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5 THINGS ALL LEADERS MUST DO AT THE START OF THE DAY

A WALKING LEADER LEADERSHIP ARTICLE

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INTRODUCTION

You are the leader. You are the first person your followers need to see. They need to know you are committed and dedicated to them first and foremost. I know it may sound tired but if they see someone other than you, well I do not need to go any further into this. If I do have to explain it to you, then by now you need to ask yourself "just how serious are you taking your role as a leader?" Taking the title others have given you is by far the most precious and the most fleeting (mess up once and you are done as a leader). Of course, some people mess up time and time again but do they ever return to the full status of LEADER? Most do not. However, I won't get into that and I will save that for a different article. I want to focus on the top five things that I believe ALL leaders must do at the start of the day.

1. BE THE FIRST TO ARRIVE

Being the first on the scene gives you a unique perspective that most people never get to see. You get to see the physical silence. You get to see and experience the machines before they come to life for the day. You also get to experience what the overnight brought to your business, department, section, or office. Being the first to arrive gives you the opportunity to walk the facility or area of responsibility. You are the first to inspect the physical condition of the workplace and report any signs of trouble. Turn on the lights and the machines. You get to see which bulbs, if any, need to be replaced and the same applies to the machines. You get to see if the copier needs toner, any PCs fail to boot up, and so on. Knowing this before the start of the day makes adjusting for any deficiency or failure easier to address. There is one last thing to remember about being the first to arrive, you get to press the ON button to the Coffee Maker. That's right, unless you brew something close to tar when it comes to coffee make it a priority that falls solely on you to make that coffee or boil water (for tea).

2. HOLD THE DOOR OPEN

Arriving before everyone not only gives you an insight as to what happened overnight but it gives you a chance to be the first person everyone gets to see. As a leader, your followers, your subordinates, those that look to you and up to you do not need to wonder or guess when you will be arriving. They will not need to if they know you are already there. By being the first one in you get the privilege of opening the front door and greeting everyone that arrives. Taking roll is encouraged, as you can share pertinent absence information to the appropriate parties. For example, Mary calls in sick then you can notify individuals in that department that they will have to adjust the today's game plan as will the rest of the organization. Additionally, being out in front gives you the opportunity to inspect the troops long before the customer and/or clients get to. This means that you have the ability to correct grooming or attire issues especially if there is a dress code in place and just like tardiness you have to address it immediately. Failing to address these issues will only lead to a situation that will get out of control. That is why it is of great importance to "nip it...nip it in the bud."

3. HAVE THAT MORNING BRIEFING

Being the one that can set the course for the day is a great job and a very important one at that. Having the ability to gather everyone in one location and pass along information to everyone at one time is by far one of the greatest perks of being a leader and being a leader that is present at the start of the business day. Have a Morning Briefing. Meet with everyone (as a whole or by groups) every morning, briefly. Meeting with people briefly is why the event is called a briefing. You are going to take between five to ten minutes. Fortunately and Unfortunately, this briefing will be considered a monologue. As it is brief there will be little to no time for dialogue. This means there is no time for a formal Q & A, you can schedule that for a later time. The objective of the briefing is to QUICKLY disseminate information and get their day start as soon as possible.

4. WALK THE COMPANY FLOOR

Before you hold the door open for your employees and about the time you fire up the *Bunn Coffee maker* you should have some time to walk the company floor. You walk by yourself. Walking the company floor by yourself will minimize any distractions considering you are on a mission. Your mission, your daily mission is to make sure everything is working for everyone (including the coffeemaker). Getting out there before everyone you get to see things most people overlook throughout the course of the regular business day. You check for safety violations, anything out of the ordinary, anything that just does not look, sound, or feels right. Take your time and take notes so that you do not forget to question if something is supposed to sound that way or is it the sound of something wicked heading your way. Remember to question anything and everything you are not sure of because one thing is certain; if it is trouble it is not going to take care of itself.

5. ADDRESS PERSONAL ACTIONS & ACTIVITIES

There is one thing all leaders do not like doing: Addressing Personnel Issues. Personnel issues are part of being a manager, director, executive of any organization. For as long as there have been organizations there have employee issues. However, it does not need to be all doom and gloom. A leader that does not like addressing personnel issues should do everything within his or her power to avoid them. However, when the inevitable happens the fastest way to deal with the issue is to address the issues immediately. The leader cannot afford to put off or delay what must be done. Before the start of the work day is the perfect time to get all your “ducks in a row” when it comes to preparing for addressing the actions or activities of the employees. Having that time before the start of the day you have time to respond appropriately and minimizes last-minute scrambling. Any leader worth his weight in gold will cherish any opportunity to minimize any scrambling, last minute or not.

CONCLUSION

Having the motive and opportunity to get in before the start of the day is something all leaders should ensure they can attain. Getting ahead of anything that could potentially slow production or prevent employees from doing their job is priceless. Ultimately, when the leader is present to meet and greet everyone at the start of the day is equally priceless. Make being the first person in to the office a habit to, as the late Lt. Gen. Harold G. Moore once said, *“When we step on the battlefield, I will be the first boots on and the last boots off.”*

ABOUT DAVID GUERRA, M.B.A.

David Guerra is a former Active Duty US Army Infantryman, Husband, Father, Businessman, Author, and Trainer. David is the author of two books on Leadership and Leadership Development: “The Walking Leader” and “Great To Follow”. He has also written several ebooks in what he considers *leadership lessons in the workplace* series. Each book in the **3000 Leadership Lesson** series tackles specific issues in the workplace that can get out of control if left unchecked for too long. Assigned to West Berlin during the last few years of the Cold War, David uses his time in the divided city as the inspiration for his series of historical fiction books: **Occupied Berlin** series. All of his books can be found on Amazon (dot) com and on the Barnes & Noble (dot) com websites.

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