



Learning To Lead

By Jan Kelly

I recently made a presentation to a group of dealers about leadership. As I began to write my speech, the following thoughts came to mind. I share them with you now as a reminder that our industry needs leaders – and none of us can afford to declare an exemption.

The skill set for developing leadership qualities includes:

L – Listen to others and listen to your own internal voice after gathering all the facts. Leaders make choices every day; the ones that work best are seldom off the cuff, and few shoot from the hip.

E – Energy for the work that awaits them every day. When you love what you do it is not work; it becomes a labor of love. When you are fulfilling a calling, you are eager to get to work, you are focused upon the task at hand, and you spread the energy to others you meet.

A – Accountability for the action taken, and attention to detail prior to implementation. “A” should also stand for action. Ideas without implementation are worthless. Try it, even if it is not perfect; tweak it as you discover the flaws. Be fearless. Take responsibility.

D – Determination to meet goals. Writing down goals with a time frame is key to achieving them. Keep the goals in sight and review them; make sure they are attainable.

Leaders **LEARN FROM OTHERS** so they can maximize their efforts

E – Establish guidelines and processes. Have you mapped out each department’s employees? Do not choke business; establish a playbook so everyone will know for what they are held accountable, what is expected, and how deals are to be split.

R – Read books. Leaders are readers. Begin with 20 minutes in the morning. Leaders read books about history, they read biographies, and they are curious about learning what works and why. What have others tried? How did it work for

them? Leaders learn from others so they can maximize their efforts.

S – Share the load. Create a team. Sharing the load means monitoring, meeting and mentoring. Finding the right person for the right job. While it sounds easy, it is one of the most difficult jobs a leader will face. Leaders bring out the best in people, and they share the spotlight with their producers.

H – Honesty is not just a word. It is what separates the few from the field. It is how you live and how you conduct business. Your followers do not learn from words . . . they learn from watching your actions and take their lead from your example.

I – Integrity is doing the right thing when no one is watching you. Live your life knowing that someday you will answer for your deeds. When that day comes the lines will be long, so make the explanations short; live each day as if it were your last.

P – Planning. Machiavelli wrote about planning for war even during times of peace. A leader is prepared for the best and for the worst. Leaders are purposeful; they know that any journey requires a map, the means, and a mission.

In 2007 we must lead to succeed. Are you ready to be followed?

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