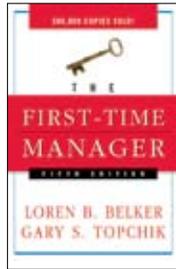


## React to the Problem, Not the Stress

To succeed as a leader, you must convert feelings of distress and fear of a stressful situation into the challenge of a stressful situation. If you are going to be a leader who periodically faces stressful situations, here are seven suggestions for you:

1. Don't be panicked into impulsive action. It may make matters worse.
2. Take several deep breaths and try to relax. Speak slowly even if you don't feel like it. This instills calm in those around you. It says, "He's not losing his head, and therefore I shouldn't."
3. Reduce the situations to two or three key points that could be handled to remove the urgency of the moment, so that the rest of it can be processed in a non-urgent way.
4. Assign three or four major elements to members of the staff to process in parts and then be combined into the whole.
5. Ask for suggestions and ideas from the experienced members of your staff.
6. Think about the problem and not your reaction to it.
7. View yourself as an actor playing the role of the wise, calm, and decisive leader. Play that role to the hilt, and after a while it will cease to be role-playing and will be you. This constitutes changing your reaction to the stressful situation.

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## Mayo Clinic: A Model for Service Success

Mayo Clinic's service, culture, and management systems have been described for the first time in book-length detail in the recently released *Management*

*Lessons from Mayo Clinic: Inside One of the World's Most Admired Service Organizations* (McGraw-Hill, 2008). Authors Leonard L. Berry and Kent D. Seltman explain how the Clinic has sustained its performance at the premier level for over 100 years and how this complex service organization has sustained a culture producing complex services that exceed customer expectations and earning deep loyalty from both customers and employees.

This book speaks to managers in any service business. It is not primarily targeting managers in healthcare although it is clearly valuable for those who are concerned about healthcare service improvement. The Berry-Seltman book offers lessons in how to build and sustain service excellence in any business. It offers insights into the management fundamentals practiced at Mayo Clinic:

1. The "what" value, Chapter 2, "Preserving a Patient-First Legacy"
2. The "how" value, Chapter 3, "Practicing Team Medicine"
3. A differentiating strategy, Chapter 4, "Practicing Destination Medicine"
4. Hiring to sustain the culture, Chapter 6, "Hiring for Values—and Talent"



In a recent interview, Berry and Seltman explained how Mayo Clinic's brand was created: very satisfied patients voluntarily engage in word-of-mouth marketing as they tell their story to family and friends. "This is the

result of care," said Berry, "where the institution's primary value—the needs of the patient come first—becomes a part of an employee's DNA. It guides not only the way the day-to-day work is performed, but it also gives employees the power and moral authority to act in unique situations." For instance, explicit permission is not needed when an employee sees a patient need that requires action. Berry notes, "If an employee's choices are either getting back to work on time or taking 10 minutes to get a wheelchair for a patient who seems unsteady, the patient will most likely get the chair."

Mayo Clinic's salaried physicians work collaboratively on teams formed to meet the needs of each unique patient. Physicians serve on numerous teams simultaneously. When the episode of care is completed, the teams dissolve so physicians have capacity for new patients. Seltman explained that administrative staff also work primarily in teams that draw on diverse talent needed without respect to boundaries found in many organizations.

*continued on next page*

# Managing the White Spaces

As companies downsize, solid or dotted lines on organization charts lead nowhere. Layoffs, reorganizations, or restructuring leave white spaces within departments or between groups. Within these white spaces may be problems or opportunities that previously were someone's responsibility but now don't officially belong to anyone. Or these orphan tasks might stem from recent changes in the technology available to the firm, the marketplace in which it sells its products or services, or the distribution channels to which it sells them—they may not be problems but rather opportunities that the company is not availing itself of because no one fully knows their worth.

The situation is understandable. It's tough enough for executives to complete their assigned work in today's distressed organizations, let alone address situations for which they have no responsibility. Everyone is so busy that it's easy to think of orphan responsibility as someone else's job. Consequently, tasks that exist in the white space frequently go unattended.

Some orphans are like gnats, annoying but deserving of nothing more than a swat of the hand. If it was clear whom these orphans belongs to, they might find themselves at the bottom of that individual leader's priorities list. But

some orphans hold the potential for significantly increasing corporate revenue or decreasing expenses.

If you are to be a successful executive in today's tough times, you need to:

- Recognize orphans for what they are.
- Know how to make judgments about which orphans or problems in white space to devote time to.



■ Draw attention to the orphan or problem without invading another person's turf.

■ Encourage staff to step into the white space to benefit the department or organization as a whole and do so yourself.

■ Build synergy by bringing together colleagues to work on the issue. Open communications and begin spanning the white space between job titles or departments.

## Recognize Orphans

We all have clear-cut responsibilities. But often there is work that needs to be done that does not appear on our list of job goals. These are unattended areas, frequently frustrating when they affect our own performance. There is the desire to blame some colleague for not fully doing his or her job. We walk away annoyed, feeling that we aren't able to do our own work because of someone else's imperfect job performance.

Successful leaders aren't quick to prejudge or walk away. Rather than spend their time venting about a peer's failure to hold up his or her end of the work, they investigate to determine who would be responsible for that area of the operation. They then bring the problem to the attention of their colleague and together they address the situation that is negatively influencing their own efforts.

If accountability isn't clear, the successful leader goes to his or her own director to learn who is responsible for the area of the operation. Once jurisdiction of the task is clarified, the individual visits with the person. This isn't a time for finger-pointing or accusations that someone is not holding up his end of the work. That only causes defensive behavior and counter-accusations. Forget that the individual's neglect of an operational

## Mayo Clinic: A Model for Service Success continued from preceding page

The authors also explained how Mayo Clinic has developed scheduling systems that enable the staff to provide a huge amount of medical care in a short period of time. The scheduling systems are the backbone of "destination medicine" because the compressed appointment schedules move patients through a work-up and even the beginning of treatments in a three-to-five-day time period about 85% of the time, according to Seltman.

Berry pointed to Mayo's employee recruitment process that looks first for a match with Mayo's values and then for the talent and skills required for the

job. "Both are necessary," he said. "Mayo hires people with the kind of value systems the organization needs."

He continued, "Mayo recruits administrators who know that they can never be the CEO, because the CEO is always a physician. Managers who choose to work at Mayo Clinic are people who will be fulfilled by working on a brilliant team. The team rather than an individual is recognized as the source of success."

The values established by the founders of Mayo Clinic over 100 years ago still serve as the foundation for the Clinic's current success. Because Mayo

has continued to perform well, a "shake-up" has not been needed. Each of the 11 CEOs spanning more than a century have been promoted from within. Mayo Clinic deliberately and continually nurtures the next generation of leaders who believe in and live the values of the organization.

Readers and reviewers highly recommend the book because of its insights on driving a customer-focused culture within the organization. Many suggest that it is a must-read for all executives.

*Management Lessons from Mayo Clinic: Inside One of the World's Most Admired Service Organizations* can be purchased wherever books are sold.

area is causing problems to continue and undertake collaborative and cooperative work.

### Know Which Orphans to Adopt

It's easy to be enticed into the white space to take on a task that no one else is addressing, particularly if we think tending to the orphan could bring us some prestige or add to the bottom line. But successful managers and executives hold back and first do menial calculations, if not paper ones, on the value of working either on their own or with others on the orphan task. The orphan must make their own work easier or bring in additional revenue. Since attempting to solve an orphan problem or mine an orphan opportunity could be seen as infringing on another executive's territory, the leader needs to be sure that the orphan is worth the time that might have to be spent on organizational diplomacy. Orphans may take minimal effort but demand tremendous patience in dealing with individuals who suddenly see their turf being invaded if the orphan will gain them high visibility or a better operating report.

It helps in analyzing orphans if an

executive has an understanding of other divisions' missions and objectives. Knowledge of disciplines other than his or her own—even a superficial knowledge—also helps the executive to gauge the orphan's benefit to the organization and who else's expertise may be called for to make the potential of the orphan a reality.

*Within these white spaces  
may be problems or  
opportunities that previously  
were someone's responsibility  
but now don't officially  
belong to anyone.*

### Encourage Employee Initiative

Since employees may also identify orphans within either the department, division, or company in the course of their work, the executive needs to empower employees to get out of their boxes and work on these orphans either to make their own work easier or add to the bottom line of the operating statement. State members

should advise their supervisor of any orphans they encounter, discuss their action plan—since there may be political minefields that their manager can advise them about—then be allowed to pursue the orphan, particularly if it represents a good opportunity for the organization.

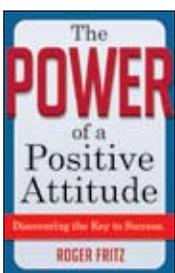
### Building Synergy

When orphan tasks are encountered, the most effective way to handle them without stirring up political troubles is to span organizational boundaries, bringing in individuals from groups that might be responsible for some orphan to work together on the project.

Staff members with strong networking skills as well as solid technical or other professional skills might be best suited to serve as department liaison on orphan projects. They can represent the department in group meetings or otherwise span the white space between departments.

*One additional bit of advice:* Too often, executives seek out the same individuals to lead such project efforts. Now is the time to give talented newcomers the opportunity to demonstrate their strong team skills.

## Developing Positive Leaders BY ROGER FRITZ



A positive attitude ignites the drive to excel as a leader and help those around you excel as well. You can stimulate this drive to grow in the following ways:

- Implement ideas, whether your own or ideas from others, by harnessing them in practical ways.
- Accept responsibility.
- Make critical decisions with minimal personal agony.
- Emphasize facts over opinions. You should always first gather the facts and then implement them when you are solving a problem or seizing an opportunity.
- Be a master of communication. Others will feel free to talk with you because they know that when they have



- something to say to you, you will be receptive.
- Confirm that others' ideas and jobs are important.
- Treat people as they would want to be treated.
- Become a good teacher and trainer.
- Criticize constructively.
- Explain carefully when you are introducing something new, anticipating problems, objections or fears. Look at change from other peoples' points of view.

- Don't be afraid to admit when you don't have all the answers.
- Be curious. Successful leaders are aware and wide awake when it comes to current events and developments in their field and within the firm.

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Here's what you'll find on the  
**AMA Members-only Website** [www.amamember.org](http://www.amamember.org)

**MANAGEMENT**

**Coaching: What Really Works.** In the old days, coaching was often directed at problem employees. But today's coachee is more likely viewed as being on the fast track, according to a new AMA/Institute for Corporate Productivity global study.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Managing Brand YOU.** Get out of your rut! Learn how to adapt the same million-dollar branding strategies used by Starbucks, Coca-Cola, and Oprah to create a successful "Brand YOU."

**LEADERSHIP**

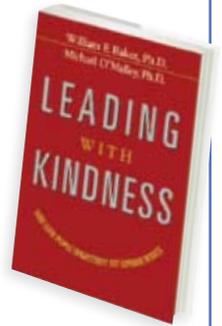
**Job One for Leaders: Doing the Right Thing.** A defining mark of leadership is to strive to do the right thing, not the "correct" thing or the easiest thing, writes Sander Flaum. That's a habit each of us can practice every day.

**HR/TRAINING**

**Sparking a Dialogue on Diversity.** Is "unintentional intolerance" alive and well in your organization? It may be, if you can count the number of women and people of color in key leadership roles on just one hand. An expert explains how to recognize the signs.

**Book of the Month**

**Leading with Kindness: How Good People Consistently Get Superior Results,** by William F. Baker and Michael O'Malley, Ph.D. Here's a refreshing business insight: nice guys often finish first. The authors show leaders how they can use sincerity, honesty, and respect to grow their business.



**AMA Conferences/Special Events Calendar**

**SEPTEMBER 15, WASHINGTON, DC AREA AT ARLINGTON, VA • Managing Government Employees: How to Motivate Them, Deal with Difficult Issues and Produce Tangible Results.** Managing government employees presents unique challenges. Government managers may feel that strict and complex regulations mean they cannot accomplish their job or delegate to their staff properly so they can work more efficiently. Come join us for a day-long session with AMACOM's author Stewart Liff as he discusses how even the most competent managers in government agencies can face overwhelming obstacles.

**SEPTEMBER 16, WASHINGTON, DC AREA AT ARLINGTON, VA • Visual Management Techniques to Improve Your Performance.** Do you find yourself wondering what your company's or department's business objec-

tives or goals are or where you can locate them? The fact is, visual elements in a workplace have a tremendous impact on execution, morale, and productivity. Come join us for a half-day session with AMACOM's author Stewart Liff as he provides an in-depth overview of how to successfully implement an organizational transformation using the revolutionary concept known as Visual Management.

**SEPTEMBER 17, WEBCAST • How to Become an Expert on Anything in 2 Hours.** Your ability to connect with others immediately through knowledge of a particular subject area is vital to gaining trust, solidifying relationships, and getting ideas across. In this webcast a highly decorated former military interrogator will share his process for quickly taking in small amounts of information in any

subject and using this knowledge to generate instant rapport with others.

**SEPTEMBER 23-24, NEW YORK, NY • World Business Forum.** HSM's World Business Forum is the leading international symposium for the business community, hosting the largest gathering of senior executives and featuring the most important leaders in the world. Over two days, you'll hear the unique perspectives of world leaders and management icons such as Tony Blair, Colin Powell, Jack Welch, Narayana Murthy, Jim Collins, Marcus Buckingham, John Chambers, Rudy Giuliani, Muhammad Yunus, Bill George, and David Rubenstein. This is a great opportunity to learn from the business greats who are driving the global economy and shaping the industry of tomorrow. Special discounts are available to AMA members.

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