

The Most Prized Leadership Tool for 2009:

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY: **INSPIRES OPTIMISM**

"While we may not be able to control all that happens to us, we can control what happens inside us." --*Benjamin Franklin*

"Optimists are right. So are pessimists. It's up to you to choose which you will be." --*Harvey Mackay*

"An optimist sees an opportunity in every calamity; a pessimist sees a calamity in every opportunity." --*Winston Churchill*

"Some folks go through life pleased that the glass is half full. Others spend a lifetime lamenting that it's half-empty. The truth is: There is a glass with a certain volume of liquid in it. From there, it's up to you!" --*Dr. James S. Vuocolo*

Inspiring Optimism

As many of us approach the New Year with some cautiousness and apprehension about how the global economic crisis may impact our organizations, our families and friends, and ourselves—it is a perfect time to reflect on a leadership characteristic that is most needed during these times of uncertainty—OPTIMISM.

The power of optimism cannot be over-rated as a factor in successful leadership. The ability to see the positive aspects of any situation can be a source of inspiration and motivation to capitalize on each possibility. Research shows that optimism may be partly responsible for higher achievement and success in many aspects of life. Optimism helps leaders be more resilient in the face of stresses and downturns. Because they believe things will work out for the best, optimistic leaders make stronger commitments to work and the workplace than their pessimist colleagues.

Characteristics of Optimistic Leaders

- Views negative events as transient rather than permanent events.
- Considers negative events challenges to be solved rather than as tragedies.
- Doesn't over generalize a single negative event as foreshadowing a storm of similar negative events, but rather contains the impact of any given negative event and doesn't overreact to it.
- Believes in one's own capacity for self-control, personal effectiveness and creativity.
- Thinks "outside the box" to find solutions
- Practices perseverance—again and again.
- Clearly identifies the personal development opportunity that a challenging time or event presents: Learn patience? Perseverance? Self-control?
- Changes negative self-talk to positive and appreciative thoughts.
- Looks at the positive and seeks out new, creative options when situations go awry.
- Believes in oneself and one's capabilities to positively impact a situation that appears to be negative.
- When speaking with others, focuses on the positive and on possible opportunities.