

# CLEAR THE WAY TO LEAD THE WAY

By Jay Perry

Clarifying the “why” behind the “what” of the job

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**T**his is a quote from a recent Gallup Workplace poll, “Only half of employees globally clearly know what is expected of them at work.”

The lack of clear direction provided by leaders is killing productivity and efficiency. It is not done deliberately or knowingly but is the result of assumption on the part of the leaders. They assume that people are as clear as they are with what the objectives are. It is not true and fully supports the old axiom, “To assume makes an ass of you and me”. One of the consistent conversations I have in coaching leaders is directed at helping them see the reality of leadership of their subordinates, you must always practice the 3Rs, reiterate, repeat and review the objectives. You cannot assume common sense will prevail.

My wife and I recently went to brunch and saw poor leadership in action. This is an excerpt from my restaurant review, “What could have been a great experience was spoiled by a disorganized manager who had all of his people running. I believe it to be the manager’s fault as no one was assigned sections or duties which would have streamlined everything and made it much nicer.” I am sure they had their marching orders at the morning scrum, “Let’s make our customers happy today” but of course without clear direction the workers are going to do their personal best in the way they interpret the directive.

How organized are your leaders? Do they clearly understand the “why” behind

the “what” of the job? Do they have communication skills that excite and inspire their people to support the mission of your company?

Most of what I find in my work and in hundreds of companies over the years reflects this as where the problem starts - the lack of skill set required to get people, first to understand, then to act in a supportive way. Like I said in my book, *Success Manifesto*, you must develop clarity, it is part of a leadership skill set that can be learned.

Have you practiced getting to the “why” of something? You should do that exercise on your own first. You will end up with a clearly defined reason. You do what you do and that “why” will support the action. Another enormous benefit of the “why” is when you are motivated by it you are less attached to the method of achievement which means you will free up creativity that could create a better way of doing the “what” for the solution.

The “why” is also much easier to communicate when you are crystal clear. If that picture in your mind is clear then you can work on the word track necessary to communicate it in a way that others understand and support it. Practice it then “beta-test” it with a trusted colleague to understand its effectiveness at sharing the root message of what you are shooting for.

Developing these skills in your people is another one of the things necessary to remain as the one who’s driving. **CRM**