

SALES AND SERVICE

# Excellence

THE MAGAZINE OF TEAM LEADERSHIP

DECEMBER 2009

**Negotiation  
Power**

**Your Virtual  
Brand**

**Inspire Your  
Employees**

**Curtis Finch  
CEO of Journyx**



*"Sales and Service Excellence is a phenomenal resource for sales professionals who want to grow and achieve more in their careers."*

—Tom Hopkins, AMERICA'S #1 SALES TRAINER

www.LeaderExcel.com

# Sales and Service Excellence

Volume 9 Number 12

The Magazine of Team Leadership

December 2009

TECHNOLOGY/VIRTUAL BRAND

## Your Virtual Brand

*Exercise personal leadership.*



by Deborah Dumaine, Catherine Mullally, and Brian Penry

**M**OST OF THE TALK ON DEVELOPING A personal leadership brand focuses on live interaction—how you present yourself in face-to-face situations, or in situations where peers, subordinates, and the marketplace actually see or hear you. But in our global, virtual world, your interactions are often remote. These days, you lead more and more in three ways: by writing, in virtual meetings, and through the Internet. You may be an outstanding face-to-face leader; now you need to *define your brand* in virtual workspace.

When is the last time you Googled yourself? Try it again. You may be surprised at how much more information is available about you since last you checked. This, too, is part of your virtual brand. While it may be tough to change what the world is saying about you, you can take charge of how you speak, write, and represent yourself and increase your impact.

### You Are Your Word

In today's virtual workspace, people are often led and inspired by leaders whom they've never met. That makes written communication a critical manifestation of your virtual brand. Many leaders forget how much of their leadership is done through writing, even in ordinary tasks like e-mail. Each time you commit yourself in writing, you're



leading—making decisions, managing, guiding, collaborating, giving feedback. As you motivate and inspire, you create your brand. Here are three ways to improve your leadership brand in writing.

**1. Motivate your audience by considering their needs.** Analyze your readers' needs, and include only the information your readers need. Drive

action by answering three questions: Why am I writing this? What main message do I want readers to remember? What do I want readers to do?

**2. Sound a call to action.** Clearly delineate what you need your readers to do. Include action steps, timeframes, and a request for action. Add headlines—and make them specific. Instead of "Rationale," try "Rationale: to avoid potential liability." Include "Action requested," "Next steps," and "Suggested deadline." What is one key message you want your readers to remember? That's your bottom line. It should go at the beginning and include a *so what?* statement. Explaining your purpose in writing will motivate your readers, drive the action you want, and position you as a sure-footed decision-maker with a dynamic brand image.

**3. Cultivate a style that matches your virtual brand.** Also express compassion and support. Avoid judgmental terms or corrective feedback in e-mails—save that for live or phone meetings. Your readers should also be able to identify your style by *the look* of your communications. Style includes word choice, sentence and paragraph length and structure, and use of headlines. Keep your audience in mind. Use a simpler style for your in-house

### CONTENTS

NICHOLAS READ	<i>Selling to the Top</i> . . . . .	3
GENE SICILIANO	<i>Eight Budgeting Tips</i> . . . . .	4
JOHN TSCHOHL	<i>Customer Service Steps</i> . . . . .	4
SHARON DREW MORGEN	<i>Buyer's Environment</i> . . . . .	5
ANGELA HRIBAR	<i>Before the Recovery</i> . . . . .	6
STEVE FRETZIN	<i>Recruit Successfully</i> . . . . .	6
BRIAN DIETMEYER	<i>Negotiation Power</i> . . . . .	7

JOE CALLOWAY	<i>Keeping Customers Loyal</i> . . . . .	8
STEVE LOPEZ	<i>Performance Feedback</i> . . . . .	8
BRENDA BENCE	<i>You and Your Company</i> . . . . .	9
ERNEST F. ORIENTE	<i>Music Of Performance</i> . . . . .	10
HARVEY MACKAY	<i>Beat Rejection</i> . . . . .	10
ANNE-MARIE FINK	<i>The Value of Value</i> . . . . .	11
SHANNON KAVANAUGH	<i>To Plan or Not To Plan?</i> . . . . .	12

JOE TAKASH	<i>Retain Top Talent</i> . . . . .	12
CURT FINCH	<i>Inspire Your Employees</i> . . . . .	13
BJ BUENO	<i>Create a Magnetic Brand</i> . . . . .	14
WENDY WEISS	<i>Build Relationships</i> . . . . .	14
JENNY HAMBY	<i>Successful Seminars</i> . . . . .	15
MANUEL DIOTTE	<i>Create an 'A List'</i> . . . . .	16
MARK HUNTER	<i>Close too Quickly?</i> . . . . .	16

# Inspire Your Employees

*Bring out the best in your people.*



by Curt Finch

**W**HEN I STARTED MY COMPANY, Journyx, 13 years ago, I had no idea what I was getting into. I am a programmer and technology geek by nature and I left my programming job to start my own company with nothing but an idea and a dream. Back then, I did not have the experience needed to effectively manage people. I had to learn these skills through trial and error, and I had to learn them fast, in order to keep the company going. After all, human resources are a company's most valuable asset.

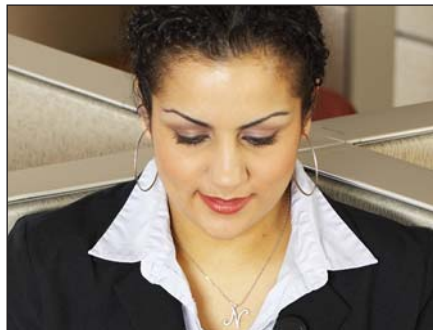
Over the years, I've done every job there is in the company. I've been the accountant, the software developer, the marketing and PR professional, the testing department, integration services, customer technical support, and sales. I have lost sleep when we were close to missing payroll, watched as competitors copied our software bit for bit and lied about us to prospects, and then celebrated along with hard-working employees as we achieved success. Today, Journyx has 50 employees and several million dollars in sales with no outside investment. Here are some of the things I learned about managing and motivating employees to reach their highest potential.

## Hire Diverse

Businesses today face fierce competition on all sides, regardless of industry. The only way to survive in such an environment is to be relentlessly creative. New products, services and ideas are the best way to outshine the competition and win market share.

In order to keep creativity alive in a company, you have to surround yourself with different types of people. Forget partnerships, listen to your customers, and hire high school kids, foreigners, people from other races and religions, and Martians, if you can find them. Different people bring different perspectives to the table, something you need not only to succeed, but merely to survive. The truth is that no matter how smart you are, you cannot be as innovative as you need to be all by yourself.

Here in Austin, Texas, we have the luxury of proximity to the University of Texas (UT). From this well of intellect we continually draw for ideas and young energetic labor. It is a well that never runs dry. In the past, we have hired interns to work on both marketing and legal projects, depending on their area of study. Since Journyx is a technology company and UT has a computer science department, we also hire IT people and developers. Not only do they bring a fresh perspective during their internships, but if they are a good fit, they can remain with us upon graduation and become a long-term asset to the company. If not, they can get a letter of recommendation and some real world experience to put on their resumes. It's a win-win situation.



## Be Flexible

Another key to effective resource management is to be flexible about allowing employees time off for extracurricular activities, such as college or graduate school classes. For example, we have an employee at Journyx who is currently working on her bachelor's degree in social work, which has nothing to do with her work at Journyx, and we know that we will lose her upon her graduation. Even so, we allow her to take off the time that she needs to accommodate classes, internships and other requirements. I look at it this way: she is important to me as a person, not just an employee, and I do not want to hold back her education even though her career choice has nothing to do with furthering the interests of Journyx. It's vital to take a vested interest in not only your company and its profits, but also the people who make up that company.

Your employees have lives outside of the office; the more you recognize

this and support them in the things that matter to them, the more loyal and productive they will be in return.

## Build People Up

I learned a long time ago that I can only be a mentor when I know what I'm talking about, which is not everywhere. Having said that, I'm good at lots of things and when those things are relevant, I try to step in and help. I've found that when I roll my sleeves up and dig in alongside an employee who needs some help, they see that I care about them and in turn, that makes them care more about the company and the job they're doing.

Also, let people know when they are doing a good job, as well. I like the phrase, "catch people doing something right" because it expresses the best way to mentor. And as Napoleon Hill stated, "It is literally true that you can succeed best and quickest by helping others to succeed." Encourage people to do more of what they're good at. Find their hidden talents. There's no point in spending lots of time telling people where they're messed up.

## Think Outside the Box

One of the most difficult tasks for a manager is to keep employees motivated, especially during tough times. It can be especially difficult to do this when money is tight and bonuses are not an option. A couple of years ago, I decided to do something creative and different in order to motivate our sales team. I bet them that they would not exceed their quota for Q1 by 33 percent and promised that if they did, the entire leadership team would dye their hair. Well, the sales team did not exceed their quota by 33 percent—they actually blew the doors off and beat their numbers by 45 percent. Since we lost the bet, we held up our end of the bargain and dyed our hair neon blue for a week, and I have pictures to prove it. (My wife has since forbidden me to do this again.) Remember: you can't take yourself too seriously.

As you can see, there are many ways that managers today can keep employees happy and their performance high. All it takes is a little understanding and the willingness to try new things. The investment for such initiatives is low, but the return just might surprise you. **SSE**

*Curt Finch is the CEO of Journyx, speaker and author of All Your Money Won't Another Minute Buy: Valuing Time as a Business Resource. Visit [www.journyx.com](http://www.journyx.com) or [www.project-management-blog.com](http://www.project-management-blog.com).*

**ACTION: Diversify your workforce.**