

CaCIMA EMERGING LEADERS ACADEMY Creating values-based Servant Leaders

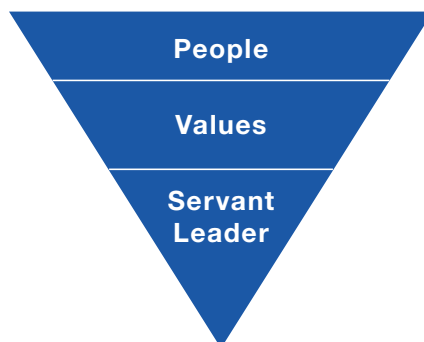
By Rick Kolster, CBC, Head Coach/Founder, Peak Performance Group

Leadership at its very core is critical for any organization to thrive and grow. Foundationally, a leader's primary responsibility is to help develop the people that they lead and help them to perform at higher levels of productivity. In other words as the founder of the program Coach Rick Kolster will tell them; "A leaders responsibility is to make the people around them better." The CaCIMA Emerging Leaders Academy participants are taught to embody this concept. The Emerging Leaders Academy was created to build better leaders for the future. The idea of building leaders is age old and has been a focus of great leaders for all of history.

The idea of servant leadership is not new, but it had its beginnings in the 70s and has become a catch phrase and leadership approach in the past 20 years. Historically leadership has been about command and control. While this method of leadership had its place and time, that time has passed. Today's employees are looking for a more involved and engaged boss. They want to be heard and have a say in the workplace. That is not to say that the employees are running the company per say, but that they have an opportunity to share and they are valued.

The Servant Leader model is one where the top down philosophy is to help the people become the best employees they can be; To help them be the best so that they have the capacity to perform.

Here at the Peak Performance Group, we truly believe that Leaders are made rather than born. Servant leaders are developed through a



conscious process of focus on a leader's ability to get the right things done and helping those responsible to get them done. Flipping the traditional organizational hierarchy upside down with people at the top and leaders at the bottom.

Servant leadership is not a simple concept, as there are many views of what it embodies. Instituting a servant leadership mindset must transcend a simple training program and must be part of an overall organizational movement. Instilling it from top to bottom is culture change. It is more complicated within a fairly mature industry as many behaviors and attitudes are entrenched.

To drive change, it takes a well-orchestrated process rather than an event or a series of events. It is more than doing a quick hit workshop and then moving on to the next thing. To change behaviors, you have to change beliefs. That takes time, effort and the intent to do so.

What are the benefits of implementing a servant leadership culture with a program like the Emerging Leaders Academy through an association?

Experience indicates that it is a way of increasing productivity, improving morale, reducing turnover

and improving overall results. What benefits do the participants hope to gain from implementing the process? Are each of the participants seeking to become "great" leaders? If so, the goal is to be sure that what they do is transformational, that it makes a difference in the long-term success of the participants. How will the benefits be measured? Let's explore this further so there is a very clear ROI for embarking on the process.

The CaCIMA Emerging Leader Academy participants embark on a three year growth track. They begin with learning about basic self-leadership skills focusing on being able to "lead themselves" first. Learning the key principles for being the best they can be. They then transition into the second year where the focus is organizational leadership. Here participants learn how to communicate with different types of people in the workplace, using core values to create the best culture and how to build strong successful teams. Finally, in year three they master the skill of coaching the team. Helping the people they will lead be more effective and using a values based mentoring style to lead.

All the while participants are placed in situations where they are given an opportunity to take the lead of group projects and even community service projects that give back to the communities they live and work in. Projects have included a proposal to the CaCIMA board a process for finding and retaining quality talent and building a program that allows plants to show they are good neighbors in their cities and towns



Above:
Emerging Leaders students spent time
volunteering at the Veterans Village
of San Diego.

Right:
Building hygiene kits for our
veterans in need.



Community service projects have had the participants putting together hygiene kits for Veterans Village in San Diego and working with the City of Onatio to help clean up and beautify a park and playground. These events help the Emerging Leaders to better understand others and give back. This reinforces the servant leadership concept to each.

Robert K. Greenleaf is generally credited with being the first to coin the term "servant leadership" in the mid 1970s. Greenleaf passed away in 1990, and his work has been picked up by a number of leadership gurus over the intervening 20 years. Names such as Stephen Covey, Ken Blanchard and others have used the term in their writings and as a piece of their teachings. It should be noted

that although no one has made it the centerpiece of their teachings, it has been an important part. The TACA Emerging Leaders Academy was developed with servant leadership as the fundamental focus.

Practical applications and case studies of organizations that have implemented the model are few and far between, but there have been a few books highlighting the concept. Jim Collins discussed the model in "Good to Great" in his description of Ken Iverson, retired CEO of Nucor Steel. In one instance he related a description of Iverson: "Ken is a very modest and humble man. I've never known a person as successful in doing what he's done that's as modest... And that's true in his private life too... He has a simple house he has lived

in for ages...he's that humble and simple."

Stephen R. Covey discusses servant leadership at some length in *The 8th Habit*. He uses the term in conjunction with Collins "Level 5 Leader" principle. His take on servant leadership is that it is the base of creating trust and cooperation in an organization. The concept is that there is a difference between authority, which is given by the organization and power, which is earned by the individual. When power is used, it creates trust and allows others to reach their full potential.

Personal responsibility is a theme that is most often associated with servant leadership. The more responsibility someone has or will take, the more likely they are to allow others the opportunity



Above & Right:
**CalCIMA Emerging Leaders spending
the day rehabbing and cleaning
a city park in Ontario.**

to act in a similar manner. One of the early concepts taught to the ELA participants is the idea of having authority vs power in an organization. The ability to use influence rather than use rank or positional authority is critical in the servant leader model. When someone is personally responsible, they invite cooperation and response rather than resistance in others. By inviting cooperation, creativity, new ideas and workflow are enhanced.

Discipline often has a negative connotation, depending on how it is used. When someone must be disciplined, it is usually a corrective action for something they have done. When someone is put on a "PIP", that is a form of discipline that is generally considered to be a negative (especially by the person who is on the receiving end). Discipline in general usage is considered to be a way that we deny ourselves of something...as in

the case of stopping smoking or losing weight or perhaps exercising. We are said to lack discipline if we fail to accomplish our goals.

The root word for discipline is "disciple". The word describes someone that is a student, but also a teacher; a follower, but also a leader. Therefore discipline is the act of creating a disciple. This helps us understand the idea of servant leadership is about creating disciples...**people within a company that can follow and lead, can both learn, and teach.**

Perhaps, then, we can define servant leadership in the following concrete terms.

"Servant leadership is the discipline of inviting a cooperative response in others by placing the interests of the organization and others before your own."

By using the Servant leadership principle combined with the organizations core values we now

have the blueprint from which to build a long-lasting culture of serving and growing the most important asset of an organization, its people. The result of this is better morale, lower turnover, a ready "bench" of leaders ready to take the helm at any minute. This will drive higher profits, lower costs and improved customer satisfaction.

The CalCIMA Emerging Leaders Academy is helping to build future, servant leaders for the concrete and Industrial Materials industry. Thus, providing the key to long term survival and growth... Great Leaders. ■

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