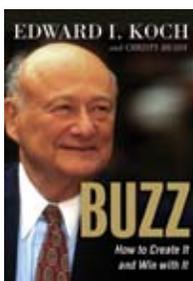


WORDS OF WISDOM FOR EXECUTIVES: Being Open to Change

BY EDWARD I. KOCH

With his audacious, refreshing, in-your-face style, and unflinching honesty, Ed Koch remains one of the most beloved politicians this country has ever seen. For 12 years, he ran New York City with candor, compassion, and integrity, rescuing it from financial disaster and developing a revolutionary program that created 250,000 units of affordable housing.



In *Buzz*, his new book about self-marketing, Koch reveals qualities that are critical to executives. On a key issue of today, change, he writes:

Creating buzz starts with being true to yourself and your core beliefs, but that doesn't mean you should never change or forego new ways of doing things. Resistance to all change eventually will result in negative buzz, as people come to see you as stubborn and inflexible.

Situations change, perspectives change, and smart people know when they, too, must change. You should never announce a change just to take advantage of shifting conditions or opinion, but when you recognize the real need for change, embrace it and get out in front of it. Being open to change is a hallmark of leadership. It marks you as someone to listen to, someone to follow, and it gives you the most positive kind of buzz.

For more information about *Buzz*, published by AMACOM, visit www.amanet.org/books

Do Your Meetings Sabotage Your Profits?

BY DON SCHMINCKE

It's yet another weekly management meeting. Everyone shows up, sits down, and takes his or her turn in reporting progress on assigned projects. At first glance, this looks like a great way to ensure accountability for performance, but could it be sabotaging your company's future success?

It's not that tracking performance is wrong, but there are other ways to issue status reports on projects more efficiently, such as email, intranets and old-fashioned paper. Why not use the invaluable time in meetings for what we wish we had more time for—solving problems?

Meetings that focus on problem-solving rather than reporting on good performance offer companies key benefits such as:

More efficient use of time. Companies that use face-to-face time for problem-solving exploit the power of human dialogue versus wasting it on monologues. They create solutions and address decisions on the issues that matter.

Higher motivation. Solving problems generates more positive energy than status reporting does. Celebration and acknowledgement of good performance should be done, but in more meaningful ways than self-proclamation in short slots of time on meeting agendas.

Profits. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out how Toyota got to the top. Continuously seeking improvements by finding and resolving problems enhances

competitive advantage in any market.

Make it Happen in Your Company

Shifting your company's culture to embrace problem-solving meetings can be tough. It takes more than an e-mail announcement or a speech. Some ideas include:

1. Assess the management meetings that you are now attending Determine if they really are necessary. If not, distribute the data or information that would be available from those meetings using other methods.

2. If regular meetings are important, shift the agendas from focusing on performance accolades to sharing and solving problems.

3. Challenge those who "don't have problems." Are they holding their cards too close to the vest?

4. Notice the level of defensiveness in the culture. Can they disclose issues easily? Can they take feedback without becoming upset?

5. Lead by example. Surface your problems first! This may be difficult at first, but it will show that you are serious. And it allows you to start challenging the group by asking questions like: "Even though we are performing well, what's not working or can be improved in your department?"

Don Schmincke is a business consultant and author of the CEO bestseller *The Code of the Executive*. For more information, visit: www.sagaleadership.com



Leverage Intellectual Capital to Create Market Distinction

BY MAUREEN BRODERICK

Rather than rely exclusively on sales brochures, product and service companies have found white papers, opinion pieces, and other documents that address important market issues to be effective marketing and business development tools.

The intent is to come across to the recipients of these documents as not only a leader, but a thought leader in the field, demonstrating your firm's depth of knowledge and ability to craft solutions to complex problems facing potential clients.

As a standalone program or integrated with other marketing efforts, developing and distributing thought leadership can benefit your firm in many ways:

Build awareness Thought leadership programs build visibility and connect your brand to cutting-edge thinking. Positioning your firm as the thought leader in a specific field or area is a powerful way to differentiate your services from competitors.

Focus your service offerings Today, it's critical to understand what your market needs and what they are willing to buy. Developing content for a thought leadership program is an excellent reason to talk to your clients and prospects to determine trends and test service needs and buying decisions.

Facilitate business development



Leverage the finished content into meetings with your clients and prospects to share your information, or use it as the basis for small, focused briefings.

You may already have a thought leadership program, but you may not be using it to its full advantage. By following these steps, you can be sure you are leveraging your people, your intellectual capital, and your marketing—all in one fell swoop.

Step 1—Assess. Review the content you have. If you have recent presentations, service offering documents or other content, determine whether it is about issues that are currently relevant to your clients and prospects. If so, you can skip to step three. If not, consider step two first.

Step 2—Create. If you need new content, don't despair; this is a great oppor-

tunity to go out and touch the market. Create surveys, conduct interviews, poll industry leaders for their thoughts, ask them about their biggest pain points. From this information, you can create opinion pieces, advice articles, speeches, or Web content.

Step 3—Plan. To be an effective marketing and business development tool, thought leadership must be structured as an ongoing program. A single thought leadership piece may pique the interest of some, but awareness, brand building, and business development benefits will result from consistency and persistence. It is important to develop a program plan with positioning goals, a well defined-target audience, topics and messaging, and targeted delivery methods.

Don't miss this opportunity to leverage one of your firm's greatest assets—its intellectual capital. Thought leadership programs demonstrate your expertise on issues that impact your clients' success. They position you as a leader, differentiate you from the competition, and are a significant business development tool.

Maureen Broderick is president and CEO of Broderick & Company, which works exclusively with professional services firms to develop and implement market strategies that build brand awareness and generate business. For more information visit, www.broderickco.com

A Compelling Approach to Leadership

Based on interviews with dozens of leadership pioneers, innovation consultants Dr. Susan Smith Kuczmarksi and Thomas D. Kuczmarksi identified six qualities essential to "peopleship," a leadership style critical to transforming a disengaged workplace into a compassionately productive work culture.

In their book *Apples Are Square*, the Kuczmarksi's share the six leadership qualities they identified that will cause a major shift from the ever-prevalent "control and compete" leadership style.

The six values are:

Humility. The authors write, "Having humility means viewing oneself as insignificant."

This allows people to let their egos go and care more about others' viewpoints than about being right.

Compassion. Understanding how others feel is what compassion is about. And a leader who is compassionate is gracious, generous, kind, supportive, and nonjudgmental.

Transparency. Transparency means opening one's self up, being not only physically but mentally accessible to others. "A transparent person is one who enables his thoughts and deeds to show through," they write.

Inclusiveness. As a leader, you need to accept and recognize people's opinions

and perspectives, and establish an environment in which people know they will be listened to, trusted, and valued.

Collaboration. This is about win-win work relationships. "Without them, collaboration is just a word," write the Kuczmarksi's. Collaboration is about working together to win a common goal.

Values-based Decisiveness. Values should serve as a compass in decision-making, according to the authors. "When values guide the decision-making process, deciding on a course of action is trouble-free and effortless."

Apples Are Square: Thinking Differently About Leadership is published by Kaplan Publishing.

Do You Have Q-Banks?

BY ARTHUR B. VANGUNDY

At the outset of strategic planning, executives and managers are often in different perceptual locations—that is, organizational stakeholders may differ in their perceptions



regarding their organization's tactical and strategic positioning with respect to a number of variables. A Q-bank (Question Bank) is a broad process that can help an organization take a hard look at itself and increase understanding about what it does and does not do as well as what it should do. The outcome will be a sense of potential strategic directions to pursue and the beginning of a sense of priorities.

One way to do this is to conduct a Question Bank, which is simply a list of questions and responses developed to help draw out information, knowledge, and perceptions of value held by key organizational stakeholders. Although a lot of this information already may exist in various documents and in the form of tacit knowledge held by executives and managers, not all stakeholders may hold the same per-

ceptions; be aligned with this information; or, even more important, be aware of some information with strategic consequences.

In general, Q-banks are especially

useful when an organization:

- Wants to affirm all or parts of its current strategic plan.
- Lacks consensus about strategy among key stakeholders.
- Wants to chart a new strategic course for the organization.
- Is losing market share and competitive advantage.

Q-banks are not, however, a substitute for conventional strategic planning.

Many organizations already have collected the information needed, but they still could benefit by involving key stakeholders or by just updating old information.

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Not Even the Beginning of the End

BY LYNN UPSHAW

In 2002, as corporate scandals were beginning to rock a number of business centers around the globe, the Gallup International Association polled 36,000 people in 47 countries, statistically representing 2.1 billion souls. They were told by respondents that business executives from multinational companies are among the least trusted leaders when it comes to acting for the benefit of society.

Three years later, Harris Interactive found that the overall reputation of American corporations had continued to slide. In 2005, 71 percent of respondents rated the reputations of U.S. businesses as either “not good” or “terrible,” up from 68 percent the year before.

Some wishful thinkers have predicted that the current hand-wrenching about

integrity in business will soon become just another passé topic of conversation. But that is a dangerously short-sighted point of view. There have been too many scandals, too many angry shareholders, and far too many ethically challenged executives for us to expect the public to trust easily again any time soon.

For today's leaders, this is about much more than fixing the mistakes of foolish businesspeople—it is about regaining investor and customer faith, which happens to be the only absolutely indispensable ingredient of every successful corporation.

Excerpted, with permission of the publisher, from *Truth: The New Rules for Marketing in a Skeptical World* by Lynn Upshaw. Copyright 2007, Lynn Upshaw. Published by AMACOM. For more information, visit: www.amanet.org/books

Organize Your Desk and Your Brain

BY MICHELLE LABROSSE

Creating optimal work-flow isn't only about your work space, it's also about how to manage the information in your head. The more disorganized and chaotic a workspace is, the more difficult it is for you to stay focused on the task at hand. If you haven't conquered this situation, here are the Five S's to help you.

Five S's of Work Space Flow

Sort—Catalogue your clutter and then create a place for it.

Straighten—Now that you know what you have, it's time to straighten up and put everything in its place.

Scrub—Be sure there is no dust on any long-standing stacks of paper or books.

Standardize—Use standards and processes that are documented and displayed so people know how to keep things organized in their workspaces.

Sustain—Keep the flow in motion. If the Five S's become second nature, you stay ahead of the game.

Inside Your Head

Here now are five techniques to help you organize what's inside your head and help you retrieve information quickly.

Shape, Size and Color Coding. Coding information with shapes, sizes, and colors helps your brain to remember it.

Key Word Identification. When you write or chart anything, pay attention to the words you use. Choose words that will give your brain something to latch onto.

Mind-mapping. For remembering a presentation or key points, a mind map is an invaluable tool.

Mnemonic Triggers. Link a simple word, code, or symbol to something you want to remember.

Visualize a Positive Outcome. Once you have the info that you need organized in your head, then visualize whatever the positive outcome of the info will be.

Michelle LaBrosse is founder and chief cheetah of Cheetah Learning, Inc., and is an international expert on accelerated learning and project management. For more information: <http://www.cheetahlearning.com>



Here's what you'll find on the
AMA Members-only Website www.amamember.org

MANAGEMENT

Have More Fun at Work. Cindy Lauper famously sang that "Girls Just Want to Have Fun," but it turns out that employees need fun, too. A business professor explains how a more pleasurable work environment can boost both worker morale and the bottom line.

LEADERSHIP

Ed Koch on Creating a Vision. Legendary former New York City mayor Ed Koch rose up from relative obscurity to reign over the Big Apple for 12 years. Now he shares his strategies for creating a successful personal vision, in an excerpt from his book *Buzz*.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

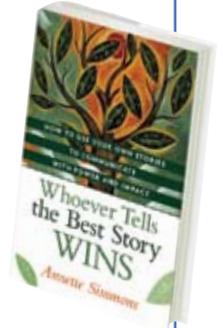
Welcome Some Disruption in Your Life. While it's natural to fear change, Sander A. Flaum advises: "If you do want to make a difference in the world, you'd better overcome your fear. In fact, you better be willing to shake things up."

SALES & MARKETING

Never Hire a Bad Salesperson Again. What makes a super salesperson? According to a new book, "Winning salespeople always share one critical psychological trait: *drive*." Drive can't be taught, but you can learn how to recognize it in potential sales hires.

Book of the Month:

Whoever Tells the Best Story Wins, by Annette Simmons (AMACOM, 2007). Did you hear the one about...? Everyone loves a good story. It's a can't-miss way to create a true connection with your audience and an invaluable skill for anyone who wants to persuade, motivate, or inspire others.



For more information about this book, visit www.amanet.org/books

AMA Conferences/Special Events Calendar

SEPT. 5, FREE WEBCAST • Get in the Game: Using Business Simulations to Drive Excellence. Organizations are using more online courses, simulations, and complex game-based learning methodologies to engage and enhance learners' classroom experiences. Join us for a conversation with Bjorn Bilhart, principal and CEO of Enspire Learning, one of the pioneers in interactive simulation development.

We'll discuss the use of games and simulations against the backdrop of today's training challenges, including time pressures, the need for global deployments, and computer-savvy learners.

SEPT. 7, FREE WEBCAST • Avoiding the Seven Deadly Sins of Negotiating. Whether you're asking your boss for a raise,

or trying to secure a multimillion dollar overseas contract with multiple parties and issues, don't let yourself fall into "negotiating hell." Join master negotiators, authors and trainers Frank Acuff and Larry Ray as they discuss the seven negotiating mistakes that are virtually guaranteed to doom your cause to failure.

SEPT. 12, FREE WEBCAST • Make the Right Call: Tools to Guide Critical Financial Decisions. This fast-paced Webcast examines simple yet effective financial decision-making tools and techniques. Armed with this know-how, you'll understand how to determine which projects and products will deliver the greatest profits and growth.

SEPT. 19, FREE WEBCAST • Business Is Human: Relationships Power Your Growth. The truth is that most people sim-

ply aren't very good at building mutually beneficial relationships. Shaking hands and collecting business cards aren't the answers. In this Webcast, Keith Ferrazzi will share powerful tips and tactics for making and keeping connections with people who will shape your career and personal life.

SEPT. 26, FREE WEBCAST • Leadership with a Twist. Employee surveys increasingly confront executives with major issues around trust, credibility, and caring. How can organizations develop leaders who are able to address these challenges? In this Webcast, Kenny Moore, co-author of *The CEO and the Monk*, will describe several steps that leaders can take to develop themselves and, in so doing, help create healthier and more productive workplaces.

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