

## Leadership By Wandering Around!

By Fred Leland

*We—leaders of every stripe—are in the “Human Growth and Development and Success and Aspiration to Excellence business.” “We” [leaders] only grow when “they” [each and every one of our colleagues] are growing. “We” [leaders] only succeed when “they” [each and every one of our colleagues] are succeeding. “We” [leaders] only energetically march toward Excellence when “they” [each and every one of our colleagues] are energetically marching toward Excellence, Period. ~Tom Peters, The Little BIG Things: 163 Ways to Pursue EXCELLENCE*

Leadership by wandering around (LBWA) is a spin off of Tom Peter’s management by wandering around (MBWA). What’s the real difference? Not much, except I just plain do not like the word *manager*, nor how many people manage.

Personally I prefer leaders, those folks who, by their very nature, are willing and capable of leading. Leaders are DOERS who know how to get things done by inspiring people through interaction, example and caring enough to know a great deal about those they work with. Leaders typically want to know their people, how they operate and what makes them tick. They learn this by wandering around talking and more importantly listening to those on the frontline -- those in the know!

Mangers know how to crunch numbers and can create spread sheets like there’s no tomorrow. They’re great at budgeting and won’t be a penny off at year end. But do they understand the most important aspects of the job and *cost versus benefit* in training, educating and developing people to do the jobs they need to do. More often than not, leaders focus on these matters whereas mangers may not.

Scheduling managers are masters as they know every detail about who has been in and out of work, how often and for how long, and can recite it to you on moments notice. But do they know the backgrounds of their people and the whys (sick child, relationship issues, workplace conflict, etc.) behind time off taken? Leaders do, and they stand up and reach out to offer assistance.

Crime analysis managers are dead on with the problem areas in the communities they work. Hell, they got the maps and print outs to prove it. But do they understand the issues surrounding the community or the issues that make the problem solving difficult for the

officers who have to go out and resolve these problems? Do they truly understand the need for community and cops to stick together and work collaboratively to resolve these issues?

For all that managers do, I admire and respect them. The numbers and facts part of the law enforcement and security professions is important and needs to be done correctly. My question to *managers of people* is, how, with all they know, do they not know the **why** behind the numbers? Why sick time is run amuck? Why morale and execution are low?

Yes you know where the crimes are taking place, but do you know the why behind it? Managers know the cops who have been complained about, but why do they not know the circumstances and dynamics surrounding the incident? Do they understand that *at times* conflict and violence turns ugly and cops have to use bolder language and reasonable force to meet the goal of stopping on going dynamic and dangerous encounters? Do managers understand that this exception to the *courtesy rule* is both reasonable and acceptable?

Managers can recite policy and procedure, in the aftermath of an incident, but are managers aware that policies and procedures often times stifle initiative and create unnecessary friction in decision making?

Managers are aware that policies and procedures are great tools at covering your assets, and at the same time, aware that the 6-8 inch policies and procedures manual has not been read by those on the frontline and quite often not read by those same managers who claim to have implemented them. Do they dare say that out loud? A leader would!

We could go on and on and on here about manager's verses leaders, but, whatever term you wish to call yourself, leader or manager, get up and mingle and interact with your people. Spend a great deal of time doing so.

Leading by just wandering around may just prove beneficial in actually producing an atmosphere of caring, an attitude of excellence and the winning mindset needed to prepare ourselves for a job that means much more than statistics, numbers and procedures.

Leaders create and nurture trust through the interaction they crave. Why crave interaction you may ask? Because leaders know its people

not numbers that make organizations thrive. This craving allows relationships to form that are strong and healthy even when disagreements exist. Interaction breeds "buy in" and "buy in" breeds passion, which leads to excellence.

This craving for more interaction by wandering around grows amongst the entire organization and individual initiative takes hold by all who understand that leaders come in many shapes and sizes with and without titles. Multiple streams of communication open up allowing information to flow, up, down and sideways. Individuals and the organization become more agile and flexible, and hence able to prepare and be ready to face any problem, any crisis.

Stay Oriented!

Fred