



By Steve Lewis

HOW TO MANAGE A SUCCESSFUL GROUP OR COMMITTEE



When it comes to successful leadership, there is more than one formula for accomplishing desired results, as demonstrated by several SIORs who were kind enough to share their strategies for leadership success.

For example, **Bruce H. Wolfgram, SIOR, P.Eng, RPA, Leed AP**, office specialist and vice president, Tenant Representation for Primecorp Commercial Realty in Ottawa, Canada, says, "I believe you need to first show your team that you know what you're doing, but then going forward, encourage and allow each person to contribute in his or her own way. A successful leader does not need to be the loudest person on the team."

And **Paul B. Kluck, SIOR, RPA**, first vice president, CBRE, in Greenwood Village, Colo., who has chaired a number of committees, shares the following approaches: “To me the biggest things about chairing a committee are 1) to be organized, 2) to respect peoples’ time — so always be on task, 3) thank your members.”

“An individual has to be motivated in order to motivate others,” adds **Nimrod T. Frazer, Jr., SIOR**, general manager, Industrial Partners, in Montgomery, Ala.. He explains that a successful leader is “a person who is enthusiastic, positive, loyal to the SIOR and their group, and who leads by example.”

HOW DO YOU ESTABLISH CREDIBILITY?

If you are meeting the individuals in your group or committee for the first time, how do you start to develop their faith in you as a leader? “Whenever I run a meeting, I first make it clear what we are trying to accomplish,” says Kluck. “At the beginning of the meeting the agenda is laid out with supporting material; the meeting starts and ends on time, we keep to the agenda, and the items generally have a limited time outlined. If for some reason we do go over, it has to be agreed on by the members.”

In addition, he says, “my first meeting will be goal oriented – here’s where we’re headed, here’s what we’re trying to accomplish, and I need your help to get there.” The best way to establish your leadership, he asserts, “is by establishing your leadership.”



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“I explain my background, which hopefully should include prior experience in the focus area,” adds Wolfgram. “But even if you don’t have extensive prior experience, that’s okay. You’re there to manage the process in the future, and to help bring forward the entire team’s accomplishments.”

“When introducing yourself you must have a specific goal in mind,” says Frazer. “Without that it is impossible for a group or committee to be motivated. You need a specific reason to work toward a goal; motivation must be an ongoing process.”

HOW DO YOU MOTIVATE YOUR MEMBERS?

Frazer has several additional thoughts on how to motivate members. “Motivation requires recognition,” he asserts. “People will strive harder for recognition than for almost any single thing in life. It is vital to get people involved and to seek their opinions. People who are listened to and given an opportunity to actively participate are more effective and more motivated.”

“Let each team member contribute in their own way,” suggests Wolfgram. “Plus, keep meetings on time with a clear agenda and also make meetings fun.”

Kluck notes that “a lot of people—especially SIORs—are pretty motivated, so it’s not too difficult a task. But as a general statement you have to find people’s talents and passions. They will not be motivated to speak publicly if it scares the crap out of them. Build a task you want them to accomplish around their talent and passion—that’s how they get motivated.”

WHO PROVIDES THE BEST MODEL?

In terms of generating positive performance, is it more effective to encourage group or committee members to use you as a model, or to develop their own approaches—or some combination of the two?

“They should be allowed to go their own way,” says Wolfgram. “The goal is to draw from all their expertise—which is best done when they are free to work in the manner best suited to them.”

“My job is to bring out thoughts and ideas from each personality,” says Kluck. “I do not try to model, so that they will reach into what they are and bring it out to share. A lot of times committees may not be meeting but once or twice a year, and serve for two or three years, so the last thing I want to do is sit and do nothing. If they are new to committees I give them orientation, and make sure their thoughts and ideas come out at the first meeting. Everyone gets the chance to talk, and nobody dominates the conversation.”

GOALS AND COMMUNICATION

When it comes to establishing goals, “the membership council should allow the subcommittee to establish their own goals, but communicate together on a regular basis – through conference calls and committee meetings at conferences to stay engaged and informed,” says Frazer. “I think you as a teacher should

encourage the committee to develop their own goals and objectives. Conducting an appraisal as a group can be one way to ensure each member is staying focused and involved in the process and the committee.”

His groups, he adds, communicates through phone calls, emails, selected committee meetings, and time spent face-to-face at SIOR conferences twice a year. “You should try to have motivated leaders in your committee who work hard to accomplish the committee goals,” he declares.

“I typically will set or indicate our goals, as the goals may be coming from beyond me,” says Wolfgram. “However, the way these goals are achieved is often best left to who on the team has the most expertise and passion to tackle each individual goal or project—either by themselves or as part of a two- or three-person sub-committee.”

Most of his formal meetings are monthly at best, and sometimes less frequent, but Wolfgram asserts that direct face-to-face interaction is critical. “Often work gets done outside of meetings, so email, phone, texting, and informal get-togethers are all fine, depending on how team members wish to communicate while completing their individual projects.”

“I try to be selective about who will be on the committee because of the goals,” adds Kluck. “It’s all about being organized, goal oriented, on task and effective in meetings and respecting the time and energy members bring to my committee.”

As for establishing the goals, he continues, “usually we are all going to rally around the goals of the committee. Once we have everybody on board, then everyone has a job. If we try to accomplish any particular goals I ask for volunteers or I assign a task. We all understand where we’re going and everyone will be involved in how we get there; there is no hidden agenda.”

As for communication, he adds, “in a formal sense, the agenda is a form of communication. Then there are minutes, a form that not only summarizes what happens in the meeting but also outlines tasks that need to be accomplished. They come out shortly after the meeting. I like face-to-face meetings better than anything, but that’s expensive. I’m okay with conference calls, but if we’re not getting attendance and we’re not effective we pretty much have to go face-to-face.”

Are there other ways to address the members if progress is not satisfactory? How do you inspire members when things do not appear to be progressing as well as anticipated?

“I like to always be straight up,” says Wolfgram. “Sometimes things go off-track that are beyond our control. If so, the team needs to know that it’s not their fault and that we just need to accept that and alter our strategy.”

“You have to go back and review the goals of the committee,” adds Kluck. “Maybe they’re not achievable and we are reaching too high. You can also look at the committee mix; maybe you do not have the right people on the ‘bus’—or they’re not sitting in the right ‘seats.’ You just need to re-evaluate things from the very beginning to make the process more effective.”

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Finally, successful leaders agree, it’s important to recognize and/or reward your members when they have met their goal or performed well.

“I like to recognize team members on an ongoing basis, with their peers as well as throughout the chain of command,” says Wolfgram. “And the occasional lunch or party including beer or wine is always another sure chance to keep morale high too!”

“The reward is the satisfaction that you’ve recruited new members into SIOR and given the committee the assurance that through teamwork they accomplished their goal and improved SIOR as an organization,” adds Frazer.

“We’ve done it in a number of ways,” says Kluck. “For a lot of folks being on committees they are pretty good at rewarding themselves, but the best way to reward someone is through public adulation. Maybe when you’re at the podium you can take the opportunity to thank all the people on the committee. At meetings I always try to thank members who have done a particular task and accomplished it, but that can be a little perfunctory. Genuine praise personally and publicly are the best ways in my mind.” ■

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