

impact

November 2020 | Issue 5

A Leadership Magazine

REFLECTIONS ON KINDNESS

5 daily leadership habits

COMPANY CULTURE

A hard hitting success factor

GOLD MEDAL TEAMWORK

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A STORY

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leader has mood swings?

THE I-T OF IMPACT

Factors that matter



hello

Welcome to the 5th issue of **impact!**

This month we reflect on the practice of kindness as a leader, the shaping of a culture, winning strategies from the world of sports, and factors that create leadership impact.

And there's a story about an angry CEO.

We would love to hear your thoughts on the topics. Please connect via www.2020visionleader.com.

Thanks.

Enjoy the read!

Mandy Flint & Elisabet Vinberg Hearn

impact

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5 LEADERSHIP ACTS OF KINDNESS

How to bring out your natural leadership kindness

BY MANDY FLINT & ELISABET VINBERG HEARN

Being kind comes naturally.

It's in our human nature to want good things for others, to want others to be happy, to succeed and prosper.

Kindness is always important. As a leader right now in this global pandemic and unrest, it's an absolute necessity to let that natural kindness come to the forefront of how we show up as leaders. We are not always aware of what others are feeling good about or what they are struggling with. When practising kindness we can support others when they need us.

Here are 5 powerful leadership acts of kindness to practise every day - with employees, peers, people more senior than you and all other stakeholders:

Be 100% present.

When you're with someone - in real life or remotely - show them that they have your full attention and that you value them enough to not let yourself be distracted by buzzing phones or pinging emails.

Listen without prejudice.

Don't assume that you know what someone is thinking or what they will say. Be curious about their opinion. Listen first, then respond. Ask the right questions.

Be supportive.

Are you seeing someone struggling? Emotionally or work related. Reach out, support, offer your help, your guidance or simply your ear. Be prepared for any response and allow that to be ok.

Notice when someone does something good.

Praise them, thank them, recognise them publicly if relevant. Cheer someone on for their effort, dedication, creativity and results. We have the power to increase the number of positive messages around us and that creates a ripple affect. We need it in these challenging times.

Be honest.

Kind honesty is sharing your observations on what someone is doing very well (so they can do more of it) and also what they could do more effectively (where they're not having the impact they want or need). Feedforward is caring enough to be honest - always in a supportive way that makes the person feel you always have their best interest in mind.

“DO THINGS FOR PEOPLE NOT BECAUSE OF WHO THEY ARE OR WHAT THEY DO IN RETURN, BUT BECAUSE OF WHO YOU ARE.”

Harold S. Kushner



CULTURE NEEDS TO BE PART OF YOUR STRATEGY

**Culture is not something soft and fluffy,
it can be the difference between success and failure**

BY MANDY FLINT & ELISABET VINBERG HEARN

There is always a culture.

Wherever you work, there will be a culture (just like any society is guided by its cultural norms) and the culture can either be left to its own devices or it can be consciously created, adjusted, tweaked or changed. You get to decide.

What is culture then?

Culture is always present, it never stops. In a way culture is quite simple, it simply determines "how things get done around here". It is usually implicit rather than explicit and can be hard to pinpoint. It is not the "what", it is the "how" of business. It is how people react, behave and interact every minute of every day.

It is not something complicated or fluffy, it is something quite simple. It is the glue that holds an organisation together. It is however not determined by words on the wall in the office reception, it is more complex than that.

And this is the challenge with culture, the concept is simple but the implementation can be very complex and habits die hard, and to change behaviours takes time.

The questions to ask, for an organisation that wants to embrace the power of culture, are these:

- Do we have a healthy culture that drives the organisation forward, that makes it easy to operate effectively and efficiently? Especially in a dynamic and fast-paced environment?
- Do people enjoy working there?
- Does the culture deliver results while creating a true picture of an organisation with integrity?
- Does it create trust and build confidence?
- Does it attract customers, employees and investors?

These are relevant questions, because it should do all those things.

Culture, as we've discussed, is "how things get done" and for that reason it should be on every board's agenda as well as every executive team's and every leader's agenda. Leaders at all levels should be setting the tone for "how things get done". Culture definitely starts at the top, and at the same time it can't just be dictated from the top.

It needs to resonate with people at all levels, it needs to feel right for people, as something they would "stand for" themselves. It gets propagated by role modelling not just by words.

For these reasons the ingredients of culture start with hiring. When new employees get hired and introduced into the organisation, not only do they need to know WHAT to do (their tasks and responsibilities), they also need to know HOW to do it.

For example:

- How do decisions get made around here?
- How much can I decide? How much am I empowered?
- Who can I go to for decision on this?
- Can I give my views honestly and openly?
- Who can I go to for advice on this?
- Is it OK to talk to senior leaders openly?
- What is acceptable here?

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Organisations need to make it easy for potential new employees to understand what the organisation is all about, what it stands for and therefore, what kind of culture there is – so that they can decide whether this is a culture that fits them or not. And once they are hired, new employees need to understand at greater depth what the culture is all about, “how things get done here”. The organisation has a great opportunity here to get things right from the start by taking a proactive approach to this kind of onboarding of new hires.

As mentioned earlier, the behavioural rules of an organisation can be either implicit or explicit. Implicit rules are made up of behaviours we observe or undertones that we can pick up on, whereas explicit rules are what we are told to do, guided by for example the corporate values. And implicit rules will trump explicit ones every single time!

Let’s look at an example: Imagine a company that say it values and respects people’s work/life balance. Leaders then reward and praise people who work long hours, sacrificing their personal lives!

And as well intended as that may be, we can all agree that it is not a behaviour in support of work/life balance.

Let’s get practical.

An organisation that wants to work on their culture, should consider the “two trains” of culture; this is a metaphor of two parallel drivers that will support one another and help shape the culture if done correctly. Both trains are important and can bring you forward, but sometimes organisations only focus on one and not the other, and as a result don’t get as far.

The first “train” is all about behaviour (we’re back to “how things get done”), meaning that each employee, from the CEO to the frontline are role models and that their behaviours shape the work culture. This in turn means that everyone needs to be made aware of the fact that what they do matters and that how they do it matters even more. This leads to the creation of a culture where people are emotionally attached to the organisation at a much deeper level, as they realise how important they are.

It creates an awareness of personal impact and they will want to do more, as they know they can influence more aspects of their job and the business.

The second “train” is about systemic framework. This is made up by all the internal systems and procedures that organisations need to consistently deliver. It provides a mechanism for making the needed, healthy behaviours easier to do, such as job descriptions, work processes, handover procedures, performance appraisals and much more. Let us look at an example from the service function to illustrate this:

The customer complaints process must empower team members in a way that is consistent with the desired culture.

If the culture you want is that everyone is empowered to satisfy the customer, then don’t write a procedure that requires escalation on every minor issue, as this will achieve the opposite.

Some people shy away from the word culture, which may be a reason why it often gets ignored. They don’t like the word, they find it fluffy or they think it’s another management fad.

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The thing is this though; it doesn't matter what it's called, it doesn't matter if someone likes it or not – it is there just the same. There is always a culture. You can of course choose to call it something else (and you may need to, if there is a strong resistance to it within your organisation) but you definitely need to heed it.

Other phrases to describe the same thing could include:

- Success system
- Success strategy
- Working climate
- Values in Practice
- Operating guidelines

In the end it doesn't matter what it's called, what matters is that people get and adhere to "how things get done here".

It is all about what we do and not just what we say.

So go ahead and share expectations; if you for example want to have a culture of sharing ideas then start sharing ideas yourself as well as putting it into people's goals and that will help drive the behaviour of sharing. You are effectively using both "trains" of culture, you role model the behaviour AND you encourage the same behaviour in others through the goal system.

In a clear, strong, healthy culture, people know EXACTLY how to operate and this helps them to act with integrity for the good of all constituents.

This is the only way to long-term success.

Think about the power of culture and remember that you can make it manageable and tangible, rather than soft and fluffy – because it's not – it is the strongest driving force of an organisation.

And it starts with each person, every day, every minute. You are all creating it through every interaction you have.

Whether you are a leader, team member or part of many teams; every interaction you have is creating the culture.

What culture are you creating today?

"CUSTOMERS WILL NEVER LOVE A COMPANY UNTIL THE EMPLOYEES LOVE IT FIRST."

Simon Sinek





GOLD MEDAL TEAMWORK

8 winning tactics for team and individual success

BY MANDY FLINT & ELISABET VINBERG HEARN

Watching athletes compete and succeed is inspiring. And it's a reminder that success doesn't happen without teamwork.

Teamwork is crucial not just to team success but also individual success. No one is an island: behind most successful individuals, stands a great team. A top athlete will have a team of coaches, physiotherapists, dietitians and many more. Together they work towards a goal – the gold medal goal.

And it's exactly the same at work. Gold medal teams are what every organisation wants. And there's a lot we can learn from sports when it comes to teamwork and performance.

The first important step is that a team needs to know where they are going or what they are contributing to (vision) and why (purpose). This clarity provides a framework and "reason to be" that can rally a team to work together. Once the goal is set, here are eight proven tactics for creating gold-winning teams and individuals.

Build trust

If you are going for gold, then remember that trust is crucial to teamwork, and it starts with team members knowing each other. Team members need get to know each other, both professionally and personally.

Otherwise they won't understand each other and they won't want to engage because they haven't made that human connection – and hence they won't fully trust each other. When the going gets tough in sports, each member of the team really have to know each other to be able to support each other.

Share information

Knowledge is not power. Teams members all bring their unique set of skills, knowledge, experience and wisdom to the table. Effective teams fearlessly share regularly and generously for the benefit of everyone. This makes the capability of the whole team grow and gives the team more power. In sports the teams involved have to constantly share information and insights, keep up to date and not keep anything from each other.

Be transparent

Without transparency, trust will suffer. Transparency is becoming the expected norm in business and expectations are growing.

It starts at the top: the more senior you are and the more responsibility you have, the more you need to be a role model for this. Employees will follow the leader's behaviours, good or bad. When done well this can have a positive cascade effect throughout the organisation. In sports teams it is crucial to be transparent, to let everyone know what is happening and how you are all feeling, as transparency (= knowing that there are no hidden agendas) makes people relax and be able to focus on their tasks. This in turn leads to even better results.

Deal with conflict and tension

Conflict, a difference of opinion, can be healthy and if carefully managed it can trigger useful debates.

It can make people think differently, expanding knowledge and insight, and innovation can happen and results flourish. Different opinions are not a bad thing.

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It's how we handle the conflict that makes a difference.

In sports, the pressure will at times create much tension. When getting to that all-important moment that you have trained for for years, the tension is high. The team needs to know how to handle that tension and be ready for it and not let it jeopardise the teamwork or the results.

Stay engaged

Team engagement is crucial to business success and indeed sports success too. Team members who are engaged are interested in what they do and committed to the team mission are willing to going the extra mile.

They are there in body as well as mentally and emotionally. The key to engagement is involvement; by involving others you make it impossible to stay detached. Sports teams HAVE to be engaged, not just in competition but more importantly in all the years of preparation, when things are tough and results not great.

Engagement is easier when team members support each other all the way.

Stay focused on the long-term

Businesses have to get beyond day-to-day urgencies, be able to take a holistic view, see the big picture and how all the parts fit together. For a team this means being able to think beyond your own area, how you fit into the wider organisation and how you impact the customer experience and value proposition.

This is about business sustainability and long-term success. Everyone is busy but just being busy is not enough. Long-term success requires long-term thinking. To qualify for a big competition, the teams have to stay focused on their long term goal. There will be setbacks and different results along the way – long-term thinking (keeping the end goal in mind) helps them stay focused and make decisions and take actions that will aid both short- and long-term results.

All for one and one for all

A great team can - and should - be like the three musketeers – all for one and one for all. Honour your time and efforts by seeing yourself as a full time member of the team, not just an individual contributor.

Imagine how great it would feel to be part of a team where everyone is thinking of the team and not just themselves. In all the sports teams at a big competition, the team would not have made it there if they had worked alone, doing their own thing. Teamwork is what makes the difference. And consider an individual athlete, who even if they are brilliant at their sport, would not have made it to where they are without the constant support of those around them. To be willing to let others shine, like those in supporting functions do, comes from knowing that you are valuable yourself, that your unique contribution makes the difference. That the athlete, although they may be the star, would not have made it without team. This is what 'all for one and one for all' is all about.



Follow up, give feedback and coach
Coaching leadership is also of major importance and it happens at both an individual and a team level. A great coach sees each person and is able to bring out the best in them, encouraging and helping them to want to do their best, and keep getting better – helping to bring out self-leadership in each athlete. Feedback is the breakfast of champions. With the awareness of what someone does well and could do better, they can turn that into learning and do it even better. Remember that no one is best at everything.

A sports gold medalist couldn't be a winner in all sports at the same time – and it's the same at work. Help employees to focus their efforts to become truly outstanding at what they do. Each sports team has a team or individual coach to help guide them to victory.

Many say they could not have made it without the coach giving them guidance, direction and feedback. We can be a coach to our teammates too. If you want to create a great team, pay particular attention to behaviours.

How we behave has an impact on others and affects how they behave.

It's when we change our behaviours that we can achieve transformational change.

And finally, don't give up!

What all gold medal winners have in common is that they don't give up. They don't let setbacks stop them. They use the power and the feedback of the setback to find new strategies to move forward. They value the silvers and the bronzes too – and they use them to propel them onwards and upwards.

So stay focused, go the distance, and never give up on that goal. Be a strong gold medal winning team.

"TALENT WINS GAMES, BUT TEAMWORK AND INTELLIGENCE WIN CHAMPIONSHIPS."

Michael Jordan





A STORY: GEORGE, THE ANGRY CEO

A short story about the consequences
of emotional outbursts

BY MANDY FLINT & ELISABET VINBERG HEARN

George, the CEO, had a temper. His volatility was well known and created a certain cautiousness when people were around him.

Noel didn't know how to break the news to George that he was £500K below their forecasted revenue. This was due to an incorrect prediction, which had only just been noticed by Noel. As George was known for "shooting the messenger" when bad news hit, Noel didn't really want to be the one who got shot. George would behave very aggressively when anyone came to him with bad news. Noel needed to tell him there had been an error in the numbers that they couldn't fix, but he didn't dare. He decided to leave it until next month, hoping that it would somehow miraculously resolve itself. The next month it was £1 million so much worse, and he knew he should do something so he went to talk to Theresa, another senior member of the team.

Theresa looked serious as Noel finished his story.

"Yes, this should be addressed, but maybe it could wait a bit longer. You know just as I do, how much George has on his plate right now with the looming takeover. He's preoccupied and he is not very receptive to anything that's not directly related to that. I also wonder if the numbers could still improve as the last month is trending more positively. Given that George is such hard work, you may get into trouble unnecessarily. You saw how he ripped Tom apart at the quarterly review last week, didn't you?"

Theresa's question needed no answer and she fuelled Noel's fear and made him convinced that it would be more prudent to wait again.

"Yes, you are probably right. He is a bit of a tyrant, isn't he? Tom did try to tell him in a really good way and he had reasonable arguments, and George's response just shut everyone down. Did you notice how uncomfortably quiet it went after that?"

"Yes, I did. I felt myself wanting to melt into the background. I mean, who wants to be the next target after such a public dressing down! Hm, I wonder if he has any idea what effect his outbursts have on others. Does he think it makes him powerful to behave like that? Well, it doesn't. He may shut people up, but he doesn't get the truth and he doesn't look like a great leader."

Noel had to agree. It was becoming increasingly hard to work with George.

Well guess what; the next month it was £2 million and hiding was no longer an option for Noel. With a heavy heart he walked the corridor to George's office with his imaginary armour on, getting ready for an angry confrontation.

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The predicted explosion occurred and George demanded to know why Noel hadn't come forward with this information sooner.

Noel mumbled something about trends and changing markets and not worrying George unnecessarily, none of which was particularly well received.

As he left the office, exhausted from the exchange, he was amazed that George didn't understand why he hadn't been approached before.

Well, I'm certainly not going to tell him, but somebody needs to!

"GOOD LEADERSHIP REQUIRES YOU TO SURROUND YOURSELF WITH PEOPLE OF DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES WHO CAN DISAGREE WITH YOU WITHOUT FEAR OF RETALIATION."

Doris Kearns Goodwin



ANALYSIS

Noel is fearful of telling his CEO the truth about the budget. From a rational perspective he of course knows that he should speak up, but his fear pushes the logic away. With Theresa's help he even finds reasonable excuses not to tell George. This only delays the inevitable, ie talking to George, which makes George's reaction even stronger when Noel finally does talk to him.

George's anger is caused by him feeling threatened, threatened by the possibility of him looking bad as a leader if the budget is not met. By being defensive, he hinders any sensible conversation that could have been had. He points a finger at the messenger thereby making the messenger defensive, closing down any potential solutions. And if it's a recurring event, it creates a very non-transparent culture of "cover my a**e", where everyone defensively looks out for their own interests.

By not telling George directly, but instead going behind his back to Theresa, Noel is unwittingly creating a ripple effect of fear and non-transparency. Others will hear the story and think twice before approaching George with bad news.

As it happens, George is at times actually a very fun and inspiring leader, but his occasional outbursts make his behaviours inconsistent. This causes people to not feel at ease with him as they don't know what his reaction will be. George is therefore in danger of surrounding himself with only "yes-sayers", fearful of challenging him or bringing him bad news. And by not realising that, his impact is non-constructive.

THE I -T OF LEADERSHIP IMPACT

THE I-T OF LEADERSHIP IMPACT

I

INTEREST

Taking a genuine interest in others, caring about others

M

MOTIVATION

Being motivated to do a great job

P

PURPOSE

Being relentlessly purpose-driven, doing things for a reason

A

ACCOUNTABILITY

Holding self and others to account, having a high say-do ratio

C

CURIOSITY

Approaching the world around with curiosity and wish to keep learning

T

TRUST

Creating trust and being trustworthy

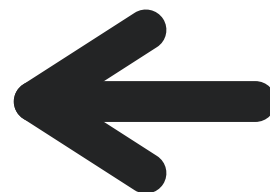
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Our ability to have a good or even great impact is becoming more and more important. We all need to think about the effect we have on others and what effect we want to have.

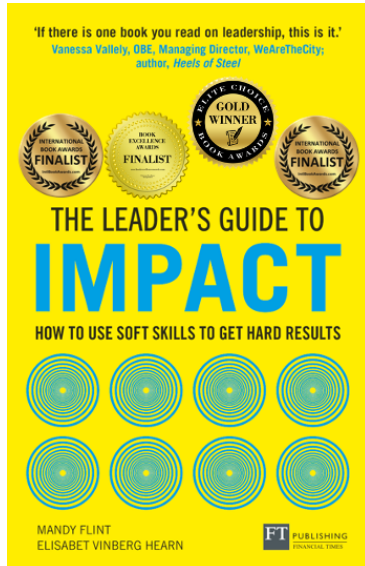
"How" we operate rather than simply "what" we do is becoming more and more critical to success.

It's all about how we impact people, the business and the world around us. In fact, it is fast becoming the differentiating factor for successful executives, leaders and organisations overall, something that we observe every day in our work.

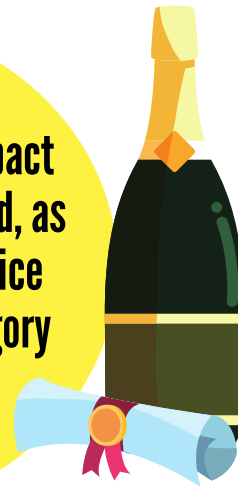


Here are some behavioural factors that make an impact.

CHECK OUT OUR AWARD-WINNING BOOKS ON LEADERSHIP

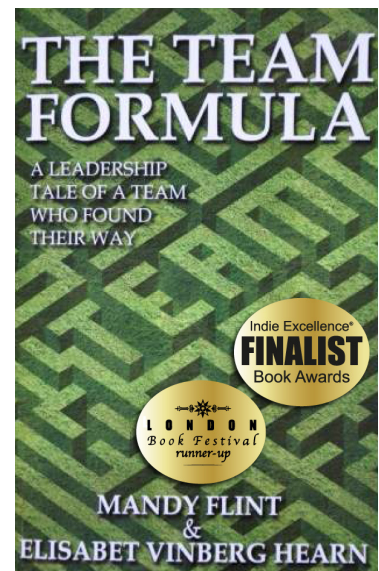
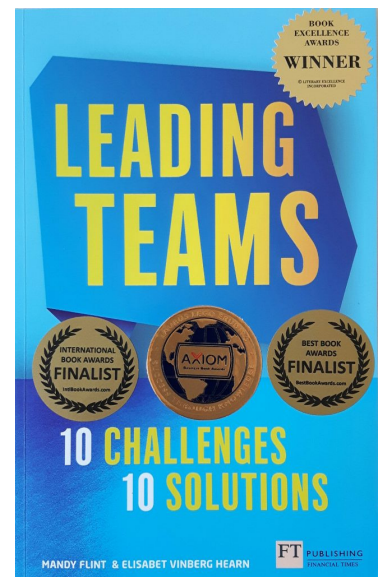


The Leader's Guide to Impact has received it's 4th award, as a Winner in the Elite Choice Awards, Leadership Category
Read the judge's feedback below



Judge's feedback:

Authors, Mandy Flint and Elisabet Vinberg Hearn, have delivered a truly impactful and transformative guide to leadership. With guidance, self assessments and actionable solutions and tools, they have outlined a simple yet powerful process readers can use to create impact in a lasting and authentic way. This book is a must read for those looking to become 21st century leaders who can adapt and effectively improve the way they work and connect with others.



A cityscape at sunset with a prominent church spire and buildings reflected in water. The sky is filled with vibrant orange and red clouds. The city features several multi-story buildings with varied architectural styles, including a central church with a tall, pointed spire. The entire scene is mirrored in a body of water in the foreground, creating a symmetrical effect.

impact a leadership magazine

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