

THE  
PETER  
BARRON  
STARK

# Quest

## FOR WORKPLACE EXCELLENCE

### Call in a Coach Before Your Quarterback Gets in Trouble

We often receive calls from our clients that go something like this: "Peter, I have an executive/manager on my team who is technically sound and highly competent at doing his job. However, when it comes to motivating his team or team members in other departments to be in alignment and heading toward a common goal, he could make significant improvement. Can you help us?" My answer is always greeted with a bit of surprise. I tell them that the answer is a definite "maybe." After you read this article, you'll understand why.

Our experience working with thousands of managers has shown us that even though an executive/ manager has risen through the ranks and knows the technical components of his job extremely well, he still may have opportunities to grow as a leader and to build relationships where others willingly follow.

The challenge is that being a technical expert is not enough when someone rises to higher levels of leadership in the organization. With each move, from doer to supervisor, from supervisor to manager,



from manager to director, from director to vice president and from vice president to CEO, he needs a higher level of leadership skills.

Our research has clearly demonstrated that the majority of these types of executives/managers struggle in the following areas:

- >>> a style of written or verbal communication that is abrasive

internal customers

- >>> unable to effectively present information to a group in a persuasive manner
- >>> difficulty prioritizing objectives and tasks
- >>> failure to produce timely results
- >>> refusal to hold subordinates accountable to specific performance standards and desired results

Leaders who are unable or unwilling to improve their skills in these areas can find themselves facing a roadblock when they attempt to move to the next level or, even worse, may find their careers completely derailed.

We've also worked with high-level leaders who are very successful, but may find they are facing an isolated situation where they need the input and direction of a "coach." We believe coaching can be an effective tool for all leaders.

**Leaders have people who willingly follow.**

- >>> inability to build a strong, effective team
- >>> unwillingness to provide constructive feedback and hold people accountable
- >>> unable to accept constructive feedback
- >>> unable to resolve conflict with peers or people who report directly to him
- >>> lack of responsiveness to

#### INSIDE:

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# Become the Leader You've Always Wanted To Be

True leaders understand that success does not depend on their titles, but on the values they uphold and the choices they make on a daily basis. While many people use “manager/supervisor” interchangeably with “leader,” we believe that there clearly is a difference between the two terms. Managers have the authority to make things happen. Leadership is all about influence. Influence comes from building strong relationships with a foundation of trust. In our work with leaders around the world, we have identified the following eight characteristics that will enable you to be the type of leader who people will willingly follow.



- »» **Recognize the world is rapidly changing.** You can decide that you are going to help create change and learn from it, or you can try to resist change. Because of global competition and the rapid increase of information and technologies, many large organizations are eliminating layers of middle management and supervisors to be more responsive to change and to their customers. Middle managers need to look forward and see how their talents and energies can be re-applied in the organization. Change is the one thing you can count on. Your ability to adapt to change will significantly impact your organizational success.
- »» **Look at what you're free to change, not at what you cannot change.** Where are you going to spend your energy? Complaining about things you cannot change or creating the things you can? If you feel your destiny is in someone else's hands, you do not have to take responsibility for your actions. Focus on what you can do and take responsibility. There is power in responsibility.
- »» **Lead with your heart and head.** We recently heard a manager say that he did not care about people's emotions. He went on to say, “We have a job to get done!” Unfortunately, people are the ones who are going to get that job done and people have feelings. In fact, everything about motivation and the desire to do good work is based on a feeling. If you do not consider people's feelings, you will find it impossible to be an effective leader.
- »» **Reach out to people who have different perspectives.** It is easy to communicate with people who think just like you. It is difficult to effectively communicate with someone who has a differing viewpoint. If we can only communicate with people who think like us, we are limiting ourselves from learning new and valuable information.
- »» **Become comfortable with the unknown.** To become empowered, you must feel comfortable with the unknown. As fast as our environment is changing, it is impossible to know all the facts or have all the answers all the time.
- »» **Develop a leadership “tool kit.”** No one can have all the answers. What you can do is create a “tool kit” of resources that can help to solve problems. If you only have a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail. Collect information, and then learn and practice leadership and management techniques. Remember: Good leaders never stop learning.
- »» **Look for multiple right answers.** With information and the environment changing as rapidly as they are, we can no longer afford to look unilaterally for one right answer. Become multi-lateral in your thinking. Search for possibilities—not just one solution.
- »» **Substitute effectiveness for perfectionism.** If you wait until all the available information is in to make your decisions, the chances are you will have waited too long. In today's environment, we no longer can afford the luxury of waiting until something is absolutely perfect.

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## THE 50 PERCENT FACTOR

When CEOs or human resource professionals share their specific concerns about an executive/manager, they always ask, “Do you think that coaching this individual will be effective?” Most consultants and coaches will reply “absolutely” and tell you about all of their successful projects.

Unfortunately, our response sometimes disappoints our clients. We are painfully honest when we say, “Overall, our coaching projects are 50 percent successful.” About half the time we work with executives/managers who are excited about having a coach. They want to learn how to be an even more effective leader and are excited to put their new skills into action. As we work with these motivated leaders, we often hear the leader’s boss, peers or direct reports say, “Wow, John has really changed.” Some of the leaders we have coached have even risen to the most senior positions in their organizations, and they attribute that success directly to their coaching experience.

The other half of the time we work with a leader who is so busy doing the technical aspects of his job that he perceives the coaching as an inconvenience. The only question this leader longs to ask us, but never does, is, “Tell me exactly what I have to do to complete this coaching assignment and get you out of my life.” The challenge with these executives/managers is reflected in the old cliché: If you keep on doing what you have always done,

you keep getting what you have always got! Some of these leaders who we have worked with have eventually been asked to leave the organization.

You may wonder why all leaders are not motivated to improve their leadership skills. The reality is about half of the leaders we work with have been rewarded in their careers with promotions and bonuses for their past behaviors. Even though people give them feedback about their leadership strengths and opportunities for growth, they are not motivated to change. These leaders perceive that their past has worked well enough for them and really do not see a strong need to change. While we never want to discourage coaching, leaders with this attitude are typically unsuccessful in a coaching relationship.

We recommend two types of coaching support that can help executives and managers become even better leaders.

### 1. One on One Coaching

A motivated executive or manager can find it valuable to review his strengths with a coach and develop an action plan to “turn up the volume” in the areas he believes are hindering his true leadership potential. Ideally, the coach will have also gained feedback about the leader from interviews with the human resources professional or the executive or manager’s supervisor. The key to success in these one-on-one coaching sessions is the leader’s desire to improve. If the individual does not have a desire to be coached or is not motivated to change, coaching will be unsuccessful.

quotable

“ Thank you very much for the amazing training! Our employees were so happy with the program you conducted that they were talking about it among themselves and even seeking out the HR department to say thank you. The content (along with your humor) was very appropriate and appreciated. I believe it brought our employees a new understanding and positive vision for change in the workplace. Thank you so much!”


Traci Porterfield  
The Anthony Robbins Companies

“ I want to share my appreciation of your support for our business in delivering a three-day negotiation skills package to my buying team. As you know, the retail climate in the UK is particularly challenging, and I am delighted to report that my team has enthusiastically risen to the challenge of applying the specific skills and individual tips that came out of their time with you. The absolute test that we agreed on of achieving a financial return on the investment we made in your time and skills has already been exceeded in year one!”

Andrew Gill  
Co-op Retail

“ We have participated in a great deal of sales training in the last 18 years, but you have by far been our best investment. My team greatly appreciates your ‘hands on’ approach and the energy you bring to each meeting. Thank you for giving 150% to our success.”

Doug Ament  
VP, Nautical Enterprises, Inc.



## If coaching does not work and the leader is unwilling to change, share them with a competitor and mess up someone else's strategic plan.

### 2. Leadership Development Assessments (360s)

One of the most powerful tools to provide feedback and coaching to an executive or manager is the 360 Leadership Development Assessment. First, we create a customized assessment based on interviews with the executive/manager to be coached, human resources and the executive/manager's immediate supervisor. We then post this assessment (75-100 questions) on line and ask for it to be completed by:

- >>> the leader being assessed (leader rates himself or herself)
- >>> the leader's immediate supervisor
- >>> the leader's direct reports
- >>> the leader's peers
- >>> a cross-representation of internal customers who interact with the leader

The 360 assessment is a powerful tool because the data literally becomes a "mirror" that the executive/manager holds up to affirm his strongest leadership attributes and develop an action plan in the lowest rated areas. It is easy to deny the feedback of any one individual. Yet, that denial becomes much more difficult when you have the feedback of many individuals who interact with you at different levels. For example, it is not uncommon in

the initial coaching sessions to hear an executive/manager say, "My boss says that my style of communication is abrasive or mean, but I don't agree. I may be stern in some of my communications, but I am not abrasive or abusive." It is easy to deny the feedback of one person. But, when 10, 15 or 20 people who work with you on a daily basis tell you something about your style of communication or leadership, it commands attention. We've heard it said that "if 10 people say you have a tail, sooner or later you have to turn around and take a look."

When the 360 is completed, the coach works with the executive/manager to develop an action plan. Once the action plan is in place, we hold follow up meetings at regular intervals to ensure the plan is achieving the desired results.

Sometimes clients ask, "Is it worth it to hire a coach?" The answer is—absolutely. Fifty percent of the time, we coach leaders who take the coaching feedback and create significant leadership and organizational success. It is our belief that this 50 percent success factor will far outweigh the coaching failures who suffer from a disease called "Popeye Syndrome." These leaders have a unilateral focus shared by Popeye, the famous cartoon character, who simply said, "I am what I am." Even if you and your organization are not able to create a leadership "win" through coaching, you will know that you did everything possible to support this leader in being a success.

**“Peter’s presentation for us, ‘Taking the Broncos from Good to Great,’ was excellent and precisely targeted the focus of our retreat. I feel confident that our executive group will benefit from Peter’s informative, energizing talk and move forward by implementing some of his suggestions. I would highly recommend Peter Barron Stark & Associates to any organization that aims to heighten and improve their focus on important organizational issues.”**

**Joe Ellis**

**Executive VP, Business Operations,  
Denver Broncos**



**“On behalf of the supervisory and managerial staff of Helix Water District, we wanted to express our appreciation for your outstanding presentation on Workplace Excellence. The presentation was fast moving, well organized and contemporary to challenges facing supervisors and managers in the 2005 workplace. You gave the management staff 10 clear tools for improving and building excellence within the workplace.”**

**Mark Weston**

**General Manager, Helix Water District**

## Headline Needed Here

On August 24, a San Diego jury reached a decision that requires a pharmaceutical company to pay 6.1 million dollars in a sexual harassment case. In addition, the two supervisors named in the case must pay an additional 1.8 million dollars in punitive damages. The company's insurance policy, which the firm has said it may use to pay part of its legal costs, is 3 million dollars.

While this decision probably strikes fear into the heart of every president, manager and supervisor who hears it, great leaders know that the best approach is a proactive one. Legally, the requirements are clear. All public and private employers (who operate within the state of California) with 50 or more employees are required to provide two hours of sexual harassment training to all supervisory employees every two years. This training must take place by January 1, 2006. (If your organization is not in California, please check your state's requirements.)

Peter Barron Stark & Associates has had the privilege of training thousands of employees and managers from organizations like Directed Electronics, Websense, Shea Homes and Time Warner on this topic. Please visit our web site, [www.pbsconsulting.com](http://www.pbsconsulting.com), or contact us at 877.727.6468 for more information.

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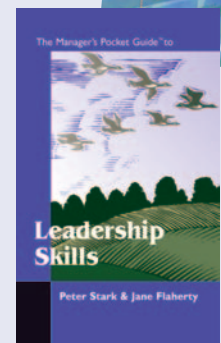
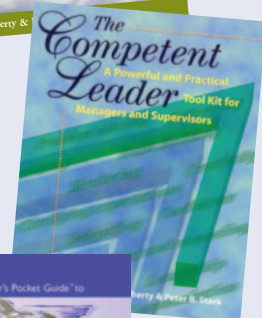
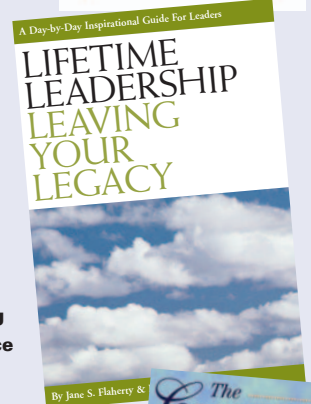
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