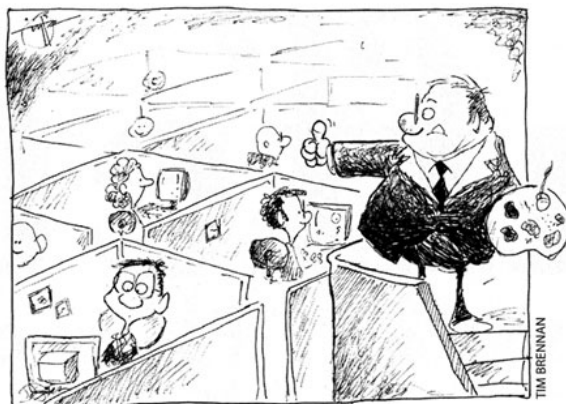


By Dr. Lee Smith



Managing in Chaos

Just when you think you have it all under control, it isn't

LEADERS in all business shapes and sizes live in the zone of complexity, which most often resembles chaos rather than complex order. This zone is an unpredictable place, sometimes scary, but ripe with opportunity – if only you choose right. What's even scarier is trying to control the entire ball of unraveling string alone.

In any given moment of any day, the manager must be able to snap the big picture, rush to strategize and quickly follow-through.

DAILY PURPOSE CHECKLIST

What, exactly, is your purpose, in this place, at this time? How will you accomplish it? These are simple but profound questions, which might seem daunting at first, but can serve to keep you and others focused about why you're here, help you gain commitment, determine how to rightly influence people, how to have the best talent in the right job at the right time, and how to hold everyone, including yourself, responsible and accountable. It isn't as difficult as it seems.

Former Rear Admiral Ed Allen (USN Retired), a leader of Oracle Corp., is an extreme multi-tasker, but even he reaches his limits. Allen reveals "What keeps me sane in a crazy world of business is taking time in the quiet of my morning workout to remind myself of my true purpose, what's really important, not only for

me personally, but for those I serve and the organization as a whole." The grounding piece for Allen is the use of a list of five memorable and foundational questions to start the day.

THE DAILY FIVE:

- How will I be the "holder" of our vision and values today? As leader/manager, you hold up, for everyone to see, the direction you want the organization to go and the integrity you personally use, and expect, getting there. If you're clear about the path, they will follow.
- What can I do today to create an environment of trust so everyone can collaborate? Collaboration spawns innovation, which keeps an organization thriving. Collaboration and innovation only happen when people feel valued and trusted.
- How will I influence and inspire others, and model leadership strength today? You can't NOT influence. Everyone watches the leader. Inspiration begins by being intentional about how you influence – what you say (verbally and nonverbally),

what you do, how your presence and decisions impact and influence, and, most importantly, how all these things match your vision and values.

- How will I support individuals while still advocating for the whole? You need to know your people – their strengths, challenges and unique talents. People need leaders who support, yet challenge; encourage, yet hold responsible. A manager or leader must be a connoisseur of talent, placing workers in positions that yield the greatest benefits to them and to the organization – then keep developing them.

- How will I hold everyone, including myself, accountable? This is the one we try to avoid. The "a" word is barely mentioned in even whispered tones. We expect it to just happen – but it doesn't. Accountability must accompany every phase of operation, for every person. Consider the processes and strategies you have in place to do this. Most importantly, what processes do you use to hold yourself accountable? It begins at the top – it doesn't just end there.

Refocusing yourself at the beginning of each day will bring order to the complexity you face. Practice it until it becomes habit.

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