In this book, Maxwell deals with an important topic: not everyone is called to be the top leader in an organisation, and so we need to learn to lead from "the middle". The idea of 360-Degree Leadership is that we should be able to "lead up", influencing our leaders, "lead across", influencing our peers, and "lead down", influencing those lower down the organisational hierarchy. As usual, Maxwell gets his points across with a series of fairly brief, pithy chapters dealing with various practical issues.

He introduces the first section, which deals with myths about leadership, by reflecting on the sorts of people we instinctively think of when we think of "a leader": William Wallace, Winston Churchill, Mahatma Gandhi, etc. He points out that this is misleading as "99% of all leadership occurs not from the top but from the middle of an organization". Taking this further, all of us can lead effectively, even if we're not the Vice Chancellor or the CEO.

He notes that many people are good in one direction (e.g. they have influence with their boss, but alienate the people who report to them, or are great with their team, but do no get along with their peers), and some people are very productive, but lack influence with anyone in the organization.

In contrast, 360-Degree Leaders have influence in all directions, with their superiors, with their peers and with their subordinates. While this may seem like a tall order, Maxwell provides some helpful guidelines in the book on how to lead in all three directions: up, across and down. He dedicates a section to each of these topics, but begins the book with a section that discusses a number of myths commonly believed about leading from the middle, followed by a second introductory section that discusses a number of challenges that middle leaders may face.

**Myth #1: The Position Myth - I cannot lead if I'm not at the top**

The perception that one cannot lead without a position or title is widely held, but not true in Maxwell's opinion. As he states in "The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership", "The true measure of leadership is influence - nothing more, nothing less". To counter this myth, Maxwell puts forward a hierarchy of leadership. At the lowest level is Position, where people follow you because they have to - this is leadership based on Rights. Level 2 is characterised by Permission, where people allow you to lead them - this is based on Relationship. Level 3 is the level of Production, where people follow you because of your achievements - based on Results. At level 4, the focus is on People Development, where people follow because of what you do for them - based on Reproduction. Lastly, the highest level of leadership is characterised by Personhood, where people follow you because of "who you are and what you represent" - based on Respect. One starts at the bottom of this hierarchy with every person you interact with, and must earn the right to lead at higher levels.

Using this hierarchy as a guideline, it is clear that one can lead without a significant position. Maxwell puts it this way: "Influencing others is a matter of disposition, not position". This can be done from anywhere in an organisation.
In fact, middle leadership is vital for any organisation. Maxwell quotes David Branker, a long-standing and successful middle leader: "To do nothing in the middle is to create more weight for the top leader to move... Leaders in the middle can have a profound effect on an organization".

A closing quote, from Maxwell:

Leadership is a choice you make, not a place you sit. Anyone can choose to become a leader wherever he is. You can make a difference no matter where you are.

Some things to think about:
1) Can you think of any examples of middle leaders, who clearly exert an influence beyond the bounds of their position?
2) How would you rate your influence in all three directions (up, across and down)?

We continue our introduction to the idea of 360-Degree Leadership, by considering the next few common myths that Maxwell finds are commonly held.

**Myth #2: The Destination Myth - When I get to the top, then I'll learn to lead**

Maxwell opens this short chapter with a story about his writer, Charlie Wetzel. Charlie was a fairly keen recreational runner, who ran regularly and occasionally even competed in a 10km race. However, he had a goal of running a marathon, and decided in 2003 to run the Chicago marathon. Needless to say, he didn't just arrive in Chicago in October and run the race. His preparation and training was rigorous.

This process started with the selection of the Chicago marathon. After much research he found that this was a relatively fast, flat route, with very dependable weather conditions, and great crowd support - in short, the ideal venue for a first attempt at a marathon. He also researched how to run a marathon, using web sites, articles, chatting to marathon runners, etc. He even found someone with some experience of marathons who agreed to run with him in Chicago. Then he started to train (in April), increasing his weekly distance steadily. By October he was ready and easily completed the marathon.

"Leadership is very similar. If you want to succeed, you need to learn as much as you can about leadership before you have a leadership position". Maxwell describes how people often tell him that they will read his books when they become leaders. He has to bite his tongue, and resist the temptation to tell them that they may not become leaders if they don't do some preparation!

He strongly believes that leadership is learned by experience: one needs to seize any opportunities to develop leadership skills. "If you don't try out your leadership skills and decision-making process when the stakes are small and the risks low, you're likely to get into trouble at higher levels when the cost of mistakes is high, the impact is far reaching, and the exposure is greater". He also quotes John Wooden, the famous basketball coach: "When opportunity comes, it's too late to prepare". One has to prepare for leadership ahead of time.

**Myth #3: The Influence Myth - If I were on top, then people would follow me**

Maxwell tells the story of a housekeeper who worked for President Woodrow Wilson. When she heard that the Secretary for Labour had resigned she suggested that her husband would be a good replacement - he worked hard and understood labour! Wilson pointed out that the cabinet position required someone of influence, to which she replied that if her husband was the Secretary for
Labour then he would be influential!

While few people would go as far as this woman, the idea that influence comes with position is commonly held. "You may be able to grant someone a position, but you cannot grant him real leadership. Influence must be earned". Being given a position may give you an opportunity to establish some influence, but this will depend on how well you lead. A good leader's influence will stretch beyond that conferred by the position. Conversely, a weak leader will end up with even less influence than their position would suggest. "[A] position doesn't make a leader, but a leader can make the position".

Some things to think about:
1) How can one prepare for leadership before gaining a leadership position?
2) Can you think of any leaders who have acquired more influence than their position holds? Or conversely, of any leaders who have squandered the influence appropriate to their position?

This week we look at the next two myths around the idea of 360-Degree Leadership, from Maxwell's book (The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization).

**Myth #4: The Inexperience Myth - When I get to the top, I'll be in control**

Maxwell notes that many people in any organisation will double-guess the leadership: "If I were in charge, we wouldn't have done this... Things sure would be different around here if I were the boss". He notes that there is a positive aspect to such thinking - it demonstrates a desire to improve things, and is indicative of a leaning towards leadership. He quotes Andy Stanley on this issue: "If you're a leader and leaders work for you, they think they can do a better job than you... And that's not wrong; that's just leadership".

However, there is also a negative aspect to such thoughts, as they are highly unrealistic. In practice, one often has less control, rather than more, as one ascends the organisational ladder. This is due to the numerous factors that potentially impact on the organisation, many of which are outside of any leader's control. Having real influence (rather than a title or position) is essential.

As an example of this principle at work, he mentions Carly Fiorina, who was a very successful leader at Lucent, before being hired as the CEO of Hewlett-Packard. While at H-P, she managed the merger with Compaq, which was meant to put H-P in a strong position to compete with Dell. However, the promise of the merger was not realised, and ultimately Fiorina was asked to leave. Although, she had the top position, she was not in control of the market factors that impacted on the merged company or, ultimately, of her own destiny.

**Myth #5: The Freedom Myth - When I get to the top, I'll no longer be limited**

This is related in some ways to the previous myth, but focuses on the freedom that people believe they will have when they reach the top position in their organisation. Maxwell puts this idea into words: "When I get to the top, I'll have it made... When I'm in charge, the sky will be the limit". In practice, leaders are all subject to very real limits on what they can do. Many of these arise from the increased responsibilities and pressures that come with leadership positions. One has to weigh up the consequences of one's actions as a leader, and their impact on the organisation. The effect of this can be highly limiting.
As an illustration, Maxwell considers a hypothetical, successful salesman. He might make $5 million in sales each year. He would probably also have a lot of freedom - e.g. to work his own hours to best fit in with his clients' activities, etc. "[He] can do things in [his] own style, and if [he drops] a ball, [he] can probably recover pretty easily". However, if the salesman is promoted to be the manager of a sales team of six people, he will have far less freedom (needing to interact with his subordinates in ways that accommodate their scheduled interactions with their clients, for example), and far greater responsibility (for $25 million of sales). If he moves further up the organisational ladder, he might become responsible for an entire division, with even greater responsibilities and demands. "So in some ways, leaders have less freedom as they move up, not more".

To illustrate this, Maxwell uses the following diagram, which shows how responsibilities increase as one goes up through and organisation, while rights decrease. At the bottom, a customer has no responsibilities to the organisation, while a CEO has enormous responsibilities. With these obligations comes diminished rights, and limits on one's freedom.

Some things to think about:
1) How much control do you have over your daily work? How much is dictated by organisational needs and the needs of the people you work with?
2) Do you agree that an individual's rights become restricted as they work their up the organisational ladder?

This week we consider the last two myths about 360-Degree Leadership, from "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization" by John Maxwell.

**Myth #6: The Potential Myth - I can't reach my potential if I'm not the top leader**

Maxwell starts this chapter by asking how many children set their career sights on being the Deputy President, or a middle manager! People's natural inclination is to want to be the top dog. (Apparently, an Internet recruiting company ran an ad campaign that poked fun at this by showing small children making statements like "When I grow up, I want to file all day long"!). "Yet the reality is that most people will never be the top leader in an organization. They will spend their careers somewhere in the middle". Maxwell then asks if it is OK to accept this, or whether one
should strive to reach the top position. His answer is that people should try to be the best that they can be in their position, rather than reaching for the top post.

As an example of this, he mentions the career of Dick Cheney. Cheney has had a long career in politics: chief-of-staff to Gerald Ford, secretary of defense for the first President Bush, and Vice President for the second. "He possesses all the credentials one would need to run for president... Yet he knows that the top position is not his best role". Cheney appears to be content having realised his potential as an effective deputy.

**Myth #7: The All-or-Nothing Myth - If I can't get to the top, then I won't try to lead**

Faced with the reality that one is unlikely to become the top leader in an organisation, some people may simply give up on leading at all. Maxwell describes this attitude as "If I can't be the captain of the team, then I'll take my ball and go home"! Others might not give up completely, but may feel frustrated that they are not at the top. This often results from a belief that success equates with being the top-dog.

As an example, Maxwell refers to an article in Fortune magazine in 2005, which identified six men as being heroes of the civil rights struggle in the USA. However, these men never participated in marches or sit-ins. Their mark was made in some of America's largest corporations, where they rose up through the ranks to become significant leaders (but not necessarily the CEO). When they started out, some of them couldn't use the same toilets or facilities as their colleagues, but they persevered in demonstrating their leadership potential and ultimately had a huge impact on their society. One of them expressed it this way: "you always have a choice of weapons. Some of us chose to do our fighting on the inside". They saw their role as an important complement to the "marching and raising hell and whatnot", as one of them put it. Following the initial success of these six men, Fortune identified a long list of current CEOs, company presidents, etc. from minority groups.

Maxwell notes that anyone can make an impact on their organisation from any position, but only if they don't give in to the frustration and give up trying to make a difference.

A closing quote from Maxwell: "I believe that individuals can become better leaders wherever they are... You can change people's lives. You can be someone who adds value. You can learn to influence people at every level of the organisation - even if you never get to the top".

Some things to think about:
1) Can you think of anyone who has made a great contribution to some organisation from a position other than the top?

2) Would you agree with Maxwell "that individuals can become better leaders wherever they are... You can change people's lives. You can be someone who adds value. You can learn to influence people at every level of the organisation - even if you never get to the top"? How might that perspective apply to you in your current position?

This week we move on from the myths about 360-Degree Leadership to consider some of the challenges that face 360-degree leaders. In this section of his book, "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization", John Maxwell deals with a number of challenges that face people who try to lead from the middle of an organisation. He notes that this can be a frustrating scenario, and also provides some advice on how to deal with the challenges.
Challenge #1: The Tension Challenge: The Pressure of Being Caught in the Middle

The Key to Managing the Tension Challenge: Learn to lead despite the restrictions others have placed on you.

Maxwell notes that middle-leaders are often not sure of exactly where they stand. They have some authority, and some resources. They have some ability to direct people, but also have limitations on their power. Overstepping one's authority as a middle-leader is likely to be a dangerous move! "If you are not the top leader, you are not running the show, but you may be responsible for it". You may feel that you have good ideas for the organisation's strategic direction, but you cannot make the necessary changes. All of these factors combine to create the tension of feeling "caught in the middle". Maxwell notes that the authority of a middle-leader is conferred by a leader further up the organisational ladder, and that that person can remove your authority, usually quite easily. "If that does not create tension, nothing will"!

He then turns to consider a number of factors that contribute to this sense of tension.

1) Empowerment: How much authority have you been given, and clearly is it delimited? Maxwell tells of the experience of a naval captain, Michael Abrashoff, who was given command of a "problem" ship, the USS Benfold. In his book, "It's Your Ship", Benfold describes how he tackled the poor performance of the sailors under his command, by delegating authority to them. He describes this process as "defining the parameters in which people are allowed to operate, and then setting them free". In his case, he set the boundaries at anything that "had the potential to kill or injure someone, waste taxpayers' money, or damage the ship". Within these limits his crew had the authority to act on their own initiative. Maxwell points out that this is an ideal situation for middle-leaders, but that often the boundaries of authority are not set this clearly. "The more vaguely the lines are drawn, the greater the potential for stress".

2) Initiative: How do you balance initiating and not overstepping your boundaries? People with leadership abilities tend to see and want to seize opportunities. This can lead to tension if your leaders are not comfortable with you initiating activities, and are not ready to empower you to act on opportunities that arise.

3) Environment: What is the leadership DNA of the organisation and its leadership? Maxwell notes that military organisations have a different style to large business corporations, which in turn are different in comparison with small start-ups, etc. Besides these kinds of large-scale differences, there are also differences arising from organisational culture and the style of the leaders (Maxwell notes that the leadership DNA of the USS Benfold changed, dramatically, under Abrashoff's leadership). One needs to carefully assess and understand the environment in which you work, and particularly whether it adds to or minimises the tension you experience as a middle-leader.

4) Job Parameters: How well do you know your job and how to do it? Maxwell notes that starting a new job is almost always very stressful, due to the uncertainty of the new position. "Only when you really have a handle on your job and you are good at your work does it reduce the tension of being in the middle".

5) Appreciation: Can you live without the credit? Public recognition for the performance of an organisation usually goes to the leader at the top. Lance Armstrong deals with this issue very well in Chapter 6, "Blue Train (Le Train Bleu)" of his book "Every Second Counts" (see the StaffDev email of May 2004). In it he states "it's an
embarrassment worth cringing over that I've stood on the podium of the Tour de France alone, as if I got there by myself... When I wear the yellow jersey [the special riding jersey worn by the race leader], I figure I only deserve the zipper. The rest of it, each sleeve, the front, the back belongs to the guys." That kind of credit for the rest of a team is all too rare, and middle-leaders need to be prepared to receive less recognition than the leader.

Maxwell then moves on to consider some tips for addressing the Tension Challenge.

1) Become comfortable with the middle
He notes that middle-leadership can sometimes be easier than the top position, particularly when there is a good, strong leader at the top of the organisation. Such a leader will make life easier for the middle-leaders by creating momentum and smoothing the way, providing empowerment, and clear boundaries, etc. Even mediocre middle-leaders can thrive in such an organisation. A lot of this comfort comes from having clear expectations: don't expect more from your job than it is likely to provide. Discussing your expectations with your leader and thus establishing the boundaries of your authority is very helpful.

2) Know what to "own" and what to let go
This is related to the idea of clear expectations, but focuses more on your leader's expectations of you. Maxwell tells of a father and son where the son worked for the father, but the father was often away from the organisation on speaking trips. When he would return there would often be some tension regarding ownership of projects and responsibility for areas of the organisation. The son learned to ask: "Is this yours or mine?". The answer to that question clarified his own responsibility, but also served as prompt to the father to back off if it was appropriate for his son to manage some aspect of the organisation given his frequent absences.

3) Find quick access to answers when caught in the middle
Maxwell points to executive assistants as people who are frequently caught in the middle, and describes how he remains in daily contact with his own assistant even when traveling. One of the best things he can do for her is to provide her with information rapidly, allowing her to deal with the pressures that she faces in managing his business affairs. "If I don't keep her waiting, she can do her work much more effectively". Most people have probably experienced the converse frustration of having to wait for some information, while champing at the bit to get going with something that needs to be done.

4) Never violate your position or the trust of the leader
Abusing your authority, undermining your superiors or abusing the organisation's resources are guaranteed ways of increasing the amount of tension you experience. The trust of the leadership is essential if you wish to retain the authority that you have and to expand it further. One important aspect of this is to avoid having "if I were in charge..." conversations with your coworkers. If you have problems with the leader, discuss it directly with them.

5) Find a way to relieve stress
The tensions experienced by middle-leaders will never go away completely, although they can be minimised in the ways outlined above. It is important to have healthy outlets for stress when it occurs. Maxwell tells of a middle-leader who dealt with his frustration with his leader by keeping a file of "Things I will never do to my team when I become the top leader"! This helped prevent the kinds of problems alluded to in the previous section, by providing him with a way of getting his frustration off his chest and also providing him with a useful resource for when he eventually became the leader of the organisation. Maxwell also suggests activities such as exercise or getting a massage as constructive ways of dealing with the stresses of middle-leadership.
A closing quote:

Nobody said becoming a 36-Degree Leader would be easy. Leading from the middle of an organization is stressful, but so is being the top leader... The key to succeeding is to learn to deal with the tension of whatever position you are in, overcome its obstacles, and make the most of its advantages and opportunities. If you do that, you can succeed from anywhere in the organization.

Some things to think about:
1) How clear are your boundaries and the amount of authority that you have? If necessary, how could you clarify these issues?
2) How do you relieve the stress you experience? What else could you do to manage it?

This week we consider the second of the challenges of 360-Degree Leadership from "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization" by John Maxwell.

**Challenge #2: The Frustration Challenge: Following an Ineffective Leader**

The Key to Managing the Frustration Challenge: "Your job isn't to fix the leader; it's to add value. If the leader won't change, then change your attitude or your work address"!

Maxwell opens this chapter with the story of General Robert E. Lee. Lee was a very successful general, and was offered the leadership of the Northern armies at the start of the American Civil War. However, he was from North Virginia and felt his loyalties lay with the South, so opted to lead the North Virginian army. There his talents rapidly became apparent, as did the fact that he was a far better leader than the President of the Confederacy (i.e. the South), Jefferson Davis. Four years into the war, the Confederate congress resolved to appoint Lee as overall leader of all the Southern forces. They hoped that this would allow him to work around Davis' poor management of the war. They even wanted to appoint Lee as Commander-in-Chief, the position formally held by the President. Lee refused this, because of his loyalty to his leader and his position. Even his opponents recognised this situation, and Ulysses S. Grant wrote in his memoirs how Davis was totally out of touch and only Lee provided any hope for his side. Maxwell notes that Davis' poor leadership is one of the main reasons that the Confederacy lost the war, and that the USA could be a very different place today had Lee been the leader!

Maxwell points out that in this kind of situation, following an ineffective leader can be hugely frustrating for a strong middle-leader. He then describes a number of different types of poor leadership that one might encounter in this way.

**The Insecure Leader**

Everything that happens to an insecure leader gets filtered through their self-centredness. If one of their people does a great job, they feel overshadowed. Conversely, if someone does a poor job they often grow angry because they are being made to look bad. Maxwell recounts the story (a joke, I hope!) of the CEO who sent the following message to his HR head: "Search the organization for alert, aggressive young leaders capable of stepping into my shoes. And when you find them - fire them!". Maxwell also recounts a story told to him by a friend who had an insecure boss. This man had a policy of keeping all his workers off-balance.

Middle leaders in this situation not only have to manage their boss' insecurities for themselves, but also need to try to deflect the problems from affecting their own people.
The Visionless Leader
These individuals create two problems in an organisation. Firstly, they provide no direction or motivation. Secondly, they usually lack passion for their work. These factors don't "create the kind of positive environment that is exciting to work in".

Middle leaders with vision can use this to motivate their section, but need to be aware that other people, possibly with non-productive visions, may try to take advantage of the vision vacuum to further their own agendas.

The Incompetent Leader
Maxwell tells the story of the Turkish architect who was ordered by the Sultan to build the Blue Mosque in Istanbul. The Sultan was insistent that the minaret had to be made of gold. The problem was, there wasn't the budget available to do this! Arguing with his boss could quite conceivably have been the end of the architect who needed a creative solution. His answer was to build the mosque with six stone minarets. When questioned by the Sultan on the absence of gold towers, he replied that he had misheard his instructions and thought the Sultan wanted six ("alti" in Arabic) towers, not a gold ("altin") one! Fortunately, managing around an incompetent leader today is unlikely to result in the literal loss of one's head!

Maxwell notes that incompetent leaders are likely to limit the growth of the entire organisation (he refers to the Law of the Lid, from his book *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*).

The Selfish Leader
Maxwell quotes leadership expert, Tom Peters: "The selfish leader will attempt to lead others for their own gain... These people believe that life is a point driven, zero-sum game, with winners and losers". He also tells of a leader that he met who had worked for a selfish leader who hoarded all the perks of his position. As a consequence, this leader now makes a deliberate effort to share his perks with those who work for him.

The Chameleon Leader
Maxwell tells the story of a teacher, who was desperate for work during the Great Depression. When asked in an interview whether the world was round or flat, he answered "I can teach it both ways!". Chameleon leaders have the same sort of reaction when cornered. This causes major difficulties for their followers who can never be sure which way the leader is heading. "Valuable time and energy... is often wasted in trying to predict and anticipate the leader's next move".

The Political Leader
This type of leader is closely related to the Chameleon Leader, but tend to be motivated by desire to get ahead, rather than emotional immaturity. "It's hard to follow people whose decisions are based on political ambitions rather than the mission or the good of the organization".

The Controlling Leader
This type of leader micro-manages everything you do, which is highly frustrating for any competent person. This leadership style is often caused by an overly perfectionistic personality, or by the leader's belief that no one else can do the job as well as they can (i.e. devaluing the contributions of the people who work for them). "Neither makes for positive working conditions for the people answering to them".

Maxwell then turns to some suggestions on how to tackle these kinds of problems. He notes that the usual desire is to "fix or replace" the boss, but that these options are not usually open to middle-leaders and are even inappropriate. His suggestion is to rather focus on one's own attitude to the
problem. "The role of leaders in the middle of an organization - in nearly every circumstance - is to add value to the organization and to the leader" (he allows that there are exceptions when the leader is dishonest or unethical). Maxwell notes that most people will find themselves in this situation to some degree or another at some time in their careers, and that it is especially likely to happen to strong leaders. He provides six practical tips:

1) Develop a solid relationship with your leader

Many people react to an ineffective leader by withdrawing from them. Maxwell urges one to resist this tendency, as it only leads to a lose-lose scenario. Building a good, professional relationship will further the cause of the organization, and may give you the ability to provide a positive influence.

2) Identify and appreciate your leader's strengths

Even the most ineffective leader must do some things well. Maxwell advises trying to find what these areas of strength are, and how they can best be utilised for the good of the organization.

3) Commit yourself to adding value to your leader's strengths

Having identified your leader's strengths, try to find ways in which you can get them to work for the organization.

4) Get permission to complement your leader's weaknesses

A common maxim for leaders is to "staff your weaknesses" - to employ people who are strong in areas where you are weak. In this case, if your leader has weaknesses in areas where you are strong, you may be able to compensate for those weaknesses. However, this needs to be done very carefully and tactfully - if a weak leader perceives that you are criticising them or trying to show them up they may react badly. If they identify a weakness or a need, you can try, privately, offering to help in that area. Emphasize that you are trying to relieve them of an area of responsibility so that they can better focus on applying their strengths in another area.

5) Expose your leader to good leadership resources

Share any books, video messages, conference experiences, etc. that you have found helpful with your boss. Again, this needs to be done sensitively so that it does not come across as criticism. Maxwell suggests approaches such as "I just [read] this book, and I thought you might enjoy it too" or "I was reading this wonderful book, and I thought of you; the author and you have a similar background". If an approach like this is well-received, you can follow up with further resources.

6) Publicly affirm your leader

This needs to be done truthfully and with integrity, but, having identified your leader's strengths, giving due recognition for their positive achievements will give you a good basis for building a positive relationship with the leader and increase your influence with them.

A closing quote:

*It's hard to find a downside to adding value to your leader and organization, especially if you maintain a long view. In time, people will recognize your talent. Others will value your contribution. They will admire your ability to succeed and to help others - even those less talented than you - succeed.*

Some things to think about:
1) Have you ever encountered a leader who exhibited any of the weaknesses listed by Maxwell? What was your experience like?
2) Do you agree that "it's hard to find a downside to adding value to your leader and
This week we turn to the third of the challenges of 360-Degree Leadership from "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization" by John Maxwell.

**Challenge #3: The Multi-Hat Challenge: One Head... Many Hats**

The Key to Managing the Multi-Hat Challenge: "Knowing what hat to put on and then enjoying the challenge".

Maxwell makes the point that many middle-leaders have to fulfil multiple roles (or wear multiple "hats", hence the name of this challenge). He contrasts this with the experience of the people at the top or the bottom of an organisation.

**At the Bottom**

People at the bottom of any organisation usually have a few, relatively straightforward tasks to perform (although these may require considerable skill and training in some cases): "most of the time, they require only one 'hat'." One example, is a typical worker on an assembly line. Another example is a grill cook in a restaurant. The tasks to be performed by such a cook are relatively straightforward: prepare the grill area before the restaurant opens, grill the necessary food as orders come in, and clean up the grill area at the end of the shift. Considerable skill is required, but there is little variation in the requirements of the job.

People in these positions may become very good at what they do. "But if they can only do one thing - or are willing to do only one thing - they will probably not 'move up' as leaders. Leadership requires the ability to do many things well". Maxwell uses a sporting analogy here, pointing out that leadership is more like competing in a decathlon, rather than a single event.

**At the Top**

The leaders at the top of an organisation face many competing pressures, but they can also choose where to focus their time and energy. Anything that doesn't use their personal strengths to the best advantage of the organisation can often be ignored or delegated. Maxwell points out the paradox in this: in order to rise to the top position, one must do many things well, but once there one must focus on doing a few things excellently.

**In the Middle**

This is where the multi-hat challenge arises, and very frequently. Leaders in the middle are "often ... forced to deal with multiple shifting priorities, often with limited time and resources". Maxwell gives a simple diagram to illustrate this with a leader in the middle facing demands from above, demands from customers on one side, from suppliers on the other side, and expectations from the people below them in the organisation who report to them. He returns to the example of the grill cook, who might be promoted to sous-chef (the person responsible for running a restaurant). The grill cook is answerable only to the sous-chef and usually only interacts directly with him or her. When the cook gets promoted however, he has to deal with the cooks at all the stations in the kitchen, with the waiters, possibly directly with the customers if the waiter cannot handle a difficult situation, with the suppliers who provide food and cooking materials, and with the owner or manage of the restaurant. Suddenly he has to manage the staff of the restaurant, the scheduling of the food for orders, the price and quality of supplies, the complaints of customers, the expectations of the owner, etc. Life was a lot simpler as a grill cook, when all he had to wear was one hat! These kinds of challenges, usually inherent in any middle-leadership position, often put people off seeking leadership positions.
Maxwell then turns to some practical tips on how to manage the multi-hat challenge.

1) Remember that the hat sets the context when interacting with others
   Each hat "has its own responsibilities and objectives", and one needs to context-switch appropriately when dealing with different people - e.g. the sous-chef will deal differently with the cooks, the waiters, the suppliers, the customers, the restaurant owner, etc. "The goal often determines the role and the approach to take".

2) Don't use one hat to accomplish a task that requires another hat
   Maxwell uses the example of his assistant, Linda, who attends meetings on his behalf when he is travelling. She is very careful not to abuse the "representing John Maxwell" hat she wears on these occasions to steer things the way she thinks they ought to go. In the same way, after such a meeting, when reporting back to Maxwell, she is careful to represent the views of the people at the meeting as objectively as she can.

3) When you change hats, don't change your personality
   While the context changes, and thus the style of the interaction required, your personality, values, etc. should remain constant. This is critical to establishing trust with the people you interact with.

4) Don't neglect any hat you are responsible for wearing
   It can be easy to fall into the trap of favouring certain hats and neglecting others. Maxwell tells the story of a person he knew who was a senior leader for an organisation. This man was asked to manage two additional departments during a transitional period. In order to ensure that all his areas of responsibility were covered properly, he set up three offices. He spent five hours of the day in his primary office, and a further two hours each in the additional departments for which he was temporarily responsible. While this is a little extreme perhaps, it allowed him to keep up with the demands of each of the three portfolios for which he was responsible and helped him to make the context-switch required for each of them, ensuring that none of them was neglected.

5) Remain flexible
   This comes back to the "key" identified at the beginning of the chapter: "Knowing what hat to put on and then enjoying the challenge". One has to be prepared to change hats at short notice and adapt to the curve balls that inevitably come one's way.

A closing quote:

*Some people love a new challenge and thrive on the rapidly changing demands and nature of leadership in the middle of an organization. Others find it less appealing. But it's something all 360-Degree Leaders must learn to navigate if they want to be successful and influence others from wherever they are in the organization.*

*Some things to think about:*
1) Can you think of any examples of someone who has abused their hats, or changed their personality with their hats? What was the effect of this behaviour?
2) How many hats does your current position require you wear? How do you balance the tensions that this causes?

This week we consider the next challenge of 360-Degree Leadership from "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization" by John Maxwell.
Challenge #4: The Ego Challenge: You're often hidden in the middle

The Key to Managing the Ego Challenge: "Remember that consistently good leadership does get noticed".

Maxwell opens this chapter by describing how people will often come up to him at leadership conferences and make comments about how they would love to do what he does. Maxwell admits that he loves his work, but he always asks them if they would be prepared to do what he had to do in order to reach the position that he is in today! He then describes what he had to do when he was starting out: driving in his (small, cheap) car to speak to small groups of people for no payment, just because of his passion for the subject of leadership. As he got better known, he had to fit speaking engagements into the busy schedule of his "proper" job - "long flights, unhealthy food, and long hours" - then teach for six hours a day for a week. As his reputation grew further, his wife had to pitch in to help, while they had to employ someone to look after their children. They would spend hours packing their teaching materials, then carry them into cars and planes as they travelled. "The few hours I spent on a stool teaching probably looked very glamorous to some people. The days spent preparing the lesson and dozens of hours of logistics and travel were not"!

Maxwell likens this aspect of leadership to an iceberg: what you see is only the top 10%, the rest is concealed from view. We look at great leaders and only see the "good" part of the job, not the years of difficult development and preparation. He quotes the great tennis player, Arthur Ashe: "True heroism is remarkably sober, very undramatic. It is not the urge to surpass all others at whatever cost, but the urge to serve others at whatever cost".

Many middle leaders struggle with the ego challenge, desiring the public recognition and credit for their work (often deserved), but not getting it. Maxwell then provides some tips on how to manage this challenge.

1) Concentrate more on your duties than your dreams
Maxwell tells how the great conductor Leonard Bernstein was asked which of the instruments in an orchestra is the most difficult to play. He considered the question for a while then responded, "Second fiddle. I can get plenty of first violinists, but to find one who can play second fiddle with enthusiasm - that's a problem". Middle leaders can get so caught up in the dream of their ultimate goal that they lose sight of the immediate issues. "Effective leaders pay more attention to production than to promotion". Focusing on the job at hand, and doing it well, will cause others to notice you and your contribution. Even more importantly, you can rest contented in a job well-done, rather than hankering after a dream, frustrated.

2) Appreciate the value of your position
Maxwell tells a cute story about a rabbit and a beaver looking up at the Hoover dam wall. The beaver says, "No, I didn't actually build it myself. But it was based on an idea of mine"! The point is that you need to value your own work and contribution, as others may not do so. If we are focused on some dream, we may lose the satisfaction of the here-and-now, and may not enjoy the journey that will get us to our dream.

3) Find satisfaction in knowing the real reason for the success of a project
Here, Maxwell refers to the "level five" leaders identified by Jim Collins in his book "Good to Great". These leaders took their organisations to remarkable heights, performing orders of magnitude better than their competitors. Collins identifies a number of reasons for this, among them, the unusual style of leadership that he describes as "level five". These leaders are not the gung-ho, charismatic figures who get the front-page attention of the press, but are marked by a quiet humility. Maxwell credits this somewhat surprising finding to the fact that the success of an organisation usually depends on many people (including the middle-leaders), rather than just the top...
dog, and the best leaders have the humility to recognise and acknowledge this. As a leader one should recognise that one has done a job well, and take satisfaction from that, whether it is acknowledged by others or not. This should also serve as an internal source of motivation, leading to less reliance on external motivation.

4) Embrace the compliments of others in the middle of the pack
"There is no higher compliment than acknowledgment and appreciation from someone whose circumstances, position, or experience is similar to yours". For example, a musician will get far more satisfaction from a compliment from a fellow-musician than from an unqualified fan. If a fellow middle-leader pays you a compliment, take it as highly credible praise from someone who knows what they're talking about.

5) Understand the difference between self-promotion and selfless promotion
Here, Maxwell tells the story of how Edmund Halley worked with Isaac Newton, helping him to develop and refine his ideas about gravity. He encouraged Newton to publish his work, then helped edit, produce and finance the publication of "Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy", which caused Newton to become far more famous than Halley. "It was more important for him to see Newton's ideas shared than to receive personal promotion for helping him" (I guess he did get a comet named for himself!). Selfless promotion seeks to put others first, rather than self, to build others, rather than self, up.

In closing, Maxwell relates the material of this chapter to the idea of an "abundance mind-set", introduced by Stephen Covey. Another author, Tim Saunders, has built on this idea, stating that "there are plenty of resources, credit and opportunities to go around". Conversely, he believes that much conflict arises from the opposite, a scarcity mind-set. Excellent middle-leaders cultivate an abundance mind-set, which will usually result in their being noticed and promoted. "Good leaders get results - and they get noticed".

Some things to think about:
1) Have you ever received a compliment from someone in the same or similar position as your own? Would you agree that this is worth more than a compliment from someone else?
2) Can you think of examples of people with abundance and scarcity mind-sets? Which ones make the best leaders?

This week we consider the fifth challenge of 360-Degree Leadership from "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization" by John Maxwell.

**Challenge #5: The Fulfillment Challenge: Leaders like the front more than the middle**

The Key to Managing the Fulfillment Challenge: "Leadership is more disposition than position - influence others from wherever you are".

People with a gift or inclination towards leadership usually want to do so from the top/front. Maxwell tells the joke about the dog-sled team: the lead dog's view is always changing, but the view for the mid-pack dogs is constant ("and not exactly what one would call 'scenic'"!). Most people's natural inclination is to seek to improve themselves and their position: they want more recognition, more money, a better home, etc. Leaders also want to move up, to have a greater influence, etc. However, Maxwell points out that being at the top/front is not always a good thing - certainly there are positive aspects, but there are also negative ones that are often not perceived. He describes leadership as a "double-edged sword... anyone who sees only the positives without
recognizing the negatives is either naive or inexperienced". He then makes a number of observations that bear out this two-sided perspective.

1) The front is the most recognized position for a leader
The top leader is often the one who receives the praise and recognition for the achievements of the team/organisation. People seeking this kind of affirmation may perceive the top position as desirable for this reason. However, the leader is also the one held responsible and who takes the criticism and the punishment when things go wrong. One just needs to look at sports teams for examples: if the team does badly, it is usually the captain or the coach who is held responsible. Being the top dog can be a positive experience, but in many organisations it can also lead to dismissal!

2) The view is better from the front
Maxwell tells of a mountain climber who was asked why he climbed mountains. He turned to the interviewer and said, "It's obvious that you've never been to the top of a mountain"! Leaders often have a better perspective of what is happening, they are privy to the details of the organisation - they have a better "view". But again, there is another side to this. If one has a good view, one is responsible for trying to resolve the problems that one sees, as well as enjoying the good aspects. "Leaders at the front don't have the freedom to neglect what their position allows them to see".

3) Leaders in front get to determine the direction
"When I first began leading, I thought that the leader in front could control many things in an organization. The longer I lead, the more I discover how little the leader controls". Maxwell notes that leaders do control direction and timing, but that most of the time, their responsibility to the organization gives them little freedom.

4) Leaders can set the pace
Progress is like oxygen to a leader. Maxwell repeats one of his favourite quotations, by David Livingstone: "I will go anywhere provided it is forward". However, a leader has to temper his or her enthusiasm to allow their followers to keep up. Racing ahead is a recipe for disaster. "A leader's success comes from bringing others across the finish line with them". However, working with other people usually takes more time. He uses the analogy of a trip to the supermarket with your kids - it's much faster on your own! A business trip with colleagues is usually slower than travelling on your own. As a leader you will have to adapt your pace to suit your team.

5) Leaders enjoy being in on the action
Their desire to achieve usually attracts leaders to the action. However, in many organisations, the action takes place in the middle. The leaders may make the decisions, but the work is carried out by the followers. Maxwell tells of one his colleagues who gave up a top leadership position to come and work as the deputy in one of Maxwell's companies. He is a good leader, but has chosen to place himself in a position where he can make a more concrete contribution.

Maxwell then gives some suggestions on how to find fulfillment while in a middle-position in an organisation. He quotes Henrietta Mears: "The person who keeps busy helping the one who is below him won't have time to envy the person above him". Maxwell suggests that maintaining the right attitude (or disposition) is the key to being satisfied with your current position, and being able to influence people.

1) Develop strong relationships with key people
Building productive relationships provides its own fulfillment, but it also puts you in a position of potential influence. "It's more important to get along with people than to get ahead of them". Maxwell notes that many potential opponents may in time turn out to be useful allies.
2) Define winning in terms of teamwork
Here he quotes the famous basketball coach, John Wooden: "The main ingredient of stardom is the rest of the team"! This echoes one of my favourite quotes from Lance Armstrong: "When I wear the yellow jersey [the special riding jersey worn by the race leader], I figure I only deserve the zipper. The rest of it, each sleeve, the front, the back belongs to the [team]!" (Every Second Counts", Lance Armstrong, 2003). As an example of a middle-leader who made a great team contribution, Maxwell sticks with sports and describes the career of Bob Christian, a fullback in the Atlanta Falcons American football team. Fullback is not a glamourous position - the main role is to block attacking opponents. As a result, Christian was never a star player by any of the usual measures (runs, catches, touchdowns, etc.), but was described as "the most complete fullback in football". He received several man-of-the-match awards for his excellent blocking.

3) Engage in continual communication
Middle leaders often get frustrated because they are not involved in the setting and refining of an organisation's vision. Keeping informed prevents unpleasant surprises as strategy and tactics change, and prevents demoralisation arising from a sense of being kept in the dark (mushroom syndrome!). Middle leaders thus need to work on the communication channels, both downward (trying to keep in touch) and upward (keeping their boss informed on how they are implementing the vision).

4) Gain experience and maturity
Maxwell recounts the story of the turkey who eagerly ate the feed provided by the farmer. The turkey wasn't wrong, just ignorant about the impending celebrations featuring turkey! He quotes Ed Cole: "Maturity doesn't come with age. It begins with the acceptance of responsibility". Focusing on one's current responsibilities and the experience that is being gained in the middle of an organisation is an excellent antidote to hankering after a higher position - the satisfaction of a job, well done.

5) Put the team above your personal success
As an example of people who put aside their personal wishes for the good of the team, Maxwell describes the relationship between Churchill (the Conservative Prime Minister) and Clement Attlee (leader of the opposition, Labour party). The two men had different political beliefs and totally different personalities (Churchill once described Attlee as "a modest man with much to be modest about"!). However, during World War II the two men buried their differences for the sake of the country, Attlee serving as Deputy Prime Minister (and the only person besides Churchill who was a member of the British Cabinet for the entire war). Once their common goal was achieved they went their separate ways, opposing each other in the elections, where Attlee triumphed over Churchill. "They put the nation ahead of their personal gain".

A closing quote: "helping others to win [is] much more important than where you are in the organizational chart".

Some things to think about:
1) Would you agree with the statement "I thought that the leader in front could control many things in an organization. The longer I lead, the more I discover how little the leader controls"? Can you think of any other examples of this paradox?
2) Have you ever felt frustrated by a lack of communication? How can you improve your communication channels?

This week we continue looking at the challenges that face 360-Degree leaders, based on the book
"The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization" by John Maxwell.

**Challenge #6: The Vision Challenge: Championing the vision is more difficult when you didn't create it**

*The Key to Managing the Vision Challenge: "The more you invest in the vision, the more it becomes your own".*

Most people with leadership ability want to see their own vision and goals achieved, rather than someone else's. However, when you're in the middle of an organisation, you usually have to work towards the fulfillment of someone else's vision. In order to reach a position where you can set the vision for the organisation, you will need to put in the effort to support the goals of your current leader. Maxwell lists a number of potential responses to the challenge that this entails, ranging from the most negative to the most positive.

1) **Attack it - criticise and sabotage the vision**
Some people just refuse to adopt another person's vision, and work to undermine it, sometimes even if it is a great vision and well-presented by the leadership. There are a number of possible reasons for this.

a) They didn't help create it. People usually want a sense of ownership (Maxwell asks when you last washed a hire car!). For this reason many organisations try to follow a participative approach to setting the vision, but this is not always possible (and new members of the organisation will not have this advantage).

b) They don't understand it. Despite the best efforts to communicate and explain a vision, some people may not understand it. For this reason, leaders need to repeat the vision frequently and in as many different ways as possible (Maxwell quotes an author who said that leaders have to act like third-grade teachers in this regard!).

c) They don't agree with it. People may feel that the vision is unattainable, or (less often) that it is too small. Others may disagree with changes made to the vision over time. However, one of the most common problems in this regard is that people disagree with the leader and so refuse to accept any vision that he or she presents. Maxwell refers back to the Law of Buy-In in his 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership (see [http://listserv.ru.ac.za/pipermail/cs-staffdev-l/2003-May/000016.html](http://listserv.ru.ac.za/pipermail/cs-staffdev-l/2003-May/000016.html)), which states that people buy into the leader, then the vision. There are two sides to this. Firstly, if people respect the leader they will subscribe to his/her vision, even if it is not completely compelling. Conversely, if they don't respect the leader, he or she can cast the most compelling vision imaginable and people will reject it.

d) They don't know the vision. "There is absolutely no difference between people not knowing an organization's vision and the organization not having a vision at all". This obviously relates back to point (b), and is critical when welcoming new people into an organization. "Vision leaks. It needs to be communicated clearly, creatively, and continually".

e) They feel unneeded to achieve the vision. Leaders can dictate the vision, they can ask for assistance in achieving the vision, or they can have an attitude that says "We can't do this without you" (which is usually all too true). The last strategy clearly instills more loyalty and motivation. Maxwell tells of the workers in a parachute factory in World War II. The work was repetitive and boring (sewing large pieces of plain material together, all day long). However, every morning the
workers were reminded of the importance of their work, and that it might be one of their family members who had to depend on a parachute they had made - "lives could not be saved without their efforts".

f) They aren't ready for the vision. Some people may not be ready ("emotionally, intellectually or professionally") to engage with the vision. It is an issue of ability, training may help, but if it is an issue of attitude, there is a more serious problem.

Any of these six problems causes a breakdown in the communication and implementation of the leader's vision to the people who are responsible for bringing it about. This usually means the vision will never be achieved. Middle leaders have a responsibility to try to break through any logjams that occur in this way.

2) Ignore it - do their own thing
Rather than actively attacking the vision, some people may simply ignore it. This can be difficult for a middle leader who does not necessarily agree completely with the vision, but, for the sake of the organization, should be seen to be supporting it.

3) Abandon it - leave the organization
In extreme cases, particularly if the vision is offensive for some reason, the only solution may be to leave. "The leader in the middle is neither undermining the vision, nor is he endorsing something with which he cannot agree". However, if this happens again, the individual needs to reflect deeply on their motives, as there is probably some other problem.

4) Adapt to it - find a way to align with the vision
There may be some creative way to work within the organisation's vision. Maxwell tells of a middle leader who managed the IT section for the training department of a large organisation. The responsibilities were fairly mundane and there was no clear contribution to the organisation's overall goals (I suspect that many of the support staff in the University feel the same way). This middle leader discussed his frustration with his boss, and developed a plan for the IT section to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the training department. In this way the IT manager felt far more fulfilled and made a greater contribution to the company. Aligning the visions of the top leaders and the middle leaders in this way leads to increased job satisfaction and organisational and personal success.

5) Champion it - take the leader's vision and make it reality
A vision will never be realised without the participation of most (if not all) people in an organisation. Ideally middle leaders should adopt the vision as if it were their own and strive to bring it about.

6) Add value to it
This final level goes beyond working towards the achievement of the vision, and improves on it, bringing "greater value to the leader, greater value to the recipients of the vision, and greater value to the person who contributed to it". One cannot usually jump straight to this level, but has to earn the right to add value by first championing the existing vision. However, the benefit of attaining this level is that the vision challenge is eliminated, because the middle leader is effectively working towards their own vision, as an extension of the organisation's vision. Maxwell describes one of his own organisations, a non-profit leadership training group. Initially, he had a three-pronged vision, focussed on training in academia, in urban areas and internationally. Over time, the middle leaders realised that they were diluting their energies and started to encourage the top leadership to consider focussing more closely on doing one thing really well. The outcome of that was a reworking of the vision to concentrate solely on the international training aspect. That has led to remarkable
successes.

A closing quote: "Vision begins with one person, but it is only accomplished by many people".

Some things to think about:
1) What is your organization's vision? How well do you know it?
2) Have you ever had to work towards a vision that you had not created, and perhaps did not believe in fully? What was your response?

This week we consider the last of the challenges that face 360-Degree leaders, described by John Maxwell in his book "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization".

**Challenge #7: The Influence Challenge: Leading others beyond your position is not easy**

*The Key to Managing the Influence Challenge: "Think influence, not position".*

Perhaps more than any of the previous six challenges this one is impossible to avoid. Leading other people is never easy and this is particularly true when trying to lead up and lead sideways. Maxwell states that 360-degree leaders need to change their approach from "I want a position that will make people follow me" to "I want to become a person whom people will want to follow". This underscores a slightly different point: even if you do have a position of leadership, people will not necessarily follow you. However, if you can develop influence and persuade people to follow you when you don't have a leadership position then it becomes even easier as you ascend to more senior leadership positions.

Maxwell then outlines a number of different aspects of influence and how this can be developed.

1) People follow leaders they know - Leaders who care

Some people try to motivate others by playing power games or goading them with negative criticism. This is usually counter-productive as people will become defensive or even obstructive. John Knox said "You cannot antagonize and influence at the same time". However, people who show genuine concern for others will usually have a great deal of influence. "People... can tell the difference between leaders who are using them for their own gain and those who want to help them succeed". In one of his other books, Maxwell puts it like this: "People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care". If you demonstrate genuine concern for others, then they will usually be prepared to extend themselves to help you.

2) People follow leaders they trust - Leaders with character

"We tend to put a lot of emphasis on intelligence and skill in [the USA]. And while those things are important, they cannot substitute for strong character". Stories of leaders who suffer from moral failures or character flaws are all too common, and very quickly destroy any respect people had for such leaders. Some people believe that they can live as they like today, and change their behaviour when they reach a leadership position. They are probably deluding themselves on two counts: (1) that they will receive a leadership position if they have not already demonstrated their trustworthiness, and (2) that they will be able to change when the time comes.

3) People follow leaders they respect - leaders who are competent

How well a person handles difficulties is a strong indicator of their leadership ability. They might
be liked and treated well for their character and for their concern for others, but they won't be respected unless they can actually do the job. "Being able to do a job well brings a leader credibility".

4) People follow leaders they can approach - Leaders who are consistent
Maxwell tells the story of a counter-example: a leader who was very moody. One of his immediate reports developed the technique of listing all the issues he needed to discuss with his boss, and then taking time in meetings to judge the boss' mood. If the boss was in his usual bad mood, the middle-leader would keep quiet. However, when the boss was in a good mood, the middle-leader would work through the whole list. Needless to say this was not ideal, particularly when problems were left unresolved for several weeks, waiting for the right opportunity! Good leaders need to discipline themselves to be consistently approachable (I guess one could be consistently grouchy, but that's not going to achieve much!).

5) People follow leaders they admire - Leaders with commitment
Most great leaders (e.g. Winston Churchill or Martin Luther King) demonstrate immense commitment to their cause or organisation. "They gave everything they had to leading according to their principles". People will be prepared to follow and to sacrifice for a leader who demonstrates a whole-hearted commitment themself.

In closing, Maxwell refers back to another of his books, "Becoming a Person of Influence", which he co-authored with Jim Dorman. This book is framed around the following acrostic:

I)ntegrity: builds relationships on trust
N)urturing: cares about people as individuals
F)aith: believes in people
L)istening: values what others have to say
U)nderstanding: sees from their point of view
E)nlarging: helps others become bigger
N)avigating: assist others through difficulties
C)onnecting: initiates positive relationships
E)mpowering: gives them the power to lead

A closing quote: "The whole secret is to think influence, not position. That's what leadership is all about".

Some things to think about:
1) Can you think of a leader who demonstrated serious character flaws? What impact did this have on their leadership?
2) Can you think of a leader who has demonstrated exceptional commitment? Would you agree that they are/were admired by their followers?

This week we come to the third section of John Maxwell's book "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization". Having considered myths and challenges that face 306-Degree leaders, in this section he starts to consider some practical principles that can be applied when trying to "lead up" — to influence those above you in the organisational hierarchy. This is probably the hardest of the three types of leadership that Maxwell identifies in this book (leading up, leading across and leading down). Using his idea of leadership as influence he suggests adding value to your leaders as the best way of gaining influence with them. Depending on the nature of your leader that may take a long time, and might even never happen. "Your underlying strategy should be to support your leader, add value to the organization,
and distinguish yourself for the rest of the pack by doing your work with excellence. If you do these things consistently, then in time the leader above you may learn to trust you, rely on you, and look to you for advice. With each step, your influence will increase, and you will have more and more opportunities to lead up”.

**Lead-Up Principle #1: Lead Yourself Exceptionally Well**

Maxwell often tells young people who complain about not having any followers to lead, that they should focus on leading themselves first. In his view this is the starting point: "if you wouldn't follow yourself, why should anyone else?". He describes the key element in this process as "self-management", as too many people are guilty of making good decisions for themselves, but then fail to follow-through on these. In essence, this was the message of his previous book, "Today Matters" (see the StaffDev emails from October 2005 to April 2006 for a summary of this). In it he expressed his philosophy that we don't need to make lots of good decisions daily, but only a few good decisions covering the main areas of our lives, and then to manage these decisions on a daily basis. He refers to the classic example of a person who makes a New Year's resolution to exercise more regularly, and starts attending gym. In many (probably most) cases the new gym routine is over by the time February, maybe March, comes around.

In terms of leading up, your leader will either perceive you as someone who manages themselves well and can be relied on, or as someone who drains the leader's energy as they have to continually monitor and manage you. In the former case, "your boss will see you as someone who maximizes opportunities and leverages personal strengths... someone [they can turn] to when the heat is on".

In "Today Matters" Maxwell identified twelve things (the "Daily Dozen") that need to be managed in one's life. In focusing purely on leadership in this chapter, he trims this down to seven critical factors.

1) **Manage Your Emotions**
Maxwell cites some scary statistics: 20% of the victims of fatal car accidents have argued with someone in the previous six hours, and "people with emotional problems are 144 percent more likely to have [car] accidents". We all know people who are "emotional time bombs", and they are usually not very nice people to spend time with. For people in leadership, this is even more critical as an emotional meltdown is likely to affect many others.

There is a place for leaders to display appropriate emotions: controlled anger at injustice, genuine sympathy for someone going through difficult circumstances, etc. The key here is to ensure that the display of emotion is for the good of the team. "By letting [them] know what you're feeling, you're helping them to see what you're seeing".

2) **Manage Your Time**
People at the top of an organisation can often delegate work, and people at the bottom can usually work to the clock. It's the people in the middle who usually feel the pressure of time management most acutely, often arising from the Tension Challenge (i.e. Challenge #1). Maxwell quotes author Charles Spezzano from "What To Do Between Birth and Death", who states that people pay for things with time, not money. For example, how long will it take you to earn the amount of money that you would pay for that new car? The cost of everything can be translated back into the time taken to earn it. Spezzano says "The phrase 'spending your time' is not a metaphor. It's how life works"! Getting this kind of perspective may help in managing how we utilise our time.

3) **Manage Your Priorities**
The Multi-Hat Challenge (i.e. Challenge #3) means that many middle-leaders are forced to be generalists to a certain extent. However, one needs to learn to play to one's strengths. Maxwell
suggests that one should try to spend 80% of one's time in one's areas of strength, 15% in areas of growth, and 5% on other things that must be done. That's not always possible for a middle-leader who must answer to a boss, but one can try to delegate to people below one, or to swap duties with peers to better take advantage of each others' strengths. Maxwell quotes Jim Collins from his book "Good to Great":

Most of us lead busy, but undisciplined lives. We have ever-expanding to-do lists... Those who build [great] companies, however, made as much use of "stop doing" lists as the "to do" lists. They displayed a remarkable amount of discipline to unplug all sorts of extraneous junk.

4) Manage Your Energy
Most of us only have so much energy available and need to learn to direct it wisely (Maxwell describes his own frenetic approach to life when he was younger as "High energy, low IQ"!). One of the techniques he now uses to manage his energy is to start each day by reviewing his calendar and asking himself what the "main event" is, and aiming to give that his best effort.

He also identifies three energy "thieves" - the ABC:

- Action without direction: doing things that appear pointless
- Burden without action: being unable to do the things that do matter
- Conflict with resolution: being unable to deal with what is the matter

If these ABCs are common in your workplace, you will struggle to maintain your energy levels (and may need to consider a new job!).

5) Manage Your Thinking
The busyness of daily life can easily rob us of the time needed to think things through carefully. Maxwell suggests keeping a list of things that need focused attention, and the setting aside some time (perhaps daily, perhaps weekly) to review them thoroughly. In his book "Thinking for a Change" (not yet the subject of a StaffDev series!), he suggests having a special thinking place and talks about his own "thinking chair": a comfortable chair in his office that he only sits in when he needs to think something through. He uses this time to review his list of issues that he hasn't been able to devote sufficient time to, and works methodically through them. "A minute of thinking is often more valuable than an hour of talk or unplanned work".

6) Manage Your Words
Most leaders are busy, and would much rather see action than listen to words. Consequently, your words need to be direct and brief. This issue is linked to the previous one: if your thinking on an issue is clear, you are much less likely to waffle. "If you have something worthwhile to say, say it briefly and well. If you don't, sometimes the best thing to do is to remain silent".

7) Manage Your Personal Life
A shambolic personal life will almost always spill over into all other areas of your life. Maintaining a healthy balance here is important: reaching the top of your organisation with a shattered or dysfunctional family and no friends is likely to be a very empty achievement. Maxwell gives his own definition of success: "having those closest to me love and respect me the most". That is not to say that he doesn't want respect from his co-workers, but that is a secondary goal, not his primary focus. "The negative impact [of messing up my family] will spill over into every area of my life, including work".

In closing he notes how leading oneself will bring credibility and respect. "The better you are at making sure you're doing what you should be doing, the better chance you have for making an
impact on others”.

Some things to think about:
1) Have you ever worked for or with someone who did not lead themselves well? What was the effect that they had on you and others in the organisation?
2) Which of these seven areas do you struggle most with? What one, practical step might you take to address this?

Before we get to the next principle in "The 360-Degree Leader", I came across the following section in Carly Fiorina's book, "Tough Choices" in which she gives her views on the topic of 360-degree leadership. She is discussing the period immediately before her departure from Lucent to become the CEO of HP; a time at which Lucent was losing its direction and the CEO was not managing the situation very effectively. One of Fiorina's peers came to her and said "Carly, this isn't [the CEO's] company, it's yours. You are our real leader. Lead us." She goes on to give her own views on leadership: "I have believed all my life that leadership has nothing to do with title or position. Leadership is about making a positive difference for and with others. Leadership is about the integrity of one's character, the caliber of one's capabilities, and the effectiveness of one's collaboration with others. Anyone can lead from anywhere at any time. I have seen people lead from lowly as well as lofty positions". That's a pretty good definition of 360-degree leadership and agrees well with John Maxwell's views.

Returning to Maxwell's book "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization", in our last session we began to consider a number of principles that can be applied to increase our leadership (or influence) in an upward direction. Maxwell summarised these principles in the following way: "Your underlying strategy should be to support your leader, add value to the organization, and distinguish yourself for the rest of the pack by doing your work with excellence".

**Lead-Up Principle #2: Lighten Your Leader's Load**

Maxwell opens this chapter by discussing the responsibility that leaders carry, using Harry Truman (a former President of the USA) as an example. Truman was famous for the sign on his desk that read "The Buck Stops Here", and was often quoted referring to this statement and how he bore ultimate responsibility for the well-being of the American people. Not all leaders have this degree of responsibility, but there is always a load that rests (sometimes heavily) on the leader's shoulders. In working with your leader, you can either increase or decrease the load that they carry. Maxwell is quick to note that he is talking about genuine help here, not "sucking up". He goes on to list a number of benefits that arise from practicing this principle.

1) Lifting shows you are a team player
He gives the example of one of his own employees, Kirk, who has always had an incredibly helpful attitude. Even now, as the leader of one of Maxwell's organisations, Kirk will ask him, "John, is there anything I can do for you?" He is willing to help with anything from achieving major organisational goals to small personal tasks, and does them all with excellence.

2) Lifting shows gratitude for being on the team
Maxwell quotes a Chinese proverb: "Those who drink the water must remember those who dug the well"! A very practical way of demonstrating gratitude is through helping the leader; lifting the load.

3) Lifting makes you part of something bigger
Assisting people with larger responsibilities makes you a part of what they are doing, and allows you to contribute at levels and in ways that you would not be able to otherwise. This impacts on the significance of your role. "You cannot contribute to something significant without being changed. If you want to be better than you are, become part of something bigger than you are".

4) Lifting gets you noticed
Helping your leader will get you noticed by him or her. The more often you help, the more you will be noticed, and this will usually result in your being given opportunities for development and advancement.

5) Lifting increases your value and influence
You may have a friend or family member who is always prepared to help you out, and adds value to your life. If so, that person no doubt occupies a special place in your life. The same applies to followers who add value to their leaders. Maxwell describes how he evaluates new employees after they have been with him for two years (he's a natural optimist, and reckons it takes that long for his optimism to be tempered by reality!). More objective leaders might be able to undertake such an evaluation more quickly. Essentially, he asks himself if the organisation is better off with the person on board.

Maxwell then turns to some practical tips on how to go about helping your leader. There are many other possible ways of helping, and his list is not intended to be complete or definitive. In working this out for yourself, he suggests going with your instincts.

1) Do your own job well first
The best way to help your leader is to ensure that he or she does not have to worry about what you are doing (or not doing). Maxwell tells of one of his employees who frequently asked how he could help, but never seemed to complete his own work. When he spotted this, Maxwell explicitly asked him to get his own work done first, before offering to assist him with other tasks. Despite the advice the employee persisted in this behaviour, until Maxwell had to fire him.

2) When you find a problem, provide a solution
Maxwell describes a Peanuts cartoon in which Lucy is criticising Charlie Brown. When he asks her what he should do, she replies, "I don't pretend to be able to give advice. I merely point out the trouble"! Leaders far prefer the approach espoused by Henry Ford: "Don't find a fault; find a remedy". At one time, Maxwell seemed to have a large group of "Lucies" working for him. In desperation, he stated that employees who brought him problems, should also bring three possible solutions. In time, they learned to be far more self-reliant as a result of this approach.

3) Tell leaders what they need to hear, not what they want to hear
Leaders can be somewhat insulated from what is happening in an organisation. Helpful employees will alert them to situations that may require their attention. Maxwell again refers to his assistant, Linda, who has his complete trust as a result of being completely truthful, even with bad news. This may be awkward, especially at first, and Maxwell suggests starting off carefully and very diplomatically. In time you will be able to judge whether you can be more frank and forthright. He sums this aspect up as "Your job is to be a funnel, not a filter".

4) Go the second mile
He opens with a great quote from Zig Ziglar: "There are no traffic jams on the extra mile"! Going beyond the minimum requirements of your job will cause you to "stand out from the crowd". This will usually result in additional trust and confidence from the leader.
5) Stand up for your leader whenever you can
Maxwell quotes Colin Powell on this issue, as stating that loyalty during the decision-making process consists of giving your perspective whether it is in line with others' views or not. However, once a decision is made, loyalty consists of following it through, even if you disagree. I have heard Powell speak on this topic, and he points out that while it is critically important in a military setting (you cannot double-guess your commanders in mid-battle!), it is also vital in other organisations.

6) Stand in for your leader whenever you can
The leader cannot be everywhere in the organisation, and you may encounter situations of which he or she is unaware. Maxwell used to tell new employees that they carried two buckets: one full of petrol and one of water. When they came across problems or "small fires", they could choose to use either bucket, either to make the problem worse or better!

7) Ask your leader how you can lift the load
Genuine offers of assistance (particularly from people doing their own jobs well - see point 1 above) will usually be gratefully acknowledged. Maxwell speaks of his own experience as a consultant and speaker to various organisations. When he started out, his approach tended to be to come in as the outside expert and tell them what he thought they needed to know. Over time, his approach has changed, and now he asks the leader of the organisation how he can help them. In particular, he focuses on three aspects:

- what can I say that you have already said
- what can I say that you cannot say
- what can I say that you have not yet said

In these ways he can reinforce the leader, address issues that are difficult or impossible for the leader to address, or open up a new direction or focus. Almost always, the leaders that he works with have something that they would like him to say in at least one of these categories.

Some things to think about:
1) Do you have a friend or family member who is always prepared to help you out, and who adds value to your life? What is their impact/influence as a result of this attitude?
2) Can you think of any other ways in which you might help someone in leadership in any organisation in which you are involved (possibly using your instincts as Maxwell suggests)?
3) Which of these practical techniques (1-7 above, or your answer to question 2) could you put into practise?

The next chapter of John Maxwell's book "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization", continues with the list of principles that can be applied to develop middle-leadership. As we noted previously, Maxwell summarises these principles in the following way: "Your underlying strategy should be to support your leader, add value to the organization, and distinguish yourself for the rest of the pack by doing your work with excellence".

**Lead-Up Principle #3: Be Willing to Do What Others Won't**

Maxwell opens this chapter with the story of a group that contacted the explorer David Livingstone, and offered to send some of their members to assist him, if he had found a good road to where he was currently positioned in Africa. Livingstone's response was blunt: "If you have men who will come only if they know there is a good road, I don't want them. I want men who will come even if there is no road at all". That captures the central message of this principle very well. Leaders truly appreciate people in their organisations who have this kind of "whatever-it-takes" attitude, people
who go beyond the confines of job descriptions and comfort zones. Such an attitude will bring you to the attention of your leaders and give you influence with them.

While a whatever-it-takes attitude is critical, there are several practical steps that can be followed to put attitude into action.

1) 360-Degree Leaders Take the Tough Jobs
Problems are common in all areas of life, but facing them and dealing with them is often unpopular. Having the courage to tackle difficult problems will not only get you noticed, but will equip you with valuable leadership strengths, such as resilience and determination.

2) 360-Leaders Pay Their Dues
Any worthwhile endeavour involves some form of sacrifice. In order to become a 360-degree leader you will need to give up some things, stretch yourself, persevere in self-development and put the needs of others before your own. George Halas, an (American) football "legend", expressed the rewards of this kind of attitude in this way: "Nobody who ever gave their best ever regretted it".

3) 360-Leaders Work in Obscurity
Maxwell is sometimes asked about ego and how it affects leadership. He believes that the path to leadership is often long, hard and unseen and so ego issues are worked out long before a leader rises to prominence - he describes this as a "test of personal integrity". He quotes the well-known English author, Emily Bronte: "If I could I would always work in silence and obscurity, and let my efforts be known by their results". "The key is being willing to do something because it matters, not because it will get you noticed".

4) 360-Leaders Succeed with Difficult People
The top leaders in an organisation often have some choice in who they choose to work with (at worst, they can usually fire anyone they don't want to work with!). Lower in the organisation, this is not so easy. However, good middle-leaders will usually find a way to work well with difficult colleagues, for the good of the organisation. This usually requires trying to find some common ground and establishing a positive working relationship.

5) 360-Leaders Put Themselves on the Line
In order to stand out in an organisation you may need to take some risks. However, one must be very careful not to take undue risks that may impact negatively on the organisation or other people in the organisation ("betting with other people's money" as Maxwell terms it). The risk needs to be yours alone.

6) 360-Leaders Admit Faults but Never Make Excuses
Developing as a leader involves a process of self-discovery and will result in failures sometimes. You need to be honest with yourself and others in facing these and learning how to manage or avoid similar problems in future, without making excuses. Maxwell quotes Steven Brown, leader of the Fortune Group: "Essentially there are two actions in life: performance and excuses. Make a decision as to which you will accept from yourself".

7) 360-Leaders Do More than Expected
People usually have very high expectations of top leaders, and may have very low expectations of people at the bottom of an organisation. In the middle, the expectations are possibly less clear, which provides great scope for exceeding expectations and becoming noticed. This is particularly true when you exceed your leader's expectations.

8) 360-Leaders Are the First to Step Up and Help
Leaping to the assistance of someone is a very good way to get noticed in a positive light. Helping your colleagues and leaders will gain you influence and respect.

9) 360-Leaders Perform Tasks That Are "Not Their Job"
The response that "that's not in my job description" is guaranteed to irritate your leader! Conversely, showing a willingness to "get the job done", for the benefit of the organisation will create a very positive impression.

10) 360-Leaders Take Responsibility for Their Responsibilities
Our society seems to become more and more subject to victim and entitlement thinking. When something goes wrong, the initial reaction is often to blame someone ("sue someone"!). Good leaders take responsibility for their actions, learn from the outcomes and move on.

In closing, Maxwell states: "People who want to be effective are willing to do what others won't. And because of that, their leaders are willing to resource them, promote them, and be influenced by them".

Some things to think about:
1) Do you know someone with a "whatever-it-takes" attitude? What is their impact on their organisation?
2) How would you handle being asked to do something that is not part of your job description?

We continue with the list of leadership principles for "leading up" from John Maxwell's book "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization".

**Lead-Up Principle #4: Do More Than Manage - Lead!**

Maxwell opens this chapter with a discussion of the difference between management and leadership. He summarises this as follows: "Managers work with processes - Leaders work with people". He gives an example of a naval vessel in which various things must be managed: ordering of supplies, maintenance of weapons, feeding of the crew, etc. These are handled through set procedures, protocols, timetables, etc. All of this requires management. The leaders are those who "lead the people who manage the processes". This requires dealing with people's feelings, aspirations, fears, problems, etc. "though people can be managed, they would much rather be led. And when they are led, they perform at a much higher level".

Maxwell notes that good leaders are also good managers. Leadership development usually follows a path from self-management to management within their field to the ability to influence others. Tom Mullins states that "Leaders must be good managers, but most managers are not necessarily good leaders".

Maxwell then lists a number of factors that distinguish leadership from management:

- People more than projects
- Movement more than maintenance
- Art more than science
- Intuition more than formula
- Vision more than procedure
- Risk more than caution
- Action more than reaction
- Relationships more than rules
- Who you are more than what you do

He then provides seven practical issues that need to be considered in order to move from management to leadership.

1. Leaders Think Longer Term
Long-range thinking is a critical leadership skill. Maxwell tells the joke about the person who said "My department has a short-range plan and a long-range plan. Our short-range plan is to stay afloat long enough to start working on our long-range plan"! While managers often focus on the immediate demands of keeping the processes running smoothly, leaders must consider the long-term well-being of the organisation. In this, I am reminded of Stephen Covey's analogy of building a road through a jungle: the managers must ensure that the workers have sharp machetes, food and water, etc.; the leader is the person who climbs a tree surveys the landscape and announces that the team is working in the wrong jungle and must change direction.

2. Leaders See Within the Larger Context
Many people focus on how events will affect them. A leader must consider how events will affect the people they lead and affect the organisation - they have to keep an eye on the "big picture". "If you desire to be a better leader, then broaden your thinking and work at seeing things from a larger perspective".

3. Leaders Push Boundaries
Management is often based on following rules and procedures. This is not a bad thing, as most rules are in place to prevent negative outcomes. However, sometimes leaders need to challenge the status quo, to look for better ways of doing things.

4. Leaders Put the Emphasis on Intangibles
Management is often concerned with tangibles - e.g. are there sufficient machetes, food and water available? Leadership often involves less tangible elements: influence, "morale, motivation, momentum, emotions, attitudes, atmosphere and timing". Such factors cannot easily be measured and managed. Furthermore, in many cases, an apparent problem is not actually the real problem. Maxwell gives the example of a department that has gone significantly over budget. The problem lies not with the budget or the money, but elsewhere, possibly with the people (attitude, morale, etc.), the department's vision for itself, or with the leadership.

5. Leaders Learn to Rely on Intuition
Dealing with unmeasurable intangibles and identifying underlying problems often requires good intuition. Maxwell quotes Joyce Brothers, a psychologist: "Trust your hunches. They're usually based on facts filed away just below the conscious level". This often requires practice: the more you deal with intangibles, the better your intuition becomes. "Intuition alone may not be enough to go on, but you should never ignore your intuition".

6. Leaders Invest Power in Others
While management is often about exerting control (controlling systems, processes, etc.), leadership often requires delegation: giving away control/power. "Good leaders... look for good people, and they invest in them to the point where they can be released and empowered to perform".

7. Leaders See Themselves as Agents of Change
Leadership often requires identifying and seizing new opportunities. "[Leaders] don't want things to stay the same. They desire innovation. They love new challenges. They want more than just seeing progress - they want to help make it happen".
To summarise: "Think people, think progress, and think intangibles".

Some things to think about:
1) Can you think of a situation where an organisation has experienced a problem, where the cause lay not with the obvious, but with "intangibles"?
2) Do you agree with Joyce Brothers' advice to "Trust your hunches"? Why?

This week we get to the fifth of the leadership principles for "leading up" from John Maxwell's book "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization".

**Lead-Up Principle #5: Invest in Relational Chemistry**

Relationships are critical in leadership: "People won't go along with you if they can't get along with you". This is just as true for upward leadership as any other form of leadership. Maxwell provides some practical tips on how to forge a stronger, productive relationship with those above you in the organisational hierarchy.

1. Listen to Your Leader's Heartbeat
   This might be summarised as "what makes your leader tick?". One needs to pay attention to what the leader says outside of formal settings: in the corridors, around the water cooler, at meals and other functions, before and after meetings start and end. If one already has a good relationship, you might even be more direct and start to ask more personal questions. Maxwell suggests looking out for things that make the leader laugh, or cry or sing (i.e. the things that bring joy, tug at the emotions and bring fulfillment). Identifying these sorts of factors in your own life may also help you spot them in others. One needs to be sensitive in going about this, as leaders may rightfully feel very exposed if they open themselves up at this level, and one should never try to use such insights manipulatively.

2. Know Your Leader's Priorities
   What are the things your leader must get done? Identifying these may help you to position yourself to help your leader carry the load in critical areas, and will help you understand your leader and his/her decisions better.

3. Catch Your Leader's Enthusiasm
   Shared enthusiasms often lead to highly energised interaction: time spent working together on a project just flies past. A common passion can help strengthen the bond between you and your leader.

4. Support Your Leader's Vision
   Few things make a leader happier than when the rest of the people in the organisation start to grasp the vision and run with it. "Leaders in the middle of the organization who are champions for the vision become elevated in the estimation of the leader. They get it. They're on board".

5. Connect with Your Leader's Interests
   While point 3 above deals with work-related enthusiasms, this is referring to "outside" interests. What are your bosses hobbies, pastimes, sporting interests, etc.? Spending some time doing some basic research on these topics will give you a point for connection with your leader, and can help break down the sense of isolation that many leaders feel.

6. Understand Your Leader's Personality
Maxwell tells a joke about two employees who were talking about the top leader of their organisation. The first said, "You know, you can't help liking the guy". The second responded, "Yeah, if you don't, he fires you"! While your leader is hopefully a little less extreme, understanding and accommodating your leader's personality will stand you in good stead. In particular, knowing the similarities and differences between your own personality and your leaders will help you to work with him/her more productively. Often different personalities complement each other well, while similar personality types can lead to friction. In this regard, personality tests such as the Myers-Briggs test, can be very useful.

7. Earn Your Leader's Trust
Maxwell introduces the idea of "relational currency" here, or what Steven Covey calls "The Emotional Bank Account". This refers to the idea that our interactions with people are often either positive (depositing currency into the account) or negative (withdrawing currency from the account). If many deposits have been made, there is a healthy balance in the account, and the occasional dropped ball will not break the relationship (or lose the leader's trust in you). Conversely, if frequent withdrawals are made (through disappointing the leader) the account will become bankrupt, and there will be no trust from the leader. Andy Stanley expressed this as follows: "Loyalty publicly results in leverage privately" - backing up your leader will earn his/her trust and provide you with a position of influence.

8. Learn to Work with Your Leader's Weaknesses
It is very difficult to work productively with someone you have little respect for. While no one is perfect, trying to work around your leader's weaknesses or compensate for them, while emphasizing their strengths, will usually help build the relationship.

9. Respect Your Leader's Family
Maxwell expresses some reluctance to venture into this area, but feels that it is too important to neglect. "If... your boss's spouse doesn't like or trust you, the relationship between the two of you will always be strained". While this issue is hard to control, one can try to maintain an appropriate, respectful relationship with the leader's family.

A closing quote: "The quality of the relationship you have with your leader will impact your success or failure. It is certainly worth investing in".

Some things to think about:
1) What are the things that make you laugh/cry/sing? What are the things that make your leader laugh/cry/sing?
2) What are your leader's weaknesses? How could you work with them, or around them?

Continuing with John Maxwell's book "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization", we get to the sixth of the principles for leading upward.

**Lead-Up Principle #6: Be Prepared Every Time You Take your Leader's Time**

Maxwell opens this chapter with an extract from a Time magazine article on Bill Gates: "Bill Gate's time is valuable. There are Microsoft employees who wait their whole career to be alone with Gates for 45 minutes". The point they were making applies to any leader. "For all leaders, time is precious". The implication of this is that one should always be well prepared when meeting with one's leader and take care not to waste his/her time. One also wants to get the maximum value from what might be very limited time for a meeting, and preparation can help ensure that the benefit of a rare meeting is maximised.
Whatever the amount of time and regularity with which you can generally meet with your leader, Maxwell provides a number of practical guidelines for maximising the value of the time spent together.

1. Invest 10X
Maxwell suggests spending ten times more time in preparation for a meeting than the expected duration of the meeting. This investment will help ensure that you get the maximum value from the meeting. In his earlier book, "Today Matters", Maxwell told the story of his meeting with the great basketball coach John Wooden, and how he prepared for hours for the lunchtime meeting. Good preparation also allows the leader to be able to make a decision during the meeting, without having to request and wait for more information. Another factor that impacts on the extent of the preparation required is the state of the relationship you have with your leader - if it is new, or tenuous, then excellent preparation is even more critical than when there is a healthy relational bank balance to draw on. Maxwell quotes Benjamin Disraeli (a former British Prime Minister): "The secret of success in life is for a man to be ready for his time when it comes".

2. Don't Make Your Boss Think for You
Asking your leader questions when you could or should have found the answers for yourself will not create a good impression (and is not a good use of your leader's time). The only good questions to ask the leader are those you cannot answer for yourself. Good questions "clarify objectives; they speed up the process of completion; and they stimulate good thinking".

3. Bring Something to the Table
In other words, be prepared to make a positive contribution to any encounter with your leader - be prepared to give "resources, ideas or opportunities", rather than simply receiving from the exchange. While original contributions are welcome, there is also a place for people who will help develop other people's ideas, and contribute through the process of refining or brainstorming other ideas.

4. When Asked to Speak, Don't Wing It
While thinking quickly on one's feet is an useful and often admirable ability, it should never be a substitute for adequate preparation. The danger that one's run in always "winging" situations like this, is that people rapidly start to see through the quick thinking to the lack of real substance.

5. Learn to Speak Your Boss's Language
Maxwell gives the (admittedly extreme) example of his writer, Charlie Wetzel, who has literally had to learn to write with Maxwell's "voice". More generally, the ability to communicate well with your leader will help you to relate well, and also to represent the leader well and accurately.

6. Get to the Bottom Line
A meeting with someone who waffles on without getting to the point can be very frustrating for a leader. Again, this may be context-dependent: when you are first getting to know a leader it may be useful to explain yourself and give more background, but as the relationship develops, one can often start to "cut to the chase" more rapidly. The leader can always ask for explanation or amplification, if necessary.

7. Give a Return on Your Leader's Investment
If you are always well prepared when you meet with your leader, they will start to see time spent with you as a good investment of that time. Explicitly acknowledging the benefit that you have received from the time and attention of your leader can be very beneficial to the relationship, and help increase your influence and the amount of time the leader makes available to you. Maxwell
described a mentoring relationship he has where the meetings with the mentee almost always follow these lines:

This is what you said last time we met
This is what I learned
This is what I did
Did I do it right?
Can I ask you more questions?

He is also generous with his thanks for the time that Maxwell spends with him, and gives feedback with specific examples of how what he has learned from his mentor has helped him. The end result is that Maxwell now listens to him, and takes his opinions seriously - he has earned influence with his leader.

Some things to think about:
1) Do you ask good questions? How can you make a more effective contribution to meetings with your leader?
2) There can be a tension between getting to the point and allowing time for a relationship to grow and develop. How can one manage this effectively?

This week we get to the seventh of the principles for leading-up from John Maxwell's book "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization".

**Lead-Up Principle #7: Know When to Push and When to Back Off**

Maxwell introduces this principle by describing a visit he paid to the Ukraine early in 2005, just a few months after the Orange Revolution. His host and business partner there described the events that had led to the fall of the government after they tried to rig the results of an election. In essence, the Ukrainian people said "enough is enough" and, through passive demonstrations, forced the government to back down and hold new, fair elections in which genuine democracy came to the Ukraine. This is a great example of leading up: the ordinary people of the Ukraine influenced their leaders and the future of their country. After the new elections, even the former leader acknowledged the "leadership of the people and bowed to them in respect and thanks". A critical aspect of this successful influence was the timing. As Maxwell points out, if they had tried this in previous years there would have been a violent crushing of the dissent. Likewise, if the people had waited longer, they might have missed the opportunity and faced a stronger, better entrenched regime. "To be successful, you have to know when to push and when to back off".

While this is an extreme example of the importance of timing in exerting influence, the principle is just as applicable in every-day situations in our organisations. "A great idea at the wrong time will be received just the same as a bad idea". Judging the ideal time to speak up and when to be silent is not easy, especially since there are some situations that require us to speak up even when the timing seems imperfect. Maxwell gives some indicators that we can use to judge if we should "push" and then some that can be used to judge if we should back off.

When to Push?
1) Do I know something my boss doesn't, but needs to?
Leaders do not always know everything that is going on in the organisation and the environment. If you have information that could damage the organisation or your leader, or if you are aware of a possible opportunity, you need to speak up. Maxwell's brother Larry explicitly instructs his staff to tell him if "there is a great problem or ... a great opportunity". In order to assess what your boss
needs to know about, you can ask for explicit guidance from your leader (such as Larry Maxwell gives his staff), or else you will need to use your judgement and your knowledge of your leader (i.e. the sorts of factors that we have touched on in the past few weeks).

2) Is time running out?
Maxwell quotes an old saying: "Better one word in time than two afterward". Timing is often critical for an organisation to react to threats or to seize opportunities. If you sense that time is of the essence, you probably need to speak up. Nothing will irritate a leader more than to hear an employee say, "oh, I saw that coming" after the event!

3) Are my responsibilities at risk?
If you are struggling to complete the tasks that you have been assigned, you should warn your leader. Again, this prevents them being blind-sided if the situation goes wrong. A leader would much rather provide assistance and extra support to get the task done than have to perform damage control at later. Maxwell describes how his writer, Charlie Wetzel, is sometimes not so good at this and will attempt to soldier on rather than ask Maxwell for help. While he is motivated by his sense of responsibility, this fault can lead to a loss of effectiveness.

4) Can I help my boss to win?
If you see an opportunity that you think your boss would want to seize, speak up. Again, this relies on having a good relationship and a good understanding of their priorities, as we have considered in previous sessions.

When to Back Off?
While speaking up may be important, knowing when to shut up is often just as important!

1) Am I promoting my own personal agenda?
One needs to be self-aware, and to beware of possible selfish motives. Since your leader is probably just as aware of them (if not even more so), continuing to push for action that will further your personal agenda is likely to be counter-productive.

2) Have I already made my point?
Most people do not appreciate being badgered. This is just as true of leaders. If you have pointed out a threat or an opportunity, clearly and your leader has got the message, there's probably nothing to be gained from continuing to bring it up - you've done your part, now it's up to your leader to act on the information, or not. "If you keep repeating yourself after your point's been made, you're just trying to get your own way". Maxwell notes that trying to force your boss to accept your point of view is much the same as trying to do so with your spouse - "even if you win, you lose"!

3) Must everyone but me take the risk?
Pushing an issue when you are not personally invested in it, is likely to be more annoying than helpful. You need to have "skin in the game" to be taken seriously, and not just be a vociferous spectator.

4) Does the atmosphere say "no"?
Apparently, Disney World employees are trained to notice and react to the emotional state of the visitors to the park. On of the guidelines is never to approach families that are arguing! Middle-leaders need to be sensitive to the state of the leader (Maxwell uses the analogy of reading the weather) and to avoid bringing up important issues if the mood is not right.

5) Is the timing right only for me?
Maxwell quotes the Roman emperor Hadrian: "To be right too soon is to be wrong". While the
leader is ultimately responsible for the timing of any action or reaction, knowing when to raise an issue is an important skill for a middle-leader. The Latin motto, "festina lente", or "hasten slowly" points to the truth of this: "If the timing is right for everyone, then move forward. But if it is right only for [you]... back off and move more slowly".

6) Does my request exceed our relationship?
Middle-leaders do not have positional authority, and must rely on influence and relationship in order to lead. Pushing your leader beyond the bounds of the established relationship is likely to be counter-productive.

Maxwell ends the chapter by recounting the story of George H.W. Bush (i.e. the older one) when he was Vice President to Ronald Reagan and Reagan was shot. As Reagan was incapacitated, Bush was the de facto president, but he deliberately chose to back off. When he was flown to the White House for an emergency cabinet meeting, he refused to let his helicopter land on the presidential landing spot. In the same way, at the cabinet meeting, he refused to take the top chair and sat in his usual position. A few years later, when the time was right, he was elected as president in his own right, and the depth of character that he displayed during this critical time was no doubt a significant factor.

Some things to think about:
1) Is your primary inclination to push too hard, or to remain silent or back off too easily? How can you develop a better balance?
2) Getting the timing right is a critical skill. How does one "hasten slowly" in practice?

This week we get to the penultimate principle for leading-up from John Maxwell's book "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization".

Lead-Up Principle #8: Become a Go-To Player

Maxwell introduces this chapter with a hypothetical scenario: imagine you are working on an important task with an impending deadline, when you are suddenly handed another major task with the same deadline. Delaying either of the projects is unimaginable. What will you do? Most people would try to delegate one of the tasks to someone they can trust to get it done and done well. Maxwell then turns this around: if that's what you would do in that situation, how can you become the person that your leader would turn to in similar circumstances?

In one of his earlier books ("The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork"), Maxwell describes this as the "Law of the Catalyst": every team has members who can be relied on to get tasks done, no matter what. "Those team members who can make things happen are their go-to players. They demonstrate consistent competence, responsibility, and dependability". Becoming such a go-to player will put you in a position of trust and influence.

Maxwell then describes a number of characteristics of go-to players.

1) Go-To Players Produce When the Pressure's On
He categorises the people in an organisation into one of four groups, depending on what they do:
- Those who never deliver: Detrimental
- Those who sometimes deliver: Average
- Those who always deliver when in their comfort zone: Valuable
- Those who always deliver regardless of the situation: Invaluable
It is this last group who form the go-to players: no matter what the circumstances they deliver the goods. In fact, these people often thrive under the most intense pressure when they're operating well out of their comfort zones.

2) Go-To Players Produce When the Resources Are Few
Maxwell tells the story of a speaking engagement he had shortly after the release of his book "Today Matters". There were two sessions scheduled, with different groups of people, on one day. After the first session, the organisation that was hosting Maxwell sold out all the copies of the book that they had available. The leader of the organisation swung into action and dispatched people all across the town to buy up every copy of the book that they could find in the bookstores so that they would be available to the people at the second session. This meant that the organisation would make no profit on the books as they had to buy them at the full cover-price, but the leader reacted to the need to have the books available for his people at the time that they would be most likely to buy them.

3) Go-To Players Produce When the Momentum Is Low
Again, Maxwell categorises people into three groups:
- Momentum breakers: those who undermine the organisation and diminish its momentum. He describes this group as the "bottom 10% of the organization", and notes that Jack Welch, when he ran General Electric, actively tried to identify and fire these people!
- Momentum takers: the middle 80% who go with the flow, neither adding to nor taking away from the organisation's momentum.
- Momentum makers: the top 10% who actively contribute to creating momentum. They "make progress. They overcome obstacles. They help move others along. They... create energy in the organization".

4) Go-To Players Produce When the Load Is Heavy
Any good employee may offer to assist the leader when they are lightly loaded themselves. The really valuable ones will offer to help, even when they are busy. Their offer to help is dependent on the leader's load, not their own. Maxwell credits many people in his organisation with such an attitude, but singles out Dan Reiland, a former employee who still volunteers to help Maxwell even though he's no longer employed by the organisation! Maxwell states that this is an matter of attitude, not one's position in the organisation.

5) Go-To Players Produce When the Leader Is Absent
One of the best opportunities for a middle-leader to shine is when the leader is away. Natural leaders will usually react to such a "leadership vacuum" by seeking to fill it. While this is a good opportunity to get noticed, one needs to be careful as one's motives are usually very apparent. If they are acting for the benefit of the organisation and the leader, it will be clear. Conversely, if their motives are selfish, or for self-promotion, it will also be obvious.

6) Go-To Players Produce When the Time Is Limited
Maxwell described a sign he saw in a small company, entitled "The 57 Rules to Deliver the Goods":

Rule 1: Deliver the goods
Rule 2: The other 56 don't matter

This is the attitude displayed by go-to players. Maxwell tells the story of a middle leader, Roy, who was sitting in a company presentation at which the leader of the organisation announced an interesting new programme. To his shock, the leader then announced that Rod would be managing the programme and that anyone with any questions should direct them to him! You can imagine many reactions to a situation like this. Rod pulled out a sheet of paper and quickly designed a plan
of action for the new programme. When people came up to him after the meeting he had a plan to
describe. Afterwards he admitted that it probably wasn't his best work, but it was adequate, served
the organisation and prevented any embarrassment for the leader.

While that is an extreme example, most leaders will come to rely on the people in their
organisations who display these 6 characteristics.

Some things to think about:
1) How do you react to high-pressure situations?
2) Can you think of someone who is a consistent "momentum maker"? How do they do this?

This week we get to the ninth and final principle for leading-up from John Maxwell's book "The
360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization".

**Lead-Up Principle #9: Be Better Tomorrow Than You Are Today**

Many people are focused on arriving at some "destination": perhaps a desired leadership position,
or some level of seniority. On "arriving" they often stop trying to grow and develop their skills, etc.
Maxwell is blunt: "What a waste of potential!" While the desire to grow is admirable, stopping at
any point is a sad "waste". Maxwell suggests that many people set their sights too low (and admits
he did so when he was younger), and suggests that one set goals for who you want to be, rather than
where you want to get to. He describes this concisely as "being more growth oriented than goal
oriented".

If you wanted to learn about cooking, who would you rather have a lesson from: Jamie Oliver, or
your next-door neighbour who can whip up a good meal on occasion? If you wanted to learn about
leadership, would you rather meet with Nelson Mandela, or the owner of a local corner cafe? While
the answers to these questions are obvious, what is it about you that would make people want to
spend time with you and learn from you? Maxwell suggests that "competence and experience" are
the factors that attract people to someone that they think they can learn from. "Competence is a key
to credibility, and credibility is the key to influencing others. If people respect you, they will listen
to you". Abraham Lincoln put it this way: "I don't think much of a man who is not wiser today than
he was yesterday".

Personal growth is a long-term activity. Maxwell draws an analogy with fruit and nut tress that can
take 3–7 years (fruit) or 5–15 years (nuts) from planting to producing a crop. Steady, patient
growth is the key to productivity for people as well as trees. Maxwell quotes Elbert Hubbard: "If
what you did yesterday still looks big to you, you haven't done much today!" Measuring your
current achievements against your past successes is a good way to assess how much you are
growing. Another quote, from leadership experts Warren Bennis and Bert Nanus: "It is the capacity
to develop and improve their skills that distinguishes leaders from followers".

The ability to learn has a cumulative effect: "The more you learn and grow, the greater your
capacity to keep learning". Maxwell repeats the story of a leader whose first boss would sit down
with him when he messed up and work through the failure with him. The boss' final question was
always "Did you learn something from this?". This seemed rather harsh and tough to the young
man at the time, but he later realised that he was making good progress and becoming a successful
leader in his own right because he had put in place specific mechanisms that he had learned from
those difficult conversations with his boss.
Earning respect and a position of influence with your leaders requires that you be growing and improving. "No matter how much it costs you to keep growing and learning, the cost of doing nothing is greater".

Maxwell then gives a few practical, daily ways in which we can increase our capacity to learn and develop.

1. Learn Your Craft Today
Going back to the tree analogy, Maxwell tells of a sign on the wall of a tree farm: "The best time to plant a tree is twenty-five years ago. The second best time is now". No matter what your age or circumstances, you can start learning and growing today. Remember, it's not about the destination, but about the process of self-development. Maxwell quotes Napoleon Hill: "You can't change where you started, but you can change the direction you are going. It's not what you are going to do, but it's what you are doing now that counts".

2. Talk Your Craft Today
Speaking to people (peers and those ahead of you) is a very good way to learn. This often comes very naturally: musicians will discuss music with each other, parents discuss parenting techniques, sportsmen share tips and techniques. This usually arises from the participants' level of engagement with the topic, and brings benefits of increased "passion, ... new skills and insights, and ... [preparation] to take action". While discussions with peers are helpful, time spent with more skilled and experienced people is invaluable. We have referred before to Maxwell's regular habit of meeting with leaders he admires, and how he prepares meticulously in advance to get the maximum benefit from these encounters. He tries to fit in at least six of these "learning lunches" a year. The maximum benefit from such discussions lies not in trying to emulate the other participant's approach, but to apply what they know and what they do to your own circumstances and style (heaven forbid we all become clones of John C. Maxwell!).

3. Practice Your Craft Today
Learning about your field of expertise and talking about it are all very well, but it has to be put into practice to have any real benefit. This usually entails starting small, lots of practice and a willingness to step out of your "comfort zone".

Maxwell is often asked how people might develop or improve their organisations. His answer is to develop yourself, and then to develop other leaders around you. He quotes Jack Welch, the former CEO of General Electric: "Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others". Start now!

Some closing quotes:
"If you're not moving forward as a learner, then you're moving backward as a leader", John C. Maxwell.

"By improving yourself, the world is made better. Be not afraid of growing to slowly. Be afraid only of standing still", Benjamin Franklin.

Some things to think about:
1) Have you ever had a sense that you had "arrived"? What was the outcome?
2) Who do you admire as a leader? How might you be able to benefit from spending some intentional time with them?

The next major section of John Maxwell's book "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your
"Influence from Anywhere in the Organization" turns to the issue of leading sideways (or "leading across." as he terms it), namely influencing your peers. Maxwell makes this point that this can be very difficult (particularly if one is doing well at leading up, which may lead to suspicion or jealousy from one's peers). As with leading-up, the key to winning influence with fellow-leaders is to help them to win. This depends critically on the ability to form good relationships. With that as background, we turn to the first of seven principles for leading sideways.

**Lead-Across Principle #1: Understand, Practice, and Complete the Leadership Loop**

Reaching a point of influence with one's peers is a process that takes time. Maxwell describes this as a circle of seven steps: 1) Caring, 2) Learning, 3) Appreciating, 4) Contributing, 5) Verbalizing, 6) Leading and 7) Succeeding, where step 7 leads back to step 1.

1) Caring - Take an Interest in People
Leaders are often very goal-oriented and don't take the time to focus on people. While not everyone is a "people person", it is important to learn some relationship skills if this is not a strength (and there are many books and resources that can help with this). Some practical tips include valuing other people, trying to see things from their perspective, and looking for things to appreciate about them. "People always move towards someone who increases them and away from anyone who decreases them".

2) Learning - Get to Know People
It is important to move beyond caring to finding out what makes individuals tick (as a counter-example, Maxwell quotes Charlie Brown from the Peanuts cartoon series: "I love mankind. It's people I can't stand"!). One must take the time to talk to fellow leaders in order to get to know them, their talents, interests, opinions, etc. One can also undertake specific exercises. One such exercise, developed by one of Maxwell's companies, is based on "Value Cards". These are a set of around 40 cards labelled with various values, "such as integrity, commitment, wealth, faith, creativity, and family". The exercise consists of selecting your top six values. You then have to discard two, and then another two. The purpose is to help people to work through what is really important to them. The benefit of this in terms of learning about people is to share the results. One company produced a poster of all the employees' values which they display in their offices. The company's leader stated that "the camaraderie that already existed among his people had gotten even better".

3) Appreciating - Respect People
We find it easy to appreciate and respect those who are like ourselves, but less so with people who are different or have different perspectives or opinions. We need to try to move beyond these natural biases and assume the best of people, especially in first encounters. This is likely to result in reciprocal respect, and ultimately in influence.

4) Contributing - Add Value to People
Helping others out, especially when you do not stand to get any reward, or expect anything in return, is a very powerful way to earn influence. Maxwell gives some practical tips in this regard. Firstly, share your best "stuff" (ideas, resources, etc.) with others. Secondly, use your skills to compensate for the weaknesses of others (Maxwell quotes Sylvester Stallone, from his part in the movie "Rocky" where he talks about his fiance: "I got gaps, she's got gaps, together we don't got gaps") - healthy collaboration benefits both parties. Thirdly, invest in the development of others - share resources that will assist in the growth of your peers. Fourthly, share experiences and opportunities - involve others in trips, meetings and projects that will benefit them. This kind of
selfless sharing may attract some suspicion, but once people realise that your motives are genuine, they will appreciate your openness and generosity.

5) Verbalizing - Affirm People
Think for a moment of the teachers who had the most impact on your life. For most people, these teachers were probably the ones who encouraged you and built you up. This kind of affirmation is a powerful way of earning the right to influence people. Genuine praise and encouragement will strengthen people, particularly when expressed publicly in the presence of others.

6) Leading - Influence People
Once one has been through the first five steps, one is in a position to start to lead sideways - influencing one's peers. This is based on a well-founded relationship of trust and credibility. How quickly one can get to this point depends on the circumstances (and some people are naturally better at building relationships quickly), but it cannot be hurried. This is also not the ultimate goal - one needs to progress to the next step.

7) Succeeding - Win with People
Maxwell notes that people have a number of possible reasons for wanting to lead. The two best reasons are (1) leaders have a vision that they wish to fulfil, and (2) leaders want others to excel. "Great leaders don't use people so that they can win. They lead people so that they can all win together". The result of reaching this stage is often that it results in other people being attracted into your circle of influence, taking you back to step one and starting to build new relationships.

In closing Maxwell quotes a sports coach who encouraged his team to do the right thing and to treat others well, stating that people would ask three questions:"(1) Can I trust you? (2) Do you believe in this? Are you committed to this - have a passion for this? (3) Do you care about me as a person?”. If those in your circle of influence can answer yes to these three questions, you will have earned a powerful position of influence.

Some things to think about:
1) Can you think of a person who increases (or decreases) you? What is your reaction to them?
2) How would the people around you answer the three questions "(1) Can they trust you? (2) Do you believe in this? Are you committed to this - have a passion for this? (3) Do you care about them?"?

This week we come to the second of the principles for leading across from John Maxwell's book "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization".

Lead-Across Principle #2: Put Completing Fellow Leaders Ahead of Competing with Them

Competition with one's peers can be a very healthy thing, as long as it does not develop in ways that are harmful to the overall goals of the organisation. In this chapter Maxwell gives some guidelines that can be used to focus the positive aspects of competition and avoid the pitfalls of destructive competitiveness. "In healthy working environments, there is both competition and teamwork". In categorising competition as healthy or unhealthy, Maxwell distinguishes between behaviours that "complete" one's peers, rather than (negatively) "compete" with them:

<p>| Competing | Completing |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scarcity mind-set</th>
<th>Abundance mind-set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Me first</td>
<td>Organisation first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destroys trust</td>
<td>Builds trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Win-lose</td>
<td>Win-win</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single thinking (my ideas)</td>
<td>Shared thinking (our ideas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excluding others</td>
<td>Including others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fundamental issue is whether the organisation benefits or is harmed by a particular behaviour. A combination of both competition and teamwork is required. As usual, Maxwell gives a number of practical guidelines to help get this distinction straight.

1) Acknowledge your natural desire to compete
Almost everyone has some form of competitive streak. I always believed that I was not particularly competitive, until I started entering the occasional social bike race a few years ago. I don't have to finish first or even anywhere near the front, but I discovered (to my surprise) that I do NOT like being passed by another cyclist on the road in a race! In Maxwell's opinion/experience, leaders tend to be particularly competitive. "The key to being competitive is channeling it in a positive way. If you squash it, you lose an edge that motivates you to do some of your best work. If you let it run wild, you run over your teammates and alienate them".

2) Embrace healthy competition
Healthy competition between the members of a team can be a very positive thing for an organisation. It brings out the best in people (Maxwell asks how many world records have been set by solo runners?) - we tend to do best when we have someone egging us on. It also helps us to assess our performance by providing a benchmark for comparison. It creates camaraderie arising from teamwork (when competition is really healthy, even members of opposing teams will form bonds born out of respect for their opponents). Lastly, it never gets personal. In sports, having fun should always be a key component - if it gets too serious, it probably isn't healthy any longer. Maxwell tells a corny joke about a rooster who brings an ostrich egg into the chicken run, then says to the hens, "I don't want to intimidate you girls, but I just want to show you what they're doing up the road"! Good competition can help motivate a team.

3) Put competition in its proper place
As we said at the outset, competition is healthy if the organisation benefits. It needs to be used to sharpen the skills of the team to face the opposition in the marketplace.

4) Know where to draw the line
One needs to be sensitive to when competitiveness starts to become destructive or harmful. Maxwell says that this is easy to assess: "when competitiveness raises the bar and makes others better, that's healthy. Anytime it lowers morale and hurts the team, it's unhealthy and out of line".

Maxwell ends with a story about when he first started out as a church leader, and the three department leaders who worked under him in his first church. They were a competitive bunch, and always trying to out-do each other. This motivated them and their teams to do their best. However, if one of them had a difficult problem, the others would immediately come to their aid. "They always put the team's win ahead of their own". Those three leaders have gone their separate ways now, but are still very good friends. "They have deep respect for each other that continues to give them credibility - and influence - with one another".

Some things to think about:
1) How competitive are you naturally? How easy do you find it to channel your competitiveness in productive/healthy ways?
2) Have you ever experienced unhealthy competition within an organisation? What was the result?

This week brings us to the third principle for leading across (or leading our peers) as we continue with John Maxwell's book "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization". This chapter is particularly full of really good quotations, underscoring how many wise people over the centuries have wrestled with the topic of friendship.

**Lead-Across Principle #3: Be a Friend**

As we assess the various facets of our relationships with our colleagues at work, friendship is perhaps not necessarily one that immediately jumps to mind, although I think the Department does have a good number of very healthy friendships. And, of course, this was a topic which we dealt with in depth last year when we worked through Tom Rath's book "Vital Friends: The People You Can't Afford to Live Without" (see the StaffDevs for February – August 2007). Maxwell quotes Ralph Waldo Emerson: "The glory of friendship is not in the outstretched hand, nor the kindly smile, nor the joy of companionship; it is in the spiritual inspiration that comes to one when he discovers that someone else believes in him and is willing to trust him". Friends at work are vital, as Rath noted, and strong workplace friendships will bring many benefits. Friends at work can help us through the tough times, and bring extra enjoyment to the good times.

Maxwell lists three benefits to having friends at work:

1) Friendship is the foundation of influence
He quotes Abraham Lincoln: "If you would win a man to your cause, first convince him that you are his sincere friend". Influence arises from strong, positive relationships.

2) Friendship is the framework for success
Maxwell quotes Theodore Roosevelt on this: "The most important single ingredient in the formula of success is knowing how to get along with people". Teamwork is vital for success in most modern workplaces, and strong teams will be the result of good workplace friendships. Even if we should succeed on our own, the lack of coworkers to share in the success with will usually render the victory somewhat empty.

3) Friendship is the shelter against sudden storms
When things go badly or when we face difficult circumstances at work, having a friend by your side will be a great support. Another quote, this time from Aristotle: "True friends are a sure refuge".

Maxwell then turns his attention from "why" to "how", giving some practical tips on how form and strengthen workplace friendships. He notes that we all have friends and know how to form friendships, but suggests that there are some specific issues in the workplace that should be taken into account. In particular, in the workplace, we may not have the luxury of being able to walk away from someone who does not immediately reciprocate overtures of friendship. However, in order to effectively lead across the organisation, it may be essential to persevere in such situations.

1) Listen!
This really is the first step to building a good relationship. Maxwell quotes Ralph Nichols: "The most basic of all human needs is the need to understand and be understood. The best way to
understand people is to listen to them”. Developing good listening skills will lead to your peers wanting to spend time with you, to confide in you, and ultimately to see your advice. "That is the starting point for influence with them”.

2) Find common ground not related to work
Common ground in the workplace is often formed at quite a shallow level. However, if one takes the time and makes the effort to find common interests outside of the workplace, this will often result in a deepening friendship.

3) Be available beyond business hours
This is related to the previous point. Having common interests is all very well, but when these become shared they are far more meaningful. Even simply sharing a meal away from the workplace will help nurture a budding friendship. Playing sport or sharing hobbies together will also strengthen friendships. These kinds of activities will help you to understand your colleagues in a much better way. Maxwell notes that it is important to respect boundaries, but notes that since "leadership isn't limited to nine to five, friendship can't be either”.

4) Have a sense of humour
He quotes the comedian Victor Borge here: "Laughter is the closest distance between two people"! Particularly in difficult situations, a shared laugh can help form strong bonds. Maxwell tells the story of his writer, Charlie Wetzel, who was far too serious when he began his postgraduate studies. However, in his second year, he became a teaching assistant and formed a friendship with another postgrad, Homer, who was a strong student, but also had a strong sense of humour. Despite having little in common the two became good friends, and Charlie "credits Homer with helping him not take himself so seriously and with reawakening his sense of humor, something for which he continues to be grateful”. People will be attracted to someone who is cheerful and sees the funny side of difficult situations, which will help strengthen the bonds of friendship.

5) Tell the truth when others don't
The quote here is from Henry Ford: "Your best friend is he who brings out the best that is within you". Sometimes that means speaking the truth, even when it is difficult to do so. Out of politeness, or from fear of a negative response, people may be tempted to avoid the truth when we are headed in the wrong direction, reacting badly, or not performing at our best. However, a true friend will (graciously) point out these kinds of failings. This requires having a healthy emotional "bank balance" with the other person (a topic we have dealt with several times before), and there is a partial catch-22 here: you need to have a strong friendship before you can make use of this technique for strengthening a friendship.

In closing Maxwell quotes Charles Schwab, a very successful US business leader:

*Be friends with everybody. When you have friends you will know there is someone who will stand by you... It doesn't pay to make enemies. Lead the life that will make you kind and friendly to everyone about you, and you will be surprised what a happy life you will live.*

Some things to think about:
1) How good a listener are you? How has this affected your relationships?
2) How easy do you find it to tell others difficult truths? How would you react to someone pointing out a failing in your own conduct at work?

The next chapter of John Maxwell's book "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence
from Anywhere in the Organization" deals with the fourth principle for leading across: avoiding office politics.

**Lead-Across Principle #4: Avoid Office Politics**

Maxwell opens the chapter with a joke about a politician who arrives late for an after-dinner speaking engagement. Arriving as the guests are finishing the meal, he is rushed to the podium and launches straight into his speech, focusing on one of the key areas of his campaign. During a pause in his talk, the host leans over and explains that the group he is addressing hold the opposite viewpoint. Without a moment's hesitation, the politician continues, "Now that I have explained the opposition's position in great detail, I will tell you the truth"! While we almost expect that kind of flip-flopping on issues from politicians, it is not an approach that goes down well in the workplace. Maxwell defines "playing politics" as altering your stance on issues in order to try to get ahead. Workplace signs of this are currying favour with the boss, flip-flopping on issues depending on the way things are going or using others to get ahead. "Political people are fickle and opportunistic, doing what's expedient in the moment to win, regardless of what's best for their peers, their employees, or the organization".

He gives one of his comparative lists, contrasting "people who rely on production", with "people who rely on politics":

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent on how they grow</th>
<th>Depend on who they know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on what they do</td>
<td>Focus on what they say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become better than they appear</td>
<td>Appear better than they are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide substance</td>
<td>Take shortcuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do what's necessary</td>
<td>Do what's popular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work to control their own destiny</td>
<td>Let others control their destiny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grow into the next level</td>
<td>Hope to be given the next level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base decisions on principles</td>
<td>Base decisions on opinions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

He sums this up as a difference between people who are driven by ambition and those who strive for excellence. Political animals may get ahead in the short-term, but in the long-term the principled stand of those who avoid petty politics will usually win out. Unfortunately, those short-term gains can lead others to conclude that the only way to get ahead in an organisation is through playing office politics and to adopt that as a strategy. It takes courage and character to swim against the tide and stand on principles. That can be very difficult in settings where political manoeuvring is the accepted way to get ahead. Maxwell provides six practical steps that can help to avoid falling into the political sewer.

1) Avoid gossip

Maxwell quotes a saying: "great people talk about ideas, average people talk about themselves, and small people talk about others". Gossip is toxic to all three parties involved: the subject, the speaker and the listener. Cutting people off when they start to gossip will leave you feeling more positive about yourself (not to mention the unfortunate subject). Maxwell notes that someone who will gossip to you will often also gossip about you when you're not around. He quotes Winston Churchill: "When the eagles are silent, the parrots begin to jabber". Great leaders are like eagles: they are inspiring and soar above the small plots and schemes of office politicians. They deal with issues and people directly. "They praise publicly and criticize privately".
2) Stay away from petty arguments
Most organisations of any size have their grudges and bad feelings based on past history. Middle leaders should try to keep clear of involvement in these wars. Maxwell quotes another saying: "a bulldog can beat a skunk in a fight anytime, but he knows it's just not worth it"! Mature leaders know when to avoid getting sucked into petty disputes.

3) Stand up for what's right, not just for what's popular
Sometimes it is important to take a principled stand on an unpopular issue. Maxwell suggests using the Golden Rule (i.e. "do to others what you would have them do to you") as a guide for deciding on these kinds of issues.

4) Look at all sides of the issue
When dealing with a difficult issue it helps to try to see it from the perspectives of the other people involved. Maxwell notes that middle-leaders often have an advantage in this area as they are still fairly well in touch with people lower down in the organisation, but are also more aware of the issues faced by people at the top. This may give them a unique ability to appreciate these different perspectives better than those at the top or bottom.

5) Don't protect your turf
Turf wars are usually aimed at retaining or building power in an organisation. Unfortunately, it is usually the organisation that suffers. Fights for budgets, space and other resources can be highly counter-productive. Good leaders will try to do what is best for the organisation. If giving up some resources will benefit the organisation they will make the sacrifice (and in the process will usually earn goodwill for future interactions with the people who benefit from their selfless actions).

6) Say what you mean, and mean what you say
This brings us back to the opening story about the after-dinner speech. Politicians are renowned for changing their positions to suit the audience. Good leaders will rather stick to their guns, based on their principles. Trust cannot be formed in such an environment and good leaders must be "credible and consistent".

In closing Maxwell notes that he may have been a little harsh on politicians in this chapter, as there are dedicated, principled people in the political arena who are motivated to serve. However, for most people today, the word "politician" has mainly negative connotations. Maxwell contrasts politicians with statesmen (I guess that should be statespeople, if we're going to be politically correct!), which are described as follows in Webster's dictionary:

*These terms differ particularly in their connotations:* Politician suggests the schemes and devices of a person who engages in (esp. small) politics for party ends or for one's own advantage; a dishonest politician. Statesman suggests the eminent ability, foresight, and unselfish patriotic devotion of a person dealing with (esp. important or great) affairs of state: a distinguished statesman.

Maxwell calls for office statesmanship, rather than office politics to be the order of the day for aspiring leaders.

Some things to think about:
1) Do you know someone who gossips? What is their impact on the organisation, and on you?
2) Do you know someone who could be described as an "office statesman"? What sets them apart from office politicians?
In the next chapter of John Maxwell's book "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization" we come to the fifth principle for leading across: building relational networks.

**Lead-Across Principle #5: Expand Your Circle of Acquaintances**

Maxwell introduces this topic with a personal story. For much of his life he lived and worked in parts of the USA that do not have many African-Americans. Then, about ten years ago, he relocated from California to Georgia, which does have a large African-American population. Realising that he needed to broaden his perspective in this new setting, he contacted the leader of a local college with a predominantly African-American student profile, and asked him for introductions to the leaders of the local African-American community. The college leader was very happy to do so, and set up a regular series of lunchtime meetings with different leaders. Maxwell notes that some of them were initially suspicious of his motives, but soon accepted that he was genuine in his desire to learn more about a group and a culture about which he had little prior knowledge, and that he was prepared to share from his own experience and add value to their lives. "At times during those lunches I was taken out of my comfort zone, yet I'm glad to say I learned much about the African-American community and have developed wonderful relationships with many new friends".

That last sentence sums up an important principle in this chapter: the need to get out of our comfort zones in expanding our circle of friends and acquaintances. While doing so may be difficult it is an important key to personal growth. Maxwell lists a number of benefits, such as exposure to new ideas, new perspectives, new methods and skills. It also allows you to expand your network of contacts, which is vitally important in any area of modern life. Maxwell quotes Tim Sanders of Yahoo, from his book, "Love is the Killer App": "In the twenty-first century, our success will be based on the people we know. Everyone in our address book is a potential partner for every person we meet... If you organize and leverage your relationships as a network, you will generate long-lasting value (and peace of mind) beyond your [finances]. You will also create a value proposition for new contacts, which in turn drives membership in that network - the prime law of business ecosystems, known as the Law of Network Effects... When we are fully and totally networked, we are powerful". Sanders also lists knowledge and compassion as vital resources.

Maxwell then turns to some practical tips on how to expand your network of relationships, particularly focusing on extending outside of our comfort zones. He notes that this is easy for some people, but not so for many others. However, the effort involved in stretching oneself in this way is likely to be rewarded. He defines the relational comfort zone as comprising people we've known for a long time, those with whom we have things in common, and those who we know like us. He suggests that you try to imagine expanding your circle of acquaintances by an order of magnitude, and how this might enable you to find answers to difficult questions, new business opportunities, even things as simple as recommendations for good restaurants and holiday spots.

1. Expand beyond your inner circle
   One of the most effective ways of starting to expand your circle of acquaintances is to use your existing contacts. Everyone you know knows someone (probably several people) you don't know. Ask for introductions, find out about common interests and connections, ask for invitations to events where there will be new people, or "simply ask for a phone number and make contact yourself. This can be a very simple and effective way of dramatically expanding your network of relationships. Maxwell notes that this network then needs to be maintained through regular (although not necessarily frequent) contact.
2. Expand beyond your expertise
Maxwell has often described how he seeks out people who can teach him about leadership. However, in order to create an effective network, one has to reach out beyond one's immediate field. In many businesses, a contrary approach is very evident in the lack of contact or interaction between people in different departments. Building bridges with other sections of the organisation will bring benefits for the organisation and those who it serves (e.g. customers, students, etc.).

3. Expand beyond your strengths
Maxwell notes how people often congregate with others in the same field as themselves (e.g. how many movie stars are married to other movie stars?). Again, a key to effectively expanding your network of acquaintances calls for you to reach out to people with different strengths, jobs, personalities, etc. A highly-driven individual can probably learn valuable lessons from someone who is more laid-back (and vice versa). Jim Collins, author of the best-selling business book "Good to Great", describes how excited he got when people from social sectors started to apply the lessons of the book, and how the contrasts between the business world and the non-profit sector highlighted some important principles for him.

4. Expand beyond your personal prejudices
Maxwell quotes Andre Gide, a French author: "an unprejudiced mind is probably the rarest thing in the world". Whether we admit it or not, most of us probably have deep-seated prejudices of one sort or another. Some of these may be the obvious issues (race, gender, etc.), but more subtle issues such as class, nationality, etc. may also influence our views. Moving beyond these self-imposed comfort boundaries can be very fulfilling. In particular, one should question whether a particular perception has been formed based on experience of just an individual (or a few examples). Just as Maxwell needed to do when he moved to the "Deep South" one may need to actively build relationships with groups who may have been the subject of some personal prejudice.

5. Expand beyond your routine
Many people follow closely defined routines, visiting the same shops, restaurants, etc. (Ever noticed how you bump into people you seldom see if you got to Pick and Pay at a different time to your usual shopping schedule?!). As a practical example, Maxwell describes how two of his companies had been in one building, where they had separate offices, but common hallways, and shared meeting venues and lunch facilities. A few years ago, they moved into a new building where they now had completely separate facilities. After a while, Maxwell's assistant realised that she was losing touch with what was happening in the other area and started a practice of visiting the other company once a day and interacting with a different person there.

In closing, Maxwell notes that none of these suggestions is "revolutionary", but points out that we have to be deliberate about our actions in order to expand our circle of acquaintances. The status quo will not automatically bring about any expansion of our personal network.

A closing quote:

I cannot remember a single time I've regretted getting outside of my comfort zone and trying to get acquainted with someone I didn't know. Even if I failed to connect, or if there was no chemistry, or if the person turned out to be unpleasant, it always yielded some kind of benefit, either because I had a new experience, learned something new, or received an introduction to someone else I enjoyed meeting. It's an investment in time - and influence - that is always worth making.

Some things to think about:
1) How easy do you find making new contacts and friends? How can you extend your...
current circle of acquaintances?
2) To what extent have you let your prejudices, routines, strengths, etc. shape your networking? How can you start to overcome any such obstacles?

The next chapter of John Maxwell's book "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization" discusses the fourth of the principles for leading across. This builds directly on some of the material from his book "Thinking for a Change".

**Lead-Across Principle #6: Let the Best Idea Win**

In opening the chapter, Maxwell asks that you imagine going into a meeting for which your boss has asked you to prepare a proposal for discussion. You have worked hard on the proposal for weeks, and prepared diligently for the meeting. As the meeting gets going and you start to present your ideas, people start to get excited and to contribute their ideas. Before you know it, the meeting has drifted far from the proposal you had prepared and is starting to come up with something completely different. Most people, quite naturally, will handle this kind of situation by trying to pull everyone back to their proposal and fighting for their ideas. This is based on the considerable investment they have put in. This investment has three aspects: (1) intellectual investment - the planning and thinking that has gone into the proposal; (2) physical investment - the hours of work; and (3) emotional investment - the sense of ownership and possibility for self-advancement. As a result "it becomes difficult to let those ideas die, especially when someone else who didn't do any work may come in and get all the credit".

Maxwell points out that it is essential for the organisation to have the best ideas, and that means that responsible middle-leaders must support the best ideas and not just fight for their own ideas. He quotes Harvey Firestone, founder of the tyre company: "Capital isn't so important in business. Experience isn't so important. You can get both of these. What is important is ideas. If you have ideas, you have the main asset you need, and there isn't any limit to what you can do with your business and your life. They are any man's greatest asset - ideas". Maxwell notes that good ideas do not (only) come from the top leaders in any organisation, but often arise from the middle ranks. Good leaders need to help bring out good ideas and support the best ideas, wherever they may have come from, for the organisation to benefit.

Maxwell then provides a number of practical ideas that can help middle leaders bring out the best ideas.

1) 360-Degree Leaders Listen to All Ideas
Having an open mind is the key starting point. Maxwell quotes the mathematician and philosopher, Whitehead: "Almost all really new ideas have a certain aspect of foolishness when they are first produced". Cutting off what appear to be crazy ideas may be short-sighted in the long term. Maxwell refers back to the skill of "shared thinking" that he put forward in "Thinking for a Change". This essentially states that collaborative, brain-storming approaches are likely to yield better, more valuable results than "solo thinking" and in less time.

2) 360-Degree Leaders Never Settle for Just One Idea
Most leaders have a strong bias for action, and may be inclined to leap on the first good idea that comes along. Maxwell suggests that having multiple ideas and working through the options is a better strategy. (He makes an interesting observation that Communism was essentially based on one idea, and that this is why it failed in comparison to the multiplicity of ideas inherent in democratic, free-market systems). He notes that democracy and the struggle for survival of ideas in such a system can be messy, but the results are generally worthwhile. The same is true for
organisations as for nations: "If people are open to ideas and options, they can keep growing, innovating, and improving".

3) 360-Degree Leaders Look in Unusual Places for Ideas
Natural leaders are always alert for new ideas. These might be sparked by newspaper articles, movies, nature, hobbies, etc. Maxwell notes that finding good ideas requires searching: "Rarely does a good idea come looking for you".

4) 360-Degree Leaders Don't Let Personality Overshadow Purpose
Isn't it annoying when someone you don't like or have a low opinion of comes up with a really good idea?! Good leaders need to look beyond their personal feelings about an individual when assessing the worth of their ideas. The ultimate good of the organisation needs to be the measure for judging ideas.

5) 360-Degree Leaders Protect Creative People and Their Ideas
When someone first puts forward an idea (particularly if it is truly innovative and hence may seem a little crazy) they may be very sensitive to criticism. Maxwell quotes Charlie Brower, and advertising executive: "A new idea is delicate. It can be killed by a sneer or a yawn; it can be stabbed to death by a quip and worried to death by a frown on the right man's brow". Good leaders need to be sensitive to these dynamics and nurture fledgling ideas, and the creative (often sensitive) individuals who produce them.

6) 360-Degree Leaders Don't Take Rejection Personally
Reacting badly in a meeting where your own ideas are rejected, while natural, may well stifle the creativity of the meeting, especially if one is in a leadership position. Maxwell gives a personal example: he seldom gets to choose the titles for his books! Of the last nine books he had written up to "The 36-Degree Leader", he had only chosen one title (his idea for "The 360-Degree Leader" was "Leading from the Middle of the Pack"; even "The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership" was chosen by his editor). For an author with a strong sense of ownership and investment in the book this is difficult to accept. However, he admits that his ideas are not always the best and the publishing teams, editors, etc. often have better ideas than his own.

In drawing these ideas together, Maxwell shares the thoughts of Mel Newhoff, a leading advertising executive. Newhoff encourages people to be passionate about their ideas, but also to be prepared to compromise. Passion is required to sell, defend and advance your ideas. However, one must also recognise that other people also have good ideas, and that people judging competing ideas will have different opinions and views. While one should never compromise one's principles and values, accepting that other ideas may be better than your own is an important personal strength.

A closing quote:

*When you think in terms of our idea instead of my idea or her idea, you're probably on track to helping the team win. That should be your motivation, not just trying to win friends and influence people. But I think you'll find that if you let the best idea win, you will win friends and influence people.*

Some things to think about:
1) Do you agree with Harvey Firestone that "'Capital [and experience aren't] so important in business... What is important is ideas'"?
2) How easy do you find it to let go of your own idea when a better, competing idea comes along? Do you take the rejection personally?
In the next chapter of John Maxwell's book "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization" we come to the seventh and last of the principles for leading across.

**Lead-Across Principle #7: Don't Pretend You're Perfect**

Many people, and perhaps especially leaders, are prone to putting on a facade of perfection. One of the problems with this is that it requires a great expenditure of effort in order to maintain the pretense. However, as Maxwell quotes newspaper editor, Norman Cousins: "to talk about the need for perfection in man is to talk about the need for another species"!

In our very competitive and driven society, to admit to imperfection can be difficult. However, Maxwell notes that no one is perfect and that leaders who are "real" and open about their weaknesses and their strengths are attractive because of the difference. "They engender trust. They are approachable. And they are a breath of fresh air in an environment where others are scrambling to reach the top by trying to look good".

He then turns to some practical tips for "getting real".

1) Admit Your Faults
Maxwell tells the story of speaking at a conference for CEOs and recommending that they be honest about their weaknesses and failings. Afterwards one of the participants came up to him and said that he thought this was "a really bad idea". His reasons were that, in his opinion, leaders should never reveal their doubts, fears or weaknesses otherwise they might lose the confidence of their followers. Maxwell suggested that he was mistaken in his basic assumption, namely that his followers were unaware of his weaknesses! Admitting to your weaknesses is not a case of telling people something they don't already know, so much as letting them know that you are aware of your own failings. Your colleagues and followers will already be very aware of your "weaknesses, faults, and blind spots" (Maxwell suggests that you ask them if you don't believe him!). Admitting to them will make you "approachable and trustworthy". The result is likely to be strong relationships and high levels of influence.

2) Ask for Advice
Leaders may think that asking for advice is a sign of weakness and will only do so as a last resort. "How much more quickly would people get things done if they asked for help when they needed it instead of trying to fake it until they make it?"

3) Worry Less About What People Think
Maxwell tells one of those wonderful Churchill stories to illustrate this point. Apparently, while he Prime Minister Churchill was on the receiving end of a highly critical speech from a member of the opposition. Through it all Churchill remained unmoved, even appearing bored. When the speaker came to an end, Churchill commented, "If I valued the opinion of the honourable gentleman, I might get angry"! While that might be a rather extreme view, being overly concerned about the opinions of others is not a healthy characteristic. Maxwell speaks from personal experience here, as, early on in his career, he was a "people pleaser". In time he learned that doing the right thing was more important than making a good impression on others. While being genuine will not earn you popularity with everyone, it will give you credibility.

4) Be Open to Learning from Others
We've all met people who have an opinion on everything and refuse to entertain alternative points of view. Such know-it-alls can be very irritating. Having a teachable attitude will make you
approachable. Maxwell strongly believes that everyone you meet can teach you something. This has two benefits: (1) "you will learn a lot"; (2) you will be likable.

5) Put Away Pride and Pretense
Often the reason for pretending to be perfect is to try to influence others. However, most people are not so easily fooled, and, when they see through the pretense, will actually be turned off. Rather than trying to impress others, Maxwell suggests that you let them impress you. "People with charisma, those who attract others to themselves, are individuals who focus on others, not themselves. They ask questions of others. They listen. They don't try to be the center of attention. And they never try to pretend they're perfect".

In closing, Maxwell advises that leaders should simply do their best, while remaining honest and transparent. That is likely to result in respect from your peers and followers, and then in influence.

Some things to think about:
1) Can there be too much honesty and openness in a working relationship?
2) How open are you about your weaknesses and failings? Do you think these things would really be a surprise to those who work with you?

The next section of John Maxwell's book "The 360-Degree Leader" turns to the subject of most people's first thoughts on leadership: leading down. Maxwell introduces this section by noting that people in leadership positions may feel that they have mastered this aspect and do not need to study it in any detail. However, he makes the point that the style of leadership that he is advocating in the book is different, "nonpositional, [360-Degree Leaders] lead through influence, not position, power, or leverage", and that this applies to downward leadership as much as to leading upward and across. As with the other "directions", the secret to leading downwards is to seek to add value to the other person. He quotes James Stockdale, a retired Admiral: "Leadership must be based on goodwill. Goodwill does not mean posturing and, least of all, pandering to the mob. It means obvious and wholehearted commitment to helping followers. We are tired of leaders we fear, tired of leaders we love, and tired of leaders who let us take liberties with them. What we need for leaders are [people] of the heart who are so helpful that they. in effect, do away with the need of their jobs. But leaders like that are never out of a job, never out of followers. Strange as it sounds, great leaders gain authority by giving it away."

**Lead-Down Principle #1: Walk Slowly Through the Halls**

This is a favourite principle of Maxwell's which he discusses in a number of his books (if I remember correctly, it was advice his father gave him early in his career). He notes that many leaders are driven by their goals, focused on accomplishing tasks, and biased toward action. This kind of disposition can mean that they are often in a hurry, and may neglect to connect with their people in informal ways. Maxwell makes the point that this is a dangerous trap to fall into: "First and foremost, leadership is a people business". If you neglects your followers you may turn around one day to find that they're not following any more ("and you're only taking a walk"!). Leaders sometimes try to compensate for poor relationships by relying on their position or on their skill, but neither of these is an effective substitute for good working relationships.

One of the most effective ways of putting this principle into practise is to take advantage of the informal opportunities that occur in settings like the tea room, car parking areas, Pick n Pay, etc. He suggests getting to meetings a little before the scheduled time and using the time to connect with other early arrivals. Most basically, he suggests walking slowly through the halls, taking the time to chat. He also notes that middle-leaders often have an advantage here, as they are perceived as more
accessible and more approachable than the top leadership of an organisation ("they're too important to talk to me" is often the thinking). He also suggests that this skill is most easily learned while in middle-leadership positions, rather than waiting until one rises to a senior position. As usual, he has a number of practical tips and techniques that can help to master this skill.

1) Slow Down
Maxwell notes that people lower down in an organisation will usually have less information and less experience than a leader, and so the leader needs to consciously slow down when discussing issues with a follower. He draws the analogy of getting one's children to help one around the house. This is usually slower, and often more frustrating than simply doing the job oneself, but if the children are to mature and develop skills themselves one needs to take the time to guide them and assist them. And, in time, their help actually does start to make the process more efficient. He gives a nice analogy of running a race: "Leaders aren't necessarily the first to cross the finish line - people who run alone are the fastest. Leaders are the first to bring all of their people across the finish line". I remember Lance Armstrong's delighted reaction at one Tour de France when his entire team finished the team time trial together. The result of a team time trial is determined by the time of the fifth rider (out of nine) in the team. Armstrong could probably have improved his chance of winning in the TDF that year if they had pushed a little harder and lost some of the weaker riders off the back, but they worked superbly well as a team and the resulting loyalty and support of his teammates was probably worth a lot more in the long run (and he did win the TDF that year anyway!).

2) Express That You Care
Maxwell notes how most people when they get their mail, sift through it looking for any personal, hand-written mail (rather than the inevitable heap of window-envelopes and junk mail!). "We all desire a personal touch from someone who cares about us". He quotes some stats from the US Postal Services who deliver 170 billion mail items a year. Of these, about 4% are personal. The desire for a personal touch is as true in the workplace as it is at the mailbox. People want to know that they are more than just a cog in an organisational machine, and particularly that their boss cares about them.

3) Create a Healthy Balance of Personal and Professional Interest
Leaders should obviously demonstrate an interest in the professional lives of their followers - encouraging them in the career development, etc. However, a deeper, personal interest is also needed for ultimate effectiveness of a leader. This needs to be approached sensitively, as no one wants a nosey boss always prying into their personal lives. Maxwell suggests starting off with fairly neutral questioning. Most people are happy to talk about their families, their hobbies and interests. One can also ask very general questions - e.g. "How is everything else going?". When listening to the responses he suggests paying careful attention to the emotional tone of the answers, and asking a gentle follow-up if there is any sign of stress - e.g. "Is everything OK?". "[D]on't push. If they choose to talk, don't judge, don't interrupt, and don't be too quick to offer advice unless they specifically ask for it". While some people might think this is inappropriate, in fact personal problems often spill over into the working environment. Understanding where people are coming from can be very helpful in trying to manage them sensitively.

4) Pay Attention When People Start Avoiding You
If you start to put these principles into practice you will start to develop an intuitive sense of what is normal in the organisation. People are often quite predictable, following regular routines and habits. When something is wrong you are likely to pick it up, if you are aware of what is not happening - e.g. who is not chatting in the tea room when they would normally be, etc. Likewise, one needs to be aware of what people are not saying: while good news is easily shared, people are usually more reluctant to deliver bad news. The truth and importance of this is often very apparent
when supervising post-graduate students! "A good 360-Degree Leader always slows down enough to be looking, listening, and reading between the lines".

5) Tend to the People, and They Will Tend to the Business

Good leaders should focus first and foremost on their followers. "Leaders who tend only to business often end up losing the people and the business. But leaders who tend to the people usually build up the people - and the business".

In closing Maxwell notes that connecting with your followers is something that needs to be done in a way that suits your own "personality, working situation, and leadership style". He gives an example of a football coach who was featured on a television documentary that showed him, in the middle of a practice session, asking one of the players about his wife. The interviewer picked up on this and asked him why he asked the question. As it happened the player's wife had a serious illness and the coach was concerned for the family. He stated that "he cares about more than how his players catch the ball or tackle. He interacts with them as people first, then as football players". Maxwell subsequently met the coach and discovered that he worked hard at building personal relationships with his players. Much later, the coach was enticed out of retirement (after 14 years) to coach the St Louis Rams. Initial reports suggested that the players were not impressed with their new coach and thought he was rather out-of-touch and old fashioned. Two years later they won the Superbowl! "[H]e has found his own way of walking slowly through the halls that keeps him visible, available, and connected. And because of that, his players respect him and work hard for him because they know that he cares about them. A leader can hardly ask for more than that".

Some things to think about:

1) How easy do you find it to slow down and connect with people in informal, every-day situations? How could you improve in this area?
2) How much of an interest should one take in personal matters in the workplace? Where does this balance lie for you?

This week we come to the second of the principles for leading-down from John Maxwell's book "The 360-Degree Leader". In it he explores the issue of assuming the best of people (i.e. seeing them as a "10", on a scale from 1 to 10), which is another principle which he develops in a few of his books.

**Lead-Down Principle #2: See Everyone as a "10"**

He opens the chapter by asking you to think of your favourite teacher (anyone from preprimary through to university), someone who changed your life. He then asks what made that teacher different. This was probably not their knowledge or teaching ability, but their belief in you. Belittling students, or haranguing them is unlikely to inspire them to do their best. However, expressing your faith in them and their ability to succeed is likely to stretch them to perform to that level.

Maxwell then turns the attention to leaders, and asks a number of questions, probing whether the answer is the leader who sees you as a 2 or the leader who sees you as a 10.

- Who gets your best effort?
- Who do I enjoy working with?
- Who is the easiest for me to approach?
- Who wants the best for me?
- Who will I learn the most from?
"360-Degree Leaders get more out of their people because they think more of their people. They respect and value them, and as a result, their people want to follow them". Maxwell makes the point that this kind of treatment comes naturally to some leaders, particularly those with positive dispositions, but also notes that it is an approach that can be learned. He then provides a number of practical suggestions for developing or improving this skill.

1) See Them as Who They Can Become
He gives the example of a congressman who volunteered the services of another new congressman for a speaking engagement in 1949. The organisers of the event declined to host the new congressman, stating that they wanted someone really high-profile, and that they hoped to get the head coach from a local university football team. The new congressman who they turned down was John F. Kennedy! Maxwell makes the point that it is easy to overlook the potential of someone who may turn out to have a major impact on an organisation or even on society. Leaders need to be on the lookout for potential in their people, and when they detect it, they need to encourage it and develop it. This is difficult for insecure leaders who may be threatened by a potential high-flyer in their group, who may come to overshadow them in time. On the other hand, a secure leader appreciates that people will probably achieve their potential anyway, and standing in their way is likely to be highly counter-productive. Rather they should be a "discoverer and encourager... add value to them and get to be a positive part of the process of their emergence as leaders".

2) Let Them Borrow Your "Belief" in Them
Maxwell tells the story of a young leader who left his organisation to branch out on his own. The new venture got off to a slow start, and after three years he was thoroughly discouraged and ready to give up. He visited his old leader at the organisation where he has started out and shared his frustration and sense of failure. His former boss turned to him and said "if you've lost faith, borrow mine". This marked a turning point as, encouraged by his boss' belief in him, he returned to his workplace and persevered. It was a long, slow process, but in time his organisation became a great success. "When the people you lead don't believe in themselves, you can help them believe in themselves".

3) Catch Them Doing Something Right
Many bosses are always on the lookout for their people failing or erring, ready to leap in with correction or even a rebuke. If one is to release the potential in people one needs to look out for the times that they do something right and encourage them, positively reinforcing the preferred behaviour. Latching onto people's weaknesses and failings usually just makes them defensive, which provides little foundation for growth and development. Maxwell notes that one can start with small things, praising any task that is well done, as long as the encouragement is sincere.

4) Believe the Best - Give Others the Benefit of the Doubt
We usually give ourselves far more leeway than others, largely because we can judge ourselves by our intentions, but tend to judge others by their actions. Maxwell suggests that one should try to judge others on the same basis as we judge ourselves! The common objection to this is that people will then take advantage of the trust being expressed in this way. However, research conducted by the sociologist, Morton Hunt, suggests that this is not the case. He presents a number of fallacies and the contradicting evidence:

Fallacy: Trustful people are more gullible.
Fact: Trustful people are no more likely to be fooled than mistrustful ones.

Fallacy: Trustful people are less perceptive that mistrustful people of what others are really feeling.
Fact: People who scored high on trust are actually better than others at reading people.

Fallacy: people with a poor opinion of themselves are more trustful than people with a good opinion of themselves.
Fact: People with high self-esteem are more willing to take emotional risks.

Maxwell notes that one should not be naive, but that giving others the same benefit of the doubt that you would want for yourself is likely to be worth the risks it might entail.

5) Realise That "10" Has Many Definitions
We've used the concept of rating people as a "10" throughout this chapter without being specific, and it has probably produced a mental image of what "10" means for you. What is your mental picture of someone who is a "10"? How do the people who work for and with you rate on your scale? Maxwell notes that most people "have a pretty narrow view of what constitutes a 10". He believes that most people cannot improve skills by more than about two points on a 1-10 scale. For example, if your programming ability rates at 4, even massive effort is unlikely to take it above 6. However, everyone has some area in which they can excel and achieve a 10. He then quotes Marcus Buckingham (who gave the "Strengths" talk on DVD at the Bosberaad last year). In their book "Now, Discover Your Strengths", Buckingham and Donald Clifton list 34 areas of potential strength and state that anyone has at least one skill that they can develop to be better at than most other people. Besides skills, one can also focus on attitudes and other non-skill areas, in which it is possible to develop far beyond one's current level.

6) Give Them the "10" Treatment
Most leaders will tend to treat people at their level of performance: an average, level-5 worker will get average treatment from their boss. However, Maxwell suggests treating people according to their potential rather than their current performance. While this is far more likely to inspire increased performance, his primary reason is that "every person has value as a human being and deserves to be treated with respect and dignity". Expecting the best of people usually produces results, especially when there is a positive relationship of trust and respect.

Maxwell closes with a personal story of a visit to his parents in 2004. He needed to make a work conference call and his father offered him the privacy of his study for the call. As he sat down at the desk he noticed a small, hand-written card next to the phone on which was written

#1 Build people up by encouragement
#2 Give people credit by acknowledgment
#3 Give people recognition by gratitude

Maxwell realised immediately that this was his father's reminder of how to treat the people who he spoke to on the phone. "I was instantly reminded that Dad, more than anyone else, taught me to see everyone as a 10".

A closing quote:

Begin today to see and lead people as they can be, not as they are, and you will be amazed how they respond to you. Not only will your relationship with them improve and their productivity increase, but you also will help them rise to their potential and become who they were created to be.

Some things to think about:
1) Who was your favourite teacher? Why?
2) How easy do you find it to see the best in others? Can any of the tips above help you to improve in this area?

Before we get into this week's "Maxwell moment", I wanted to share the following short article from a newsletter from CCL (the Center for Creative Leadership). It touches directly on some of the issues underlying Maxwell's 360-Degree Leader concept.

Who Can Be a Leader?

At CCL, we define leader development as the expansion of a person's capacity to be effective in leadership roles and processes.

Leadership roles may be formal positions infused with authority to take action and make decisions (for example, a manager or an elected official) or they may be informal roles with little official authority (the team member who helps the group develop a better sense of its capabilities or the person who organizes the neighborhood to fight re-zoning efforts).

Rather than classifying people as "leaders" or "nonleaders," we believe that everyone can learn and grow. [http://www.ccl.org/leadership/enewsletter/2008/JUNtime.aspx]

Getting back to John Maxwell, the next principle for leading-down from his book "The 360-Degree Leader" considers the importance of developing those who you are leading.

**Lead-Down Principle #3: Develop Each Team Member as a Person**

Maxwell starts this chapter by discussing the way in which a lot of conventional wisdom suggests an organisation should be managed to be improved. Jack Welch of General Electric was one of the main proponents of firing the bottom 10% of the people in an organisation. At the other end of the scale, many organisations aggressively head-hunt and poach top performers from other organisations (particularly competitors). Both of these strategies, individually or in combination, seem to make some sense for organisational improvement. However, Maxwell believes that there is a growing realisation that these approaches may be flawed. He quotes from an article "USA Today", which stated that "employers are coming around to the realization that failure and success might not lie among the weakest and strongest links, but in the solid middle, the B players... the 75% of workers who have been all but ignored". Maxwell goes a step further and states that not only should employers value the solid "backbone" of the organisation but should do their best to help them (and thus the organisation) rise to their best. This kind of employee development is a characteristic of the best leaders.

Maxwell makes an important distinction between development and equipping. The latter is a process of training, or imparting skills. It is relatively simple: if someone needs to know how to do something, you show them. This is essential for organisational success, and should be done as a matter of course. On the other hand, development is a focus on helping someone to grow as an individual, developing "personal qualities" that will benefit them beyond the boundaries of the organisation for which they work. "When you help someone to cultivate discipline or a positive attitude... to manage their time more effectively or improve their people skills, that's development". In Maxwell's experience many organisations leave this kind of growth up to the individual, providing little, if any, support or assistance. "Development is harder to do than equipping, but it is well worth the price".

As usual, he then gives a number of practical ideas for developing others.
1) See Development as a Long-Term Process
In contrast to equipping, development is a time-consuming process, largely because it involves personal growth and change in the life of the individual, rather than relatively simple skills-acquisition. It should be viewed as a process, not an event. Maxwell discusses some of his own techniques, which range from one-on-one development sessions to group development teaching sessions. Development activities might include reading relevant books and discussing them, formal times of teaching, attendance at conferences, etc., etc. (perhaps even inflicting regular staff development emails on your colleagues! ;-) ). In this, Maxwell notes that it is important to maintain your own personal growth: "you cannot give what you do not have".

2) Discover Each Person's Dreams and Desires
Equipping is usually based on the needs of the organisation: what skills does an employee need in order to do their job effectively? Development, on the other hand, requires a focus on the needs of the employee: how can an employee become a more effective individual? In order to do this well, you need to know what motivates a person (i.e. their dreams and desires), otherwise any effort aimed at development is likely to be very hard work, if not completely fruitless. People's dreams and desires are a very powerful source of motivation for personal change and growth. If you can harness those dreams and desires, you can probably bring about significant development with relatively little effort. Maxwell notes that some leaders don't want to do this because of their own lack of achievement of their own dreams - they hate to see others reaching their goals in life, while they remain relatively stagnant. Pursuing your own dreams is the best antidote to this problem. "When a leader is learning, growing, and pursuing his own dreams, he is more likely to help others pursue their own".

3) Lead Everyone Differently
This is another issue that has come up in past StaffDev sessions. People do not all respond in the same way to the same stimuli. While consistency, respect and fairness are essential in the workplace, the approach to development needs to be tailored to suit the individual. "One person will respond well to being challenged; another will want to be nurtured". Some may like detailed direction, while others may prefer to be given a broad goal and then be left to work it out for themselves. Some need close monitoring, while others might resent this. The methods of development must be suited to the unique needs of the employees, not the style or needs of the leader.

4) Use Organizational Goals for Individual Development
Trying to develop people in ways that are divorced from the activities of the organisation will be very hard work. It will be far more effective to find ways that align organisational goals with individual developmental goals. An often cited example of this in the University context is with the pressure to undertake research for a person who sees their primary role as a teacher. The solution here is to encourage them to perform research in the educational aspects of their subjects. Maxwell notes that this kind of approach provides wins for both the individual and the organisation. He suggests that three things should be aligned:

- a goal: some need in the organisation
- a strength: some characteristic of an employee that can be used to help achieve the goal
- an opportunity: giving the individual the resources needed to reach the goal

5) Help Them Know Themselves
Many people underestimate the potential. As a leader one needs to be aware of this and encourage people to step out into new areas that will help them to develop their latent potential. "Leaders help them recognize their strengths and weaknesses. This is critical if we want to help others".
6) Be Ready to Have a Hard Conversation
Personal growth is not easy, and sometimes a leader will need to challenge an individual in order to spur development. Maxwell gives an example of an ex-army officer who was employed in a large company. Despite his considerable skills, good attitude and experience he was repeatedly passed up for promotion. The reason for this was some very odd personal habits (he hummed when under stress and would sit on his hands when feeling pressured!). He was not aware of these habits, or at least of the impression they left on his co-workers, and no one had the courage to confront him about his odd behaviours. Eventually, he ended up in a department where his leader was prepared to confront these issues and help him to break the habits. Ultimately, he rose to a senior position in the company. Maxwell notes that a leader who is avoiding a difficult conversation should ask himself/herself: "Is it because it will hurt them or hurt me?". If the latter, the leader needs to move beyond the selfish desire to avoid a difficult issue and confront it for the ultimate good of the employee and the organisation. Motive is important here: "people will work through difficult things if they believe you want to work with them".

7) Celebrate the Right Wins
Setting an employee up for success in an area of development is a very useful way of encouraging growth, especially in the early stages of the development. This will provide "incentive and encouragement to go after the things that will help them improve" further. Maxwell notes that it is not just the win that is important. Sometimes an individual will succeed despite an imperfect execution of the task. Celebrating this type of win may reinforce the wrong behaviours. "Experience alone isn't a good enough teacher - evaluated experience is".

8) Prepare Them for Leadership
Maxwell notes that development should always include aspects of leadership development. In an organisation, this will ensure a pipeline of future leaders at all levels in the organisation, which is critical for the long-term health of the organisation. Maxwell notes that this has to combine both theoretical and practical learning. He suggests a five-step process:

a) I do it: the leader must be capable themself in the area in which they intend to develop a follower.
b) I do it and you watch: initially the employee should simply observe. The leader should explain and encourage a deep exploration of the reasons and methods for the approach taken.
c) You do it and I watch: now the employee starts to get their hands dirty. The role of the leader is to provide encouragement and direction.
d) You do it: once the employee is reasonably ready the leader should step back and allow them to master the exercise without interference.
e) You do it and someone else watches: ultimately the employee should start to develop others (and teaching something is one of the best ways of cementing one's own learning).

In closing Maxwell notes that a commitment to the personal development of one's followers will result in strong relationships and high levels of trust. However, he also notes that one shouldn't expect well-developed followers to stay with the organisation necessarily. It may be best for them to "spread their wings and fly". While this may seem counter-productive, if the organisation has a healthy pipeline of leaders in development it will thrive as new leaders step up to the challenges.

Some things to think about:
1) How could organisational goals be harnessed to help you or someone whose development you are responsible for to grow? What steps can you take to bring about the alignment of goal, strength and opportunity?
2) Is there a "hard conversation" you need to have? What is holding you back?

The next of John Maxwell's principles for leading-down from his book "The 360-Degree Leader" covers some familiar territory for us: the issue of playing to your strengths. Maxwell has based quite a lot of this on the book by Marcus Buckingham (and Donald Clifton), "Now, Discover Your Strengths".

**Lead-Down Principle #4: Place People in Their Strength Zones**

Maxwell opens the chapter by citing some of the statistics that Buckingham and Clifton found during the Gallup research project that led to their strengths-based "revolution". These included finding that people who worked to their strengths were highly likely to work in units with lower staff turnover, higher productivity units, and more satisfied customers. On the downside, Gallup found that only 20% of people felt that they were working to their strengths.

Maxwell notes that this is a vitally important issue, as people who are working outside of their strengths will often not enjoy their work - they suffer from demoralisation and lower productivity and sometimes even burn out. Leaders need to take responsibility for helping their workers to get into their "sweet spots", as they are usually responsible for allocating work, etc. "Successful people find their own strength zones. Successful leaders find the strength zones of the people they lead".

In an earlier chapter, Maxwell commented on the link between home-life and work-life, noting how people who were unhappy at home were likely to be unhappy at work. Now he turns this around, and suggests that putting people into their strengths zones they will feel happier at work, which is likely to have a positive impact on the rest of their lives too.

He then turns to some concrete steps that leaders can take in order to help people find their strengths and work to them. He notes, "The ability to help people find their best place in their careers is an awesome power and a great responsibility".

1) Discover Their True Strengths

Many, probably most, people do not take time to reflect on their strengths, due to the busyness of daily life and the comfort of routine. As a leader you may need to actively encourage them to seek out their strengths and to actively reflect on their abilities and potential. There are many practical tools available to assist in this (not least, Buckingham and Clifton's books and the associated web sites with testing software, etc.). Maxwell also suggests using personality and aptitude tests to help, but cautions against a purely "mechanical" approach, noting the importance of personal observation by the leader.

2) Give Them the Right Job

Finding the best position for someone in an organisation can be incredibly liberating and good for the individual and the organisation. Maxwell tells the story of a leader who moved someone around in his organisation four times looking for the right spot for her. He was on the verge of letting her go, but felt that she had great potential, when he finally found the right spot and she soared in her career! This leader actually asks his employees annually, "If you could be doing anything, what would it be?" as a way of trying to assess their latent strengths and potential.

In this regard, Maxwell notes that placing people in their areas of strength usually takes time and effort, and that many leaders, with their natural bias towards action, may be tempted to put people in the most convenient or urgent positions to get on with the job. Considerable patience may be required to find the optimal position for an individual.
3) Identify the Skills They'll Need and Provide World-Class Training

Natural strengths and the right position are not enough to guarantee success. People need to be "equipped" (see last week's session) in order to have the necessary practical skills to do their jobs. Maxwell notes that great leaders will always be questioning how they can develop themselves and how they can develop their followers. "The first question determines your personal potential and ongoing capacity to lead. The second determines the potential of your team".

In one of his other books (The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork), Maxwell expounds on the "Law of the Niche", which states "All players have a place where they add the most value". In the light of this chapter, this means placing people in their areas of strength where they are best placed to make the maximum contribution to the goals of the organisation and most likely to find personal fulfilment in doing so. Maxwell feels very strongly about the role of the leader in directing this process, stating that "the success of a leader is determined more by putting people into their strength zones than by anything else". As an illustration, he tells about an experience he had when playing for his university basketball team. The coach frequently had the first team play against the second team during training sessions. One day he introduced a change: the second team players all played in their usual positions, but the first team players were all allocated to new positions. In very a very short time, the second team had reached the goal of first to 20 points. Maxwell's coach sat the teams down and told them, "Having the best players on the floor isn't enough. You have to have the best players in the right positions". Maxwell notes that this is true of all areas of life, not just basketball. "If you don't place people in their strength zones, you're making it almost impossible for them - and you - to win".

Some things to think about:
1) Would you agree that working in your strength zone is likely to produce more personal fulfilment, both at work and in the rest of your life?
2) "If you could be doing anything, what would it be?" Are you playing to your strengths? What would need to be changed to provide you with a better "fit"?

This week we come to the fifth principle for leading-down from John Maxwell's book "The 360-Degree Leader". In it he discusses the importance of setting a positive example for the people you lead.

**Lead-Down Principle #5: Model the Behaviour You Desire**

Maxwell starts the chapter by recalling the first time he read the book "Learning to Lead" by Fred Smith. One of the points that really struck him was Smith's idea of "incarnational leadership". Essentially, Smith stated that the results a leader gets are dependent on consistency in the leader's character and actions. Inconsistent values and actions lead to inconsistent results. Maxwell worked through this concept and then drew up three columns on a sheet of paper. The first was headed "What I Am", and here he wrote down the values he wished to embody as a leader. The second column was headed "What I Do", and here he listed the actions arising from the qualities in the first column. The final column was headed "Results", and showed the results of the values and actions stated in the first two columns. He lists the eight entries that he made in this table, for example: "Character driven; Do right; Credibility" was the first row. He notes that this is a valuable exercise because it forces one to focus on one's own qualities and actions rather than placing the blame for poor results on external factors.

This kind of consistency of values, actions and results is a powerful way to approach leadership. "Leaders set the tone and the pace for all the people working for them. Therefore, they need to be
what they want to see". Maxwell then explains how this works out in several different areas of a leader's influence.

1) Your Behaviour Determines the Culture
Maxwell notes that this principle is often most evident in sports teams and cites a number of (positive and negative) examples of American sports teams that demonstrated distinct characteristics that arose from the nature of the leader (usually the owner or the head coach). He notes that one will only experience a given value in an organisation if it is a value of the people who work there, starting with the leader.

2) Your Attitude Determines the Atmosphere
Maxwell contrasts the experience of working with a hopeless pessimist with that of working for an optimistic leader. The entire organisation usually displays the characteristics of the leader. "If [the leader's] attitude is good, the atmosphere is pleasant, and the environment is easy to work in. But if [the leader's] attitude is bad, the temperature is insufferable".

3) Your Values Determine the Decisions
He quotes Roy Disney (brother of Walt): "It's not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are", but takes this a step further noting that it is not just the decision-making that is simplified, but also process of sticking with the decision until the goal is reached (which may sometimes be a long and difficult process). He gives some negative examples of this principle. For example, if a leader is prone to taking short-cuts, the people in the organisation will usually aim for speed before quality.

4) Your Investment Determines the Return
We have already discussed the importance of equipping followers in a previous chapter, so Maxwell keeps this section short, simply noting "What's worse than training your people and losing them? Not training them and keeping them"!

5) Your Character Determines the Trust
The character of the leader will determine the amount of trust that his or her followers are prepared to put in them. If the leader displays good values and high levels of integrity then he or she will be trusted. Maxwell notes that trust is not earned through a position or a job-title, but through people's experience of working with you and particularly seeing how you handle difficult situations (when the pressure is on a person's true character will show through very quickly). He notes that the pass mark for character tests is 100%. "If people can't trust you all of the time, then they will consider you untrustworthy".

6) Your Work Ethic Determines the Productivity
Maxwell tells a joke about a hard-working, gruff Scottish foreman who expected his workers to follow his example. When they complained about the pressure and noted that "Rome wasn't built in a day", his response was "Aye, I know that. But I wasn't the foreman on that job"! If the leader is slack, coming to work late, leaving early, obviously taking it easy on the job, then his followers will tend to follow his example. Conversely, a hard-working boss tends to set the pace for the organisation, spurring others on to match his or her productivity.

7) Your Growth Determines the Potential
This is an issue that Maxwell covers in the "Law of the Lid" in "The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership". Essentially, this law states that the level of leadership determines the effectiveness of the leader and of the organisation. "Leadership is the glass ceiling of ... achievement". The reason for this is that it is very difficult for a team to grow faster than (or to exceed) the capabilities of the leader. "You can't give people what you do not have. If you want to increase the potential of your
team, you need to keep growing”. Again, personal growth and development is another favourite topic of Maxwell's and much of his writing is focused on this aspect.

A closing quote:

Followers become like their leaders. They are influenced by their leaders' values. They adopt their working methods. They even emulate many of their quirks and habits... If you don't like what your people are doing, first take a look at yourself.

Some things to think about:
1) Draw up a list with three columns headed "What I Am", "What I Do" and "Results" like Maxwell did and fill in the rows for yourself. If you are not seeing the results you want (listed in the third column) how can you focus on the corresponding qualities and actions in order to bring about the results?
2) Can you think of a really positive, optimistic leader (or perhaps a really pessimistic one) you have encountered? How marked was the leader's impact on the organisational atmosphere?

Continuing with the principles for leading-down from John Maxwell's book "The 360-Degree Leader", we come to the penultimate one this week, which looks at how middle-leaders should help transfer the overall leader's vision for the organisation.

**Lead-Down Principle #6: Transfer the Vision**

Maxwell notes that getting the focus on vision right in an organisation is a little like pulling the trigger after extensive preparation (in this context, that means taking care of the sorts of issues already discussed in previous chapters), and firing the organisation at the target. He notes that the leader at the top of an organisation will often be able to formulate his or her own vision and set that before the people. However, middle-leaders are faced with the more difficult situation of needing to communicate the organisation's vision to the people who they lead (i.e. transferring the vision downward). Thus, the middle-leaders are critical in the process of getting the organisation to adopt the vision. "Though [middle-leaders] may not always be the inventors of the vision, they are almost always its interpreters".

As usual, Maxwell gives a number of practical steps that can help in this process of vision transfer.

1) Clarity
Maxwell describes a an activity that his local baseball team would use to entertain the crowds during breaks in the game. The big screen at the ground would display the photo of one of the members of the team, revealing it slowly block by block. Maxwell noted that you could tell when people "got it" from listening to the noise level in the stadium: some people would get it early and there would be a bit of a buzz, followed by a rapid escalation in the volume as more and more people started to recognise the player. He notes that people latch onto unclear vision in the same sort of way: for some, it is a quick and simple process, but the majority take longer (and some may take a very long time). "If the vision isn't clear, the people aren't clear... You have to put all the pieces together for them to help them "get" it". He suggests that one focuses on two key aspects of the vision: what they need to know, and then what they need to do.

2) Connection of Past, Present and Future
The natural temptation when dealing with vision is to focus on the future. This is undoubtedly the most important aspect of vision, but a "leader who casts vision and neglects to tie in the past and
present is really missing an opportunity". Maxwell notes that connecting the "preferred future" that vision represents to the organisation's history allows one to use the past as a springboard for the future. It expresses appreciation for those who have brought the organisation to its current position, and allows newcomers to realise that they are a part of something that has a track-record and momentum. "When people are able to touch the past, they will be more inclined to reach for the future. Anytime you can show that the past, present, and future are unified, you bring power and continuity to your vision casting".

3) Purpose
Vision answer "what" and "where" questions, but purpose provides the answer to the vitally important "why" question for the people in an organisation. A great vision is all well and good, but getting people to adopt the vision if they do not see a greater purpose in what they are doing is difficult at best. A sense of purpose will enable people to hold onto the vision through difficulties.

4) Goals
An organisation's vision can be quite abstract, and needs to be implemented in terms of specific, measurable and reachable goals. "Hope is not a strategy. When you give people a process, they realize that the vision is realistic. And that increases their confidence in your and the vision".

5) A Challenge
Any vision of any value is going to be challenging, forcing people to stretch themselves and the organisation to attain it. This may seem a little dangerous, but challenging good people will encourage commitment and dedication.

6) Stories
Story-telling humanises a vision, making it "relational and warm". Talk about past struggles and victories, celebrate the achievements of the people who have brought the organisation to where it is today. The main benefit of this is to help people who may be wondering what they contribute and whether their efforts will make a difference.

7) Passion
Without passion, getting people to adopt a vision will be close to impossible. It will be seen as a nice idea, but will not incite a fierce dedication to work hard and overcome the inevitable obstacles to achieve the vision. As a leader one must be passionate oneself as the only way to spread passion is through contagion. I spent most of this week visiting a number of IT companies with a group of students, many of whom were looking for possible employment. Without exception, it was the companies where the people demonstrated high levels of passion about their work that received the most favourable responses from the students. People want to be involved in something that arouses passion.

In closing, Maxwell notes that getting people to "own" a vision is critical to its success. In turn, middle-leaders are critical in spurring a sense of ownership by the people in an organisation. Maxwell refers to the analogy of steering a ship, and the often cited fact that large ships take a long time to turn. However, he suggests that while a large organisation may be like a large ship in many ways, in others it is more like a flotilla of small nimble ships. "If every leader in the middle of the organization is a 360-Degree Leader who excels at transferring the vision to the crew in their area, then even a huge organization would be able to turn very quickly. It is not the size of the organization that matters; it is the size of the leaders within it".

Some things to think about:
1) Can you think of an example of a vision that has been accompanied by great passion?
What was the effect of this on attaining the vision?
2) Would you agree with the characterisation of large organisations as a collection of smaller organisations, and that good middle-leadership can help in bringing about rapid change in the overall organisation? What is the role of middle-leadership in this scenario?

This week brings us to the last of John Maxwell's seven principles for leading-down from his book "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization". In this chapter he considers the important issue of rewarding people for a job well done. I must confess that I found this a difficult chapter to summarise, primarily because the reward systems within the University often fly in the face of the advice that he provides in this chapter, which is more oriented towards business-like organisations (or at least those with performance-based remuneration systems). The summary that follows is based directly on the book: your mileage may vary as they say in the classics!

This chapter also touches on several points that were made when we looked at "How Full Is Your Bucket?" by Tom Rath and Donald Clifton in the StaffDev series starting in February 2005.

**Lead-Down Principle #7: Reward for Results**

Maxwell opens the chapter with a joke. A man is out fishing in his boat and having a wonderful, relaxing time on the lake, in the fresh air, when he spots a snake in the water with a frog in its mouth. In his good mood, he feels sorry for the frog, so he nets the snake and rescues the frog, throwing it back into the lake. Now, feeling sorry for the snake, whose meal he has just ruined, he breaks off a piece of the chocolate bar he has with him, and gives it to the snake before returning it to the lake. Feeling very proud of himself and the good deed he has done for the frog, and the fair way in which he treated the snake, he returns to his fishing: "The frog is happy, the snake is happy, and now I'm happy again. This is great". A few minutes later, he hears a bump against the side of the boat. When he looks over the side, the snake is back, but now with two frogs in its mouth! "The moral of the story is this: Be careful what you reward, because whatever gets rewarded gets done".

Maxwell notes that this is true in both positive and negative situations (i.e. rewarding unproductive activity will not boost productivity). "Whatever actions leaders reward will be repeated. That's why it's very important to reward results". Rewarding people for a job well done encourages positive behaviour, and provides workers with motivation and a sense of fulfilment. As usual, he has a number of practical guidelines that leaders can make use of in many situations.

1) Give Praise Publicly and Privately

Praise costs nothing and can be a very powerful form of reward. "You cannot praise too much". Public praise is important, particularly if the people witnessing the praise are important in the context. However, Maxwell suggests that one should start with private praise. This forms a foundation of integrity, where the recipient will appreciate that the public praise is sincere. It also builds on the natural tendency of most people to wish that someone could witness the praise received in private — when they do receive the public praise, "it fulfils the longing they had for others to hear it".

2) Give More Than Just Praise

While praise is important, most people appreciate more tangible forms of reward, and specifically monetary rewards. Maxwell makes the point that "the people who cost the organization the most aren't the ones who get paid the most. The ones that cost the most are the people whose work doesn't rise the level of their pay". Hard work that goes unrewarded can result in discouragement, and can make leadership very difficult. Maxwell tells the story of a leader who moved across the
country to lead a struggling division within a large organisation. Within nine months, he had improved the performance of the division by 100%. At this stage, annual performance reviews came around and he met with his manager. His outstanding performance and that of the people in his section were totally ignored and he was informed that they would all be getting the standard 5% increase that was being applied across the company. To add insult to injury he was informed that he would only get a prorata increase of 3.75% as he had not been with the company for a full year! You can imagine how motivated he must have felt.

3) Don't Reward Everyone the Same
In this context, Maxwell asks whether it is fair to reward two people equally when their productivity levels differ significantly? Should the free-loader on a team be paid the same as the hard-working individual who is making up for their lack of effort? His answer is an emphatic "No". This poses a slight dilemma, as one does not want to discourage those who are struggling in an organisation. Maxwell's solution is to "praise effort, but reward only results". In other words, encourage and praise the efforts of the less-productive members of the organisation, but save the financial rewards for those who are actually producing the results. This helps to motivate the less-productive towards becoming productive.

4) Give Perks Beyond Pay
Some organisations (such as universities) may make financial rewards for high performance difficult, and even in other organisations middle-leaders may have limited ability to influence remuneration and reward structures for those they lead. In such cases, one can try to use other forms of reward. For example, a leader might give up a prestigious reserved parking spot for a high-achieving employee. In general, any perks that the leader receives might be passed on to deserving members of the team. Maxwell also suggests sharing relationships by introducing high-achievers to members of the leader's network who may be able to help them advance in their careers. He also suggests including family members in the rewards, where appropriate, as they are often heavily impacted by the effort put in by high-achieving employees. He tells the story of a middle-leader who was faced with a critical problem one December. He personally managed the crisis, spending over 100 hours at work, eating all his meals at work and not seeing his children at all (during the lead up to Christmas). The crisis situation was finally dealt with on a Sunday. When the leader arrived at work on the Monday morning, to his surprise his five-year-old son was waiting for him at work. His boss had recognised the sacrifice that the man had made, and particularly how much he had missed seeing his son for the previous week. He commented, "Bonuses are wonderful. Gifts are great. But that moment, appreciating my sacrifice to my family, meant more than anything!".

5) Promote When Possible
One of the most effective forms of reward is a promotion, and Maxwell advises that organisations should make use of vacant positions to reward deserving employees before hiring new people from outside the organisation. In particular, "the best promotions are the ones that don't need to be explained because everyone who works with the ones being promoted have seen them grow into their new jobs".

6) Remember That You Get What You Pay For
Maxwell tells a story about a meeting of organisational leaders from the area in which he is based. This was a very productive meeting at which the leaders shared their experiences, struggles, etc. with each other. Present at the meeting was a new, up-and-coming leader. At one point in the discussion the subject of staff costs came up. The younger leader grew rather quiet and changed the subject when it was his turn to contribute to the discussion. When Maxwell spoke to him later, he said that he had realised that his organisation was under-paying its employees. He returned to the organisation and met with the board to negotiate new remuneration levels. He now states that his
organisation has the "best team it's ever had, and it is worth every penny. He doesn't ever want to lose a valuable team member because of pay". In Maxwell's view, "you get what you pay for".

In closing, Maxwell uses an analogy of an old-fashioned balance for weighing items. To get the balance level you need to have the same weight in both pans. He states that there is a similar balance between rewards and results, and that the balance tends to swing from side to side over time. An organisation's leaders will usually focus on results, as this is of primary importance to the mission of the organisation. A leader can try to force people to produce more, which may produce the desired results. However, Maxwell suggests that a better strategy is load up the rewards, and wait for the balance to swing back as better motivated employees willingly contribute more effort. "360-Degree Leaders... focus on what they can give, not what they can get. By giving more, they get more - and so do their people".

Some things to think about:
1) How much of this chapter does apply in a university context? Is it appropriate for a university to use business-like performance-based remuneration practices?
2) Do you think it is fair to reward two people equally when their productivity levels differ significantly? Why?

We now get to the sixth and final section of John Maxwell's book "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization". In this section he provides some encouragement for 360-Degree Leaders who may be battling with failure, or struggling to make an impact in any of the three "directions" of leadership covered by the book. Maxwell notes the critical importance of leadership at all levels within an organisation and provides a reminder that the "better 360-Degree Leader you become, the greater impact you will be able to make. He provides encouragement for struggling leaders by providing motivation in the form of several facets of the value that strong leadership can provide for an organisation. The first of these aspects is in team-building.

Value #1: A Leadership Team Is More Effective Than Just One Leader

Maxwell opens this chapter by observing that no one person is able to do it all, or to know it all. All of us have areas of weakness and blind-spots. Building a strong team is the obvious solution to addressing this issue. "A group of leaders working together is always more effective than one leader working alone". Furthermore, this needs to to be the case at all levels in an organisation. In order to help middle-leaders add value to their organisations by building strong teams Maxwell provides a number of helpful ideas.

1) Visionary Leaders Are Willing to Hire People Better Than Themselves
Maxwell tells the story of a leader who was once asked if he would hire someone with great potential to build the organisation at a higher salary than his own. The leader pondered this for some time, wrestling with the issues inherent in the question. When he finally came to a point where he could answer it (positively), he found that it had "changed the way he viewed his team and himself". The focus of a 360-Degree Leader should always be on attaining the vision of the organisation, not on their own status or ambition.

2) Wise Leaders Shape Their People into a Team
Nothing of any significance is ever achieved solely by an individual on their own (even famous solo explorers, sports stars, etc. have backing teams, coaches, etc. to assist them in their preparation, if nothing else). Again, the mindset of a 360-Degree Leader is on building a strong team, not simply having "labourers" to perform mundane tasks. "They look for the best people they can find so that
the team is the best it can be”.

3) Secure Leaders Empower Their Teams
Maxwell quotes Wayne Schmidt on the key principle that underlies true empowerment: "No amount of personal competency compensates for personal insecurity". Strong leaders are secure enough to empower their teams and then let them get the praise for their success.

4) Experienced Leaders Listen to Their Teams
Maxwell quotes General Tommy Franks here, which reminded me of comments that Colin Powell made in an interview on his leadership principles. Both of these outstanding military leaders believe in listening to their people. In Franks’ words, "Generals are not infallible... [Lower-ranking officers], the company commanders and the platoon leaders - all of them know more about their unit strengths and weaknesses than the general who leads them. So a successful general must listen more than he talks". Colin Powell develops this further, stressing the importance of drawing different, possibly conflicting opinions from subordinates in order to have the full picture available when making decisions. These principles apply in all organisations, not just the military. Good leaders will always listen to the people who are at the coal-face of the organisation. Maxwell suggests that listening is even more important if people are not following. Trying to be more forceful, or throwing your weight around in such situations is only likely to be counterproductive and further undermine your leadership. Genuine listening to is likely to produce much better results.

5) Productive Leaders Understand That One Is Too Small a Number to Achieve Greatness
Maxwell notes a trend in leadership thinking over recent decades. The 1980s had a strong focus on "management": producing consistency in organisations. In the 1990s the focus shifted to individual leadership: "celebrity" leaders, such as Jack Welch rose to prominence, and there was a strong focus on top leaders. In the 2000s the emphasis has shifted (quite strongly, in my opinion) to "team leadership": the complexities of leading in the turbulent and fluid conditions of the 21st century require strong teams, not charismatic individuals. This theme comes through in much of the focus on servant leadership and in the thinking of people like Jim Collins and Bill George.

A closing quote from Maxwell:

*You can't do just one thing well and be a good leader. You can't even lead in just one direction - you need the skills to lead up, across and down! A leadership team will always be more effective than just one leader. And a team of 360-Degree Leaders will be more effective than other kinds of leadership teams.*

Some things to think about:
1) Would you be prepared to hire someone at a higher salary than your own? [Consider it carefully!] Why?
2) Do you agree with Maxwell's analysis of the trends in leadership from "management" to "individual leadership" to "team leadership"? What supports or refutes the view that the current emphasis is on team leadership?

Carrying on with the final section of John Maxwell's book "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization", we get to the second of the categories in which leaders add value to their organisations.

**Value #2: Leaders Are Needed at Every Level of the Organisation**

He opens with an illustration from the sporting world. In 2004 he had been speaking on leadership
to the NFL (American "football" league) and had discussed his "Law of the Edge", which states that "The difference between two equally talented teams is leadership". After the talk, he spoke with one of the NFL leaders who agreed completely, noting that the teams in the NFL are actually very evenly matched in terms of talent and that the distinguishing factor between successful and unsuccessful teams is all down to leadership, "from the owner, the head coach, the assistants, and right on down to the players".

One of Maxwell's most strongly held beliefs is that "Everything rises and falls on leadership". To people who disagree with him, he suggests the experiment of putting together a group of individuals with no leader and observing the group dynamics. In his experience, the group will be directionless, and one will observe a number of consequences, which he spells out in this chapter.

1) Without a Leader, Vision Is Lost
One of Bill Hybels' leadership maxims is "Vision leaks". Any group needs a leader to keep the vision fresh in people's minds. Maxwell notes that the converse is not true: a group with a leader, but no vision will usually do OK, because it will develop a vision. Leaders are by nature visionary, and will forge a vision for themselves and the group they lead.

2) Without a Leader, Decisions are Delayed
Maxwell tells a story about Ronald Reagan as a young boy. His aunt took him to a shoe-maker to have a pair of custom shoes made for him. The cobbler asked whether he wanted a square-toe or round-toe shoe, but Reagan couldn't decide. The cobbler suggested he think about and come back in a few days time. Reagan couldn't decide, and didn't go back, but the cobbler met him on the street one day and asked him what his decision was. When young Reagan admitted that he still didn't know, the cobbler replied that it was OK and that he could collect the shoes the next day. Well, when he picked up his shoes one had a square-toe and the other round! Reagan learned a valuable lesson that day: "If you don't make your own decisions, somebody else makes them for you"! A characteristic of good leaders is that they are decision makers (but, again, the converse is not necessarily true).

3) Without a Leader, Agendas Are Multiplied
If a group of people come together without a leader, the individuals in the group will start to go in their own directions. I saw a remarkably illustration of this once when a few people from my church went to a conference in East London. In our group was a young woman (I'll call her Jayne), still at school at the time. At the conference were a fairly large group of youngsters (most of them a little older than Jayne) from the East London church that was hosting the conference. I was standing nearby when this group was trying to decide what to do that Friday evening. Suggestions of various movies, coffee shops, ten-pin bowling were being bandied around, when young Jayne, the stranger in the group, quietly made an alternative suggestion, that they attend the optional evening session of the conference. I have never forgotten the result: the whole group arrived at the conference that evening. It was a very good illustration of real leadership in action from someone who had no positional authority, was younger than the people she was leading and didn't even know them particularly well, having only met them that day. Needless to say, she is now a very successful young woman developing an impressive career in a multinational company.

4) Without a Leader, Conflicts Are Extended
Helping to resolve conflicts is an important part of a leader's role. Without action conflicts will be prolonged and highly counter-productive in an organisation. A leader is usually needed to bring the conflicting parties together and help them to resolve their differences.

5) Without a Leader, Morale Is Low
Maxwell quotes Napoleon on this topic: "Leaders are dealers in hope". Without leadership there
can be a loss of hope and reduction in morale. Maxwell suggests that morale can be defined as "faith in the leader at the top".

6) Without a Leader, Production Is Reduced
Maxwell tells a story about Charles Schwab, a very successful US businessman, who was running U.S. Steel at the time. He had a particular unit that was noticeably lower-performing than any of the other units in the company. He tried to diagnose the problem, but there was no obvious difference between this unit and the others. Schwab very simply and quite subtly instituted a challenge between the day shift and the night shift, and soon this unit had moved from the position of least productive to the most productive of its peers. Maxwell observes that "Leaders are creative in finding ways to help others become productive". In some cases, like the example of the steel mill, this may be through challenging people. In other cases it may require resources, training, encouragement or providing incentives. People and teams are motivated by different things in different circumstances, and it takes a leader to provide the right motivation in any given situation.

7) Without a Leader, Success Is Difficult
Maxwell refers here to the experience of Jim Collins when he was doing the research on great companies that led to him writing the book "Good to Great" (highly recommended reading, by the way). Collins explicitly instructed his research team to discount leadership in their investigation of what made companies "great". He felt that there was a simplistic tendency to credit the leader of an organisation for its success (or to blame the leader for failure). However, his research team kept insisting that leadership was a significant factor. In Collins' words: "Finally - as should always be the case - the data won". Collins ended up admitting that what he termed "Level Five" leadership was a critical factor in the success of organisations. (However, this model of leadership, which combines "strong will and great humility", is perhaps not the style of leadership that many would associate with successful leaders, but that's a topic for another day).

Some things to think about:
1) Do you have any experience of a group that has had no leader? Would you agree with the consequences that Maxwell outlines in this chapter?
2) If "vision leaks", how can a leader maintain it?

This week, we get to the third of the areas in which leaders can add value to their organisations from the final section of John Maxwell's book "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization".

**Value #3: Leading Successfully at One Level Is a Qualifier for Leading at the Next Level**

Maxwell opens the chapter by noting that the best indicator for selecting a person for a new position is to look carefully at how they are leading in their current position. The implication for the individual is that they need to focus on doing their current job well, rather than looking for the promotion. As usual, Maxwell gives a number of practical guidelines for going about this.

1) Leadership Is a Journey That Starts Where You Are, Not Where You Want to Be "To know how to get where you want to go, you need to know where you are. To get where you want to go, you need to focus on what you're doing now". In other words, you need to focus on your current responsibilities, not ones that you may get in the future.

2) Leadership Skills Are the Same, but the "League of Play" Changes
While the fundamental skills of leadership are the same at all levels, the quality of each skill needed increases as one rises through an organisation. Maxwell notes this is particularly obvious in the field of sports: Many people enjoy recreational sports; some of them may make into a school team; a few of those may be good enough to move on into a university team; ultimately, very few will make it into the professional sports arena. The key to moving on is not in the basic skills of the particular sport, but in the quality of the skill. A similar principle applies to leadership. Maxwell makes the point that to move up to the next level it is necessary to develop your skills to the maximum at your current level.

3) Great Responsibilities Come Only After Handling Small Ones Well
As a well-known author, Maxwell is often asked for advice by aspiring writers. His standard response is to ask what writing they are currently doing. Some people will tell him about the small articles that they currently write, and he will encourage them in this. However, many people will answer that they are not yet writing anything. His advice to this group is get started - "You've got to start small and work up to it". This applies equally well to leadership. For someone just starting out, a good initial goal would be to try to influence one other person. For someone a little further ahead, they might need to develop a team. He quotes St. Francis of Assisi: "Start doing what is necessary; then do what is possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible".

4) Leading at Your Current Level Creates Your Resume for Going to the Next Level
Past performance is the best predictor for future success. "If you want to get the chance to lead on another level, then your best chance for success is to lead well where you are now".

5) When You Can Lead Volunteers Well, You Can Lead Almost Anyone
Maxwell was once asked how one can pick the best leader from a group of leaders. While there are many practical skills that comprise leadership, Maxwell's answer was to suggest that the questioner look at those who were leading volunteer groups (or to test them by putting them in charge of a group of volunteers). In many ways, this is an acid test of true leadership ability, due to the lack of traditional leadership levers, such as financial incentives, or the ability to fire someone. "It takes every bit of leadership skill you have to get people who don't have to do anything to do what you ask". In the same way, Bill Hybels, an expert on leadership in churches, often states that leading a church is the purest form of leadership, because the majority of the "followers" are there voluntarily and cannot be led using techniques that may apply in business organisations. In business settings, Maxwell suggests encouraging people to get involved with charities or other volunteer organisations, and then to see how well they do in that context.

In closing, Maxwell quotes Donald McGannon, the CEO of a large corporation: "Leadership is action, not position". Working hard and well where you are currently is the best way to get noticed and to get ahead.

Some things to think about:
1) How well are you fulfilling your current responsibilities? Is there something you could be doing better in order to develop your leadership abilities?
2) Would you agree that leading volunteers is a good test of true leadership ability? Why?

The fourth aspect of the way in which middle-leaders contribute value to their organisations is in terms of the entire leadership development process (taken from "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization" by John Maxwell).
Value #4: Good Leaders in the Middle Make Better Leaders at the Top

Maxwell opens this chapter with some observations that he made during his trips to do leadership training in third-world countries. In his experience, good leadership is considerably more rare in developing nations than in "industrialized and free-market nations". Leadership in developing states is often focused on position and power is concentrated strongly in the hands of the people at the top. While he notes that is a generalisation, and there are exceptions, it is a fairly common situation in the third-world. However, this is not a productive approach to leadership, as keeping middle-leaders down minimises the effectiveness of the leader at the top. The overall result is that the quality of leadership in general is not good. Maxwell also notes that this is not a problem that is unique to third-world nations, but that it also affects organisations where the top leaders hold tightly to power and rely on positional authority. He also admits that this was his approach in the first leadership position that he held, and that the organisation suffered badly because of his poor leadership at that time, particularly after he left, leaving something of a leadership vacuum behind himself. Rather he notes, "good leaders anywhere in an organization make better leaders at the top - and make for a much better organization overall".

He then details several practical benefits of building strong middle-leadership in an organisation.

1) Every Time You Add a Good Leader, You Get a Better Team
   Once again, this is a principle that is often most noticeable in sports teams: appointing a good coach will often cause the same set of players to perform considerably better. This comes about from the leader's ability to provide direction, inspiration, an atmosphere conducive to good teamwork and a focus on results. This principle applies equally to other teams: appointing a strong leader to a sales team will bring about improved sales; employing a good restaurant manager will cause the restaurant to function more effectively, etc. Maxwell notes that in organisations of any reasonable size it is easy to locate the good leaders: simply look for the effective teams - "That is where the good leaders are".

2) Every Time You Add a Good Leader, All the Leaders in the Organization Get Better
   Again Maxwell illustrates this with a sporting example. Apparently, in his debut as a professional golfer Tiger Woods was far ahead of any of the other top golfers in the world. Some commentators feared that he was so good that there would never be any decent competition when he was playing. That fear turned out to be unfounded, because after a while the rest of the pro golfers had upped their game. Maxwell ascribes this to the principle that "Strength brings out strength". Good leaders stretch and challenge the people in their teams, but also set an example and raise the bar for other leaders.

3) Good Leaders in the Middle Add Value to the Leaders Above Them
   Middle-leaders are critical in the overall functioning of an organisation. They allow the top leaders' effectiveness to be transferred throughout the organisation. Being closer to the coal face of the organisation they can better translate vision into practical action and can act as an information conduit to the top leaders. "As a result, the top leaders are able to do more than they would ever be able to do on their own".

4) Good Leaders in the Middle Release Top Leaders to Focus on Their Priorities
   This is partly related to the previous point. As leader rise up through the organisation their role changes. In particular, many of the tasks that they were previously responsible for must be handed over to others. If those others are ineffective, the leader will find him- or herself forced to micromanage or to continue doing those tasks. Either of those approaches is likely to be frustrating for the leader and counter-productive for the organisation. "When you perform with excellence in the middle, you free up your leaders to perform with excellence above you".
5) Good Leaders in the Middle Motivate Leaders Above Them to Continue Growing
Partly from the element of competition and partly from inspiration a leader faced with an up-and-coming leader below them will be spurred on to greater effort. The inspiration aspect of this arises from the joy of working in a team where everyone is giving of their best. That is as motivating for the top leader as for the other team members.

6) Good Leaders in the Middle Give the Organization a Future
In today rapidly-changing environment, new ideas and techniques are critical for success. This can best be provided by strong leadership at all levels in an organisation. This in turn provides for leadership succession as new leaders rise up through the ranks, demonstrating their ability and earning their place at the top. The other side of this coin is that leaders need to be intentional in developing the leaders below them. Maxwell expresses this principle rather pithily: "There is no success without a successor".

Some things to think about:
1) Do you agree that finding the most effective teams in an organisation is a good way of locating the best leaders? Why?
2) Is the competitive aspect referred to in point 5 above healthy? Why?

This week we come to the fifth and final aspect of the way in which middle-leaders contribute value to their organisations from John Maxwell's "The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization". It deals with the personal qualities or characteristics of good 360-Degree Leaders.

**Value #5: 360-Degree Leaders Possess Qualities Every Organisation Needs**

When he was starting to write this book, Maxwell was asked how a 360-Degree Leader differed from other leaders. He answered that they were able to lead in all three directions (up, across and down). The questioner then asked what made such leaders different. Maxwell thought about this for a while and then concluded that that "360-Degree Leaders have certain qualities that enable them to lead in every direction, and that is what makes them valuable to an organization". His friend then advised him to include this chapter in the book, so that these qualities would be explicitly spelled out. Maxwell notes that these are characteristics that organisations desire in all of their employees, but particularly those in positions of influence. The ten qualities are: adaptability, discernment, perspective, communication, security, servanthood, resourcefulness, maturity, endurance and "countability" (a word that will be defined a little later).

1) Adaptability: Quickly Adjusts to Change
Maxwell notes that middle-leaders are often forced to react to decisions made above them. This requires a high degree of adaptability, as they do not have the luxury of monitoring changing circumstances until they are comfortable with implementing new strategies, etc. He makes the observation that "All organizations contain early, middle and late adapters". Early adapters get on board with new directions quickly and easily. Middle adapters catch up fairly quickly, and late adapters struggle to accept change (and may even fight against it). Middle-leaders need to adapt quickly, and then help their followers to adapt. Maxwell notes that this may be difficult, and one may end up having implement changes even before one is completely comfortable with them. In such situations, it is critical that there is an atmosphere of trust with regard to the top leaders who have introduced the change.

2) Discernment: Understands the Real Issues
Maxwell tells the old joke about the president, the old priest, the young mountain climber, and the
world's smartest man who are on a small plane together when the engines fail, the pilot rushes back, tells them to jump and leaps out with his parachute, leaving only three remaining parachutes. The president claims one on the basis of national security and jumps. The world's smartest man claims that he is a vitally important resource for the world and jumps. The mountain climber and the priest are then left with a single parachute. The priest tells the young man to take it as he has already had a good, long life and is ready to face his Maker. The mountain climber points out that there isn't a problem - "The world's smartest man just jumped with my backpack"! In the same way, 360-Degree Leaders can discern the core of an issue through the surrounding circumstances. "They know what really matters".

3) Perspective: Sees Beyond Their Own Vantage Point
As we have noted before, middle-leaders are often in a good position to observe more than people at the very top or very bottom of an organisation. They often have a more complete picture of all the factors in place, since they can see both upwards and downwards.

4) Communication: Links to All Levels of the Organisation
Arising from the previous point, middle-leaders need to be able to share their unique perspective effectively. This requires communicating up, down and across. Maxwell gives a number of examples of important upward communication. One of these (ignored, unfortunately) was from the UN commander in Rwanda who tried to warn his leaders of the pressures building in that country and asked for permission to step in and take action. The consequences of his leaders' refusal was the violent death of almost one million people.

5) Security: Finds Identity in Self, Not Position
In a society that places a lot of emphasis on positions and titles, middle-leaders may be under-appreciated. Consequently, they need to be secure in themselves and the contribution that they are making to their organisation, rather than being concerned about other people's opinions. Maxwell advises focusing on your self-development, rather than your advancement or your status.

6) Servanthood: Does Whatever It Takes
"I believe the true measure of leaders is not the number of people who serve them but the number of people they serve". Servant-leadership is a huge topic in itself. One of the leading authorities in this field is Robert Greenleaf, who Maxwell quotes: "The servant-leader is a servant first... [Someone who strives] to make sure that the other people's highest priority needs are served". Maxwell notes that it is very easy to tell whether you are a genuine servant-leader: simply note your reaction when you serve others. If this is easy and causes no discomfort, you have the right motivation. If it is something you rebel against, you aren't a servant-leader.

7) Resourcefulness: Finds Creative Ways to Make Things Happen
Middle-leaders are often in a position where they do not control the resources needed to achieve their goals. Maxwell advises, "get used to doing more with less"!

8) Maturity: Puts the Team Before Self
Any selfish behaviour by a leader will undermine their influence (and thus their leadership). Leaders have to put the good of their people and the organisation before their own needs and desires. He gives a powerful example of a group of school headmasters in an area who recognised the need for a particular specialist in their schools. There was no funding for this specialist and so the group decided to forgo their own salary increases to fund the new post. "The team and the children they support were more important to them than personal gain. That's mature leadership!".

9) Endurance: Remains Consistent in Character and Competence over the Long Haul
Maxwell tells of a trip he made to Africa, and of watching cheetahs hunting. While cheetahs are the
fastest animals on the planet, they are sprinters and have to catch their prey very quickly before they tire. In contrast, he describes leadership as an endurance race: "To succeed, 360-Degree Leaders need to respond well to challenges and keep responding well".

10) Countability: Can Be Counted on When It Counts
Maxwell coined the term "countability" when he wrote his book "The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork". The definition of the word, and the expression of the Law of Countability is really expressed in the heading of this section: "Teammates must be able to count on each other when it counts". This goes further than an intellectual trust to an active interdependence. It also flies in the face of an often increasingly self-centred society.

Maxwell closes the chapter and the book with an extended discussion of a great example of a 360-Degree Leader: General George C. Marshall. Marshall's role in the Second World War is often overshadowed by the attention paid to figures such as Churchill and Roosevelt (admittedly, both great leaders themselves). Marshall had a distinguished career in the military and rose steadily through the ranks. He served in France during the First World War, as an aide to General Pershing and as head instructor at an infantry training school. A biography stated that he "rose through the ranks of the military with a record of achievement rarely equaled by any other".

He rose to real prominence during the Second World War, when he served as the chief of staff for the U.S. Army. Here he demonstrated his excellent middle-leadership skills, leading up to the President, across to the commanders of the other allied forces, and down to the officers he commanded directly. When he was appointed to this position, the U.S. armed forces were relatively small (less than 200,000 people) and were poorly equipped. As the War began in Europe, he recognised the need to ramp up their military strength. Four years later the U.S had a "well-trained and well-equipped force of 8,300,000". Churchill referred to him as "the organizer of victory". Roosevelt relied heavily on him and trusted him completely (at Roosevelt's insistence, he attended every allied conference to discuss the direction of the war effort).

Marshall worked tirelessly to coordinate the various allied forces, and also led across within the U.S. military. For example, he argued successfully against MacArthur's strategy of focusing purely on the war against Japan before assisting the British in Europe. There too, he successfully argued against the British plan to focus on the Mediterranean, and pushed for the invasion of France. "Marshall won everyone over, and for a year ... planned the invasion of Normandy". Later Churchill described him as "a statesman with a penetrating and commanding view of the whole scene".

Marshall was also a highly effective leader in the traditional sense of leading down, and was highly respected by those who followed him. Eisenhower called him "the greatest soldier of your time and a true leader of democracy" and said "In every problem and in every test I have faced during the war years, your example has been an inspiration and your support has been my greatest strength".

After the War, his influence continued to grow as he was appointed as Secretary of State. In this role, he came up with the plan to aid the reconstruction of Europe. When it was suggested that this be called the Truman Plan, President Truman insisted that it rather be called the Marshall Plan. His enormous leadership role in influencing the entire modern world was recognised when he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize — "the only professional soldier in history to whom it has been given".

Maxwell notes that not all of us have the position to influence world events at the same level as someone like George Marshall, but he notes we need to be willing "to do what it takes to make a
positive impact wherever we find ourselves in life — to add value in any way we can to others... As a 360-Degree Leader you can influence others no matter where you are in the organization, no matter what title or position you have, no matter what kind of people you work with".

Some things to think about:
1) Are you an "early, middle and late adapter"? How could you improve your adaptability?
2) What images or examples does the term "servant-leader" bring to your mind? Are they positive or negative?