

THE PRESIDENTS' FORUM

NEWSLETTER

September 2005



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Consistent techniques shape the culture of our leaders.

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Leading for Growth

Consistent techniques shape the culture of our leaders.



Bob Prosen

No soft science, superior leadership is essential for running a profitable company, says Bob Prosen, CEO of [The Prosen Center for Business Advancement](#) in Dallas.

For starters, your leadership style will drive your company's culture. "Culture is the unspoken rules of the game" it's how things get done," explained Prosen, speaking at a TEI Presidents' Forum. To maximize your organization's performance, he recommends embracing an accountability-based culture, where employees know: 1) precisely what they're

responsible for and 2) that you hold them accountable to get it done.

In an accountability-based organization, leaders should communicate that they're responsible *to* employees, but not *for* them. "That's sounds subtle, but there's a big difference," says Prosen, explaining that leaders provide the right environment, tools, training and support, but employees are ultimately charged with generating results.

Put your ego aside. Superior leaders aren't afraid to hire people who are smarter than they are. To test your hiring savvy, ask yourself two simple questions:

1. How often does an employees come to me with ideas that I've never heard of before " ideas that he or she has

Calendar: Presidents' Forums

SEP 14 - The University of Chicago
Gleacher Center, Chicago, IL

SEP 22 - Bentley College Meeting &
Conference Center, Boston, MA

OCT 6 - The Harris Conference Center,
Charlotte, NC

OCT 20 - The Cobb Galleria, Atlanta, GA

NOV 2 - Jones Graduate School of
Management at Rice University, Houston,
TX

NOV 17 - The Bethesda Marriott Hotel,
Washington, D.C.

To attend a Presidents' Forum in your area, apply by calling 614-895-1153 or visiting www.tei.net/experience.asp.

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About The Entrepreneurship Institute

by Jan Wm. Zupnick, President

Founded in 1976, TEI's mission is to provide unlimited opportunities for business owners to grow their companies. TEI is dedicated to meeting the knowledge and networking needs of America's small- and mid-market company presidents.

already tested successfully?

2. Would I hire that person again today?

Prosen has employed these two questions often during his 25-year career, which includes senior positions at Sprint, Sabre and AT&T Global Information Solutions/NCR. The answers have sometimes prompted painful staffing decisions, he says, but the payoff was worth it. For example, when Prosen joined Sabre, a provider of technology and marketing services to the travel industry, his division wasn't making its profit objectives. Within 18 months profit improved by more than 50 basis points.

Reward the right people. Prosen discourages "socialistic compensation" where employees receive similar salary increases. Instead, reward the people who produce real results, especially as it relates to your organization's profits.

Money isn't the only way to recognize people for their accomplishments; often employees just want a thank you. And the higher up in the company this acknowledgement comes from, the more powerful it can be.

Prosen once asked the president of a large company to personally call 20 employees: "I said, 'You don't know these people because the company is too big, but they've just knocked the ball out of the park.' " When the president obliged, not only were the employees gratified, but their recognition spread like wildfire inside the organization, inspiring others to excel.

Gaining loyalty and trust. A successful leader must be able to confide important information to his or her senior managers. If you can't do that, then you don't have the right people.

Remember that loyalty is a two-way street where leaders must make "and" and "keep" commitments.

Sometimes leaders get caught in a dilemma where decisions could be cast either way. "But when you step back and look at the situation, you know the right thing to do," Prosen says. "Don't ever compromise on your integrity, because if employees catch you, then they'll think it's OK for them to compromise."

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A Different Ball Game

Office Furniture Team scores a touchdown.



When an ankle injury forced Brian Hutson to retire from the National Football League, he tackled an even tougher turf: entrepreneurship.

Today Hutson is CEO of [Office Furniture Team Inc.](#) (OFT), a new and used office furniture company that he launched in 1997. Headquartered in Addison, Texas, OFT generated \$4.5 million in 2004

When these presidents can learn from each other what works and can tap the expertise of top-level professionals who serve on our advisory boards, they are better able to lead their companies to stronger profits and sustained growth. This creates wealth and jobs, both of which are good for America.

TEI's educational programs, networking opportunities and business communications are targeted to presidents of existing multimillion-dollar enterprises. A growth orientation is a key criterion for invitation to TEI's learning programs, such as The Presidents' Forum.

To become a member of TEI or for more information, call (614) 895-1153 or visit www.tei.net/apply.asp.

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- Provides access to top business experts.
- Gives your business visibility with local and national business owners.
- Provides hundreds of contacts nationwide through TEI's Web site and other member firms.

Services Include:

- A free one-page listing of your firm's products/services in TEI's Peer Contacts section at www.tei.net/ask_peercontacts.asp.
- The Presidents' Forum Media Library of streaming audio webcasts featuring America's best business leaders is now available for free. Speaking at Presidents' Forums nationwide, these business leaders can now share their strategies, tactics and wisdom with you in this expansive archived audio library. To take advantage of this powerful resource, go to: www.tei.net/presidentsforum.
- A subscription to The Presidents' Forum electronic newsletter featuring the most current thinking