



Integrated Leadership Because Results are Everybody's Business and It's Not Business as Usual

There is a saying about the greatest asset of any company walking in the door every morning, and walking out again every night. In the increasingly consolidated and competitive world we live in, this may be truer than ever. With diminishing resources across the board, companies and financial institutions in particular are asking fewer and fewer people to do more and more.

At the end of 2008, Retail Bankers, Commercial Lenders, Business Development Officers, Residential Lenders, and Executives across the country sat in offices and board rooms to discuss their outlook for the upcoming year, and their forecast of what the bank and their department could achieve. We were part of many of these discussions with our clients, and only a few things were clear about 2009:

- These are unprecedented times that have created a business environment that is new to everyone;

- Resources are limited and the environment (economic, political, and industry) is one of continued volatility;
- An emotional and mental “workplace recession” has hit all organizations; and
- No industry or business is immune.

In determining what course of action to take for the upcoming year, three basic strategies were repeated over and over. Each one (outlined below) has its own risks and reward:

1. Hope For The Best – This strategy is a combination of passive and reactive decisions. For the most part it is business as usual as decisions are made to cut budgets, watch costs, and minimize some of the usual events that are run throughout the year (networking, social, etc.). This strategy suspends all growth initiatives

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2009 PENNSYLVANIA BANKERS ASSOCIATION

Spring Summits

Renew Relationships with Your Colleagues at the 2009 Spring Summits

PBA Spring Summits are right around the corner offering educational sessions and a recognition dinner.

- Group 2 • April 27 • The Desmond, Malvern
- Group 3 • April 23 • The Westmoreland Club, Wilkes-Barre
- Group 4 • April 21 • Williamsport Country Club, Williamsport
- Group 5 • April 22 • Sheraton Harrisburg-Hershey, Harrisburg
- Group 8 • April 29 • Marriott Pittsburgh North at Cranberry Woods
- Group 6 • April 28 • The Calvin House, Duncansville



For more information, please call Cindy Walleit at (717) 255-6913.



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until some point in the future.

2. Survive – Banks that implement this strategy will be taking proactive measures to survive 2009. They will take actions to hold onto the current client base so it is not taken away by other banks/financial institutions with aggressive strategies and tactics. The primary focus of this strategy is to equip employees with a full understanding of this new business environment, educate them on how to be effective within it, and make them visible and accessible within the franchise footprint to preserve client relationships.
3. Thrive – Banks who take this position will be making a dedicated effort to expand their market. It is a proactive strategy that aims to identify and take advantage of opportunities that are unique to this present economic environment. The focus is to prepare and direct employees to capitalize on this once in a lifetime event and capture “A Level” clients from other institutions.

Which strategy is the right one for your bank in 2009? That answer really depends on what your bank is trying to achieve. However, 2009 cannot be a year of business as usual, and action must be taken. Business as usual could poorly position a bank in the near term, and could cause permanent devastating effects in the future. We’ve seen consequences of this approach in our own industry as banks have been bought, sold, or gone out of business. We can blame their downfall on the bad decisions of a few people, but the problems are now deeper and more complex. Some of the largest organizations in America such as Best Buy, Linen N’ Things, and Circuit City, are dropping by the wayside. Others such as Fed Ex, Citigroup, and General Motors have taken action to rid themselves of some of the business as usual practices and continue to make major changes. We all know that there’s more bad news to come and changes to be made in this unmerciful economic climate.

The only way to embrace a “survive or thrive” strategy is to make sure you have the right people in place and are committed to working together. This doesn’t necessarily take a massive corporate restructuring. But it might take a massive reorientation of the way your people see themselves, and the way they interact and integrate with each other. A positive shift in the way they think, act, and address work life -- not to mention life in general.

Right now, virtually every American worker is experiencing a personal mental and emotional recession. Recent reports show that the level of stress in individuals professional and personal lives is rapidly increasing. Employees are constantly reminded by television, radio, newspaper, magazines, the Internet, friends, family and co-workers that times are tough. Many employees are struggling to make ends meet, and may also be dealing with a spouse’s loss of a job or other crisis of their own. In these highly stressful and turbulent times productivity declines as people become mentally and emotionally consumed with their life issues. People feel hopeless and helpless, and business as usual is not changing anything.

Yet, we are the singular and collective answer to fighting our way out of this mess. When we as a country and an industry come out of this mess, it will be because we came together and applied old-fashioned American ingenuity and spirit in a new way to tackle these issues. None of this will be achieved without strong leadership that can pull people together.

What does that mean? It means putting our greatest asset - our people to work and finding new and better ways to collaborate and work together. It means finally, FINALLY, working beyond silos. It means changing (gasp!) the way we hold meetings, set goals, hold people accountable, and work together. It means we are going to have to learn to lead people to integrate their efforts.

As people struggle during these tough times, our business as usual approach to coaching, sales, service, and leadership will not be good enough to truly thrive or survive through these economic times. Bank leaders need to gingerly prepare and encourage their people to do their best in 2009. During this time it is essential that we address the human side of business -- the emotional and mental components -- now more than ever. There is no single “magic bullet” to leading people to perform at their best in the worst of times. There is not one book or one article you read and bam change overnight. The reality is that there are several keys to change, numerous primary sources worth reading, and dozens of exercises that help and the short list is constantly changing. Not to mention different for every organization. Sure, some truths persist over the years, but the optimal solution for today’s environment goes well beyond winning friends and influencing people. There are new and valuable skills that when learned and applied properly can change a person’s life, and can make the difference whether a bank succeeds or fails. Some leaders

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didn't think this statement was true, many have become casualties of a tough economy, and more casualties are yet to come.

Not sure if you're a leader? It doesn't matter. Not now. All that matters is that we all start to learn how to truly work together and how we can perform at our best to make our institutions stronger and better during these historic times. The success of your bank is going to come down to the success of your individuals. The most successful people in banking (and other industries) in 2009 and beyond will learn how to:

- Prevent an emotional and mental recession from seizing the workplace environment;
- Develop trust and support of others within the organization;
- Work with people from other areas of the bank to tackle common issues;
- Devise goals, strategies, and incentives that optimize employee and customer relationships;
- Create a mindset and business plan that maximizes resources and resourcefulness; and
- Unlock the promise of human potential of employees.

FTC and the PBA have collaborated to provide to informative and powerful programs designed to teach bankers the new skills required to achieve the objectives listed above through the Integrated Leadership seminars at the Spring Summits, and the Thrive 2009 events throughout the year. For any institution interested in offering customized programs for their bank, please contact FTC directly.

About the Authors: As the co-founder of FTC Methods Inc., Dennis Budinich conducts high - energy learning programs for banks and bank associations

nationwide. Dennis is a speaker for numerous bank events and at industry conferences for such organizations as the Pennsylvania Bankers Association, Bank Insurance & Securities Association, and the NJ Bankers Association.

In all of his presentations, Dennis shares the information he acquired while earning the designation of expert Emotional Intelligence Trainer and Coach through Talent Smart Inc. He also incorporates his vast research in the fields of positive psychology and self science, and draws on his personal experiences in retail banking and as a successful entrepreneur.

As co-founder of FTC Methods Inc., Eric Laurens conducts research for and co-creates adult learning programs. He is also the corporation's primary administrator and contact person. Eric holds his B.S. in Business/ Marketing from Albright College in Reading, PA.

FTC provides value to the banking industry by improving the performance of company employees through highly customized professional development programs. We have experts with industry specific knowledge who work directly with each organization in developing programs that energize motivate and enable individuals to become aware of their untapped potential. The result: *employees and organizations that perform at a higher level and which exhibit positive change that sticks.* We have successfully helped a number of banks significantly increase revenues, deposits, and commercial relationships while at the same time raising employee engagement and customer loyalty through: Professional Development Programs, EQ Training, Keynote Presentations, Seminars, Leadership Programs, and Consulting. 

