



OPINION ARTICLE

14 July 2011

Lessons in Leadership | By John Hogan

Lessons from the Field™

By John Hogan, CHA CHMS CHE CHO

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This is titled *lessons in leadership*, and I am not specifically referring to one company, one brand or one country in that title. For the past three years, even in a tight economy, leading developers have been targeting previously under-served countries and the pace has hastened this past 12 months. (See this [link for specifics](#))



I find it more than interesting that JHM Hotels and Interstate have been working together on projects including a hospitality school in India and that many universities are globally expanding their influence through remote campuses, online courses and crammed month-long management programs. Starwood was not looking for a public relations coup when they literally relocated most of their US executive home office staff to China for the month of June 2011- they were immersing themselves in the

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For this lessons in leadership, I looked to the East for a different perspective and different industry. While hospitality is not the same as manufacturing, there are parallels in certain people skills.

A former senior managing director of Toyota Motor Corporation and renowned leader of their famous manufacturing system, Masao Nemoto is known throughout the world as a leader in quality control and process optimization. In a sense, he is one of the principal architects of the "Toyota Way." His ideas on leadership and quality management are documented, and reveal the profound knowledge Nemoto infused into the day-to-day operations at Toyota, much the same as certain hoteliers such as Statler, Hilton, Wilson, Johnson, Marriott, Oberoi, Sharp, Carlson, Kerzner, Forte, Ritz and others did in hotels.

Nemoto insisted on a culture of shared responsibility and he believed that critical tasks could not be left to a single business unit, but rather should be a collective responsibility. Nemoto's point of view says that leaders must lead across the company, not just their own particular area.

His beliefs went from the senior leaders all the down to the individual worker on the assembly line, where everyone speaks, insisted Nemoto, not just management. A direct

responsibility for problem solving, instead of pushing the problems or issues up the line where it likely gets choked in bureaucracy.

In my career, I have worked with and in all sizes of organizations. I have sat in countless meetings that seem to be stalled with some regularity and have found myself wondering the same things you might be thinking today: *"Are we competing against each other or against the competition?"*

Nemoto's 10 leadership principles:

1. **Improvement after improvement.** Managers should look continually for ways to improve the work of their employees. Advance is a gradual, incremental process. They should create all atmosphere conducive to improvements by others.
2. **Coordinate between divisions.** Managers of individual divisions, departments, or subsidiaries must share responsibility. A corollary of this is that upper management should not assign important tasks to only one division.
3. **Everyone speaks.** This rule guides supervisors of quality circles at Toyota, ensuring participation and learning by all members. It has also been generalized to all meetings and the annual planning process. By hearing everyone's view, upper management can create realistic plans that have the support of those who must implement them--an essential element in quality programs.
4. **Do not scold.** This was an alien concept to most managers. At Toyota the policy is for superiors to avoid giving criticism and threatening punitive measures when mistakes are made. This is the only way to ensure that mistakes will be reported immediately and fully so that the root causes (in policies and processes) can be

makes it harder to find the underlying cause of a mistake, but it is difficult to train managers to take this approach.

5. **Make sure others understand your work.** An emphasis on teaching and presentation skills is important because of the need for collaboration. At Toyota, managers are expected to develop their presentation skills and to teach associates about their work so that collaborations will be fuller and more effective.
6. **Send the best employees out for rotation.** Toyota has a rotation policy to train employees. There is a strong tendency for managers to keep their best employees from rotation, but the company benefits most in the long run by training its best employees.
7. **A command without a deadline is not a command.** This rule is used to ensure that managers always give a deadline or schedule for work. Employees are instructed to ignore requests that are not accompanied by a deadline. The rationale is that without a deadline, tasks are far less likely to be completed.
8. **Rehearsal is an ideal occasion for training.** Managers and supervisors give numerous presentations and reports. In a QC program there are frequent progress reports. Nemoto encouraged managers to focus on the rehearsal of reports and presentations, and to require that they be rehearsed. Rehearsal time is used to teach presentation skills and to explore problems or lack of understanding of the topic. Because it is informal, rehearsal time is better for learning.
9. **Inspection is a failure unless top management takes action.** The idea behind this is that management must prescribe specific

"do your best to solve this problem") is ineffective. So is failing to take any action once a problem is defined.

10. **Ask subordinates, "What can I do for you?"** At Toyota this is called "creating an opportunity to be heard at the top." In the first year of a quality-control program, managers hold meetings in which employees brief them about progress. Three rules guide these informal meetings:

- Do not postpone the meetings or subordinates will think their project is not taken seriously.
- Listen to the process, not just the results, since QCs focus in on the process.
- Ask the presenters whether you can do anything for them. If they ask for help, be sure to act on the request.

If top management is perceived as willing to help with problems, employees are more optimistic about tackling the problems and will take management's goals more seriously.

FOLLOW UP to last week's column on TIME WASTERS

If you would like to share your top 5 Time Wasters with me, I will include them next week with our collection of the top ten time wasters I have discovered with clients, in workshops or other research. **The three submissions on what we consider to be the three most comprehensive lists will all receive a free one month membership at HospitalityEducators.com.**

Please send them no later than July 17, 2011 to john.hogan@hospitalityeducators.com.

Hospitality Tip of the Week™

"Focus on Continuous Improvement"

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