

Leadership & Strategy Review

Upcoming Programs

June 4 on "Legacy Leadership" at Treasury Executive Institute, Washington, DC

July 13 on "Transformational Leadership" at National Association of Counties' Annual Conference in New Orleans

Sept. 29-Oct. 1 on "Strategic Leadership" at Federal Executive Institute in Charlottesville, VA

50th Anniversary

[Celebration of the Opening of the Marshall Library on June 5 in Lexington](#)

A collection of articles, comments and opinion pieces from popular media and the blogosphere thematically reflecting the spirit of George C. Marshall's enduring legacy of leadership and strategic vision.

Develop strategic thinkers in your organization

By Robert Kabacoff, *Harvard Business Review*

In study after study, strategic thinkers are found to be among the most highly effective leaders. And while there is an abundance of courses, books, articles and opinions on the process of strategic planning, the focus is typically on an isolated process that might happen once or twice per year. In contrast, a true strategic leader thinks and acts strategically every day.

So is there a way to encourage routine strategic thinking throughout the organization? I would say yes; and that it's the most important thing you can do as a leader. We found that a strategic approach to leadership was, on average, 10 times more important to the perception of effectiveness than other behaviors studied. It was twice as important as communication (the second most important behavior) and almost 50 times more important than hands-on tactical behaviors. (This doesn't mean that tactical behaviors aren't important, but they don't differentiate the highly effective leaders from everyone else.)

[Read more](#)

The inner workings of the executive brain

By Andrew Blackman, *The Wall Street Journal*

Take much of what you know about how the best executives make decisions. Now, forget it.

For instance, we all "know" that tight deadlines lead to inspiration. Except they don't. Instead, they typically are counterproductive; making people less creative precisely when they need to be. Or most of us assume that when we try to solve problems, we're drawing on the logical parts of our brains. But, in fact, great strategists seem to draw on the emotional and intuitive parts of their brain much more.

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Researchers can now see how people's brains react to a situation, a process that obviously the subjects themselves can't see, let alone explain. That promises to provide a much clearer view of how leaders make good choices, and how other people can learn to follow their example.

Here's a closer look at some of the discoveries researchers have made:

- Want innovation? Be wary of deadlines.
- Big unknowns lead to bad choices.
- Good thinkers look past facts.
- Leaders should stay positive.

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Leadership: how to get from good to great

By Peter Economy, *Inc.*

Focus on a few core components of leadership and you can take your company to new heights. Leaders always want to motivate, inspire, and support their people to the absolute fullest. But most go to bed at night suspecting that they're coming up a little short. Maybe more than a little. Take heart; you can become a truly great leader. All it takes is:

Perspiration Great leadership requires effort, lots of effort. And much of that effort revolves around learning: about your people, your operations, your industry, and yourself. Be relentless in your pursuit of knowledge about everything and everyone in your business ecosystem.

Vision Develop a clear vision for what your business is all about, and don't lose faith in it. Know in your heart that you and your team can accomplish anything you set out to accomplish if you work together and believe in one another.

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Four qualities of successful executives

By Bruce Nolop, *The Wall Street Journal*

A combination of decisiveness, confidence, flexibility, and humility; I believe that this is the recipe for superior executive leadership.

Decisiveness Great executives know where they want to go.

Confidence They also have the self-confidence to stick to their plan and not be daunted by the obstacles that inevitably will arise along the way.

Flexibility At the same time, great leaders are flexible to changing circumstances. This is consistent with the military maxim that any battle plan becomes obsolete the minute the shooting starts. While thorough planning is clearly desirable, Dwight Eisenhower said that "plans are useless but planning is indispensable."

Humility Most important, and a seeming paradox, great executives are humble; they recognize the need to listen to alternative points of view and to trust the judgments of others.

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The best leaders make unforgettable first impressions

By Glen Llopis, *Forbes*

The most memorable leaders know how to naturally make a good first impression. They are mindful of what most employees do and don't expect of them and want to create for them a safe environment that enables engagement. Leadership success is all about people and when leaders forget this fact, they are headed down a path of self-destruction.

Here are 14 things every leader should consider if they want to make an unforgettable first impression. Read them carefully and ask yourself which ones you are doing and which ones you still need to introduce.

- Warm greeting
- Polished
- Friendly, engaging

[Read more](#)

The non-profit, nonpartisan, independent George C. Marshall Foundation, located in Lexington, Virginia, prepares emerging leaders in military service, foreign service, public administration and business in the essentials of vision, strategy and leadership. If you'd like to learn more about *The Courage to Lead* series, call Rick Drake at 540-463-7103 or go online to www.marshallfoundation.org.