



## Leading By Example

By Diana L. Garren

It is critical to set a positive tone for your company by being a leader who leads by example. The phrase “*do as I say and not what I do*” will not allow you to be an effective leader. As a leader, you are a role model whose behaviors send a powerful and unforgettable message to your employees about what is expected of them and what is most important to you. You are the one who sets the standard by which your employees will calibrate their own choices and behaviors. This is why it is so important to lead by example and not by words void of action.

To lead by example you must first be clear about your company’s vision, mission, purpose, and values. Your actions then need to align with them, because when in doubt, without fail, people believe your actions over your words. Every action you take or do not take speaks volumes about your values set for the company and your seriousness about those values.

### **Do you walk the talk?**

Where your time is allocated, is the best test of what people believe is important. For example:

(1) If you say that quality is important, the amount of time you spend on quality issues is the best test of your commitment to quality.

(2) If you say consistency in your work product is vital to your success, the amount of time you spend developing your internal structure will reveal your commitment to consistency.

### **Do you pay attention to questions?**

Questions you ask send messages about what is important to you and point people in the “right” direction. Questions you are asked are also good indicators of other people’s interest and concerns.

### **What do you recognize and reward?**

Recognition and rewards send tangible messages to people about what is important to you. If one of your values is teamwork you must promote, recognize and reward people when they work as a team to obtain the highest achievement of a job. Who is rewarded and why are among the clearest ways in which you demonstrate your seriousness about your corporate values.

### **What has consequences?**

Just as recognition and rewards send tangible messages to people so do consequences. One of your jobs as a leader is to be sure your employees know exactly what is expected of them. If customer service is expected and an employee is rude to one of your customers it is your job to enforce consequences for that action.

## **What does your daily routine say?**

Is your daily routine consistent with what you say is most important to you and your company? Does your staff see you act out daily what you talk? By you being the model for your employees to follow. It allows everyone to get a clear idea about what they should be doing.

Remember that, *"words are cheap"*. What you do says volumes about what is important to you and your company more than all the words, manuals, or mottos placed on your walls. People respect and want to follow a good leader. They learn by what they see more than what they read or hear.

Be sure to write out who your company is and then act it out through all you do. This is what will develop a company culture that is consistent and true.

***Diana L. Garren of Atlanta, GA is one of the leading business image experts in the United States. For more information, you may visit [TruePerceptions.com](http://TruePerceptions.com). In future issues, Ms. Garren will help your business tackle the many facets of image maintenance.***

