

# The EDvocate

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The EDvocate is a quarterly publication of the Greater Livingston County Economic Development Council.



*Your Opportunity Awaits...*

## The Leadership Challenge

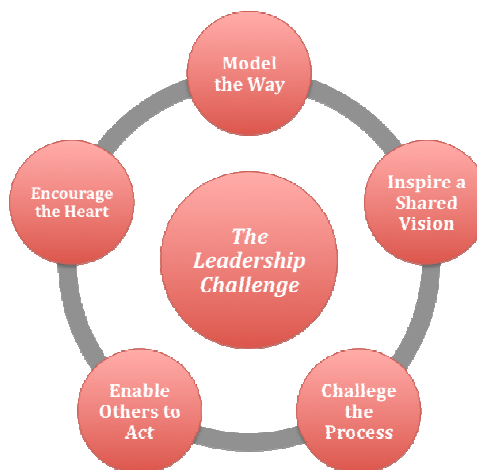
By Larry Vaupel, GLCEDC CEO

This month's theme for our newsletter is Leadership and Management. We asked some of our members to give our readers some advice on how to manage a small business. I recently read a book by Kouzes & Posner titled *The Leadership Challenge*. I know many of you have read this book, because I have seen it on many of your office bookshelves. The book is the result of years of research and thousands of interviews. I found the book to be practical and relevant to businesses of all sizes and I thought I would summarize the book for this month's newsletter.

The authors found that there are five practices of exemplary leadership. The first practice is "Model the Way". This simply means that leaders are to lead by example. Leading an organization or business is similar to raising a family. The employees are watching the leader's actions in the same manner in which children watch and learn from their parents. Actions speak louder than words.

The authors refer to the second practice of exemplary leadership as "Inspire a Shared Vision". Leaders like to picture the world, as it *should* be, not as it is. However, it takes more than just having a vision to bring about success. Leaders must create a culture in which their employees share their vision and are free to take risks in order to make the dream a reality.

Leaders are pioneers. Leaders "Challenge the Process". The third practice involves risk-taking. The authors cite the Leader's Mantra as being "Try, fail, learn. Try, fail,



learn." Leaders learn from their mistakes, and failing does not prevent them from trying again. Eventually, the "Try, fail, learn" will become *try, succeed, profit*.

Successful leaders "*Enable others to act*". This involves creating an organization that works collaboratively, yet retains individual accountability. When employees are empowered—even expected—to act, corporate trust is created and a sense of "being in this together" permeates the workplace. The loyalty that develops between the leader and the employees is priceless.

Finally, effective leadership requires us to "Encourage the heart" of those in our organization. Personal notes and thank-you cards to your employees for their contributions encourage them to give you their best efforts. Recognizing innovation and excellence will encourage more of the same. Effective leaders take time to celebrate success and share the moments with their employees.

# Employees in Your Business: Are they renting, leasing, or owning?

By Glen Ludwig, Executive Committee Member

As an agribusiness consultant I often have heard about the increasing challenges linked to finding and retaining good employees. During my recent involvement with GLCEDC, I have learned those concerns are not limited to my clients. In a recently article I read, the author drew parallels between the attitudes that people bring to their work and the various ways that we acquire the use of a car - renting, leasing and owning.

**Renting:** When you rent a car, you are accountable for bringing it back with a full tank of gas and free of dings and dents, so you do. But you don't change the oil or take it through the car wash before you return it, because you have no pride of ownership. In the same way, millions of people don't own the work they do; they are just renting a spot on the organization chart. According to the Gallup organization, nearly 75% of workers are either not fully engaged or are actively disengaged in their work. They are doing only what is required to collect their paychecks.

**Leasing:** People who lease a car are much more likely to wash it and change the oil - until the lease comes due. Then all they care about is getting rid of it as quickly and as hassle-free as possible. That's how a lot of people view their jobs. They are leasing a spot on the organization chart, hoping that they can hang on to it until they retire, at which time they're out the door faster than a cat with a coyote on its tail. The late John Gardner wrote that the biggest dropout problem in America is not kids dropping out of school, it's adults who mentally and emotionally drop out of their jobs

years before their bodies have checked out of their cubicles or their spots on the assembly line.

**Owning:** An Iowa client of mine serves on a local hospital Board. He shared a story recently related to the Board by the hospital CEO. One of the most important people in this organization is a security guard named Martin. Every morning Martin is in the lobby at least fifteen minutes before he goes on duty, pressed and polished and ready to go. Why does he show up early? Because he wants to make sure that no one pulling up to the front door needing a wheelchair has to wait for one. So Martin scouts out all the locations that wheelchairs tend to hide, and stashes them in the lobby. And when the first early morning patients pull up, Martin doesn't wait in the lobby for someone to come in, he is outside opening the door with a ninety-dollar smile on his face. Martin doesn't own stock in that hospital. But he certainly is an owner of his job.

**How about your business?** Do all of your employees own their job, their career? Are there some just renting or leasing a slot on the organization chart, a place on the payroll, until something better comes along, or until they get fired or retire?

**Establishing a culture of "job ownership":** First, it takes more than just good management. It requires leadership. Leadership that first seeks and then creatively employs the best people. And then commits to supporting their development to great employees. Leaders can lighten the corporate burden by liberating the chronic renters and leasers from the organization.

Leaders can communicate with clarity the vision and goals of their organization and that every employee has an important contributing role to a successful future. Leaders have at minimum equal passion for human resource development and leadership – as they do for increasing sales, expanding the plant, managing expenses, or adapting new technology.

If you are interested in more information on how to improve the job ownership culture in your business, please contact GLCEDC at 815-842-2900. We can link you up with some resources.



# Tips on Business Management

## By GLCEDC Members

I recently asked several of our members to give some words of advice on how they manage their employees. Below is a summary of their responses. We hope that it is helpful to you in your business ventures.

What is your management philosophy?

- While we don't have a written philosophy, we strongly believe in leading by example. My family has a strong work ethic and we expect that from our employees. However, we don't ask them to do things we wouldn't do.
- Our philosophy is to surround ourselves with the most competent and dedicated team and provide our team with the most up-to-date techniques, equipment, and technologies. We also find it important to clearly define expectations for each employee.
- We believe in holding people accountable, giving them direction, and providing them with the opportunity to achieve. The combination of these three elements will lead to great performance.
- Our philosophy is to have all of our employees know and understand the goals of our business. I spend a lot of time trying to get my employees understand long and short term goals and work towards them. All of our employees are treated with respect and expected to work towards our company goals.

An important part of management is planning for the future. How do you plan for the future in your company?

- We look at past years to help us plan for the future. We also compare our

sales to other companies statewide. We closely follow research publications in our field.

- We recently went through a strategic planning session with our management offsite for two days. We hired a consultant to mediate the sessions. After we came back, we refined the plan and are in the process of communicating it to all our employees.
- In our business, planning for the future is ongoing. There is never a fixed target. We find that it is easier to make small incremental changes frequently then go through big changes to adjust for the future.

Are there any resources for managers that have been helpful to you?

- We participate with a regional association that offers education for managers. That has been really helpful for us.
- The advice of managers that have been in our company longer than I have has been very valuable to me.

Do you have additional advice for people wanting to become better managers?

- We have found that people want and need to know how they are doing. It is important to give your employees performance evaluations.
- Face-to-face communication is very important. Email is great, but it is better to confirm your expectations face-to-face.
- Listening is a learned skill and one every good manager should develop.

Thanks to Scott, David, Lonny, Courtney, Mike C., and Mike M. for their input.

## GLCEDC Grant and Upcoming Loan

### Participation Programs:

**Commercial Business Improvement Grant (CBIG).** The purpose of CBIG is to entice property owners to make improvements to existing structures that will remove obstacles for new businesses seeking to locate in the structure.

**Community Development Infrastructure Grant (CDIG).** CDIG is a matching grant given directly to municipalities for economic development purposes. Municipalities apply directly for the grant and the funds can be used for infrastructure improvements, property acquisition, and other projects related to economic development.

**Low-Interest Loan Participation Program (LPP).** The GLCEDC Low-Interest Loan Participation program is available to business owners in Livingston County. Please view the GLCEDC website for more information.

Checkout the News section of the GLCEDC website for more information on these grants and loan programs: [www.glcedc.org/news](http://www.glcedc.org/news)

# Tips on Managing Family Members

By GLCEDC Members

Don't let employees not perform up to the high company expectations and standards just because they are family. Every employee has a vested interest and stake in the company when it's a family business. If the family business does poorly, the family does poorly. Always remember it's not just a paycheck but a job you care about and take pride in when the family's reputation is on the line.

Don't be afraid to be the boss. As the boss it can be difficult but it is certainly necessary to tell em-

ployees what to do and what is expected of them. Don't hesitate to let them know when things are not done correctly. Even though everyone is family, give praise when called for but be critical when necessary.

This one may seem silly, but I try to not see them much outside of the workplace, like on weekends - nobody wants to be around their family all of the time.



## Winter Events

By Amy Deal

The main event around the GLCEDC office in the winter months was the Annual Meeting. The meeting drew roughly 62 members and supporters out to hear about GLCEDC highlights for 2009. We are proud of all we accomplished together and would like to thank all who came to the event.

In addition to the Annual Meeting, GLCEDC co-hosted two informational meetings regarding Brownfield redevelopment and Federal Recovery Zone Bonds in February. The Brownfield redevelopment meeting was an all-day seminar where participants learned about options available to them for redeveloping contaminated pieces of land in their communities. The workshop was co-hosted with ISU and The Farnsworth Group.

The County Board recently designated Livingston County a Federal Recover Zone making municipalities and some businesses within the county eligible for Recovery Zone Bonds. The GLCEDC and Ehlers, Inc., a public finance firm, co-hosted a reception for those interested in Recovery Zone Bonds. The GLCEDC plans to offer more informational meetings on economic development topics in the future. Check the website frequently for updates on meetings and workshops hosted by the GLCEDC.

One of the most successful programs of 2009 was the Business Retention Program. The Business Re-

ention, Expansion, and Entrepreneurship committee along with the Workforce Development committee has been hard at work to enhance this program for 2010. We plan to adopt a more standardized survey so that we can compile information over time and compare our information with similar counties throughout the country. We believe that gathering information and providing assistance to our established business owners is one of the most important things we do. The Business Retention Program allows us to gather information in order to provide better assistance and programs for Livingston County businesses.

GLCEDC is participating with Grundy and Kankakee Counties, as well as the Workforce Investment Board, on an industry analysis for all three counties. This project will provide us with important county-wide and regional information in order to establish future business and workforce programs.

The GLCEDC believes that these activities will promote and provide meaningful economic development opportunities for Livingston County residents and businesses. If you would like to partner with us please contact us about membership and leadership opportunities

# GLCEDC Work Accomplished

## Some recent activities of the GLCEDC include:

- Published the Business Retention Program Report (available via email)
- Attended the Central Illinois Development Partnership meeting
- Held a Business Recruitment Committee meeting to discuss an industry analysis
- Attended a regional meeting regarding increasing and improving broadband internet access in the area
- Facilitated a meeting with the county board finance committee regarding recovery bonds
- Met with the Mayor's Association
- Working with Coils, Inc. to secure grants and loans to bring 300 jobs to Livingston County
- Attended a seminar on effective market analysis during a recession and presented the information to the Dwight Economic Development Council
- Assisted local business in finding information and resources necessary for expansion and growth
- Executive Committee approved the Low-interest Loan Participation program
- Attended the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs conference

## Upcoming Events

The GLCEDC, several area Chambers of Commerce, and local government officials are hosting discussions for small business owners and entrepreneurs in Dwight, Fairbury, and Pontiac in March and April. The discussions will allow small business owners to get more information about grant, loan, and educational programs that may be available to them, as well as participate in a discussion about running a small business and being an entrepreneur in Livingston County. The discussion will help inform future GLCEDC programs for small business owners. We invite all first generation small business owners and entrepreneurs to attend the following discussions:

**Pontiac:** March 24, 8-9am Farm Bureau Building

**Dwight:** March 25, 5-6pm Dwight Village Hall

**Fairbury** date and time coming soon. Please check our website for more information.

GLCEDC will be hosting an educational series for business owners and entrepreneurs in the county. The first workshop in the series will be on writing a business plan and will be taught by a retired small

business owner associated with SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives). The second workshop will include information for Livingston County residents interested in being venders at our local Farmer's Markets. The third workshop will be on online marketing. Instruction on how to get a website, monitor the website, advertised online, and an introduction to social media will be provided. The dates are as follows:

**Building a Business Plan:** April 8, 5:15-6:15 Pontiac Farm Bureau Building

**Farmer's Market Vender Training:** April 22, 5:30 - 6:30pm Community Room - U of I Extension Pontiac

**Online Marketing:** April 29, 4:30-6pm Pontiac Farm Bureau Building

The Executive Committee and Board of Directors will have a joint meeting on April 15th at 5pm. If you are an Executive Committee or Board of Directors member, more information will be coming soon. All members and non-members can access the meeting minutes for both the Executive Committee and Board of Directors on the "For Members" page of the GLCEDC website.

## Important Dates:

### March

3/18 - Executive Committee meeting

3/24 - Pontiac small business and entrepreneurs meeting

3/25 - Dwight small business and entrepreneurs meeting

### April

4/8 - Biz Ed Workshops: Building a Business Plan

4/15 - Executive Committee and Board of Directors Joint meeting

4/22 - Biz Ed Workshop: Farmer's Market Vender Training

4/29 - Biz Ed Workshops: Online Marketing

### May

5/20 - Executive Committee meeting

Please refer to the website: [www.glcedc.org](http://www.glcedc.org) for more information on upcoming events.

## Executive Committee

Mike Stoecklin, Village of Saunemin, - Chairman  
Dave Ochs, OSF St. James - Vice Chair  
Kevin McNamara, Village of Dwight  
Secretary/Treasurer  
Patti Damm, Caterpillar  
Mike McCoy, McCoy Construction  
Glen Ludwig, Creative Ag Solutions  
Mike Cohlman, Champion Fitness  
Terry Sullivan, Sullivan Realty  
Scott Bauknecht, FREESTAR Bank  
Ron Minnaert, State Bank of Graymont  
Mayor Jim Gulliford, Village of Forrest  
Carey Wiesner, RKO Saw  
Bill Fairfield, County Board Chairman

## Board of Directors

Paula Corrigan, OSF- St. Francis, Inc.  
Mark Hovren, Evenglow  
Joe Mikulecky, Farnsworth & Wylie  
Jerald Sherman, Big R  
Oscar Weathersby, Livingston County Custodial  
Sandy Erschen, Manpower  
Courtney Farrell, Pontiac RV  
Joan Bullard, Joan Bullard Realty  
Mark Brummel, Barrett Realty  
Don Beavers, Livingston County Board of Realtors  
Bill Kauffman, Bank of Pontiac  
Bill Fairfield, Livingston County Board  
Leo Johnson, Pontiac School District #90  
Beth Dunahee, Futures Unlimited  
David Hamilton, Printing Craftsmen  
Tom Tock  
Carl Borngasser

GLCEDC is a member driven organization. We are always looking for new members. If you would like to join our effort, please go to the "For Members" on our website, [www.glcdec.org](http://www.glcdec.org), for membership benefits and applications or contact our office at 815-842-2900.



Your opportunity awaits...

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