

BE A LEADER

ELLEN NAYLOR, *Business Intelligence Source, Inc.*



At a recent Denver Associate for Corporate Growth (ACG) meeting, our presenter was Chris Lowney, a former Jesuit and JP Morgan executive. He asked, “Who is a great leader in your life? What are the attributes of this person?”

Like most in the audience I thought of the inspirational people in my life who have influenced me: personally, my dad and professionally, Meg Wheatley, noted leadership psychologist. My dad is one of the most giving, generous people I know and I feel lucky to have been influenced by such a fine man. Meg offers a unique sensitivity and understanding of leadership that takes into account our complex and changing business environment.

Chris suggested that we need to think about *ourselves as leaders* in this 21st century. We are stuck in our stereotypes of leadership, which are no longer part of today’s solution.

CI LEADERSHIP ESSENTIALS

Leadership is often missing in the competitive intelligence (CI) process discussion. We are often focused more on the skills and process required to set up a CI function. As you approach your company’s senior management (whether establishing a CI operation or maintaining it), consider how you are perceived as a leader, whether you’re a lone ranger CI operator or have reporting people.

At the SCIP’s WLC leadership forum, our keynotes were Jenny Fisher, VP of Human Resources at Motorola and Ava Youngblood, CEO of Youngblood Executive Search and a former SCIP president. Jenny asserted

that company’s leadership should expect and value unbiased, unfiltered truth from competitive intelligence managers. I think executives also appreciate more of the truth from other places in the company, especially in these tough economic times, where every opportunity and threat needs to be uncovered!

LEADERSHIP ESSENTIALS

Ava shared 5 “Essentials” for leaders: Education, Experience, Edge, Energy, and Ethics. Research supports the fact that 70% of your leadership capabilities comes from your experience, with 10% from your education and 20% from exposure (see Figure 1).

Education and Experience

A good education opens the door to possibilities, but ultimately it’s the weakest of the three components. Exposure includes support from mentors, sponsors, visibility, and

networks. Consider how you can package yourself including your work experience, education, and connections to be relevant to your company’s management and garner respect right from the first meeting.

Edge

Edge represents your level of self-confidence. Leaders portray the relaxed self-confidence that puts others at ease. I notice many in CI don’t have this edge, as we are too pre-occupied with CI terms and analysis, and not our broader contribution towards the company’s business problems, threats and opportunities.

Leaders with edge have good internal and external networks they constantly develop. In hiring ‘A players’ hire other ‘A players’. ‘B players’ hire ‘C players’. ‘A players’ have both a high IQ and EQ (emotional intelligence), and have that sense of urgency about getting things done. They have a global outlook and appreciate other cultures.

Those with edge also have mentors

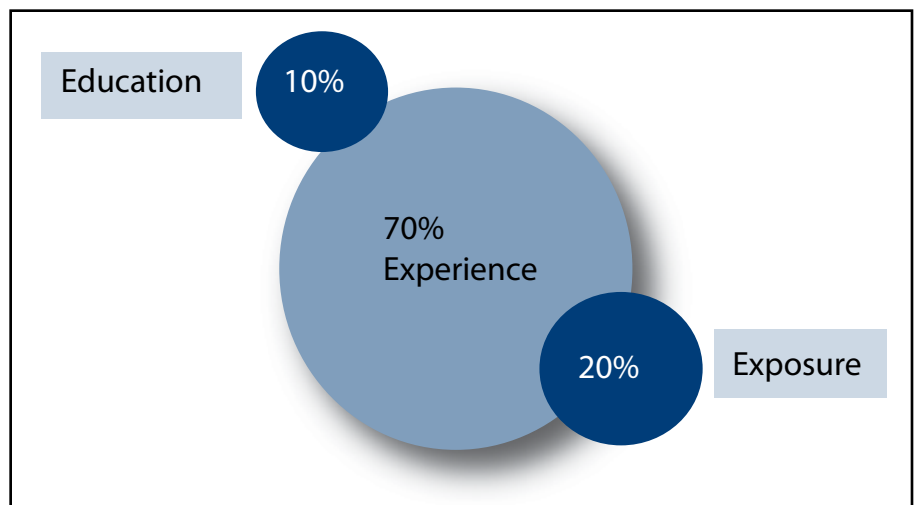


Figure 1: Leadership development

and sponsors as part of their support system. I have noticed that many in CI don't have a company mentor, and this is often why the operation isn't that visible or ultimately fails.

Energy

Energy is the ability to motivate and mobilize others with a sense of urgency when needed. These are simple words, but many people lack the ability to motivate others – they are too concerned about their own interests rather than the company's mission or the interest of those they manage.

I notice that many in CI operate in "CI Land" which is too micro for company executives, and don't consider the motivation of their CI clients. Time and again, the leaders who are successful have a heightened sense of mission, not a heightened sense of self or ego. Pull yourself out of CI and put yourself in your client's shoes.

Ethics

Ethics is so important in today's society where too many CEOs are poor role models, making money at the expense of employees and shareholders. A leader is a good role model who inspires integrity and trust, and is values driven not selfishly driven. Your ethical discussions are very important when setting up your relationships with executives. Many are confused by what CI is, and often consider it an underhanded operation.

THE 8 CONTRIBUTORS TO POWER

Ava also identified "8 Ps to Power" for leaders. Think about how you present yourself to your leadership in these eight areas: Preparation, Performance, Passion, Perseverance, Positive visibility, Predictability, Presence, and Play.

Preparation

As preparation to be a leader, articulate your vision and do it. Don't just talk about it. In CI many of us lack a vision. We just do our job.

Performance

Make sure your actions impact performance. Winner's traits are intellect and intensity to achieving. Losers are more into loyalty, obligation and fear. Consider emulating those individuals who have the biggest client impact long and short term, are best prepared, take initiatives, and are strong in technical positioning. In CI they can be a leading member of SCIP. Be up on the latest best practices in CI and apply them!

Passion

Your career is like a marathon. In the first 10 years or so, you build your credibility and confidence. In the next phase you develop character from some tougher experiences in life such as death, divorce, and tragedies that can be life-changing.

It's often through these experiences that we grow into our next phase, our calling, which is when we discover our passion, and our career just takes off. True passion often comes later in one's life. Those with true passion are noticed and promoted. You need to do what you love: that's how passion plays in work and in life!

In Ava's case her passion really soared once she realizing executive recruiting was her path. She learned the business at another company, and now leads her own successful executive recruiting firm. My husband had a successful corporate career. However his passion really came out when he became a fine oil artist. His business is growing since his painting skill improves all the time and customers can feel his passion. When they buy art, they buy a part of you, not unlike why people decide to cooperate with you as a CI professional.

Some people are lucky and find their passion much younger. My father knew he wanted to be an attorney in the 8th grade. He was one of the finest attorneys his entire career, which started with defending Japanese war criminals just after WWII. The passion continued right up through retirement.

Do you come across as having passion for CI? Passion is contagious. This is a key ingredient in motivating people to cooperative and share with you. If you lack passion then so will they, and they won't be responsive to your needs and queries.

Perseverance

It's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer.

Albert Einstein 1879-1955,
Physicist

Perseverance is a trait that is often overlooked and is difficult to acquire but is particularly needed in today's economic hard times. You will need to try to connect with people in so many ways and be creative and stay at it. Have perseverance in conducting CI. It isn't easy to stay on task as you juggle your ongoing monitoring projects with the one-offs that demand intense focus. Be honest and tell your company about threats and opportunities that they might not welcome.

Positive Visibility

To be effective, you need to have social, business, and strategic networks. Social networks are here to stay and those who ignore connecting to people they would otherwise never know, lose.

Seek critical feedback. Often women and minorities don't automatically receive this. You must ask for it. As in CI, this challenges conventional wisdom. Critical feedback tastes like medicine, yet it's a gift and you have a choice to take this advice. Part of your network needs to contain support from mentors, sponsors or coaches. In today's environment, this level of support is more needed than ever, as we change jobs and careers more frequently.

In her recruiting practice Ava is very thorough in her reference checks. This is vital to determining if a candidate has positive visibility. You can consider this reference check as a part of everyday business. As people connect with you, even through social

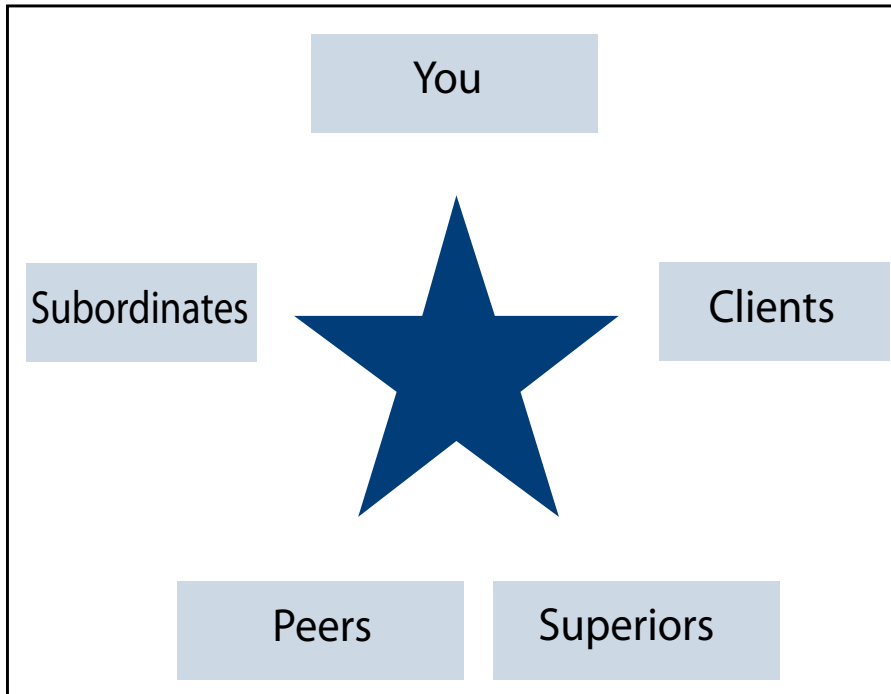


Figure 2: Relationships

networking, they are assessing your personality, how you relate to people and how well you are regarded. You need to be sensitive to all levels of relationships (see Figure 2).

Many people are good about managing up for job security, if nothing else, but are not as concerned or skilled at managing subordinates. This is just as important in CI, as we can't afford to alienate good sources of CI, regardless of where they sit. Basically you want to develop a renewable network, one that is supportive in all levels, because you treat them well, and deliver excellent work.

Predictability

Do you inspire hope, or fear and panic? Can people count on you? As a CI professional, you need to be there for your clients, and not hide behind e-mail or voice mail. That is the first line of predictability. We are often good about staying on top of our competitor's and market developments, but are we as good about communicating these developments in sound bites or electronic bites that are valuable to our

clients? The role of coaches, mentors and sponsors can help you build this trait as you count on their support to guide your development.

Presence

How do you carry yourself? Do you have a positive image? Do you have that relaxed confidence that puts others at ease? Dress for the position you aspire to be in. People do make impressions based on how you look, and sloppy doesn't say leadership.

This also carries into your CI deliverables. Are they professional in appearance? Do you distribute them to the right people? Don't fall into the trap of over distribution. Make sure what you share is relevant to everyone on the distribution list!

Play

Work hard and play harder. Make it count. Plan vacations since they revive the spirit. A long weekend can be a welcome retreat. Follow your passion with hobbies like music, writing or sports. All work and no play can really lead to a dull spirit and a lack of

creativity. CI is so intense: we need our vacations to recharge the batteries and rev up our creative juices, which help us detect patterns to indication competitor or market shifts!

Chris Lowney says Love, as a component of leadership, is having the conscience to do right by others. He quotes St. Ignatius Loyola: "Love ought to manifest in deeds, not words." People judge your leadership more by your actions than by your words since they are more telling. Be a leader: put yourself in the other person's shoes. Project yourself as a caring person who is looking for ways to give or help others rather than primarily asking for favors or help. This BTW, is also the essence of cooperative intelligence, the theme of this column. Happy New Year!

Ellen Naylor is president of Business Intelligence Source, Inc. She has 25 years of marketing and sales competitive intelligence experience, including at Verizon, where she initiated a competitive intelligence department and built a CI process that included sales. Ellen conducted financial competitive analysis and economic forecasting while at Northwest Airlines. She has held leadership positions at SCIP on the board of directors and with the Minnesota and Rocky Mountain chapters. In 1995 she received the Catalyst Award, and in 2006 was named a SCIP Fellow. Ellen earned her MBA at the University of Virginia's Colgate Darden School. She can be reached at answers@thebisphere.com.