

Living the 21 Laws of Leadership

The Law of Navigation
**Anyone Can Steer The Ship, But it takes a
Leader to Chart the Course**

“Strategy is a style of thinking, a conscious and deliberate process, an intensive implementation system, the science of insuring future success. ”

-Pete Johnson

Application Guide

They shared the same goal, they headed in the same direction, one ended in historic victory the other in tragic disaster. The difference was the application of *The Law of Navigation*.

The year was 1911, the goal was Antarctica, both headed south across 800 miles of bitter ice and sub-zero temperatures in a race for the pole. These are their stories.

Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen planned his expedition to the South pole from the methods of Eskimos to the best method of transportation across the unfriendly terrain of the Antarctic. Dogsled was the choice with a carefully planned schedule of 15-20 miles a day in a 6 hour period. This would allow sufficient rest time for both the men and the dogs.

Amundsen's preparation and attention to detail were incredible. He located and stocked supply depots all along the route. He equipped his team with the best gear money could buy. His meticulous planning paid off, the worst problem his team had was that one man had to have an infected tooth extracted.

Amundsen's team arrived at the South Pole more than 30 days ahead of the other group.

Robert Falcon Scott, a British naval officer was the other leader. An experienced explorer in the Antarctic area. He and his crew did make it to the South pole, but they paid the ultimate price tag.

Instead of using dog sleds, Scott decided to use motorized sledges and ponies. Neither the sledges nor the ponies could endure the frigid temperatures. The ponies had to be killed to end their suffering and the team was forced to pull the 200 pound sledges themselves! The equipment was inadequate so all the men developed frostbite and snowblindness. The men were low on food, poor planning on Scott's part. The men were dehydrated because they were low on fuel to melt snow. Complicating things was Scott's last minute decision to bring along a fifth man, even though they had only prepared enough supplies for four.

On January 17, 1912 they did make it, but the return trip began with one member of the crew so thoroughly exhausted he died. Another member, Lawrence Oates was also in bad shape. A former army officer had frostbite so severe he could barely continue. It is reported that he purposefully walked out into a blizzard to relieve the group of himself as a liability.

Scott and his final two members made it only a little farther themselves before dying. Their return trip had already taken two months and they were stiff 150 miles from their base camp. We know their story only because they spent their last hours writing in their journals. Some of Scott's last words were these: "We shall die like gentlemen. I think this will show that the spirit of pluck and power to endure has not passed out of our race." Scott had courage but lacked in leadership, particularly the Law of Navigation. Had he heeded it, he may have lived to tell his own story.

This story is undoubtedly more dramatic than most of life's professional scenarios you and I will encounter, but we all care about our endeavors just as much as Amundsen and Scott, and therefore must follow Amundsen's example in the *Law of Navigation*.

I. Assessment

The following questions will give you insight as to how well you are living the *Law of Navigation*.

A. The Mission

1. Do I have the end clearly in mind? (Do you see the results you desire?)
2. Do the other key personnel around you understand the desired results as clearly as you do?
3. Are you prepared to pay the price to achieve your objective?
4. Are those closest to you supportive of your endeavor?
5. Do you have your vision, mission, project goal, or primary objective etc., written down in clear and concise fashion?

B. The Map

1. If you know where you want to go, have you figured out how to get there? (At least as far ahead as is reasonable to plan.) And written it down?
2. Have you considered the resources necessary?
3. Do you have the right people?
4. Have you written out a time line?
5. Have you anticipated the obstacles?
6. Have you sought wise counsel?
7. Do you personally possess the gifts and energy needed to achieve the objective?

II. Application

** Navigation is a complicated process, but broken down into its key components it is one of the easiest laws to apply for the conscientious student of leadership. The following practical 10 steps will help you accomplish your mission, whatever it may be.*

A. See the end before you _____

Are you:

- Administrating a hospital?
- Growing a church?
- Building a small business?
- Going to college?
- Drawing architectural design plans for a new building?

The one thing all the above examples have in common is the need for a clear vision and direction to be set by the leader.

Vision is the indispensable ingredient any leader possesses. The ability to “see” the “big picture,” the end results, the better future, etc., before the first step of the process is taken is a non-negotiable characteristic of a leader. Whether it is a small, short term project or a life-time mission of a large organization, knowing the end before you begin is essential.

This point is a “gut check” for you, do you know your overall vision or mission? Could you write it down right now in a clear and succinct fashion?

This also applies to any leader in your organization who may be responsible either to help you navigate the organization toward the overall mission, or lead a select team in a sub-mission or project, or department, etc., for the good of the overall organization.

A productive and revealing exercise is to pass out a 3x5 card to your top leaders and possibly everyone in your organization asking them to write down on one side, the overall goal or mission of the organization, (or their department,) and on the other side of the card ask them to write down their key contribution to the achievement of that mission, goal etc. Do not give any “study” or prep time. Give out the cards and collect them back in 5-7 minutes. (If they do not know, extra time to “look it up” misses the point!) Stand by for some interesting reading!

Now for some candid questions. If they do not know the mission, goal etc. who is responsibility is that? Yours or theirs? Yours! It is your responsibility to continually point everyone in the right direction by keeping them focused on the objective.

B. Chart the course in as much _____ as possible.

Think through every facet of the project or mission possible. Regardless of whether it is short term and simple or long term and complex, think it through. The more preparation and planning the greater the percentage for success.

I mentally worked through all the pieces of the major move of my INJOY companies from San Diego to Atlanta, that took place in July of 1997. For months I processed the impacts on personnel, the risks, the opportunities, and the long term returns.

You may be training key leaders in your church, forecasting the finances for a multi-million dollar company, or a contractor building a skyscraper. No matter what the task at hand, there are some essentials in charting the course.

The following is a check list to offer some important things to consider:

It is possible to do the right thing at the wrong time, even do the right thing well and still end up with a disaster if your timing is not right. Is it the right time? Are your people ready? Are your customers interested? Is the economy right? Do you have the support you need?

CI Receptivity of _____ authority structures

Are the power brokers in your organization supportive of your project or mission? Do they show tangible support?

- Receptivity of _____ authority structures

Do the informal information highways of "water cooler relationships" and "copy machine gossip" indicate the people are in favor of moving forward?

- _____ ramifications or significant organizational guidelines

If you are involved in a small, short an uncomplicated project, this may not apply, otherwise; it is non-negotiable to cover yourself and the organization no matter what the cost. Pay now or pay later!

- Impact on current _____

How will the process impact valued current personnel?

- Impact on the overall _____ of the organization

How will the process impact the potential success of the whole organization, or sub-component of the organization?

There are several factors such as the current economy, culture, demographic trends, political climate, and the rapidly changing course of any industry, educational institution, or volunteer organization such as a church as it prepares for the 21st Century and beyond.

C. Determine what _____ are needed.

Dick Peterson, President of INJOY did an outstanding job implementing the thousands of details to move the INJOY companies across the country. As I think about the resources to think through, Dick covered this following list extremely well.

Five key resources to consider:

- Financial
- Equipment
- Personnel
- Time
- Experience and expertise of the leader

D. Anticipate the _____ that will slow or sabotage your project.

Anticipating obstacles is one of the most challenging, yet productive responsibilities in the navigational process. Amundsen illustrated this well as he thought through every imaginable obstacle he might encounter in the unfriendly Antarctic terrain.

** Take time to make a list of every imaginable obstacle that could prevent you from achieving your desired result. This is not about discovering reasons why "it can not be done," but arming yourself to proactively remove obstacles before they block your progress.*

E. Seek wise _____ from those who have "traveled" before you.

Ask questions and study the work of others who have more experience and exposure than you do. It is a waste of your valuable time to re-invent the wheel and make mistakes that have already been made. These mistakes often provide you answers and insights that prevent more mistakes. Be willing to pay for this advice if necessary. It will cost you one way or another, and it is usually much less expensive on the front end.

F. Do not _____

Walt Disney was famous for not cutting corners. Every inch of Disneyland is meticulously designed with creativity and care. No expenses spared! His legacy for doing things right, from design to service still lives on today.

Whether time, finances, personnel, or ethics cutting corners is a poor choice that may get you ahead in the immediate scenario, but you will undoubtedly reduce if not destroy your overall and long term results.

G. Gather the right _____ for the project.

Steven Spielberg is known for his amazing ability to cast the right actors and actresses into his film productions. This is one of his great abilities along with his heart and imagination that makes him one of the best film makers ever to live.

This is a vital key to your success, possibly the most important on this entire list of 10 things. Other leadership laws will deal more with assembling the right people around you, but for now concentrate on getting the best and brightest you can possibly afford. Remember the last point, do not cut corners! You get what you pay for! In the case of volunteers, recruit the best and the brightest, and train them the rest of the way. Go for character over competency in both paid and volunteer staff. You can train to compensate for lack of specific skills, but you can not redesign their basic character.

H. _____ your progress along the way.

Set benchmarks of achievement for the duration of your project. In the case of a long term overall mission, then set benchmarks about 18-36 months in advance, keeping your eye on the goal in the distance.

I. Embrace the principle of _____ when needed.

** Even the most masterful and detailed of plans must be occasionally modified over the course of time. The longer the time span, the more corrections must be made. Do not be married to a plan, be married to the goal!*

You may alter your plans at the point of benchmark evaluation or you may alter your plans in response to an unforeseen, unpredictable change in events or circumstances.

Perhaps you are building a large building and are caught by an usually high number of bad weather delays, or you are a pastor teaching a new Christian who is troubled by personal issues, or a business man opening up a new restaurant and the city decided to do road repair right in front of your building. Call an "audible" and go for it. The better you have planned and prepared the easier and more natural the battle field "audible" will be.

J. Put your confidence on _____

This is the final clincher in preparation and planning. It is not enough for you to have a forceful and charismatic personality. An ability to sway the masses will only work in the short term and will not accomplish massive undertakings. Never believe it until you have written it.

A masterfully written plan is confidence on paper. If your plan is as strong as it should be, your charming personality will be icing on the cake. Without the written plan, you may be wearing the cake!

III. Action Assignment

Take time to think through the three "R's".

- _____

What is the final outcome desired?

✓ _____

What are the desired financial benefits that I desire?

- _____

What are the personal, spiritual, or inner values you desire? This may take the form of fulfillment, joy, growth etc.