

## ***EVERYDAY LEADERSHIP:*** **THE HEAD AND HEART OF LEADERSHIP:**

The challenge of leadership is that we live in a “fast” business world. That means things happen quickly in an organization’s environment, and in order to survive, leaders have to get their organizations to react equally quickly – and effectively – when those things happen. That ability to react quickly is called **agility**, and the best leaders use their leadership skills to make their organizations agile.

**Agility is a social process** – agility is about getting people to work together effectively. Good leadership is about using influence to get others to work together effectively. Leaders understand that people working together can achieve far beyond the reach of anyone working alone – but only if the leader can influence everyone to work well together. An important difference between managers and leaders is that managers rely on their authority to get others to obey, while leaders use their influence to get others to want to do what the leader (and organization) needs them to do.

Those things that happen quickly in the business environment are **threats** and **opportunities**. Threats are those things in the environment that offer the promise of making our organization worse off if not dealt with; opportunities are those things in the environment that offer the promise of making our organization better off if we take advantage of them.

The rise of technology – and specifically, the internet – has done a lot to change the need for organizational agility. Technology has changed the **reach** of business by shrinking the world. Business no longer need be just local or regional – or even national – because an organization can use the internet to reach prospective suppliers and customers anywhere – and so can an organization’s competitors! And technology has also changed the **speed** of business because in the digital age anyone can reach anyone else almost instantly.

Leaders face two tasks in dealing with threats and opportunities. Leaders must **make decisions** that help mitigate threats, or take advantage of opportunities. And then leaders must **implement those decisions**. The two primary levers that leaders have available to them to make and implement decisions are the head and the heart. **The “head” is the management of information; the “heart” is the management of motivation.**

The problem is that leaders often overestimate their ability to make high quality decisions without input from others, underestimate the critical importance of idea ownership to commitment and enthusiasm by the targets of implementation, and fail to see the connection between requesting input and fostering enthusiasm and commitment for implementation. **The quality of a decision is always limited by your ability to implement that decision.** So that means decisions should always be made with one eye on implementation – the process of making a decision should be a process that helps build a solid foundation for implementing that decision.

**Inclusiveness** is a key leadership skill that helps manage both information (head) and motivation (heart). Inclusiveness is about **getting others involved** – including others who are party to a decision in the decision-making process.

Inclusiveness helps manage information because everyone brings to the table their own unique constellation of experience, expertise, and perspective. Even the smartest person can't know everything, so including others in making decisions usually means making **more informed decisions**. Including others in the decision-making process can mean learning information we didn't know, and seeing things we might have missed.

Including others in making a decision also means others will understand the decision better, and probably better understand their role in implementing the decision. So inclusiveness not only provides the opportunity for more informed decisions – it also provides the opportunity for **more informed implementation** of those decisions.

Inclusiveness helps manage motivation because people are more likely to “own” decisions – to **be committed to and enthusiastic about implementing decisions** – that they helped make. And people are more likely to agree with decisions they help make because helping make the decision provides an opportunity to air and integrate their concerns. Allowing others to participate in decision-making also helps foster a sense of partnership and control, which can be important to morale and support not only for the decision in particular but also for the organization in general. Finally, better decisions are easier to implement than poor decisions, and more informed decisions – more informed from inclusiveness – are likely to be better decisions.

Inclusiveness is a key leadership skill because it means more informed decisions, more informed implementation, and decisions – and an organization – that the targets of implementation own, and therefore are more committed to and enthusiastic about supporting.

A key concern is making inclusiveness *manageable*. Getting everyone involved in decision-making can appear prohibitively time-consuming. **Representative inclusiveness** means including some individuals – but not everyone – party to a decision in the decision-making process. If done thoughtfully, representative inclusiveness can provide most of the benefits of getting everyone involved in helping make the decision, without most of the costs. Even those not involved in helping make a decision may still feel a sense of ownership of the decision if they feel their voice has been adequately represented in the decision-making process by someone like them.

Leadership can be particularly challenging when members of an organization are connected to the organization or each other **virtually** – that is, by technology rather than face-to-face. Virtual connectivity can challenge the quality of information exchange among organization members (a head issue), and can also leave members of the organization feeling less connected to the organization (a heart issue). Leading a virtual workforce requires some additional thought about to help make sure geographically-distributed others do not feel disconnected from the organization and its decisions.