* behavior with the consequences of the *undesired* behavior, a manager can begin to see how to establish a balance of consequences that encourages the desired behavior.

Leading the Way to Change

At the highest levels of the organization, leaders must penetrate the surface psychology of behavior to reach the roots of learning: that is the wellspring of change. **David Dibble**, founder of Dibble Electronics, offered some challenging insights into this aspect of leadership during a keynote presentation at a CCI General Session.

Mr. Dibble began with a discussion of the national debt, creating a sense of anxiety in his audience. He pointed out that the United States went from being the largest creditor in 1982 to become the world’s largest debtor nation in 1993. This abrupt decline, he suggested, grew from a faulty mental model. The prosperity of the postwar era, driven in large part by lack of substantive competition, “created a national paradigm of how brilliant we were.” Due to the economic boom of the 1950s and ’60s, industrialists in the United States failed to heed the advice of Dr. W. Edwards Deming. Over that same period, Japan took an infrastructure in ruins and rebuilt their economy on a systems-based paradigm. By the ’90s they became the world’s leading creditor nation.

Although everyone knows the debt crisis must be addressed, and many people have offered potential solutions, change is not forthcoming. A national paradigm shift is

necessary. Similarly, many US companies have recognized the need for a paradigm shift of their own in order to remain competitive, but even people who understand this are still having trouble making the change.

“The key to shifting paradigms is the *emotions*,” Mr. Dibble said. “We have been trying to cause the shift intellectually, but it must come from the heart. We need to tap into the desire to make a contribution. We are working on the intellect today. Business gets the creeps when you say ‘emotion.’ Yet, if you don’t deal with the emotions, you can’t change.”

Beliefs, like thoughts, exist in the mind and cannot be seen. “How do we value our beliefs?” Mr. Dibble asked. “By the emotional content of the experience at the time we created the belief. *If you try to change and there isn’t enough emotional content, no change will take place.* Everyone has had an emotional event in their lives to illustrate this. But in organizations, we keep trying to change without having to *feel* anything. A business has a mind, and the mind dictates its behavior. It is comfortable with some things but not with others. In order to change a business rapidly, we have to raise the emotional content, and we have to change belief systems that make up the organizational models or culture of the company.”

To explain the importance of emotions in changing behavior, Mr. Dibble cited a model of the human psyche which consists of four parts: the intellect, the intuitive, the governor, and the regulator. The current business paradigm relies on the intellect and the governor, so it is dominated by rules, regulations, policies, and logic. The intuitive (emotions and memories) and the regulator (connection to higher purpose) are necessary for balance and to achieve long-term greatness. “If a company ever really gets this stuff, they are going to blow the socks off their competitors,” he said. “We have to get beyond our blind spots. You can’t even *see* the new paradigm when you’re standing in the old one.”

Leading the Next Wave

In spite of Mr. Dibble’s assertion, many CCI members are actively engaged in trying to envision the new paradigm. **Michael Munn** addressed the needs of these would-be visionaries in the keynote address at another General Session. Having spent 22 years as chief scientist at Lockheed Missiles & Space Company, Dr. Munn has impeccable credentials as a hard-boiled, no-nonsense engineer. However, an encounter with TQM (total quality management) in the early ’90s led him to begin exploring what many people call “the soft side of quality.”

Before challenging his audience with a series of stories and exercises, Dr. Munn encouraged them to record their experiences using a tool known as a *mind map* (or, as Dr. Munn prefers, an *awareness map*). This is a pictorial outline that makes use of the entire page to allow relationships to emerge outside of a linear context [see figure 1].

Dr. Munn admitted that he had originally dismissed “quality” as a peripheral matter of little consequence. Acknowledging the error of this perception, he emphasized that everyone establishes arbitrary borders (“boxes within boxes”) which limit their ability to perceive or act. Things that are unusual, frightening, or difficult to comprehend are outside our boxes.

“When you take things that are outside of your comfort zone and bring them inside the box, they are going to help you along in a tremendously powerful way,” Dr. Munn said. “Once you go outside of the boxes, you realize how limited you were. Beyond the borders, you start looking at things differently, absorbing different information.”

Outside the boxes, Dr. Munn suggested, are four significant realities:

- You know much more than you know you know.
- You are aware of much more than you think you are aware of.
- You can do much more than you think you can do.
- You are much more than you think you are.

Dr. Munn proceeded to venture far beyond the boundaries of a typical business presentation, citing current beliefs among different indigenous American peoples that stress the need for harmony to heal a dangerous imbalance that pervades the psyche of the dominant culture. In fact, Dr. Munn has come to regard *harmony* as the goal of the quality process — whether it involves creating harmonious relationships among customers, suppliers, vendors, and users or living in harmony with the planetary ecosystem.

Through a directed exercise, Dr. Munn demonstrated techniques for accessing “hidden” knowledge — things that you know that *you don’t know that you know*. The premise of the exercise was that each participant was suddenly challenged to give a one-hour lecture on the Egyptian pyramids, replacing a noted Egyptologist who canceled at the last minute. Dr. Munn emphasized a nonlinear approach like the awareness map rather than a traditional outline format when generating ideas. This helps break out of habitual perceptions. He also suggested thinking about the topic in four different ways: *logic* (data and analysis), *structures* (forms, relationships, schedules), *interpersonal relationships* (emotions and senses), and *vision* (the future and the eternal). Each category suggests a different type of information about the Pyramids. The exercise concluded with a visualization which elicited further buried information.

Having demonstrated the power of discovering what *you don’t know that you know*, Dr. Munn insisted that the real leverage for change lies in pursuing the things that *you don’t know that you don’t know* — things far outside our boxes of perception and experience. Beyond tools and skills, he offered CCI members hope and encouragement that their never-ending quest for quality is a journey worth making. Indeed, the quality movement can help lead the people of this planet toward greater harmony.