

DEFINING

LEA



LEADERSHIP



WHEN YOU ARE THE NEW LEADER

When coauthor Larry Klumas was in charge of a traveling management assistance team at Headquarters Strategic Air Command (SAC), he visited 16 bases in a year. He traveled with 8 to 20 persons assessing every aspect of the facilities organization. He saw some great organizations and some poor ones.

Invariably those organizations that were great had leaders with experience and vision, and who could impart that wisdom to the organization. Those that were bad had poor leaders who:

- micro managed because they did not know how a properly lead organization should function, were afraid that others might make wrong decisions, or were skittish that others might embarrass them (a lack of experience), or
- had no clue as to what was happening, how the components of facilities management interrelated, or where the organization was going (a lack of vision).

It is clear that Leadership is the driving force of a well-operating organization.

BY LAWRENCE J. KLUMAS, CPE, AND JANET L. KLUMAS, PH.D., J.D.

THEY WANT DIRECTION

Too often a facilities organization lacks leadership. There are many reasons, but most of these involve the person in charge—the director, or another office above the organization, or those who hire the foregoing. Too often they are qualified technically or professionally in some specific area, but they lack the primary ingredients, experience and vision! Leadership means knowing who you are (the experience component) and where you are going and how to get there (the vision component).

When Larry arrives at a facilities management organization, he thinks, “What do coworkers want to hear, to see?” For what he says to them, and how he acts, is remembered.

If the new leader offers nothing, that is exactly what is remembered—nothing! It is important to give coworkers something to remember immediately.

We have developed an answer to the question of “What is it coworkers would like to hear?” Simply put, they want direction. That direction has three components: who they are, where they are going, and how they are going to get there.

In this article those three components are explained. These three areas establish credibility and begin the building of trust, the binding ingredient of leadership. Leadership prepares and guides performance on the stage where the individual and organization can succeed.

THE STARTING VIEWPOINT, “WHO YOU ARE!”

Before you can answer the first question “who they are,” you need to know who you are. You need to understand your leadership style. You need to know how you problem solve. Those who do not reflect on who they are lack experience and have no clear vision of where they are headed. Reflection on who you are produces insight and insight produces results.

Engineer-leaders think linearly. They go from point A to point B in the most direct way possible, and don’t take much time getting there. They feel a need to be efficient. This puts a premium on a focus, the end point, and the means of getting there as rapidly as possible.

Use the following problem solving technique to produce the straightest line from point A (where you are) to point B (where you are going). This technique is not new, but often is not used in the deliberate disciplined way as it should be. Its benefit is that it causes one to think, not simply react. This structured method includes the following steps:

- Problem definition
- Problem analysis
- Generating possible solutions
- Analyzing each solution
- Selecting the best solution(s)
- Planning the next course of action (next step)



An engineer-leader doesn’t simply discuss matters unendingly; he or she discusses in order to arrive at the next point of action, the plan, the solution. It is not an exercise without an anticipated outcome—an outcome is what is demanded. Using this structured discipline method gives you a focus for being both efficient and effective.

Leaders in the facility organization, at a college, university, or school, come from all disciplines. It really doesn’t matter whether you are an engineer, an architect or planner, or some other qualifying discipline, the way you make decisions affects the organization. Your decisions as leader dictate how *you* will set the organization on its path to the future.

The facilities function on a campus is basically problem solving, whether it is a space need, a repair, some repetitious maintenance, or a service. You are now armed with a practical decision-making tool.

You can now answer the first question, “Who they are,” because you know who *you* are.

WHO THEY ARE?

Too often there is a tendency to rely on a job description to define who we are. Job descriptions are important as a general guideline. Well-written ones list clear and simple duties and responsibilities. But we are more than our job description! It is how we perform those duties and responsibilities that creates who we are.

Most importantly, we are a critical and important element of the mission of our institution. Here’s a story illustrating this point.

Larry was a commander of the facilities unit at Dyess AFB in Texas, a SAC base. The facilities compound was close to the flight line. From the conference room you could see the B-52s on alert. At a weekly newcomers meeting he would point out the window and say, “See those aircraft on alert – they don’t fly unless you come to work!”

Likewise, in education, students don’t graduate unless we in the facilities department come to work and do our jobs. We make the teaching and learning environment conducive to study for the faculty and student and create comfortable and safe working condition for the staff.

It is clear that if we do not perform with the customer in mind, we compromise that for which we are responsible. We are important, whatever job we have been hired to perform, and we are integral to the student’s education. The education mission depends on us.

WHERE ARE THEY GOING?

Knowing who you are, and knowing who they are, enables you to answer the next question posed, “Where are they going?” The following story illustrate this point.

Larry completed his last military assignment at Vandenberg AFB in Lompoc, California. His office was a mile from the headquarters building. The commanding two-star general would call and say, "Get up here; I want to talk with you." And so, he would drive up to the general's office.

Between his office and the general's office there was one stop-light. After making this trip a number of times he was perplexed as to why he always seemed to hit the light when it was red. Why couldn't he hit the light when it was green? He decided to keep a log of how many times the light was red and how many times the light was green. After a month he tallied the marks and discovered there were the same number of green as there were red.

He concluded that when the light was red, the experience was for 15 seconds. When the light was green he sailed through it and experienced the green for three seconds. Red was in his mind's eye five times longer than green.

Relating this discovery to the mission of the facilities organization, he realized that customers see the work and services provided as a red light/green light situation. If something is wrong in their world for which facilities is responsible (a light fixture is broken, the drain is clogged, a sign hangs crooked, it's too hot or too cold), they experience the red light.

The broken element required to be fixed is in front of them for the longer duration. If the light fixture works, the drain is clear, the sign hangs straight, or it is just the right temperature, they experienced the green light. The positive green light experience is cumulatively of shorter duration than the negative red light experience, and thus is less memorable.

The job of all facilities personnel, and each of us who provide work or service, is to shorten the more memorable red light feeling by keeping the customers' environment working right. When things are tended to and fixed rapidly, the customers will have a more positive feeling than they would ordinarily under the actual downtime scenario.

This answers the second question, "Where are they going?" We are re-

sponsible for the facilities environment for all campus personnel. Keep the experience green!

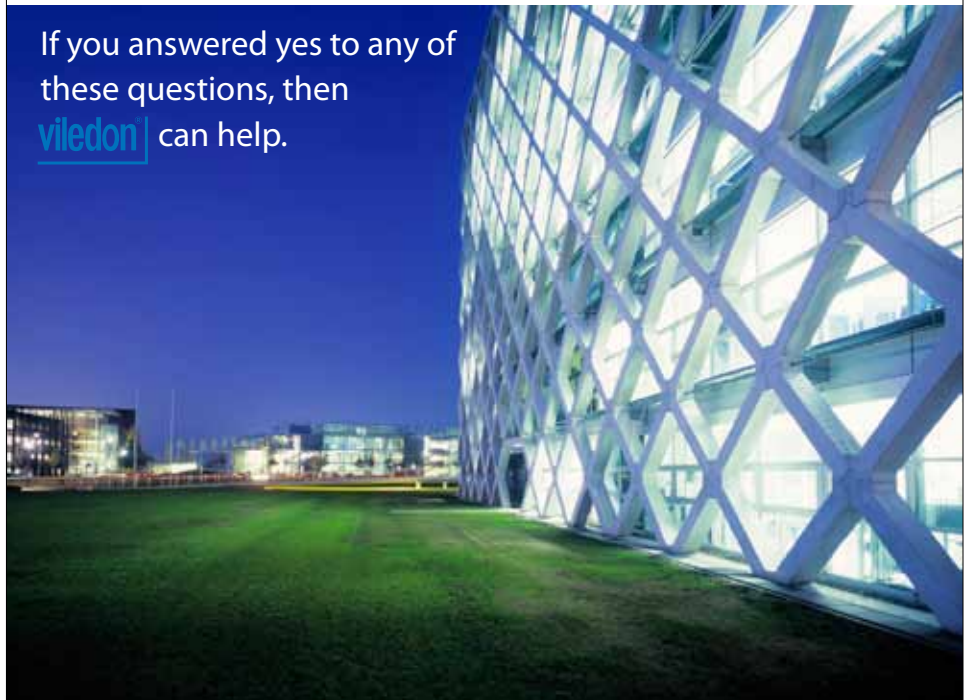
HOW ARE THEY GOING TO GET THERE?

There are many "how to" suggestions to accomplish those duties and responsibilities for which each of us is responsible. In facilities it doesn't matter whether you are a custodian,



- *Would you* like to better utilize the time of your existing preventative maintenance team?
- *Would you* like to increase energy savings?
- *Would you* like to improve the indoor air quality in your facilities?
- *Would you* like to reduce the amount of material going to landfills?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then **viledon** can help.



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groundskeeper, auto mechanic, plumber, lead, supervisor, or manager. It's our collective responsibility to provide the green light to our customer. We can do this with a set of principles and guidelines to guide us.

We must focus on those principles or guidelines to produce results. There are many, but these five lead to success in the personal and organizational workplace:

Number 5 – Don't scrimp on training and professional development. Training provides the mechanism for acquiring new skills. Training can be formal or informal (on-the-job). Obtain as much training as possible. Document training received. The right equipment allows for greater effectiveness and efficiencies, no matter what the skill, and it makes the workplace safe. Both training and equipment are paramount to achieving success.

Number 4 – Be conscious of your influence. An organization is the aggregation of the skills, talents, and experience each person brings. When one person enters or one person leaves, the organization changes. It changes because of the influence each person has on another. Recognize that your influence can be positive or negative. How you perform technically and personally makes a difference in the work place. Make sure your influence is positive!

Number 3 – Be scrupulously honest. First, what does scrupulous mean? Scrupulous is a principle of action. It is intrinsic in your actions; it is second nature. It is a basic core value. This also means you do not lie, cheat, or steal in any measure, nor do you tolerate anyone else who does. Avoid these actions and confirm the principle of scrupulous honesty in accomplishing your daily tasks. Honesty breeds trust.

Number 2 – Do whatever job is given to the best of your ability. Sometimes you are given a job that you feel is beneath you. It is not challenging—you don't like it. Nonetheless, it is always important you perform that job to the absolute best of your ability. Find out what is needed, give it full effort and seek out more to do. You are gaining experience. You do not say, "That's not my job!" Whatever is given to you, *is* your job! Rewards will result.

Number 1 – Seek out and create meaningful professional relationships. Good strong professional relationships are based on mutual trust. One can count on the other without worrying that the job won't be done and know that the project won't be compromised. It is important to seek out these opportunities. Professional relationships exist at your same level, at a higher level and at a lower level. Do not wait for someone else to initiate a professional relationship, seek it yourself. Positive professional relationships are the foundation of personal and organizational success.

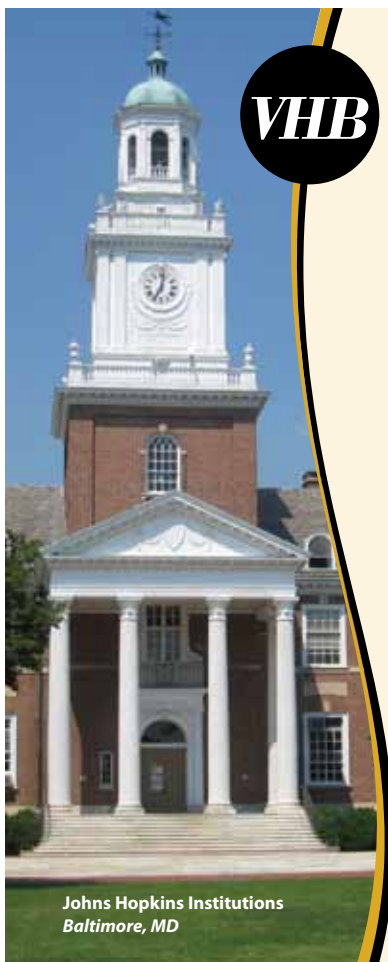
SUMMARY

When there is a new leader in the organization, the organization will change. Coworkers want direction as to who they are, where they are going, and how they are going to get there. There are a number of ways to illustrate those answers to coworkers.

Good leaders call upon their experience and vision to guide the organization. It is important that a leader recognize who he or she is, and provide the principles and guidelines needed for personal and organizational success.

It is equally important this direction be given as early as possible. Do not wait; the organization waits for your direction. Make it positive. You are the leader! 💡

Larry Klumas, formerly of Occidental College, is principal of Klumas Associates, Thayne, WY; e-mail him at lawrencej.klumas@gmail.com. Janet Klumas is co-principal of Klumas Associates; she can be reached at jlklumas@aol.com. This is her first article for *Facilities Manager*.



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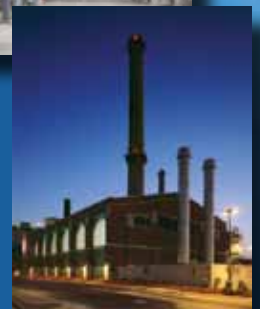
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