

**Servant Leadership Focus** is a monthly newsletter to promote and stimulate servant leadership ideas and tools into the Viox culture.



## TRANSFORMATIONAL STORIES

Ricky Hasserd, Senior Service Manager TD Industries

For twelve years I worked for a small plumbing contractor where I was taken in as a green helper and educated through an apprenticeship program. After six years of employment I finally tested out and qualified as a Journeyman Plumber. For the next six years, not much happened. Routine forty-hour weeks came and went. There was no continuing education program. Anything that affected my job was decided among the owners and passed down to me for implementation. This situation, compounded by a lagging economy forced me to search for a new job.

Through a contact, I found, applied, and got a job with TD Industries. **After a very short time WOW! What a difference!** What seemed at first to be a very large and intimidating company soon began to reveal itself as a **friendly, people-oriented family!**

Within two years, after a lot of hard work and technical training, **I was sent to a career development session called Servant Leadership Development.** My initial reaction was: *'This company thinks I have the makings of a leader? I've*

*only been here two years!'* What a confidence booster! I learned about Robert Greenleaf and Stephen Covey. Just about everything I learned about these two men seemed to make perfect sense to me. And what was better yet, this was the company culture!

Well, that was ten years ago and today I am still here. Every day has been a challenge, and opportunities for improvement are endless. TD Industries treats Partners like owners. Empowering Partners with information needed to perform their jobs and allowing them to make mistakes is a winning combination that truly provides outstanding career opportunities.

Ricky continues to provide outstanding servant leadership and has a great future with the company. He is just one of many who have caught the vision of a servant-led company. A company that has the crucial *"tipping point,"* where non-servant leaders are the exception rather than the rule.

### ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ **The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork** by John Maxwell
- ❖ **Team Effectiveness 6 Essential Servant Leadership Themes** by Justin Irving & Gail Longtham
- ❖ **Topic: Servant Led Teams**

### ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS:

Transformational Stories	1
The Law of Significance	1
Team Effectiveness Six	
Essential Servant Leadership Themes	2
Collaborative Team Players	2

## THE LAW OF SIGNIFICANCE

JOHN MAXWELL

A Chinese proverb states, *"Behind an able man there are always other able men."* The truth of teamwork is at the heart of great achievement. The question isn't whether teams have value. The question is whether we acknowledge that fact and become better team players. That's why I assert that *one is too small a number to achieve greatness.* You cannot do anything of real value alone. **That is the Law of Significance.**

I challenge you to think of one act of genuine significance in the history of human kind that was performed by a lone human being. No matter what you name, you will find that a team of people was involved. That is why President Lyndon Johnson said, *"There are no problems we cannot solve together, and very few that we can solve by ourselves."*

C. Gene Wilkes, in his book *Jesus on Leadership*, observed that the power of teams not only is evident in today's modern business world, but it is also has a deep history that is evident even in biblical times. Wilkes asserts,

• **Teams involve more people**, thus affording more resources, ideas, and energy than would an individual.

• **Teams maximize a leader's potential and minimize her weaknesses.** Strengths and weaknesses are more exposed in individuals.

• **Teams provide multiple perspectives on how to meet a need or reach a goal**, thus devising several alternatives for each situation. Individual insight is seldom as broad and deep as a group's when it takes on a problem.

• **Teams share the credit for victories and blame for losses.** This fosters genuine humility and authentic community. Individual take credit and blame alone. This fosters pride and sometimes a sense of failure.

• **Teams keep leaders accountable for the goal.** Individuals connected to no one can change the goal without accountability.

• **Teams can simply do more than an individual.**

If you want to reach your potential or strive for the seemingly impossible—you need to become a team player.



## Collaborative Team Players John Maxwell

Becoming a collaborative team player requires change in focus in four areas:

- **Perception:** See teammates as collaborators, not competitors. They perceive themselves as a unit working together, and they never allow competition between teammates to get to the point where it hurts the team.
- **Attitude:** Be supportive, not suspicious of teammates. It's a matter of attitude. If you trust people, you will treat them better. And if you treat them better, you and they will be more likely to create collaborative relationships.
- **Focus:** Concentrate on the team, not yourself. If you focus on the team and not yourself, you will be able to pass the baton when necessary instead of trying to complete the race by yourself.
- **Results:** Create victories through multiplication. Collaboration has a multiplying effect on everything you do because it releases and harnesses not only your skills but also those of everyone on the team.

### Coaching reminders:

Mike is available for individual leadership coaching. Call or email for appointments.  
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The use of team approaches by leaders in the organizational context continues to grow substantially. While it may be assumed that leadership that works well in one organizational level will likewise be effective in teams, it is vital that those at the crossroads of leadership scholarship and practice address the important questions facing leaders of team-based organizations. The question may be framed broadly as: *what form of leadership will be most effective in our emerging world of team-based and networked systems?* More specifically, it has been the interest of the authors to examine **the effect of servant leadership on team effectiveness**. The authors suggest that leaders should attend to **six primary servant leadership themes** when seeking to effectively lead in team-based environments. These themes, are *providing accountability, supporting and resourcing, engaging in honest self-evaluation, fostering collaboration, communicating with clarity, and valuing and appreciating*.

**Providing accountability.** The first item raises the importance of accountability in the effective accomplishment of team goals. Leadership that “[holds people] accountable for reaching work goals” is a significant predictor of team effectiveness. It is important to observe the role of accountability and initiative on the part of servant leaders. While the focus of servant leaders is primarily on followers, this emphasis should not imply disinterest in the accomplishment of goals. Rather than servant leadership wandering aimlessly without initiative, servant leaders care about taking initiative toward goal clarification and attainment. *The distinctive of servant leadership is not that goals are not accomplished, but rather that the leader’s focus on serving the best interest of followers becomes the essential pathway for reaching goals.*

**Supporting and resourcing.** The second item is the importance of leaders supporting workers and providing necessary resources for the accomplishment of their goals. Leadership that “*provides the support and resources needed to help workers meet their goals*” is a significant predictor of team effectiveness. Patterson (2003) argued that the servant leadership dimension of empowerment is one of the primary pathways used by servant leaders in supporting followers in goal clarification and attainment. On this point, Patterson wrote, “*by empowering followers, servant leaders are allowing them freedom to proceed toward their goals, helping them make dreams reality.*” Rather than servant leaders taking over responsibilities from followers for the purpose of insuring that things are done right and goals are accomplished, servant leaders focus their energies on providing the necessary support and resources to help followers see their goals become reality. On this point, Blanchard (1996) addressed the concept of responsibility in light of the upside down pyramid, stating that “*when you turn the pyramid upside down . . . the people become responsible, and the job of management is to be responsive to them.*”

**Engaging in honest self-evaluation.** The third item is the importance of leader self-evaluation over (or at least prior to) an evaluating of others. Having leadership that “*honestly evaluates themselves before seeking to evaluate others*” is a significant predictor of team effectiveness. Though counterintuitive for some leaders, self-evaluation plays a central role in the type of servant leadership that is effective in the team-based context. One of the reasons for this is due to the fact that values are often instilled more through actions than words (Malphurs, 1996; Peters & Waterman, 1982). Russell (2001) built on this by explicitly engaging the importance of modeling in servant leadership.

On this point, Page and Wong (2006) argued that servant leaders in high- involvement and high-impact teams model for others by setting a personal example in meeting high standards and investing considerable energy to champion the common goals of the organization. Actions often speak louder than words. In light of this, modeling humility in the form of self-evaluation is an important step in fostering an environment of personal growth and goal accomplishment for leaders and followers alike. **Fostering collaboration.** The fourth item is the importance of the leader’s fostering an environment of collaboration over competition. Leadership that “*encourages workers to work together rather than competing against each other*” is a significant predictor of team effectiveness. The emphasis on collaboration in teams can be found throughout the servant leadership literature. First, it is a concept that was drawn out of Greenleaf’s reflections by Spears (2005). Spears (2005) labeled this emphasis as building community. In community building, the theme is not limited to collaboration in work but goes further in an attempt to foster community. The servant leader’s role of fostering community and a collaborative work environment is essential in effective team leadership. **Communicating with clarity.** The fifth item in the regression model suggests the importance of leaders communicating plans and objectives clearly. Leadership that “*communicates clear plans and goals for the organization*” is a significant predictor of team effectiveness. In light of the emphasis on goals in several of the previous themes, it should not be a surprise that clarity of communication around organizational plans and goals would also be a significant leadership behavior for those leading in team-based organizations. Clarity of communication begins with clarity of ideas and concepts. In pursuing clear communication around organizational plans and goals, leaders must have the capacity to lead out of a clear vision.

**Valuing and appreciating.** The sixth and final item suggests the importance of leaders valuing their employees and expressing appreciation for the contributions they make. Leadership that makes employees “*feel appreciated by [their] supervisor for what [they] contribute*” is a significant predictor of team effectiveness. Further affirming the importance of leaders valuing and affirming followers, Laub (1999) argued that building up others through encouragement and affirmation is **one of the primary means by which servant leaders develop people**. Part of developing people involves truly empowering them in the context of team work. On this connection between empowerment and valuing others, Russell and Stone (2002) made the case that “*empowerment is entrusting power to others, and for the servant leader it involves effective listening, making people feel significant, putting an emphasis on teamwork, and the valuing of love and equality.*”

In light of this study, those who use team structures in organizations are advised to better understand both servant leadership in general and the six essential servant leadership themes in particular **if they desire to increase their effectiveness**. We trust that these findings will encourage increased exploration into the positive effects of servant leadership on team effectiveness as well as a robust application of servant leadership in contemporary organizational settings.