

# Leadership

## in Logistics

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They say the speed of the leader determines the speed of the pack. **How does an organization respond to the speed of today's ever changing market conditions and customer requirements? How does an effective leader manage the speed and agility required for the organization to be successful?**

These were some of the initial questions I asked myself, upon being invited by Victor Deyglio to provide a guest editorial on leadership for LQ magazine.

### ***A Personal Approach***

Leadership is, by its very nature, a personalized approach to an oncoming situation or new opportunity. Leadership is both unique and individual. No two leaders or situations are the same and consequently an approach that may be effective for one leader may not be for another. Leadership in logistics demands a strong vision and commitment, as well as a strategy that can be effectively executed to achieve success. In many ways, as a Consulting Specialist in Supply Chain Logistics, providing leadership is a critical suc-



cess factor while working with organizations to develop strategies, plan, implement solutions and solve business problems. Leadership is also required to identify and develop the strategies and skills required to undertake transformational organizational change that is sustainable. As I reflected upon leadership approaches that have been both successful and unsuccessful during my career, this became a great opportunity to develop a personalized leadership plan I could use as a basis for continuous improvement, as well as share with professional colleagues.

## *A Leadership Plan*

Leadership and logistics are both such complex issues. **What is the most important aspect of leadership, and what core competencies do logisticians need to effectively and efficiently lead a team?** Many skills are needed that can be integrated and used in a wide range of situations. **How could I share my perspective on leadership in a way that would have impact? The answer lies in the same approach needed to eat an elephant....one piece at a time, and to my mind, in a well planned and well executed approach.** I also wanted to present my personal perspective so it could easily be remembered. Word rhymes worked when we were kids, and were fun to do - if my twelve year old daughter can write songs, surely I could put together a word rhyme. And this, fellow Logisticians is how the L-E-A-D-E-R-S-H-I-P in Logistics plan for this article was born.

## *Skills for Success*

**L is for logical thinking.** Effective leaders in logistics need to determine needs of customers and suppliers quickly and effectively, assessing the costs and benefits to determine the best course of action to meet these needs.

**E is for excellence.** Customers will not accept less than excellence in the quality of the products and services they choose to select from the global marketplace. Leaders need to strive for relentless quality, while understanding that continuous improvement is a process, and making wise decisions about the acceptable levels of quality while managing cost effectively.

**A is for anticipating change.** Situations change, people change, everything changes. To be effective leaders, we need

to be proactive, anticipating challenges, actively managing people and situations, and ultimately striving for win-win outcomes.

**D is for decision making.** We have to be able to make decisions, without complete information, perhaps without even desirable information. Experience, intuition, empathy for, and confidence in others can help us with decisions which may impact people's lives and livelihood.

**E is for ethics.** We need to have strong ethics and values, leading with dignity and respect, gaining and maintaining confidence from our team. Without strong ethics, leaders are ultimately replaced by those who are more worthy and democratic in the world we live in today.

**R is for rising to the occasion.** Meeting opportunities and challenges directly, leading with courage and the humility required to listen to others who may have more expertise or experience.



**S is for sponsorship.** Logistics initiatives are multi-faceted and multi-disciplined, with processes and functions cutting across business units and organizations. Strong sponsorship is essential for implementing initiatives requiring buy in from stakeholders with overlapping authority and responsibility.

**H is for having fun.** Successful leaders build successful teams. Teamwork is built through shared experience and a commitment to developing a relationship. Humour is such a powerful way to create an open and energetic atmosphere for communicating, sharing and building relationships.

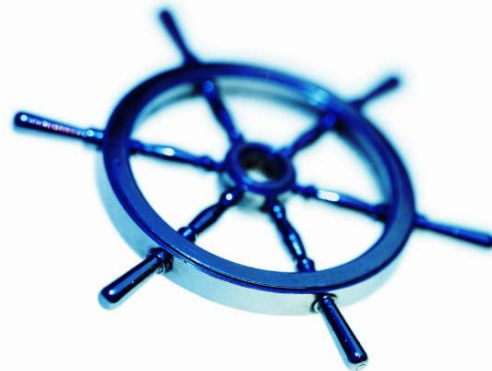
**I is for integrated thinking.** We need to be able to outsmart competitors, solve complex problems and connect the dots in new and innovative ways. Technology has provided us with powerful tools that enable new opportunities for process improvements and integrating information flows from your supplier's supplier to your customer's customer.

**P is for planning.** Because of the complexity of logistics, which requires an integration of people, processes and technology, logistics initiatives don't get accomplished without well thought out plans

that are communicated to both the organization and team in effective ways.

### ***Navigating the Path Forward***

Leadership in Logistics used to be more about the execution of plans that other leaders had developed. Today, it's more about leading the organization forward down a new path, perhaps for the first time, but with competencies developed, approaches and methods to execution and communications that have worked in other situations, and with the speed and agility required. We have opportunities to be both entrepreneurial and innovative, the ability to fundamentally transform systems, organizations and relationships to be agile and passionately responsive to market demands, defining our own path forward and ultimately creating our own success as Leaders in Logistics. ♦



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