

LEAD LIKE A GOOSE



By Gary Seibert, CEO, Small Business Resource Association

There have to be thousands of resources out there on the topic of Leadership. I have accumulated a library of my own and have used them frequently over my 50 years of being in business. However, about 15 years ago my wife and I were browsing through an antique store and I found an old picture frame with a picture of a gaggle of geese flying in formation. Under the picture was an interesting story about why geese fly in formation and I couldn't help but see a correlation between their story and a very important, but sometimes overlooked, role of a great leader — Sharing Responsibility. Here is the story.

Great Leaders Share the Responsibility

Think of autumn. Think of geese flying south for the winter. As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the birds immediately behind it. By flying in a V-formation, a flock of geese adds at least 72 percent to its flying range compared to each bird flying on its own.

That's a great model of SYNERGY — the ability to accomplish more together than apart.

When the lead goose gets tired, he rotates back in the formation and another goose flies point for a while. In doing this they model SHARED RESPONSIBILITY — leadership that is truly a team effort, not the work of a lone ranger.

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LEAD LIKE A GOOSE

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As they fly, the geese in the back honk to encourage those up front to keep up their speed and momentum. In doing this they model the power of ENCOURAGEMENT and AFFIRMATION — Everyone performs better with cheerleaders around them.

And finally, any time a goose gets sick or is wounded and falls out of formation, two geese drop out and follow him down to HELP and PROTECT him. They stay with him until he is able to fly again or dies. They then join another formation until they catch up with their group. In doing this they model CARE that emerges within a group when it WORKS TOGETHER TO REACH A COMMON GOAL.

The takeaway of this story — Partnerships Multiply our Potential and Extend our Reach. As leaders we have many roles and responsibilities. If we really examine the main responsibility of a Leader, we might determine that "Leadership" is not "Doership." In other words, Leaders are responsible to get groups of people together to accomplish a common goal-

Synergy. They are to find competent people to take part in performing specific tasks and together share in the responsibility of accomplishing a common goal. They are not doing all the work — they

are delegating the work. The leader is responsible however for being the head cheerleader and encouraging others on their way to accomplishing their common goal. What I liked best about the story of the geese is their instinctive behavior to CARE for the others in their gaggle (skein). Just think

what the workplace environment would look like if EVERY employee shared a common concern for the welfare of their co-workers. What a difference that might make in job satisfaction.

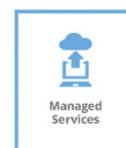
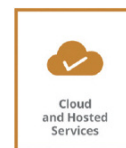
If a wild animal can possess all these great characteristics of working together, shared responsibilities, encouragement and care, wouldn't one suppose that the intelligent, learned, purposeful human being could at least be as good as the geese? One would hope so. Good luck with your GAGGLE.

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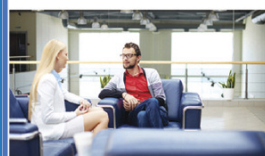
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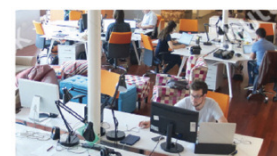


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