



Sigma Breakthrough Technologies, Inc.®

Understanding Breakthrough Leadership by Steve Zinkgraf, CEO

Every organization experiences times of stress and uncertainty, it is during these times that leaders rise to the challenge and steer the organization through its troubles. However, there are rare occasions where ordinary leadership is simply not enough. More is required to weather the troubling times. What is needed is extraordinary Breakthrough Leadership.

What is Breakthrough Leadership? Simply put, Breakthrough Leadership is the ability to lead an organization to success while positively changing the organization. This is done quickly and efficiently because a Breakthrough Leader has a clear grasp of the situation, a clear path to success and a clear definition of success. Never was this more evident than when Larry Bossidy served as Chairman and CEO of AlliedSignal during the 1990's. During that time Bossidy organized a fractured group of business into a unified organization with a single purpose and vision. Bossidy defined what it meant to be a Breakthrough Leader. Leaders accomplish great things because they have certain characteristics.

What are the characteristics of Breakthrough Leadership? Breakthrough Leaders have two critical characteristics. The first characteristic is the ability to take complex thoughts, concepts, and ideas and distill them into a manageable message with meaning. They make the complex, simple. The second characteristic is the ability to connect on an intellectual and emotional level with the members of the entire organization. When the rank and file membership can identify with the Breakthrough Leader and their goals, they become motivated. An excellent example is Steve Jobs of Apple. Jobs outlook and vision is that technology should be simple and elegant. This simple message and his ability to appeal directly to the creativity of the Apple employee produces end products that are indeed simple, elegant and successful. However, Breakthrough Leadership does not rely solely on words, but actions as well.

What are the actions of a Breakthrough Leader? Breakthrough Leaders often act according to three tenets. The first tenet is to always approach a problem with a solution or potential solution. While the solution may not initially be the correct one, it does create a roadmap that can be used to start the process to solve the problem. The second tenet is a willingness to lead the solution themselves. Breakthrough Leaders do not shy away from challenges, but rather embrace the opportunities those challenges represent. Also, the Breakthrough Leader demonstrates the confidence in their solution

and their abilities. The third tenet is to be proficient in the tools necessary to solve the problem. While they are not always the expert of the tools, they know how to use the tools and when necessary, to recognize that expertise in their team.

The question remains, is a Breakthrough Leader born or made? It is the firm belief of Steve Zinkgraf, founder of Sigma Breakthrough Technologies, Inc., that Breakthrough Leaders are a product of training, mentoring, and experience. Breakthrough Leaders can be made, and the perfect laboratory is the SBTI Master Black Belt program.

The next article will feature the SBTI Master Black Belt program.