

# **The Lucky 13**

## 13 Strategies for Becoming & Being a Great Leader

By Vic Pepe

### Preface

Who am I, and why am I  
writing this book?

Let's start here: Decades  
ago, between loads of whites and  
darks at the laundromat, I  
suddenly realized while scanning  
jobs in the newspaper that "*I am  
not qualified for any of this  
stuff.*"

I needed to gain marketable  
skills, a degree, or the ability  
to provide for my growing  
family.

My wife and I recently had our first child and struggled to make ends meet, let alone support another hungry mouth. I recently lost my job in an industry that, years earlier, I had ditched college for. I had dedicated years to the music industry, but after some success as a writer-producer, the Seattle grunge movement unexpectedly left me without work. And now, at least according to the New Jersey Star Ledger classified section, I lacked the qualifications to do one damned thing to make an honest living.

I wasted the next ten minutes feeling sorry for myself before

picking up the newspaper again. Ah ha. If my sparse qualifications failed to meet the requirements of jobs I didn't want anyway, I would look for something I wanted to do—or, at least, something I could convince someone I was qualified to do. I naturally felt drawn to technology jobs and wondered if my experience in recording and music technology might help me break into that field.

I decided then and there, among the laundromat's soap and suds, to forge my own path into the technology sector. As fate would have it, my next job did not fizzle out as expected. In fact, it blossomed into a

decades-long career in which I continue to thrive in today.

"I am the luckiest guy in technology." That has become the lasting theme of my story.

\*\*\*

Back then, I had no compass, definitive direction, or reliable guidance pointing me toward career success. When the time came to move into the fast-paced business world, I began my journey without a clear roadmap and felt like swinging in the wind after my first career choice failed. I possessed solid technical skills and an incredible work ethic but needed to gain the knowledge to turn those tools into a career. And I

certainly had no map to help me excel, even if I did find a job.

You can't teach someone how to succeed, but you can create an absolute awareness of the requirements needed on your journey to the top. I now realize that beyond any technical capabilities, it all comes down to an unwavering commitment to the fundamentals - the "*Lucky 13*," or the *13 Core Competencies* required to guide your actions and behavior as a leader. These fundamentals involve not just technical knowledge but also how you communicate, how you conduct yourself in the professional realm, how you approach

strategic versus tactical challenges, how you engage and execute, how you handle and learn from problems, and so much more.

What follows are my experiences, stories, acute observations, and things I have learned in my long journey to success. Above all else, I keep learning!