Jerry Holmes Leadership Symposium

Gina Hitz on Leadership

Gina Hitz is the Chief Information Officer for the convenience/gas-station chain Quick Trip. She came to Quick Trip as an architect, but was put into the position of a developmental engineer. This was the first of many steps that Mrs. Hitz took to building her vast skill set and growing as a leader, something that she defines as the combined experiences of education and life lessons.

Hitz described leadership by dividing into three subcategories: communication, strategic thinking, and decision making. The first of these, communication, is the ability to listen for the things you don’t hear, connect with people you weren’t connected with before, and adapt to situations. The second, strategic thinking, is the ability to anticipate what’s coming down the road, interpret it and connect the dots, and determine a direction. The last of these, decision making, is arguably the hardest part. It is the what, who, when, and how things will get done, and making the decision to start the process of whatever it is that needs to be done.

Hitz’s view on leadership can also be broken into two over-arching types: thought leadership and people leadership. Thought leadership is what most engineer are better at. It involves being curious, having critical thinking skills, and problem solving. People leadership is the harder one to grasp of the two. It involves having a vision for those you lead, defining a clear direction, and having empathy for those who look to you.

All of these ideas of leadership aided Hitz on her climb to where she is now in her career and her life, and is direct correlation to the success of Quick Trip as a company. By taking all of one’s life experiences and education and applying them to Hitz’s definitions of leadership, it is reasonable to assume that one could significantly improve their chances of succeeding in their career as well as their life.