



# ASLON CHRONICLE

*Dedicated to bringing interesting leadership trends to senior executives focused on integrity and values.*

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## *trust: ufność megbiz důvera.*

It's the same in any language

- 1 a** : assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something
- b** : one in which confidence is placed

Several years ago, a Harvard Business School professor wrote an open letter to the nation's graduates. He told them that schools tend to put too much emphasis on the idea that success comes as a result of passing tests and is based on individual performance rather than on group effort and cooperation. The professor pointed out that in the workplace, doing well depends largely on learning to succeed in a "web of relationships." If employees focus more on group achievement, rather than individual success, they will be more trusting in others.

### **BUILDING TRUST IN A TEAM**

1. Be open and forthright about your ideas as well as your mistakes. Be vulnerable and display a need for others. Be direct and don't withhold information. Be willing to work through the difficulties and not avoid the differences.
2. Leaders need to serve the team members. By modeling servanthood, you build up your team and empower them to function at a higher level. Leaders need to treat others as more important than themselves. Give credit to the team.
3. Keep in mind that the process of relationships is as important as the product of results. The end does not justify the means.
4. Everyone must humble himself. Focus on meeting the needs of others and not getting your needs met.

by Bruce Witt

### **LACK OF TRUST IN TEAM BUILDING**

Creating and building trust is probably the most critical element in building a team. Absence of Trust can stem from one of four problems:

- Relational Disconnect – An unwillingness to be vulnerable within the group. Team members who are not genuinely open with one another about their mistakes and weaknesses make building trust impossible.
- Leader Domination – When a leader treats fellow team members as only advisors, the team spirit is lost. Trust doesn't grow when the team exists only to serve the leader.
- Agenda Driven – Results matter more than relationships. Teams are about people, not just about getting things done.
- Character Deficiency – When the leader or team members act out of pride, this lack of humility lifts up people and not the main goal. Also, trust erodes when a leader's walk and talk don't match.

"Men of genius are admired, men of wealth are envied, men of power are feared; but only men of character are trusted."

Alfred Adler

## THE WORLD REALLY IS FLAT!

BY TIM SMITH

I recently returned from a trip to Prague in the Czech Republic where I was interviewing candidates for a General Manager position for a US company that is expanding their operations in Eastern Europe. Instead of hiring an American familiar with their way of doing business, they decided to hire a European national who has the contacts and business savvy to build a foothold in Eastern Europe as quickly as possible. I encountered many surprises during the process and many of the anticipated issues I thought would be challenging turned out to be a first hand experience of the "flat world".

One surprise was making initial contact. In my business we make volumes of calls and leave volumes of voice mail messages. In Central-Eastern Europe (CEE), voice mail is only used after hours so to my delight, the majority of our calls were answered the first time (eliminating telephone tag) which greatly condensed the time needed in pursuing potential candidates. I was able to reach most people the first try, explain my project, and obtain the necessary information to make an informed decision on who was and was not a viable candidate. I also had to change my life style due to the time difference. Prague, Warsaw and Budapest are all six hours ahead of us so during the recruiting period of our search project my mornings started very early!

Some of the hurdles I thought I would have to conquer for my first trip to CEE included the language, the money, telephone communication and credibility in their culture. I thought the money would be easy since most everyone is using the Euro now. Well, unfortunately the Czech Republic, where my search was focusing, is not changing over from the Czech Koruna, or crown, until 2008. So the conversion rate played a factor in adding a little "calculation" time to each transaction for services rendered, acquired or translating compensation for each executive.

My initial plan was to identify, recruit and assess about ten to fifteen executives and then fly over to meet them. Since all my calls were made from the states, my first

concern was the cost of placing the calls and how to be as economical as possible for my client. After some investigation into different plans, I found that my cell phone plan was the least expensive in making international calls. I discovered too that there is a free VoIP (voice over internet protocol) called Skype that can be used to call any place in the world for free as soon as both parties download the software to their PCs. I practiced with my son, who is going to Wheaton College in Chicago, and even used our webcam for video calls. The calls were amazingly clear and became useful for conference calls with our outsourced research assistant who was located in Prague. This research partner was able to generate



about two-thirds of the research, and through our networking with past clients who have international ties, we were able to generate the remaining one-third.

At first I was concerned about the language barrier since I am a Midwesterner and, although enjoy listening to different dialects; sometimes find it difficult to understand anyone with the slight-

est twang. I was greatly relieved to discover that most of the people I contacted spoke perfect English and I had very little problem with the accent. In fact, many spoke several languages and some were educated in the states or obtained their masters from colleges specializing in international business. They were also very interested in hearing my client's story and never once doubted that an American was calling with a legitimate job opportunity. I found their candor and openness very refreshing and looked forward to meeting them in person after conducting over ninety phone interviews.

The people I interviewed were from Prague, Moravia, Germany and even a native Nigerian. It was a real learning experience for me to hear about the history that many of these people lived through and their evolution after the "velvet revolution" in 1989 which was a bloodless overthrow of the Czechoslovak communist regime.

During my international flights I continued reading "The World is Flat" by Thomas L. Freidman and was able to identify with much of the author's statements. Although

"What other people do or say is their stuff; how we react is our stuff."

Phil Evans, Motivator, Business Coach, and Inspirational Writer

## PERSONAL INTEGRITY: A SELF-DIAGNOSTIC

*Individuals with integrity create an organization with integrity.*

To see how you're shaping up, ask yourself these questions:

1. Am I willing to say what I'm thinking?

In a world of political correctness and office politics, many of us think things that we aren't willing to say. Perhaps we fear seeming prejudiced or giving an emotional, rather than a logical response. Speaking up doesn't have to mean getting in the other person's face, showing discourtesy, or rejecting opposing viewpoints. It does mean speaking for yourself when confident that your beliefs are logical and based in fact.

2. Am I willing to risk being wrong?

This is a powerful question. As Buckminster Fuller said, "The moment of greatest integrity is when we realize we've made a mistake." Whether at work or home, we carve out our positions, state our opinions, and hold on for dear life. Certainly our ego, and often our finances or position, depends on the accuracy of these positions, beliefs, etc. Who among us is truly "open"? Who is so confident that they're willing to say not only "That's a better idea!" but also "It looks like I was completely wrong!" Who among us is brave enough to move beyond our ego and search for the truth?

3. Do I want my child or someone else I love to do that? (If not, then why am I doing it?)

Many of us engage in habits that don't track with who we want to be. We view ourselves as healthy, yet eat like pigs and smoke like chimneys. We preach love and compassion toward others on Sundays, then yell at our subordinates on Monday. We often justify such behavior by defining any conduct we can't seem to stop as an addiction or disability. Although a few people can kick their bad habits cold turkey, most of us need the equivalent of a 12-step recovery program — the least expensive and most effective way to regain personal integrity.

In **Good to Great**, Jim Collins points out that most great CEOs are "humble," lead a balanced lifestyle, and are inclusive of the people around them. Just being in their presence makes others want to be better. That's leadership by example!

4. Does this conduct make me a better person?

The universe consists of opposing energies: Good vs. evil. Matter vs. anti-matter. Light vs. darkness. Ying vs. yang. It's the same with our lives. Our thoughts and actions either help us to become better people — or they do something else. They either increase our energy or suck it dry. They either nurture us or stress us. This means that there's an easy way to check whether your conduct has integrity. Ask yourself, "Does this make me a better person?" Is it nurturing or not? The challenge is to make sure that we ask this question in the first place.

5. Am I leading by example?

You can't say one thing and then do something else. To act with integrity, you must "walk your talk." There are people whom you admire and emulate not because of what they said, but what they did or do. Jack Welch once warned that if you state one thing in a corporate meeting and then do something else afterwards, "you're dead!" To lead by example, you need the integrity to do what you suggest that others do. In **Good to Great**, Jim Collins points out that most great CEOs are "humble," lead a balanced lifestyle, and are inclusive of the people around them. Just being in their presence makes others want to be better. That's leadership by example!

6. Am I taking 100% responsibility?

When things feel "unfair," is your first response to place blame? When someone else claims that you've acted unfairly, do you first seek to justify your conduct? The only response with complete integrity is to ask, "Have I been 100% responsible under the circumstances? Have I trusted blindly, communicated poorly, or assumed too much? What do I need to learn so this won't happen again?" People and circumstances beyond our control will continue to challenge us. When we react with integrity, we focus on our responsibilities and stay "above the line" in the process.

Just asking these six powerful questions can change your life — and your company!



ASLON Group

8401 Chagrin Road, Suite 3  
Cleveland, OH 44023  
Phone: 440-543-0334  
Fax: 440-543-0314  
www.aslongroup.com

## THE WORLD REALLY IS FLAT! CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

we are thousands of miles apart, on different time zones and different cultures, business can be conducted in real time with very effective results. It just takes a little research and the right connections to bring it all together. HP x-CEO Carly Fiorini summed it up nicely when she said "that all these forms of collaboration, namely outsourcing, off shoring, open sourcing, supply chaining, insourcing and informing, make it all possible to do business more readily because the world is becoming digital, global, virtual and personal."

In the past, it was primarily the multi-billion dollar companies with great resources who opened offices in attractive regions of the world and it was primarily the top ten search firms who were hired for these projects. But now, through technology and the opening of borders for commerce, the world really is flat....

## THE ART OF SELF LEADERSHIP



Your toughest management challenge is always yourself.

Imagine a compass—north, south, east, and west. Almost every time the word leadership is mentioned, in what direction do leaders instinctively think? South. The word leadership and most leaders' minds migrate to the people who are under their care. At leadership conferences, people generally think, "I'm going to learn how to improve my ability to lead the people... entrusted to me."

South. It's a leader's first instinct. But many people don't realize that to lead well, you need to be able to lead in all directions—north, south, east and west. For example, good leaders have to lead north—those who are over them. You can't just focus on those entrusted to your care. Through relationship and influence good leaders lead the people over them. Much of what we do through relationships and careful envisioning, is to try to influence those over us—the board and the chairman.

Effective leaders also learn how to lead east and west, laterally, in peer group settings. If you don't learn how to lead laterally, if you don't know how to create win-win situations with colleagues, the whole culture can deteriorate.

So a leader must lead down, up, and laterally. But perhaps the most overlooked leadership challenge is the one in the middle. Who is your toughest leadership challenge? Yourself.

Excerpts taken from an article on Leadership by Bill Hybels <http://www.cbmc.com/>

## FACTS & FIGURES

BY MARK MCGRAW FROM "HUMAN RESOURCE EXECUTIVE"

In a survey of 1,378 job seekers in the \$100,000+ job market, 70% of respondents said they have asked for a raise and 61% said they have asked for a raise with a positive outcome.

Tax directors and HR professionals at nearly 200 organizations were asked what they thought the trend for short-term expatriate assignments would be at their companies for the next two to three years. They said they expect the number of such assignments to:

Increase = 70%	Decrease = 5%
Remain relatively the same = 22%	Do not know = 3%

### Mission Statement

**Our mission is to be the leading integrity-based retained search firm focused on identifying, assessing and delivering world class leaders.**