

Public Persona
A key to Leadership
(Another Article in the Leadership Series)

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"If we have talents, we have no right to keep them under a bushel, they are ours for the benefit of the Community." Vice Admiral Horatio Nelson, British Navy - 13 January 1804.

What do the following jobs and industries have to do with Leadership?

- Publicists ●
- Media Consultants ●
- Speaking Coaches●
- Speech Writers ●
- Public Relation Firms ●

Quite frankly, everything!

Leadership is about communication. In the previous articles in this series, we've talked about the need for a Leader to promote a vision, share this vision, and inspire others to achieve the vision. We've talked about how our paradigm of communication has changed in the last ten years, as e-mail and the Internet have changed the landscape of communicating.

Ever present is the need for a Leader who not only have an innate ability to manage people, but who also the skills to communicate their ideas. But our leaders don't always have the expertise in every facet of the wide array of skills necessary to bring their vision to their audience. Hence, we've seen the proliferation of those who have the skills. These consultants have the ability to take the idea from concept to reality.

Leadership in today's world requires far more than a large stock of gunboats and a hard fist at the conference table. – Hubert H. Humphrey (1911–1978), US Vice-President

Public Persona; our culture eats it up. Just look at any newspaper or TV news program, and there is a story about some personality. Negative image stories, always juicy and ripe, often lead off TV news programs and newspapers. But positive stories can be found, and during election years, we'll see the gamut, as each side jockeys for position.

And what are they positioning - their Public Persona versus their private lives, and how their public lives can be serve their electorate. But not all Leaders are seeking a public office. Leaders achieve status in all types of organizations, from the corporate

boardroom to the non-profit and charity executive committees, people strive to reach the top, but not all who reach the top are Leaders.

Animals struggle with each other for food or for leadership, but they do not, like human beings, struggle with each other for that that stands for food or leadership: such things as our paper symbols of wealth (money, bonds, titles), badges of rank to wear on our clothes, or low-number license plates, supposed by some people to stand for social precedence. For animals the relationship in which one thing stands for something else does not appear to exist except in very rudimentary form. S.I. Hayakawa (1906–1992), former US Senator

Leadership, as has been previously stated, is about communication. If one were to take an education course, or more properly a “how to teach/instruct” course, one would learn of the many varied and sundry methods one could employ to express the ideas they are trying to illuminate. They use blackboards, handouts, computer presentations, animation, films - a whole litany of different tactics to help illustrate the concepts being presented.

Leadership is no different. If our leaders don’t use speeches, letters, presentations, films, or any and all the different forms of communication at their disposal, they are not leading, for they are failing in the basic definition that encompasses the term Leader. Many Leaders today, fail at this aspect of their position.

Organizations that fail to be Lead, ultimately either fall into discord, and anarchy or die. A Leader must use their Public Persona to bring the disparate groups which are inherent in any organization together as one team. By utilizing their ability to project their face, their voice, their will to their minions, the Leader both completes the cycle of communication, and at the same time, starts it a new. This double-helix concept is never ending, for with the end or break in its continuity, so ends the rein of the leader.

The art of leadership ... consists in consolidating the attention of the people against a single adversary and taking care that nothing will split up that attention.... The leader of genius must have the ability to make different opponents appear as if they belonged to one category.

The quote above was carefully crafted. Its writer spent many years dwelling on what made an effective leader. This quote is over 75 years old. In 1925, leadership was about communication.

Analyze the quote. Look at the author’s use of terminology that speaks of communicating. “Attention ...against”, “...split up that attention...”, “...appear as if...” Look at the imagery that the author wishes to use to develop a leadership style.

Today, our leaders still try to consolidate attention; by using the communication medium's available to project their vision, their voice. Those who choose to remain in the background, find that their organizations begin to drift.

Leadership is a talent. And if we apply what Vice Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson, Duke of Bronte wrote in our opening quote, then all Leaders, having the talent to change the lives of others, though the implementation of a vision should not waste this talent by lack of providing a Public Persona.

Today, more than ever, a Leader must be visible; A Leader much shine; A Leader needs to Lead *by example*.

The historical quote was by Adolf Hitler (1889–1945), German dictator. Mein Kampf, vol. 1, ch. 3 (1925).