



Project Awareness and Common Sense

As soon as a project gets any traction, there erupts a reality and awareness challenge that would rival any ultimate fighting pay per view TV match. This is both internal and external and is REAL - fueled by the large amounts of \$ that will be involved.

After attending a UDSSA Swimming Regional or Custom Build a Pool Conference the project leader – or JOHN as we call him during the conference – needs to see “the world” as it really is. In fact, that is the definition of “Common Sense”; *the ability to see things both how you want them to be and how they have to be.*

Then there are the “facts”. The goals for the project may look something like this:

- Create a focus group or committee
- Develop a feasibility study (program driven) for all partners and associates to refer to
- Identify land for the project
- Develop schematics and design based off programming needs and business plan
- Secure funding
- Hire architect and create budget – design build preferred
- Evaluate.... is the project now real?

One of the hidden benefits for John and others involved in the project is “earned praise”. This is one of the prime directives of any effort. It is not the end goal but rather a positive outcome that any “doer” appreciates. The good job and pat on the back can be extremely worthwhile and a great motivator.

Another driving force is “profit”. Not all profit is directly monetary. Some can “profit” by padding their resume’ while others may actually create a position (job) for themselves. This is not necessarily a bad or incorrect thing to do. But the potential for conflict of interest still may exist.

The leader will think about the project more during a single week than anyone else will in a year. There is a difference between commitment and obsession. After a while the leader needs a method or plan to re-ground themselves. They are sure they are doing good and using their knowledge to forward the project in the right direction. They need an outside person(s) as a sounding board and as a checks and balances system. This person(s) needs to be an unbiased expert who has absolutely no stake in the project. Leaders are survivors and always have to be aware of what road they are on. One of the most dangerous forms of human error is forgetting what one is trying to achieve.

The leader’s best and most reliable tool is their common sense. This is probably what helped put them in the lead in the first place. Along with common sense they also need

The 6 senses:

Sense of Humor -

Sense of Purpose -

Sense of Fairness -

Sense of Honesty -

Business Sense -

Common Sense –

A project will be an outstanding community centerpiece and service. But to assume everyone is your advocate is foolish. A famous saying is: “Keep your friends close and your enemies closer”. The project will have adversaries. Identify them, talk with them, and change their minds. Many times, adversaries have a project perspective based on someone else’s point of view rather than the leaders. This is called “gossip” and can be detrimental if allowed to gather momentum. Keep the project real. Do not embellish or exaggerate.

Don't let passion move to the head of the line. Successful businesses have always known that you under promise and over deliver. Be factual and concise. Be consistent with your message. Learn to use the following 3 phrases when speaking with advocates and adversaries....

(1) *I don't know*
(2) *I need help on that*

(3) *I'll find out for you*

AND – the project not only includes the building but more importantly the PEOPLE who will deliver the services. Always expound the virtues of the staff who will serve the public. The leader can take some tips from the **A I M** principle the staff will eventually use

Everyone is in the SERVICE BUSINESS. "**A I M** to please!"

CODE WORD **AIM**.

Appreciated = always make people feel their efforts are appreciated. Too many people confuse the "appreciation factor" with ego.

Important = make someone feel important whenever possible. This applies to both clients, co-workers, and acquaintances. EVERYONE.

More = give people more that they expect and more than they have paid for.
Quantities of Quality!

People must continually be willing to deviate from what has worked in the past, with hopes of a finer model for the future. If we do not invent or find something new, we will at least have a chance to improve what we already have. If you want to make some enemies, change something! Boredom occurs when you're learning curve goes flat. Never quit learning about aquatics and ways you can do it better. Don't let structure slow you down. Planning is great, Strategic Planning (so-so) and mezzo/macro/micro cycles/plans may be important but refrain from doing things the same way every time just because they have worked in the past. Look for ways to be creative and still maintain consistency. Without creativity and flexibility, it's too easy to get into a rut, and a rut is nothing more than a grave with both ends kicked out.

Work unconventionally. Don't just look for opportunities to do something innovative, create the opportunity. Aggressively pursue change.

"A good plan aggressively executed right now is far better than
a perfect plan executed next week." *General George Patton*

Necessity - "There is no contending with necessity, and we should be very careful how we censure those that submit to it. It's one thing to be able to do what we want, and another to be forced to do what we must." Necessity is usually the first stimulus to any project. Those who conduct it with prudence, perseverance, and energy, will rarely fail. If viewed in this manner, it can be a blessing rather than a crisis, and produce results. Necessity of action takes away some of the fear of the act, enabling people to make bolder decisions. The vigor of the human mind quickly appears when there is no longer any place for doubt and hesitation.

Expect the best; expect to reach your goals.

Suggestions:

(1) It is your attitude at the beginning of a project that will bring about a successful outcome.

(2) Your attitude towards others determines their attitude toward you. The success you have will largely depend on how well you relate to others. We are all interdependent.

(3) Before you achieve the level you want, you must think, act, talk, and conduct yourself as would the level of person you wish to become.

(4) The more elite the person, the better attitude you will find. A great attitude is not the result of success; success is the result of a great attitude.

(5) The deepest craving for a person is recognition and self-esteem. To be needed, to feel important, to be recognized and appreciated.

LEADERSHIP Make it FUN to be around you. Get rid of "sad dogs who spread doom". Surround yourself with enthusiastic people.

Leadership would be EASY if no people were involved!

Key Leadership recommendations:

- Create a unique culture for your project.
- Like your associates and what you do.
- Listen deeply.
- Visit your competition to find out what they are doing.
- Choose a priority {and clearly, repeatedly, religiously, urgently, attentively, passionately focus your discussions and energy on that priority. Do something - right now!
- Subscribe to the "Dog Sled" leadership principle: If you're not the lead dog, the scenery never changes.

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