

# Tennessee Government Leadership

## LINK

Newsletter from the Tennessee Government Leadership Council



March 2016

Volume 4, Issue 1

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### Council Committees

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- ◆ Communication
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## Tennessee State Government

### SPOTLIGHT ON LEADERSHIP: COMMISSIONER RANDY BOYD ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



**What is one characteristic that you believe every leader should possess and why?**

A vision that is both aspirational and inspirational, one that motivates all around them to do mighty things!

**What is one mistake you witness leaders making more frequently than others?**

They often do not clearly communicate precise expectations that are measurable. Their team needs to know what success looks like for the team and exactly what their contribution is supposed to be.

**What advice can you give to help leaders avoid making that mistake?**

Over communicate, which is something in my experience never happens. Saying it once, emailing it once, is not communicating.

**What do you think is the biggest challenge facing leaders today and why?**

Defining the good from the great. We have so many resources and so many options that it is often easy to let the good get in the way of the great. Taking time to focus on doing only the things that matter most and not doing the others is the hardest part of being a leader.

**What strategies are needed to meet that challenge?**

First, one must have clear, quantifiable objectives. The great ideas move you further and faster toward your objective. Good ideas are nice to do, but don't move you toward your objective.

**What are the advantages of having the right people in leadership roles within an organization?**

It is everything. With a great team, you can achieve superior results even with limited resources and a mediocre strategy. With a bad team, no vision, resources or strategy will overcome them. The team is everything.

**If you are interviewing for a key leadership role within your organization, what top three competencies do you look for and why?**

Being a level 5 leader (see Jim Collins: mission before ego), ability to listen and understand first, and good communication skills.

**What are you doing to ensure you continue to grow and develop as a leader?**

Constantly surround myself with other great leaders and learn by listening to and observing them, as well as living outside of my comfort zone at all times so that I am forced to learn and grow.

**What advice would you give someone going into a leadership position for the first time?**

Know where you want to go and what you want to accomplish, and then surround yourself with the best people possible that share your vision.

**As a leader, generating trust is essential, especially during times of change. What are some leadership factors that tend to generate organizational trust?**

Honesty, integrity, and transparency; be humble and always quick to accept responsibility when things don't go your team's way.

**What would you like your legacy as a leader in public service to be?**

To create a culture that is values-centered and that dreams big; that dares mighty things!

## Thank you Commissioner Boyd!



**“Level 5 leaders are a study in duality:  
modest and willful, humble and fearless.  
To quickly grasp this concept think of  
President Abraham Lincoln who never  
let his ego get in the way of his primary  
ambition for the larger cause of an  
enduring great nation.”**

**Jim Collins**

## 2016 TGL Book club

Written by April Romero  
Co-Creator of the TGL Book Club

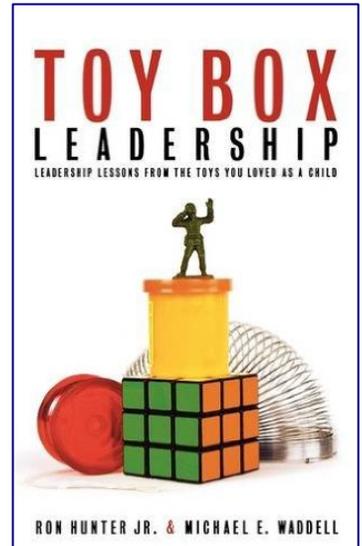
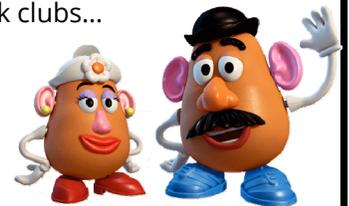
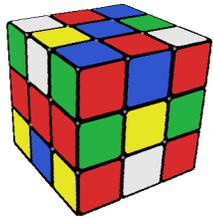
This is now our third year of the Tennessee Government Leadership Book Club. Last year at the Annual Leadership Conference five spots in the book club were handed out as door prizes, which increased our club size to 55! The amazing response to this year's invitation certainly made our record. Within 16 minutes of sending the invitation to join the book club, the 55 spots were completely full.

Then due to the VERY QUICK filling of the club, Dr. Trish Holliday began to start hearing pleas to increase the size of the club even MORE. In December 2015, the decision was made to conduct two book clubs in 2016. The first book club will hold the original 55 participants and be led by Trish. The second book club will use the same material, study the same books and be led by Dr. Ernie Ricketts and Antonio Meeks.

Because of this amazing news, you need to know the wait list is MUCH smaller now!!! The same guidelines will still hold true that if you miss two meetings in the year, you will have to give up your position because we do still have a waiting list. So if you have any interest at all in leadership books, please email [April.Romero@tn.gov](mailto:April.Romero@tn.gov) to get added to the current wait list. Your chance to get in is now greatly increased.

The Kickoff Orientation was held in the Multimedia Room in the TN Tower on January 21, 2016. The book club members received the book, *Toybox Leadership: Leadership Lessons from the Toys You Loved as a Child* by Ron Hunter and Michael E. Waddell. Our first book study meeting was engaging and thought provoking.

Please read some of the additional articles about departments starting their own book clubs...



**In other words, without consciously knowing it, our childhood toys have already taught us some of the most important leadership lessons we need to succeed.**

**Ron Hunter & Michael Waddell**



## THDA Book Club

Written by Terry Malone  
TGMI 2008, LEAD Tennessee 2012

Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA) has approved two book clubs for our employees beginning in 2016. The first one is for any THDA employee and the second one is for members of the Leadership Academy. THDA is excited to roll out these self-improvement opportunities to everyone.

In the THDA Book Club, participants will read an assigned leadership book and meet to discuss how they can apply the relevant information to their work. The first book in this club will be *The Fred Factor* by Mark Sanborn. Patricia Smith, Director of Public Affairs, (LEAD TN 2013) has organized this opportunity. Patricia wanted to offer a "taste" of the leadership training to all staff to whet their appetites for further development. If interest is strong, a second book will be scheduled.

The second book club is part of THDA's Leadership Academy, which I will be leading. The Leadership Academy is an opportunity for emerging leaders within THDA to explore what leadership is and what it means, and to help them determine if they want to continue their growth as a leader. The purpose of the Book Club for Leadership Academy is to read books that relate to the core competencies they are learning that will help them develop a synergy between that knowledge and their professional career.

During my discussion with the Leadership Academy participants, I set expectations for the book club. These included:

**Make it a conversation.** This isn't a book report, quiz, or checking up on whether you have read the book. I assume you applied to the Leadership Academy Book Club to participate. I will facilitate a conversation about important topics, using the book as the jumping off point.

**Connect it to real life.** In the end it isn't about the books, it is about what we have learned from the book. The conversation will center on the principles, examples and ideas in the book and how they connect to real life and work.

**Help people apply what they learned.** I am hopeful that you enjoy the books, but more importantly I hope you ask yourself: What can I do differently or better because of what I learned?

As our future leaders explore the five core competencies for this year's Leadership Academy, they will be reading these books to support the competency discussed:

Service Leadership—*The Truth About Leadership* by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner

Business Acumen—*The Fred Factor* by Mark Sanborn

Drive for Results—*The Energy Bus* by Jon Gordon

Managerial Courage—*Give and Take* by Adam Grant

Change Management—*Influencer* by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, David Maxfield, Ron McMillan, and Al Switzler

The Leadership Academy Book Club will meet every other month beginning in March.



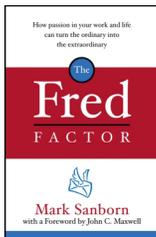
Department of  
**Intellectual &  
Developmental Disabilities**

## Middle Tennessee Book Club

Written by Tom O'Brien  
LEAD Tennessee, 2010

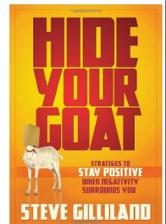
In 2015, as part of the DIDD Academy Alumni Leadership initiative, a Book Club was formed in the Middle Tennessee Region. The club was a "Pay it Forward" plan since Michelle Smith and Tom O'Brien had been fortunate to participate with April Romero in the TGL Book Club as charter members. Dr. Levi Harris, DIDD Middle Regional Director, enthusiastically invited us to include all of his Middle TN Region managers in this club.

The group has met at least every other month and is resuming March 2016. During the interim periods we were blessed with Lunch and Learn leadership opportunities.



The group has read and studied, *The Fred Factor*, *Hide Your Goat* and *Think Big Act Small*. In every case the managers took basic concepts from each of these books and added them to their managerial tool kit and applied them in a fashion that would improve employee morale and engagement in the Middle TN Region of DIDD. For example, during the time studying *The Fred Factor*, posters were placed in every office space with the picture of Fred asking "Are you a Fred?" This inspired people to ask how they could gain the characteristics of passion for work that Fred the Postman exhibited in his daily work life.

While reading *Hide Your Goat*, managers reflected on their managerial vulnerabilities that always led to issues with certain employees and were able to develop strategies to improve communication with those employees.



Reading *Think Big Act Small* reminded employees of the importance of managerial humility, meditation, making preparation for each day and daily goal setting.

The group also sponsored the Lunch and Learn presentations by the three members of DIDD upper management, the Commissioner of DOHR, DOHR Strategic Learning Solutions leaders and local physicians and spiritual leaders. The club will resume meeting on March 31, 2016 and will continue the process of reading and learning from books and motivational leaders. In the words of President John F Kennedy, "Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other."

**"Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other."**

**President John F. Kennedy**

## If You Want It Done Right, You Don't Have to Do It Yourself!

Marcus Dodson  
TGMI 2014, LEAD Tennessee 2016

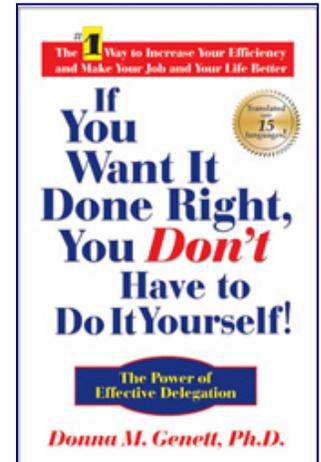
This fun, quick, and easy read makes delegating seem simple. The author compares management and leadership styles of two "identical twins, James and Jones" to explain six steps to effective delegation. The history of each character and how they handle their work day shows that each are hard workers, dedicated to their positions and enjoy helping their staff. Jones is relaxed, mentors his employees and celebrates his department's successes. James is overwhelmed, has a "piled up desk" and never has time for his employees.

James is intrigued by Jones and seeks his help. He discovered Jones learned effective delegating the hard way. Jones uses his experience to teach and coach James on the six steps to effectively delegate that include:

1. Prepare beforehand
2. Clearly define the task to be completed
3. Outline the time frame for completion
4. Define the delegate's level of authority
5. Identify and initiate checkpoints
6. Have a debrief session when the assignment is complete

As James learns and implements the delegating steps, he makes mistakes and continues to seek Jones' assistance. He takes immediate responsibility and apologizes to his employees for his mistakes. James assigns the tasks he is working on to his employees and utilizes the delegation techniques he learned. Before long, James realizes delegating allows him to accomplish more with less stress. He also learns effective delegation can reduce errors, increase efficiency, build team work, improve coworker relations and employee morale, and increase job performance.

I recommend this fun and easy to read book. The six steps to effective delegation described in this book can be utilized in our daily work to reap similar benefits.



**“In the best of times, our days are numbered anyway. So it would be a crime against nature for any generation to take the world crisis so solemnly that it puts off enjoying those things for which we were designed in the first place: the opportunity to do good work, to enjoy friends, to fall in love, to hit a ball, and to bounce a baby.”**

**Alistaire Cooke**

## LATEST NEWS IN THE LEADERSHIP BLACK BELT PROGRAM



The 2016 Vision – Black belt committee members include: Kristi Astafan, Alicia Cone, Marcus Dodson, Tammy Golden, Shannon Hall, Kelly Lancaster, Sheila Marchman, Lynette Porter, and Patrice Steinhart.

The Vision committee’s focus for the first quarter of 2016 has been improving and documenting the responsibilities of the committee in a guidebook to assist future / new committee members. In addition, several administrative website functions have been built to expedite the reporting function and belt approvals.

The committee has also been reviewing belts and will be focusing on approving and awarding belts with the first awards scheduled for the April TGL Council meeting. If you have a belt pending approval, watch your email for correspondences from the committee.

We invite you to celebrate with us the accomplishments of the individuals and the overall Black Belt Program in the statistics listed below.

There are 55 belts being reviewed:

- 22-Yellow
- 17-Orange
- 11-Blue
- 3-Green
- 2-Black

To date, 114 belts have been approved:

- 58-Yellow
- 26-Orange
- 16-Blue
- 11-Green
- 3-Black

White Belt	Yellow Belt	Orange Belt	Blue Belt	Green Belt	Black Belt	
Graduate From a DOHR- sponsored leadership development program and register online	Strategic Development Points <b>60</b>	Strategic Development Points <b>55</b>	Strategic Development Points <b>50</b>	Strategic Development Points <b>45</b>	Strategic Development Points <b>40</b>	
	Service Points <b>20</b>	Service Points <b>30</b>	Service Points <b>40</b>	Service Points <b>50</b>	Service Points <b>60</b>	
	<b>TOTAL Points Per Belt</b>	<b>80 Points</b>	<b>85 Points</b>	<b>90 Points</b>	<b>95 Points</b>	
<b>Total points accumulated for Black Belt Level</b>					Pay It Forward Project	<b>50 Points</b>
						<b>= 500 Points</b>

**All belts represent 34,483 hours of service entered by participants:**

<b>6,323 - External Service</b>	<b>4,589 - Internal Service</b>
<b>2,460 - Pay It Forward Projects</b>	<b>21,111 - Strategic Development</b>

**There are 253 active members representing 40 different agencies in the program.**

The committee appreciates everyone’s patience as we work to improve the program and review belts. If you recently signed up and have not received your white belt or have questions regarding the program, please contact us at [Leadership.Council@tn.gov](mailto:Leadership.Council@tn.gov).

# “Leaders are Readers!”

Greg Adams, Tennessee’s Chief Operating Officer

## The CLO’s Top Ten “Must Reads” for the Quarter

- *4 Disciplines of Execution* by Chris McChesney, Sean Covey and Jim Huling
- *Accelerate Building Strategic Agility for a Faster-Moving World* by John Kotter
- *All In: How the Best Managers Create a Culture of Belief and Drive Big Results* by Adrian Gostick and Chester Elton
- *Buy In* by John Kotter
- *Death by Meeting* by Patrick Lencioni
- *Disrupt: Think the Unthinkable to Spark Transformation in your Business* by Luke Williams
- *Smart Trust* by Stephen M. R. Covey, Greg Link, and Rebecca R. Merrill
- *Switch: How to Change Things when Change is Hard* by Chip Heath and Dan Heath
- *The Power of Thanks: How Social Recognition Empowers Employees and Creates a Best Place to Work* by Erick Mosley and Derek Irvine
- *Triggers: Creating Behavior that Lasts - Becoming the Person You Want to Be* by Marshall Goldsmith





# Toastmasters for Tennessee Government Leadership

Written by Helen Ford  
Vice President of Membership, TGL Toastmasters

The Tennessee Government Leadership Toastmasters club invites you to join!

The environment in our Toastmasters club is friendly and supportive. Everyone at our Toastmaster meetings feels welcome and valued - from complete beginners to advanced speakers. In our club meetings, there is opportunity to practice giving prepared speeches as well as brief impromptu presentations, known as Table Topics. The Toastmasters program allows you to progress at your own pace. TGL Toastmasters is a place where you can develop and grow - both personally and professionally; giving better work presentations; leading meetings and participating in them more confidently; speaking more smoothly off the cuff; even handling one-on-one interactions with family, friends and colleagues more positively.

By learning to effectively formulate, organize and express your ideas to others, you can achieve new levels of success. You'll be more capable and confident when giving presentations. You'll be more persuasive when pitching to prospective clients.

Anyone who is a strong leader has to first be an effective communicator. In Toastmasters you will hone your speaking skills, and develop leadership abilities through evaluations, listening, mentoring, serving as club officers and filling roles in club meetings. You will find you can use those leadership skills in all that you do!

Become the speaker and leader you want to be. Confident, charismatic leaders weren't born that way. Toastmaster members learn to tell their story. They listen and answer. Through our community of learners, they find their path to greater leadership.

Black Belt Program points are available to participating members.

The club is open for alumni that would like to join. Please plan to attend one of the scheduled meetings. For more information contact [Leadership.Council@tn.gov](mailto:Leadership.Council@tn.gov).

Club membership fees are paid by the individual member. <http://www.tn.gov/hr/article/tgl-toastmasters>





# TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

## THE COLLEGE OF PUBLIC SERVICE AT TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Dean Michael Harris  
Department Chair Rodney Stanley  
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[www.tnstate.edu/cps](http://www.tnstate.edu/cps)

# CPS



## Public Administration Executive Leadership Certificate

Another great opportunity to continue developing and learning as a leader is now available to the Tennessee Government Leadership alumni (graduates of DOHR-sponsored leadership programs). In collaboration with Tennessee State University, alumni can earn the graduate certificate in Public Administration Executive Leadership. The certificate consists of 18 hours (6 courses) of graduate level coursework taken within the College of Public Service. All courses are on-line, and the state fee waiver may be used to cover tuition. The program is based on a cohort of 20 participants per year taking one course per semester, including one course in the summer session, enabling the certificate to be earned in a two-year time frame. The courses taken for the certificate are:

- PADM 6270 Seminar in Administrative Leadership\*
- PADM 6260 Budgeting as a Management Tool
- PADM 6320 Organizational Analysis
- PADM 6900 Elective course
- PADM 6910 Elective course
- PADM 6920 Elective course

The elective courses will be decided upon once the program has begun.

\* For graduates of LEAD Tennessee, 3 hours credit for this course will be applied. The process for extending the same credit to TGMI and TGEI graduates is underway.

The 18 hours received for the certificate may be applied to the Masters in Public Administration (MPA), Masters in Professional Studies (MPS), or Ph.D. in Public Administration at TSU. To be eligible to pursue this certificate, applicants will need to possess an undergraduate degree from an accredited university, have an undergraduate GPA of a minimum 2.5, and official transcripts will need to be submitted to the university (ask for transcripts to be sent to you in a sealed envelope and give them to the Program Administrator, Dr. Ernie Ricketts). Applicants will need to fill out an official TSU graduate school application on-line.

The first cohort of 20 participants will begin in the Fall 2016 semester, with an **application deadline of July 1, 2016**.

More information will be disseminated by email. If interested, please email Dr. Ernie Ricketts, Program Administrator, at [ernie.ricketts@tn.gov](mailto:ernie.ricketts@tn.gov).

## 4 Disciplines of Execution

by Chris McChesney, Sean Covey and Jim Huling



### The Real Problem with Execution

If you're leading people right now, you are probably trying to get them to do something different.

Whether you lead a small work team or a whole company, a family or a factory, no significant result is achievable unless people change their behavior. To be successful, you will need their commitment. Getting the kind of commitment that will endure in the midst of the daily grind is not easy.

When you execute a strategy that requires a lasting change in the behavior of other people, you're facing one of the greatest leadership challenges you will ever meet. With the 4 Disciplines of Execution (4DX), you are implementing a set of proven practices that meet that challenge successfully every time.

The real enemy of execution is the whirlwind, the massive amount of energy that's necessary just to keep your operation going on a day-to-day basis. The 4 Disciplines aren't designed for managing your whirlwind, but for executing your most critical strategy in the midst of your whirlwind.



### Discipline 1: Focus on the Wildly Important

Focus your finest effort on one or two goals that will make all the difference, instead of giving mediocre effort to dozens of goals. Execution starts with focus. Without it, the other three disciplines won't be able to help you.

#### Identifying Your Wildly Important Goals

A wildly important goal (WIG) is a goal that can make all the difference. You're going to commit to apply a disproportionate amount of energy to it — the estimated 20 percent that is not used up in the whirlwind. In determining your WIG, don't ask "What's most important?" Instead, begin by asking "If every other area of our operation remained at its current level of performance, what is the one area where change would have the greatest impact?" Whether your WIG comes from within the whirlwind or outside it, your real aim is not only to achieve it, but also to then make the new level of performance a natural part of your team's operation.

#### Focusing the Organization

Here are four rules to help you narrow the focus of your entire organization:

**Rule #1:** No team focuses on more than two WIGs at the same time. The key is not to overload any single leader, team or individual performer.

**Rule #2:** The battles you choose must win the war. The sole purpose of WIGs at lower levels in the organization is to help achieve the WIGs at higher levels.

**Rule #3:** Senior leaders can veto, but not dictate. While the senior leaders will undoubtedly determine the top-level WIG, they must allow the leaders at each level below to define the WIGs for their teams.

**Rule #4:** All WIGs must have a finish line in the form of from X to Y by when. Every WIG at every level must contain a clearly measurable result, as well as the date by which that result must be achieved.



## Discipline 2: Act on the Lead Measures

While a lag measure tells you if you've achieved the goal, a lead measure tells you if you are likely to achieve the goal. For example, while you can't control how often your car breaks down on the road (a lag measure), you can certainly control how often your car receives routine maintenance (a lead measure). And the more you act on the lead measure, the more likely you are to avoid that roadside breakdown.

We call them lag measures because by the time you get the data the result has already happened. A lead measure is predictive, meaning that if the lead measure changes, you can predict that the lag measure will also change. A lead measure is also influenceable; it can be influenced by the team.

It's the data on lead measures that enables you to close the gap between what you know your team should do and what they are actually doing. Without lead measures, you are left to try to manage to the lag measures, an approach that seldom produces significant results.

### Defining and Tracking Lead Measures

Oakland Athletics General Manager Sandy Alderson and his assistant manager Billy Beane brought together the best thinkers they could find on the subject: What produces wins? The answer: the highest number of runs. What are the lead measures that create a run? They discovered that the mighty sluggers were often not all that productive. The most productive players were the ones who could just get on base. They could score runs much more reliably than the power hitters who commanded astronomical salaries.

What Beane did was to track the on-base record of players across the league and then recruit from those who were very good at getting on base.

For a decade, the Oakland A's maintained the fifth best record in Major League Baseball while ranking 24th in player salaries. The Oakland management team reframed the game by acting on the lead measures that produce wins.

If you are serious about your WIG, then you must create a way to track your lead measures. Without data, you can't drive performance on the lead measures; without lead measures, you don't have leverage.

### Lead Measures and Engagement

Coming up with the right lead measures is really about helping everyone see themselves as strategic business partners and engaging them in dialogue about what can be done better or differently in order to achieve the WIGs. A good example is the advertising department of the Savannah Morning News. Their WIG was to close a serious revenue gap. Their focus was spread across so many initiatives that they had taken their eyes off of their main product.

Everything changed when they started practicing Discipline 2: Act on the lead measures. In the weekly WIG sessions, people committed to hit a certain number of new customer contacts, reactivation calls, and upsell offers. The newspaper closed its revenue gap and shot past its goals for the year.



## Discipline 3: Keep a Compelling Scorecard

The third discipline is to make sure everyone knows the score at all times, so that they can tell whether or not they're winning. This is the discipline of engagement. If the lead and lag measures are not captured on a visual scoreboard and updated regularly, they will disappear into the whirlwind. People disengage when they don't know the score.

Great teams know, at every moment, whether or not they're winning. They must know, otherwise, they don't know what they have to do to win the game. A compelling scoreboard tells the team where they are and where they should be, information essential to team problem solving and decision-making.

When team members themselves are keeping score, they truly understand the connection between their performance and reaching their goal, and this changes the level at which they play.

When everyone on the team can see the score, the level of play rises, not only because they can see what's working and what adjustments are needed, but also because they now want to win.



## Discipline 4: Create a Cadence of Accountability

The fourth discipline is to create a cadence of accountability, a frequently recurring cycle of accounting for past performance and planning to move the score forward. Discipline 4 is where execution happens. Disciplines 1, 2 and 3 set up the game; but until you apply Discipline 4, your team isn't in the game. This is the discipline that brings the team members all together.

### A Different Kind of Accountability

The accountability created in a WIG session is not organizational, it's personal. Instead of accountability to a broad outcome you can't influence, it's accountability to a weekly commitment that you yourself made and that is within your power to keep. When members of the team see their peers consistently following through on the commitments they make, they learn that the people they work with can be trusted to follow through. When this happens, performance improves dramatically.

The WIG session encourages experimentation with fresh ideas. It engages everyone in problem solving and promotes shared learning. 4DX produces results not from the exercise of authority, but from the fundamental desire of each individual team member to feel significant, to do work that matters and, ultimately, to win.

For more information or to begin the process, contact Antonio Meeks at [Antonio.Q.Meeks@tn.gov](mailto:Antonio.Q.Meeks@tn.gov).

"The 4 Disciplines of Execution: Achieving Your Wildly Important Goals (A Summary)." *summary.com*, Soundview Executive Book Summaries, Books24X7, October 2012.



Written by April Romero

Dr. Trish Holliday received an award at the HR.Com National event called LEAD2016 on February 4, 2016. She was ranked 6th out of the 30 award winners and 300 nominations in the Winners Circle for the Top Corporate Leader over 35 in the nation, plus four other countries who competed. This award was given by HR.com and hosted at the Country Music Hall of Fame. She was the only person from an Executive Branch of State Government receiving such an individual honor. Trish is listed in the February issue of the magazine and will be featured in the August issue with her photo and interview article. Please congratulate Trish on this wonderful honor. Read more about this event at: <http://www.leadershipexcellenceanddevelopment.com/content/lead2016-leadership-excellence-award-winners>



Pictured from left to right: Kim Yap, Derek Young, Commissioner Rebecca Hunter, Dr. Trish Holliday, Dr. Deb Tobey, Kelly Lancaster, Danielle Barnes, Fred Gaston, Dr. Ernie Ricketts, Kristen Martin, and Bucky Rosenbaum.



## From the Desk of the Chief Learning Officer

### A Call to Urgency: 21st Century

### Leadership Competencies Needed for Success

Traditionally, the skills needed to be successful in a particular role have been divided into what were known as “hard skills” and “soft skills.” Hard skills were those mostly job related, technical skills, such as the skills needed to be good at accounting, engineering, etc. Soft skills were the mostly relational skills, those that enabled one to work well with others, or the skills that made one a good manager and leader. In today’s workplace, the terms are being reversed for those in leadership roles. What were traditionally known as soft skills now are viewed as the new hard skills essential for leadership success. It is no longer just important to develop the technical skills necessary to be a high performer in a particular role; the emerging trend is that there are mission critical leadership competencies needed to be a highly effective leader.



Consider for a moment the idea of flying in an airplane. When all is going well, and everything is functioning properly, a jet engine will enable an aircraft to fly. However, when something goes wrong the engine can stop performing effectively and simply stop working. This is known as a flameout.

In aviation a flameout refers to the run-down of a jet engine caused by the extinction of the flame in the combustion chamber. It can be caused by a number of factors, including fuel starvation, compressor stall, insufficient oxygen (at high altitudes), foreign object damage (such as birds, hail, or volcanic ash), severe inclement weather, mechanical failure and very cold ambient temperatures. A flameout is most likely to occur when flying through certain weather conditions at a low power setting such as flight idle (e.g., during the descent). These conditions include flight through moderate to heavy turbulence, rain, hail, or sleet.



This same concept can occur with leaders when they are not paying attention to mastering the mission critical leadership competencies, the new hard skills, identified in this article. What are the indicators of leadership flameout? Leadership flameout is evident when leaders who were doing well all of a sudden falter, begin to perform poorly, and lead ineffectively, resulting in the organization and its workforce failing to meet established goals. There could be many contributing reasons for this failure such as losing sight of the organization’s mission, becoming egocentric, doing something unethical, losing focus of purpose, and above all, failing to stay current in role and industry best practices.

Avoiding leadership flameout begins with knowing the difference between leading and managing. Warren Bennis quoted Peter Drucker who said, “Leaders are people who do the right things, managers are people who do things right. There’s a profound difference.” A mission critical competency for leaders is to master understanding that effective leaders are forward thinkers, articulately paint credible visions of possibilities, and demonstrate strategic and organizational agility. Being able to differentiate the value of leading people while managing processes increases the likelihood that leaders can avoid flaming out in their role.

What do employees want most from their organizational leaders? Marshall Loeb stated, “Employees want direction, meaning, trust and hope from their leaders.” Employers expect their employees to perform their roles effectively and efficiently. However, the 21st Century leader understands that employees need more from their leaders. Effective leaders provide vision for the organization and meaning for the work all employees do

at any level within the organization. When employees find meaning in their work, increased trust exists between leaders and employees creating greater employee engagement, resulting in a positive impact on achieving the organizational mission and goals.

Effective leaders avoid flameout by demonstrating courageous leadership. Building rapport with individuals throughout the organization, developing honest relationships, providing truthful feedback and insightful coaching can help leaders perform courageous acts of leadership.

Learning to be a lifelong learner becomes a differentiator for effective leaders. Learning to always learn helps great leaders avoid flameout by first knowing they do not know it all and making it a priority to continually improve. Demonstrating continuous learning and growth positions leaders in a way that makes flameout less likely. Great leaders are made, not born. "They're made," Loeb observed, "usually, self-made."

Effective leaders pay attention to the warning signs that could lead to flameout, resulting in the ability to keep their effectiveness moving forward. Leaders who understand and demonstrate the difference between leading and managing positively impact the work environment and the interpersonal relationships in the organization. People are cared for, their work is valued and processes are managed for efficiency. Leading with direction and purpose promotes visionary leadership. This type of leadership increases employee engagement in their work as they see how what they do aligns with the leader's vision.

Finally, becoming a life-long learner heavily impacts how to avoid flameout by keeping an eye on continuous improvement, growth and development. Success in being a lifelong learner starts with the deliberate decision to commit to always learning, seek out other lifelong learners for energy and encouragement, and develop a personal learning plan that identifies resources, strategies, and goals for succeeding.

Effective and efficient leaders avoid flameout by proactively taking strategic steps. Those steps include knowing the difference between managing and leading, developing a sense of purpose, being a life-long learner, and realizing that leaders are made, not born. These are the new "hard skills" essential for leadership success.



**LEAD On...**

**Dr. Trish Holliday**

**"Leaders are people who do the right things, managers are people who do things right. There's a profound difference."**

**Peter Drucker**

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