

## The Defining Mark

Barrier Free Business Development Ideas

### This issue: Filling the Leadership Gap

As children many of us played games such as 'Simon Says' and 'Mother may I'. We would often play simple games where the leader would control every action of the participants. Since the players had no actual control their only goal is not to 'get out'. If you think back, do you remember how often the leader would change his or her mind, or bend the rules with no apparent reason? Is it like some work environments today?

Leadership expert John Maxwell wrote a book called 'The 360° Leader' which asks the question 'How can you lead when you don't have the title or position of leadership?' A follow up question to consider is 'How can you lead if your leader doesn't?'

When you are working to elicit change in your department or organization, or simply to get things done with the team leadership is necessary. There are three key factors to 'leading from the middle'. When layered on top of one another, leadership impact is the result.

In the military it is called rank. In the corporate environment, it is title or position. It is the formal authority which most leaders use when trying to control those people in their charge. All leadership is a result of authority, yet not all authority is formal.

Informal, 'earned' authority is more often a result of relationships developed with other people. Martin Luther King and Mother Theresa are common examples of great leaders. As leaders, they did not possess rank or title (formal authority). Instead, they lead through the power of their influence.

Influence is a result of, among other things, the example that you portray to those around you. Your example will leave a lasting impression. As your colleagues see you doing those things that are necessary, (not for recognition but because they are the right things to do), your leadership influence increases.

The leadership example that Mother Theresa and Martin Luther King presented was that of a service leader. They worked for the benefit of others and with others. They did not do all the work, nor were they 'floor mats' to be walked on, they enabled and empowered others.

If you don't happen to have the title or position required to be in charge where you work, ask yourself this question: Do the people in my life whom I would be willing to support or defend people who influence with formal or informal authority?

Set an example of serving others. The influence you develop will allow you to lead from the middle, even if your leader doesn't.



Jim Carty, CSP

*"You must be the change you wish to see in the world."*  
- Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)

#### Action Plan:

- Recognize where you are in your company
- Empower and enable others
- Lead by example