



Bridges

A bi-monthly newsletter from Meridian Consulting, Inc.

Building Bridges to Success

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"Good leaders inspire us to have confidence in them, but great leaders inspire us to have confidence in ourselves."

Featured Topic: *The Magic Bullet*

In working with leaders, we frequently hear the question, "What do I do when "so and so" does this or doesn't do that?" This question comes when a leader is at an impasse with an employee. They are looking for the one right phrase or action that will turn things around—the magic bullet.

The truth of the matter is, there's no magic bullet, given the many variables that created the problem in the first place.

Unfortunately, work pressures force many a leader to look for the "magic bullet" so the work can get done, on-time and on-budget, with minimal problems. However, the single biggest variable in getting the work done—are the people involved. We once had a client who said, "Managing people is like trying to herd cats."

It's no surprise that the "magic bullet" looks very attractive.

The very nature of *Human Resource Policy Management*, tells leaders that the *policy* can solve the problem. That employee accountability is established through the clever manipulation of reward and punishment.

This conventional wisdom seduces leaders to conclude that an action or consequence will magically transform an underachiever into a motivated and fully engaged employee. While the

intended magic bullet can change behavior, it will only be temporary. Permanent change will only emerge when the employee “wants to” make the change.

The vice president of a well-established bank once informed us that his organization had initiated an "Empowerment Program" along with lots of rewards and recognition for participation. His question for us was, "How long is it going to take before people start acting empowered?" At the root of this question is the misconception of the magic bullet.

The same can be said for leadership itself. There are hundreds of management "How To" books that tell you that leadership is the ability to demonstrate the *essential three skills, or seven traits*, etc. There is **NO Magic Bullet**. There is no magic formula. Instead, start with what you know about yourself and leverage that knowledge in new ways:

- **Know your strengths, talents, challenges and blind spots** – Develop a deep understanding of how you best contribute and where you struggle. When you learn this about yourself, it enables you to find the “best” in your employees, and overcome the need for them to be just like you. Instead you will find employees to compliment yourself and to fill in the gaps where you have challenges and to illuminate your blind spots.
- **Strive to be honest, fair, and consistent in all that you do** – Take a fearless inventory on how you demonstrate these behaviors. Get someone to validate that your actions have the intended affect. Where appropriate, take the needed action. Be consistent in words and action; and hold yourself accountable when you are not. If you make a mistake, admit it.
- **Identify your ability to influence others to get things done** – Influence happens in the context of your relationship with another. The stronger the business relationship, the more influence you have. If you have no relationship or a poor one with an employee, no amount of the carrot and stick approach will make them “choose” to do what you want. As Tony Dungy once noted "They don't care how much you know, until they know that you care." Your influence is expanded by the degree to which you care about the relationship that you have with that person.
- **Explore your ability to communicate** – When you lead with your strengths, you speak with confidence, and you can create messages that resonate with others. Great leaders communicate with conviction and a passion to share the vision (where we're going), communicate expectations (how we're going to get there), and communicate values (what's important along the way). These leaders spend as much, if not more of their communication time, listening. When you listen, you learn what motivates and influences others to commit and do their best.

Great leaders inspire when they model the behaviors they expect of their employees. They inspire us to have confidence in them and *more importantly*, they inspire us to have confidence in ourselves.

Book Review: *The 9 Ways of Working*, by Michael Goldberg

“To see ourselves as others see us is a most salutary gift.” Aldous Huxley

Goldberg has written an entertaining and articulate book on the “Enneagram,” a system based on nine personality types that help you discover your natural strengths and talents, see how others see you and help you see yourself more clearly. He writes in-depth about each style's special gifts, their limits and blind spots, when they will excel, and where they will have difficulties.

Very practical and useful in the office setting, this book examines your basic assumptions, closely held opinions, and your inclinations and expectations that drive the way you work, relate to the others in everyday situations, and make decisions. His diagrams and charts provide quick and accurate overviews for making excellent distinctions between types.

As entertaining as the book is, it's equally filled with practical work examples that enable you to improve managerial and peer relationships, by making the intentions and behaviors of others understandable; thus, helping people work together more successfully. Oftentimes, getting the best results from a situation, means getting out of your own way and this book can help you do that.

The author gets at the heart of a person's motivation and how that shows up in the work environment. The Enneagram is another tool that helps you discover additional methods for working with others. It's not a *Magic Bullet* but it can help.

Featured Service: *Coaching Services*

Great leaders inspire us to have confidence in them and more importantly, they inspire us to have confidence in ourselves.

Are you looking to unleash the best in yourself and in others? Coaching is an excellent investment to see things in new ways, translate those insights into action, and overcome obstacles that cloud your horizon and limit your vision.

My coaching clients are experiencing amazing results:

“Angela helped pull me out of the doldrums of ‘nothing will change around here’ and into the possibilities that exist when I finally realized on a ‘gut level’ that all change starts and ends with me. She turned my cynicism into ‘I can’ do something about this—starting with working on developing more effective management skills. She kept me focused on my area of control and helped me improve my communication skills. Now I spend my time working in areas where I truly can make a difference. I am more successful in getting my ideas across. I have been able to influence outcomes because I can talk in a way where people with different values can listen.”

Coaching can help you achieve results faster and easier than doing it by yourself. Are you ready to reap the benefits?

- Gain clarity & purpose to stay focused
- Develop leadership presence
- Lead from your strengths with conviction and confidence
- Deal effectively with difficult people
- Build and sustain life balance
- Build powerful interdependent relationships that are key to professional success

“Things do not happen. Things are made to happen.” **John F. Kennedy**

If you are looking for results that make a difference, contact Angela today.

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