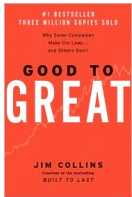


## THE LEADERSHIP TOOLBOX

Welcome to the Leadership Toolbox – a reference focused on enhancing professional success. This is an on-going Bulletin designed to provide you with practical and useful tools, techniques and tips that you can immediately implement to increase your effectiveness. As many of you may have heard about the book *Good to Great* and are trying to implement tools and techniques discussed in the book but are struggling as to how, Jim wanted to take this opportunity to share his ideas as to how to implement the main ideas addressed in this book.

### COMPETENCIES: Skills Within *Good To Great*

The success of Jim Collin's book, "Good to Great" has been nothing short of a miracle in terms of marketing and promotion. We even devote a day in our 10 day leadership curriculum to "Good To Great" ideas and principles. They include: be a humble leader, get the right people on the bus, face the facts, focus on what you do best, be disciplined, use technology as an accelerator and keep working the flywheel to make things easier. If these common sense ideas seem so obvious, why aren't companies doing a better job at them? In this special Bulletin, we will explore the ideas in *Good to Great* and see if we can make some sense and take away some kernels to chew on.



### BENEFITS OF DEMONSTRATING THESE COMPETENCIES EFFECTIVELY

As a company, the benefit of applying *Good to Great* principles is obvious ...viability in the marketplace. Companies that do great things last longer. They have happy customers and employees, make a profit and even help their local communities in which they operate. As an employee in an organization that is working on *Good to Great* principles you can expect to be more fulfilled, working on purpose and yes, even be happier.

### CONSEQUENCES OF NOT DEMONSTRATING THESE COMPETENCIES EFFECTIVELY

The world is full of organizations that don't apply the principles found in *Good to Great*. Take leadership for example. As I am working on this article, I was watching the CEO of a mining company in West Virginia talking about his company's safety record. Twenty-five miners just died in one of his mines and rescuers are looking for four miners hoping they can still be found alive. (They too perished unfortunately.) The CEO is going on about what a great safety record his mines have had for 18 of the last 20 years! Where is the concern for the miners and their families? Where is the promise to do better, to learn from this tragic accident and make the mines safer? What is the result of this leader's conduct? Distain, distrust and anger by the families of the miners as well as many others both directly and indirectly involved. Great leaders take responsibility for their organization's actions.

### IMPLEMENTATION:

**Tip 1.** When one is trying to enhance his/her skills or overall effectiveness, it's good to know your starting point. Take the following leadership survey to see what leadership level you are currently operating at. Be honest with yourself and check all that apply to your style of leading others.

#### Level One – The Individual Leader

- Does a good job at getting basic work done. \_\_\_\_\_
- Viewed as having the potential to do more. \_\_\_\_\_
- Skilled at current job. Proficient. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Level Two – The Team Leader

- Works well as a team member, contributes. \_\_\_\_\_
- Cooperates with others effectively. \_\_\_\_\_
- Good team leader – gets projects done. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Level Three – The Competent Manager

- Organizes people and resources well. \_\_\_\_\_
- Accomplishes pre-determined objectives. \_\_\_\_\_
- Seen as a competent manager. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Level Four – The Effective Leader

- Establishes and communicates a clear vision. \_\_\_\_\_
- Influences others to excel. \_\_\_\_\_
- Sets and expects high performance standards. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Level Five – The Humble Executive

- Practices servant leadership, is humble. \_\_\_\_\_
- Willful and persistent in achieving greatness. \_\_\_\_\_
- Puts organization ahead of personal gain. \_\_\_\_\_

**Scoring the Leadership Quiz:** Where are you as a leader? Add up the behaviors you checked to see what Leadership Level you are operating at. The highest Level that has all the statements checked is your current Leadership Level. Or, to really see what level you are demonstrating, pass this quiz out to your direct reports and have them evaluate you. Make it a 360° Leadership Evaluation to get a really good idea of what level you are operating at.

Let's review the main concepts of *Good To Great*

### Tip 2. FIRST WHO...THEN WHAT

Collins proclaims that, "People are not the most important asset. The right people are". His radical idea goes so far as to posit that the first thing you want to do is get the right people on the bus, in the right seats, even before you figure out what you are going to be selling! Getting the best people they could was a consistent theme across these companies. Just as important was eliminating people who were not good fits. The good news about this principle is that it has brought an increased interest and focus on the initial screening and hiring process. Organizations that have listened to *Good to Great* lessons are spending more time on finding people who *fit their culture* and not just looking at technical skill matches. So in implementing this Tip, evaluate the screening process. What are you doing to measure culture fit with candidates? It's usually much easier to train someone on how to successfully complete a technical skill but learning what we call professional skills, preferences and cultural fit need to be measured before asking a candidate to join your team. Spend time on assessments, questionnaires and focused interview questions that pertain to culture and preferences. You will be glad you did! Another interesting idea from this Tip involves getting your best people on your biggest opportunities, not your biggest problems. Don't burn up your best people on problems.

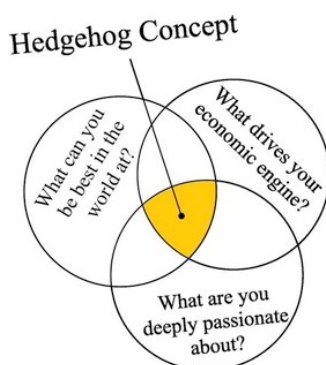
### Tip 3. CONFRONT THE BRUTAL FACTS

A number of people in a lot of organizations tend to fool themselves. It's okay to hope and dream, but the best companies do a much better job of facing the facts. Learning to conduct autopsies without blame is not easy, but this is the idea...create a culture where it is okay to make mistakes and it is okay to talk about problems. When someone makes an error, saying something like... 'Wow, so how can we learn from this so it doesn't happen in the future' using a sincere and positive voice tone is much more effective in promoting a discussion and creative solutions to solving problems rather than saying something like, "YOU IDIOT! YOU \*!@\*#!\* UP AGAIN! ONE MORE TIME AND YOU ARE OUT OF HERE...'

It takes courage to speak up and speak the truth, especially in a group setting when discussing issues and brainstorming positive solutions. You can demonstrate that everyone can celebrate mistakes as long as people learn from them. The best organizations allow the brutal facts to surface and be debated and great solutions get generated from that kind of pressure. In implementing this Tip, survey your employees on how you deal with feedback, mistakes, etc. They will usually be very open telling you what is effective and what is ineffective.

### Tip 4. THE HEDGEHOG CONCEPT

Collins claims it's better to be a *hedgehog* than a *fox*. The hedgehog focuses his efforts on one thing while the fox likes to multitask and do many things at one time. This idea of focus, sticking to one very strong skill rather than trying to be great at many things at one time is a challenging concept to really buy into for many.



In the book, Collins talks about the hedgehog's ability to focus on protecting his hide while the fox gets distracted doing too many things at one time and never gets the fox. For many of us, the hard part of this concept is that it is simply motivating to do a lot of different things. Variety is the spice of life and all that. The idea of focus is to see what is really important and to make it your priority and do it well. Stick to the essential and ignore the rest. As you think about your organization and what you are doing, ask yourself the following questions:

- Are we acting like a hedgehog or a fox?
- How am I carrying out my responsibilities?
- What am I/we really good at when I/we focus?
- What areas am I/we not performing at as well due to lack of focus?

During this interesting economic time, many say that we need to act like foxes to survive but I challenge that. If you do many things but nothing really, really well, will you, or your organization survive? Talk about these questions with your peers and you might be surprised at the benefit of just having a good dialogue about this principle. As a result, you might avoid taking the “Road to Abilene” ... going where no one wants to go and wasting a lot of valuable resources but paradoxically not confronting that fact.

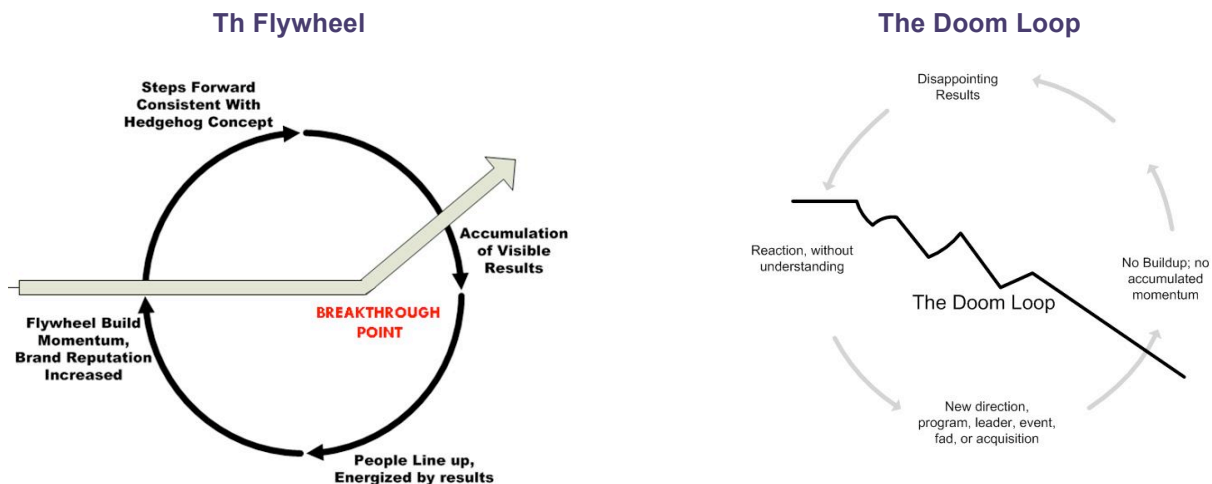
**Tip 5. THE CULTURE OF DISCIPLINE**

The learning from this principle is, “When a company employs disciplined people, hierarchy, bureaucracy and excessive controls are not necessary”. The trick is to develop effective habits like “rinsing your cottage cheese to reduce fats in your diet.” Quality and process management are the kinds of things that are done well in organizations that have a true culture of discipline where people display a disciplined approach, think about issues in an orderly manner and act dutifully. Developing and using consistent behaviors, processes and procedures builds trust in customers, the organization and the future. In implementing this Tip, evaluate what’s working, what you are doing well and what you need to stop doing or refine to enhance your and the organization’s overall success and effectiveness. “Remember, don’t confuse a culture of discipline with a tyrannical disciplinarian. They are to very different things.”

**Tip 6. TECHNOLOGY ACCELERATORS**

Technology by itself is never a primary root cause of being great or ordinary. Yet the most successful organizations do think differently about technology. Technology, for the great organizations, is a tool to help advance the business rather than to get confused as the business. Smart organizations determine how to use technology to leverage their core business to advance. In implementing this Tip, determine what technological areas you or your organization are currently struggling with or inhibiting you or the organization from succeeding and what technologies are helping you to advance.

**Tip 7. THE FLYWHEEL AND THE DOOM LOOP**



Good-to-great transformation never happened in one fell swoop but rather, as a relentless push to breakthrough and go beyond. Continuous improvement is a key component of great companies. They make things look easy, but in truth, the flywheel was turning over and over with the help of aligned employees pushing and working to make it look so easy. The flywheel builds momentum and it gets easier and easier. The other option is the “doom loop”, one where organizations are failing and sinking as they try to implement the flavor of the month and/or react to the latest crisis. How is your organization doing? Is your flywheel humming, or are you in a doom loop? Recognizing your place is half the battle. Then deciding where you want to be, getting on the right track, focusing resources effectively, following a consistent approach and using technically wisely will both help you not only survive this difficult economic situation but thrive into the future.

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### Quotes From Good To Great

- The vast majority of companies never become great, precisely because the vast majority become quite good-and that is their main problem.
- We expected that good-to-great leaders would begin by setting a new vision and strategy. We found instead that they first got the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and the right people in the right seats-and then they figured out where to drive it.
- I never stopped trying to become qualified for the job.
- You must maintain unwavering faith that you can and will prevail in the end, regardless of the difficulties, AND at the same time have the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be.
- The moment you feel the need to tightly manage someone, you've made a hiring mistake. The best people don't need to be managed. Guided, taught, led-yes. But not tightly managed.

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### TO RECEIVE PAST BULLETINS

If you are interested in reviewing past Toolbox Bulletins, visit:

<http://www.lynn-and-associates.com/Bulletins.html>



We have just scratched the surface describing several of the tools you can implement to help ensure you are getting the right people on the bus. If you are interested in talking with Lisa or Jim on how to implement any of the tips, tools or skills within this or other bulletins, please feel free to contact us anytime!

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We hope the information presented in this bulletin has been practical and helpful. Please let us know what you think and how it could be improved or if there is a topic you would like us to talk about in an upcoming newsletter. Make it a productive day!

The Lynn & Associates Team