

## **MAKING IT HAPPEN: Leadership Keys For People Who Must Produce Results**

### **Introduction**

In the mid 1990's I remember reading an article in the *Wall Street Journal* with the title: "Let's Get Rid of Management." The article claims people don't want to be managed---they want to be led. My own experience verifies the truth of this idea. I believe the carrot always wins over the stick. Just ask your horse if you happen to own one. You can *lead* your horse to water, but you can't *manage* him to drink. If you want to manage somebody, manage yourself. Do that well and you'll be ready to stop managing and start leading.

Over the past 15 years I have spent most of my time traveling and speaking to business people all across America. When I work with people in organizations to help them become more successful, the subject of practical leadership rears its head time and time again. Top executives and policy makers can find whatever they need to help them plan, strategize and lead their business into the future. But what about the people who have to carry out those lofty plans and put them into practice? What personal qualities do they need to develop? What skills should they possess? What leadership challenges face the manager on the firing line of daily performance? *Making It Happen* is written for those who must turn the lofty objectives of others into practical reality and produce results!

The need for leadership is not confined to CEO's and vice-presidents. This book recognizes the special niche held by operational managers who must lead, manage and inspire daily performance and accomplishment in others. I think it is unfortunate that the business people who get public recognition are the CEO's and entrepreneurs who develop big ideas and turn them into big successes. The public misses the fact that these industry leaders would fall flat on their inspired backs without the help of countless people who work very hard to produce the practical results necessary to sustain the big dreams. The people who must produce results are the ones who must motivate others to perform consistently. Sometimes this means just getting others to show up for work and be accountable! Sometimes it means working through complicated problems and making good choices. Sometimes it means just setting a good example.

I have developed three leadership keys I believe you need to "make it happen." These keys are practical principles and techniques that are simple to grasp and easy to use:

#### **Leadership Key #1: The Right Stuff**

You can't expect results from others if you are unwilling to produce results yourself. The workplace environment is a fertile field for criticism and negative reaction. Double standards and an attitude of "don't do what I do---do what I say!" will doom you to failure. If you have the responsibility for inspiring others to perform well, you must set a good example for them. This involves developing good management and leadership skills and maintaining them. Good leaders have high expectations. Good leaders help

others become more successful. Good leaders have attitudes that inspire other people to perform. These are the building blocks of practical leadership and are critical to your success and the success of those who look to you for guidance and instruction.

### **Leadership Key #2: Lead, Follow or Get Out of the Way!**

If you don't know where you are going, how are you going to get there? To hit a target, you must be able to see it. Leaders must cast a vision for others to help them focus on goals and objectives and provide the tools people need to be successful. The roles of leaders and managers today demand mentoring and coaching skills. The days of just being able to tell others what to do are over. Leaders have to help their people be successful.

What do I mean by helping others to be successful? I mean that modern managers have to take on the burden of developing the talents of others. Zig Ziglar says the only thing worse than training your people and losing them is to not train them and keep them! I can't think of a more appropriate adage as we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Many people are coming to the workplace unprepared to be successful. Our educational systems have failed these people and business has to pick up the slack. That means management has to shoulder the task of teaching, encouraging, and developing people in ways not required in years past.

### **Leadership Key #3: Just Do It!**

Good leaders make decisions so their people will know what they can/must do. Nothing is more frustrating or counterproductive than waiting long periods of time for a decision. I believe countless opportunities are lost each year by companies that have managers who wallow in slow decision-making processes. Competition is so fierce and the market changes so quickly that competitive advantage can be won or lost by the timeliness of a company's decision-making processes. If it's worth doing, then DO IT RIGHT AND DO IT NOW! Good leaders and managers do not procrastinate or avoid tough issues. Good leaders understand the difference between responsibility and accountability and are not afraid to take reasonable risks.

I've written this book to help you set an inspiring example for your people; to better develop the talent and skills of others, and to help you become more effective by taking swift and decisive action. *Making It Happen* is not a philosophy book---it is a book of skills and practical insights into the real world of productivity. If you have the responsibility of interpreting your company's vision and strategic plan and turning it into daily results, *Making It Happen* is the book you need NOW.