

By
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Perspective

Lead Like a Sherpa: Inspire Your Team to the Summit

If you believe that an organization's success is as much the will of the people as it is the will of the leader then it is critical that we as leaders do whatever it takes to inspire success in others.

Let us remind you of the devastating statistics that plague most businesses today. When you look at the data on employee engagement, satisfaction, loyalty and commitment, it's shocking! The majority of people today feel stuck, stalled, bored, frustrated and some are even actively disengaged when they come to work. Bottom line: there are far too many Dead People Working™ today. DPW are physically present but psychologically, emotionally and intellectually checked-out at work. Funny? Perhaps. Problem, YES! Dead People Working™ will not provide our companies with the kind of intellectual and emotional capital that we need to get ahead and stay ahead. It is time to think and act like a Sherpa.



Let us share some powerful lessons learned from the skills and guts of the Sherpas who guide teams to summit Mount Everest. While preparing for a program for Intel, we met Dave Arnett, a Director at Intel, who summited Mount Everest on May 21, 2007. Less than three thousand people have been able to summit Everest and Dave is one of them. Last year seven people died trying and Dave knew four of them. It is a daunting journey even for the bravest of the brave! Dave humbly noted that his success in summiting Everest had everything to do with the support he gained from his family, his team and the gifted Sherpas.

Family - It's hard to imagine saying yes to an adventure that could leave you widowed and all alone to raise two young daughters, yet Dave had unconditional support from this family. Dave's wife and children were fully supportive of this crazy journey. They were with him in spirit and prayer every step of the way! Is your family fully supportive of your journey? Are they willing to give financially, emotionally, and unselfishly so you can do whatever it takes to achieve a challenging professional goal, a dream or even a personal passion? Maybe you're not trying to summit Everest, but what are you trying to summit? A new project, a career transition, a personal health or wellness goal? Part of our ability to accomplish big things is

to know we have the unconditional love and support of our family and friends at home. Your team at home must be your biggest fans, allies and supporters.

Team - You cannot climb or summit Everest on your own—it takes a team. Summiting Everest is about knowing and trusting members of your team to be there whenever and wherever you need them. Do you know and trust your team inside and out? Do

you know who you can count on in a pinch? Do you know who provides intellectual support when the going gets tough, and who provides emotional support when things get frustrating? Who is willing and capable of doing whatever it takes under stress and extreme pressure? Is your team worthy of your trust? Are you worthy of their trust?

Sherpa - Dave says the Sherpas are without a doubt tactical experts and athletic wonders. However, after seeing the Sherpas in action, Dave thinks what really makes them great is their ability to truly understand the dynamics of the team. Sherpas have to be gutsy! There are times when a Sherpa has to make a tough call and tell a climber that they are a liability to the team, and that if they continue the team could die. Are you a liability to your team, or do you know someone who is? Do you have the guts to act like a Sherpa and call out the liabilities in your team, your department, and your organization? Dead People Working™ are liabilities to themselves and everyone around them. If you are a DPW or know of one, be a Sherpa, remind your team of the importance of team. Every summit, every program, every project, every new goal must be embraced by everyone! An organization's success is as much the will of the people as it is the will of the leader. If people choose to not engage, and become a liability, everyone suffers. Is it time to invite people to step up and be players or stop the climb? ■

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