



Dear Friend,

The New Light

A couple of weeks ago, the light in our master bathroom blew.

Now, you're probably wondering, "Where's she going with this?" Let me share an additional tidbit, and see if my plight gets any clearer for you. The original light had been in its place for a period that seems like forever. So, when it was time for a replacement, we upgraded...to a compact florescent lamp.

I'll spare you the details. Though, I will say that, with this new light, I'm seeing all kinds of things in the mirror that I never saw before. (Oh my goodness, talk about longing for the days of blissful ignorance!)

In many respects, albeit sometimes painful, taking a look in the mirror, with a new light, can be beneficial. It provides the opportunity to step back and see yourself as you truly are -- blemishes and all. And, if you are honest about what you see, it can result in one of the greatest gifts available -- the chance to make adjustments, as warranted.

This edition of *EA Insights* is dedicated to self-examination of our lives as professionals. I hope that what you see, using a new light, encourages you in many areas and prompts changes where needed.

All the best,

June

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Would You Hire You?

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For most executives, business owners, and managers, the hiring of qualified, motivated people is a familiar part of the job. So, put on your hiring manager hat for a moment, and consider this question. *If you had to reapply for your position, would you hire you?*

Don't answer too quickly. This isn't a matter of your title, or your resume, or your seniority. Instead, think about how you're functioning in your job today. Based on your performance, would your rehire be a no-brainer? Or, would even you have to be sold?

Whatever your specific job description, we all share the role of "leader" in one way or another. So, here are four general questions regarding leadership performance that you (as hiring manager) might ask you (as candidate) to inform your decision about rehire.

Question #1: How well do you manage yourself?

When most people think about a leadership role, the initial thought typically is about leading others. Before you can be effective as a leader of others, though, it is critical to demonstrate that you can effectively lead (or manage) yourself. So, any prudent hiring manager would want to know:

How well do you organize your time and work? Are you constantly running late, in reaction mode, or creating emergencies (where none really exist) because of poor planning?

Do you adhere to the policies and procedures of your company, or do you default to a spoken or unspoken position of "management prerogative"?



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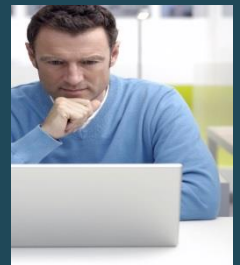
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Quotes

"It is said that it is far more difficult to hold and maintain leadership (liberty) than it is to attain it. Success is a ruthless competitor for it flatters and nourishes our weaknesses and lulls us into complacency. We bask in the sunshine of accomplishment and lose the spirit of humility which helps us visualize all the factors which have contributed to our success. We are apt to forget that we are only one of a team, that in unity there is strength and that we are strong only as long as each unit in our organization functions with precision."
-- Samuel Jones Tillden

What happens when you're stressed? Are you a positive model for others to follow, or are you known as a person who screams, belittles others, or changes the entire work environment...and not for the better?

Is being the leader an "all or nothing" proposition for you? That is, when the situation arises, how well do you assume the role of follower (e.g., with the Board, with your immediate supervisor, or in a team setting with your peers)?

Question #2: What's your commitment to the organization?

Vision is critically important for successful leadership. However, it is hard to create a compelling vision, enthusiastically communicate it, and help people grasp how they fit in the process of turning that vision into reality, when you mentally have one foot out of the door.

Beware. You need not have officially dusted off your resume (or set a retirement date) to have one foot out of the door. It's possible to check out, even though you have no immediate intention to leave. So, consider where you stand -- whether you still believe in the vision, whether you still want to do this type of work on a daily basis, whether this is the right place for you, and whether you're in it for the long haul.

Question #3: How are you as a leader of people?

Of importance here are not your leadership credentials; the key is outlining what you are doing with, for, and through the people on your team.

Successful leaders are coaches. They choose good people. They get to know the members of the team and put them in the right roles (for the organization and for the individual). They expect team members to perform, and they both help them develop the skills and understand the schemes (strategies) to do so. They give team members frequent and meaningful feedback on performance. And, they are an active partner in the continued development of each person, even if that occasionally means moving or releasing someone if the team needs to go in a different direction, if performance slips, or if there is a role for which he/she is better suited.

What's your track record here?

Question #4: What have you done for us lately...and how?

At the crux of leadership is the ability to achieve results. But, unlike the person who's just responsible for leading himself, your role requires you to achieve results with and through others. So, what have you and your team accomplished...lately? What would your customers -- internal and/or external -- say about you? And, if your sole example (or the best one) is from years gone by, you might want to think seriously about how effective you are, as a leader, today.

Turning to each result, how did you do it? Do you tend to achieve results by overworking staff, or do you encourage balance (and lead by example)? Are you (and your team) known for keeping the trains running, or are you the company bottleneck to be avoided whenever possible? Is collaboration a normal way of doing business for you, or do you function in a silo, placing overall organizational accomplishments second to your own and maybe those of your team? Have you been doing things the same way for the last 20 years just because that's how it's always been done, or are you fostering innovation and demonstrating a willingness to implement effective and efficient ideas as they come your way?

Conclusion

Well, how did you stack up? Would you rehire you?

Congratulations, if you just had your contract renewed! However, as the questions suggested, the work doesn't stop at hire (or, in your case, rehire). Continue skill-building in areas where you excelled as well as in your challenge areas.

If rehire was a hard sell (even for you), all is not lost. Know that it's never too late to make the necessary course corrections. And, you can start by taking steps **today** to succeed as a leader.

"Duty is a matter of the mind. Commitment is a matter of the heart."

-- Proverb

"Certainly a leader needs a clear vision of the organization and where it is going, but a vision is of little value unless it is shared in a way so as to generate enthusiasm and commitment. Leadership and communication are inseparable."

-- Claude I. Taylor

"Outstanding leaders go out of their way to boost the self-esteem of their personnel. If people believe in themselves, it's amazing what they can accomplish."

-- Sam Walton

About Executive Advantage

At Executive Advantage, we are committed to providing results-based business and management consulting, leadership development, and coaching support. We partner with business leaders to build healthy, well-functioning organizations, where goals are met and people thrive. We also partner with individuals to create professional (and personal) lives with clearer direction, improved results, and greater balance.

To learn more about Executive Advantage, contact us at inquiries@execadvantagellc.com.