THE SILENT KILLER

Exposing and Eliminating the Destroyer of Performance and Growth That Haunts Virtually Every Business

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Introduction

The Silent Killer in Your Business

YOU MAY NOT BELIEVE IT, but your workplace is an active crime scene. There’s a killer on the loose.

It’s true. Silently, secretly, this killer moves undetected and unchallenged throughout your business, claiming victims without remorse. From the boardroom to the break room, from sales to customer service, from purchasing to accounting, this killer goes about strangling targets of opportunity—performance, growth, profits—all while quietly consuming your resources, devouring your potential and taking your prosperity hostage.

Who—what—is this silent killer?

Read the description below out loud and think of your current situation.

The Silent Killer Is . . .

the lack of a strong team of leaders
throughout your organization
and no effective plan to develop them.
It’s that simple.
And that deadly.

“Oh, you’re wrong, Dale,” I can hear you say. “That’s not my company. Why, we work very hard to hire top talent. Our managers are great people. They’re . . . reliable. They show up on time and tell their people what needs to get done. And I hardly ever hear about major HR issues. I think our company’s leaders are just fine.”

If that’s your response, there’s a lot you’re missing regarding leadership. And this book is your chance to start seeing it.

In these pages we’re going to explore a deeper, more valuable understanding of what leadership is and how it impacts the performance of your organization. I’m not shy about saying it: The future prosperity of your business depends on what you read here.

Now, you’re probably wondering if I can tell you anything interesting and valuable that you haven’t already read or heard about leadership and its impact on the performance and results of your organization. I get it. The whole field is crowded by noisy “experts” offering lots of trendy jargon, cobbled-together, overly simplistic tools and unproven shortcuts. But my purpose here isn’t to just give you a few “tips and tricks” you can take back to the office and plug in right away. Frankly, if that’s all I did, that would be a waste of our time together. Those kinds of “quick fixes” only mask the true, underlying challenge. They merely address the symptoms of the problem, not the problem itself. I say, let’s solve the real problem, once and for all. Okay?

Now, accomplishing this will require change on your part. What sort of change?

THE FOUNDATIONAL LAW OF HUMAN PERFORMANCE

The change you need begins with embracing the Foundational Law of Human Performance, which states: **Our thinking drives our behavior, which determines our results**—the conditions, circumstances and outcomes in our lives. Therefore, if we want to improve our situation, if
we want to change our results, we *must* change our thinking. It’s simply how the world works! It’s an immutable law.

Your thinking about leadership drives the results of your organization. Therefore, my goal is to *change how you think about leadership*, to help you *think* about leadership in a much more valuable way. To begin this change in thinking, you first need to grasp some basic realities about leadership within your organization. Let’s take a look.

Our thinking drives our **behavior**, which determines our **results**.
Chapter 1

Three Things You Need to Know

THERE ARE THREE IMPORTANT THINGS you need to understand about leadership within your organization, and there’s some good news and some bad news for you. Because I know you want the hard truth, I’m going to give you the bad news first:

1) **Your situation is much worse than you think.** Because you’re crazy busy (and you are, aren’t you?), you don’t fully realize what’s going on around you within your organization. Opportunities for growth, improved performance and profit are needlessly slipping through your fingers, and you have no idea what you’re missing out on. You’re squandering the potential growth that you’ve already fully paid for.

But don’t lose heart or get defensive. Here’s the good news:

2) **Your solution is much easier than you think.** And . . .

3) **Your reward is much bigger than you think.**

Isn’t that sound good? Real improvement and true prosperity are possible.
THE WORLD OF ILLUSION (OR DELUSION)

Right now you probably think your company’s leaders are “just fine.” You don’t see anything wrong, certainly nothing important. But your employees see things far differently. While you think your leaders are fine, your employees think they micro-manage, play favorites and only care about advancing their own careers.

Over the last several years I’ve had the privilege of advising more than 50 Fortune 500 companies, helping to improve the performance and, hopefully, the lives of more than 1.2 million employees across North America. I’ve observed and worked with a lot of leaders and managers. And based on that experience, I think your employees are right! I’ve found that most leaders and managers do micro-manage (of course, they call it “helping”), play favorites and care primarily about advancing their own careers.

Why don’t you see this pattern and its harmful effects on your organization’s morale and performance? Because you’re crazy busy, that’s why. You’re constantly pulled in multiple directions at the same time, called upon to put out one fire after another (there’s a reason for this, too, and we’ll discuss it). Because you are so distracted, you think things are fine. You can’t see the problem. In fact, you think there is no problem . . . and that’s the problem! You don’t realize there’s an elephant in the room, and it’s trashing the place.

Yet, when you’re honest with yourself, you know something isn’t quite right. You’re not really satisfied with your company’s current levels of performance and growth. Everything seems harder, and takes much longer,
than it should, doesn’t it? When you think about it, you realize it feels like your business is swimming against the current, fighting a headwind or dragging an anchor (pick your favorite metaphor). What’s holding you back? It’s the leadership problem you don’t see.

In my work as a leadership consultant and coach, I’m known for exposing this silent killer of performance and growth that haunts virtually every business, including yours. But it’s not enough to just identify the problem; I then reveal exactly how to eliminate it. So after you’ve clearly seen the silent killer’s identity and impact on your organization, we’ll address the solution later in the book.

Now, in order to make the troubling information about the silent killer easier to accept (and maybe a little more fun to explore), we’re going to approach the topic as a murder mystery. Of course, we already know who/what the killer is, so it won’t be so much a whodunit as a howdunit. What we’re going to do is build the case—an airtight case—against this killer, revealing the proof of the crimes being committed within your organization. I’m going to reveal three clues, which often go unnoticed, that show how your villain does its deadly work.

So let’s visit the crime scene and check out the clues. As we find each clue, we’ll be aided by multiple experts (let’s call them “witnesses”) who will help describe the crime scene and what our silent killer is up to. We’ll also perform forensic analysis that will convert these clues into critical, high-value insights for you to leverage. They will help you recognize the silent killer in your own business, and then take steps to stop the destruction so you can get back what’s rightfully yours: the performance, growth and overall prosperity that you deserve and have already paid for.
Chapter 2

Ineffective Leadership Is Hurting Your Company’s Performance

OUR FIRST CLUE (insight) comes from research by The Gallup Organization. According to its report:

**Clue #1**

**Eighty-two percent** of people hired or promoted into new levels of leadership don’t have the knowledge and skill they need to effectively lead in their new roles. The result is that, on average, **the teams they lead produce 48 percent less than teams with effective leaders.**

In other words, it’s likely that *roughly 80 percent of your company’s teams are producing barely half of what they should be.* (I warned you there was
going to be some bad news.) And it doesn’t make any difference if the leaders are from the outside (hired) or the inside (promoted).

Welcome to your “new normal.” Remember that feeling of swimming against the current and everything feeling like it’s harder than it needs to be? This is why it feels that way.

Let’s do some forensic analysis of this clue. Think about what this one statistic is telling us. If roughly 80 percent of leaders are not effective, that means that just 20 percent are effective. And as you continue to hire leaders, the fractional multiplier effect makes the numbers even more brutal. For example, If you have only a 20 percent chance of hiring a single effective leader, what’s your chance of hiring two leaders who are both effective? Only 4 percent (20% x 20% = 4%)! And what if you bring on three leaders? What are your odds of all three of them being effective? Less than 1 percent!

Now, I know you probably think you’re well above average and hire better than average leaders. In fact, surveys show that 94 percent of Americans think we’re “better than average”—it’s called the “Illusion of Superiority.” So almost all of us think we’re better than average, which of course makes no logical sense.

But even though you probably hire managers and leaders pretty much the same way your competitors do, let’s assume you are somehow twice as good at hiring effective leaders and therefore have a 40 percent chance of a hired (or promoted) leader being effective. What are your odds of hiring two leaders that are both effective? Just 16 percent. And what are your odds of hiring three effective leaders? Roughly 6 percent (40% x 40% x 40% = 6%).

The bottom line is that there’s between a 94 and a 99 percent chance you need to develop your leaders.

Now let’s do some more math. Let’s find out how bad your financial situation really is.

If ineffective leaders cause 80 percent of teams to perform at just 50 percent of their potential, you’re losing 40% of your company’s potential per-
formance. That means **you’re wasting roughly 40 percent of your annual people costs!** That’s 40 percent up in smoke each and every year. You’re paying handsomely for productivity; you’re just not getting it. And it’s because of one thing and one thing only: the ineffective leadership throughout your organization, which you don’t even see.

Of course, every business is different. But, from my experience in this area, your business is not as different as you might think or assume (or give yourself credit for). And when you apply the 40 percent factor to what your company spends annually in personnel costs, the math is pretty discouraging.

For example, let’s assume you have 100 employees with a “fully loaded” average employee cost of $50,000/person (adding the cost of benefits, taxes, etc., to their compensation). Your annual people costs would be $5 million. That means, on average, you’re wasting 40 percent of that, or $2 million, each year!

I encourage you to stop and do this calculation for yourself, using your company’s actually people costs.

Remember when I said, “Your situation is much worse than you think”? This is what I meant. Did you have any idea you’re wasting that much money **each year**, solely because the leadership capability throughout your organization isn’t what it should be?

Imagine if the walls of your house stopped only 60 percent of the cold winter wind, or your roof stopped only 60 percent of the heavy summer rains. Would you want to do something to fix it, or would you just accept the situation? You’d take action, of course! So do you think you should do something about your 40-percent waste in people costs?

If you want to have high-performance teams, there is no substitute for effective leaders. Denying this fact only delays improvement in your organization. So our first clue has made it very clear. We need effective leaders.
Q. Stop and Think: Are you seeing more people issues within your organization than you’d like to have? Do things seem harder than they need to be? Do they take longer than they should? How much of your calendar is consumed with issues that are due to ineffective leaders? Would you like to make your work easier, more enjoyable and maybe make it feel less like, well, work?

What would it be worth to you to no longer waste 40 percent of your people costs (due to ineffective leaders)? How much more do you think your company could produce?

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Chapter 3

You’re Not Effectively Developing the Leaders You Need

HOW DID YOU DEVELOP your personal leadership style? Think about it for a moment. Was it a structured process? Was it intentional? Or was it, as with most of us, completely trial and error? The truth is, most of us simply get that first supervisory or management position and our new boss says something like, “Congratulations, and good luck. I’ll let you know when you’ve screwed up!”

And so, we wander along. We develop our leadership “style” through a completely random, unintentional walk through our career. We don’t really have any reliable knowledge about what leadership is or how it should be practiced. We just do it the way we do it, and that’s that.

I’ll let you in on a little secret: This isn’t just the way individuals approach the learning of leadership; it’s the way most organizations do it too—including yours, probably. This is our second piece of evidence of the silent killer’s presence in your workplace: the inherent challenges of effective leadership development. The process is often marked by naïve false starts and wasted effort. You may think you’re being intentional by pushing a lot of “activities” in the leadership category—throwing some money into the “leadership development bucket,” so to speak—but your efforts are likely not producing the needed results.
You’re not alone. We learned from Gallup’s research that more than 80 percent of managers and leaders could use some serious leadership development help. Our second clue comes from another sobering statistic in the *Global Human Capital Trends Report* from Deloitte:

**Clue #2**

**Nine out of 10** companies struggle to develop the leaders they need at all levels of their organizations and say that this impacts every other aspect of their businesses.

Let’s do a little forensic analysis and unpack this a bit. There are three important aspects to this statistic.

- **First,** 90 percent of companies struggle to develop leaders. So that low performance of 80 percent of your teams is going to persist for a long time, because with 90 percent of companies struggling, those teams probably aren’t going to improve anytime soon. This really is your “new normal” level of performance.
- **Second,** leaders are needed at all levels of your organization, or performance suffers. Leadership development can’t just be for those few at the top of your organization.
- **Third,** the struggle to develop leaders impacts everything—*every aspect* of your business.

Sounds grim, doesn’t it? Before you get too disheartened, or worse, fall back into denial, there’s an extremely important point—a ray of sunshine, if you will—that I need to make sure you understand.
Chapter 4

Leadership Is Absolutely a Learnable Skill Set

LEADERSHIP CAN BE LEARNED. Let me repeat the point. Leadership is absolutely a teachable, learnable combination of knowledge and skill.

I’ve been a student, practitioner and teacher of leadership for more than 30 years. When you’re focused on something that long, you really grow to understand it, and I’ve learned this: Leadership is very predictable. It operates on laws. Learn those laws and you learn to lead. However, ignore those laws, either intentionally or through lack of awareness, and leadership will be a struggle—a constant source of frustration in your life—and you won’t even know what the problem is. That’s a fact.

Leadership is not a personality, a position, a role or a gift granted to a privileged few. It is a skill set. Leaders are made, not born. (People who say there are only “born leaders” are simply making an excuse for not investing any effort in developing their own leadership ability.)

So, if this skill set is so learnable, why don’t we have better leaders? Because we invest in the wrong approaches and leave out a lot of the people who ought to be involved. Before we look at what companies try in developing their leaders, let’s consider which leaders should be included in your leadership development program.
IN Volving the Whole Team

When you think about it, most leadership doesn’t actually happen at the top of the organization—even though that seems to be where everyone directs their attention. Most leadership development programs are designed for leaders “at the top”—who control all the resources and make strategy decisions—for one simple reason: it’s easier. However, the most valuable leadership programs cover all leaders and are designed for the real-world situations of each leader: those at the top, in the middle and on the frontlines.

What I’ve found in my years of performance coaching and advising is that in a company of any real size, 99 percent of leadership actually occurs in the middle of an organization. While strategy (and its supporting resources) comes from the top down, performance and growth happen from the middle out. It’s the leadership ability of your middle managers that drives performance and growth.

It’s also well known that the number one driver of employee engagement is the leadership ability of the employee’s direct manager (your “middle managers”). In the words of the famous maxim, “People join a company, but they leave a boss.” Your employees won’t stay with you if they believe their managers don’t care about them, can’t help them or can’t be trusted to have their team’s best interests in mind, rather than just their own.

Middle managers are critical. It’s simply a function of reach and availability. Even if the people at the top of the organization have offices just down the hall or one floor above, they are simply “too far away” from the folks who actually do the work every day to have an impact on them. Performance and growth in an organization are determined much more by the leaders in the middle. Therefore, we should focus much of our leadership development and coaching investments at that level.
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Chapter 5

A Question of Means
(What People Try)

WHAT KIND OF LEADERSHIP development method will work when applied to your whole team? To answer that question, it will help to look first at some methods companies try that don’t work.

The following list includes, in no particular order, the majority of approaches I’ve seen companies employ in an attempt to develop and grow their leaders.

NO THING

Many companies—some research suggests more than 60 percent—do absolutely nothing intentional to develop leaders. They simply call it “experience” or “on-the-job learning.” After all, as they say, experience is the best teacher, right? Please. This old cliché has been proven wrong time and time again. “They” don’t actually know what they are talking about. While experience is important, there are three reasons why it is an ineffective approach to developing leaders:

1. It’s very slow. Trial and error takes a long time, and its results vary widely.
2. There’s no guarantee the leaders will actually learn the right lessons from their experience.
3. It’s the most expensive, because as we’ve already noted, 40 percent of people costs are wasted. The greatest cost of ineffective leadership development isn’t the cost (in money and time) of executing a program; it’s the lost or wasted productivity of the team.

The reality is, companies that rely solely on experience do nothing meaningful to help their leaders get better, and this fact is demonstrated by business results that are mediocre at best.

**ASSESSMENTS**

Some organizations spend a lot of money having their folks take personality or “leadership style” assessments. The problem with these tests and surveys, while they may help leaders become more self-aware, is that they don’t provide any knowledge or skills to help leaders become better. Our primary goal here isn’t self-awareness; the goal is becoming a better leader! In reality, assessments alone do almost nothing to improve the leadership ability of these leaders or your overall leadership team.

**COACHING**

Coaching can help, but only if you can find a good coach, and only if the individual leader has both a teachable attitude and the desire to grow. Those are two big ifs. In my experience, the most common situation where leadership coaching is attempted is when an organization has a high performer who’s an arrogant jerk, someone who believes he (or she) can get away with anything because he, personally, gets results. These people are rarely interested in becoming better leaders. Providing them with leadership coaching can really be best described as attempted organizational damage control. You’re just hoping that the individual improves enough so you don’t have to get rid of him and replace him.

**MENTORING**

This is the same as coaching, but done with an internal resource. The key here is to find someone who is actually a good mentor. Sadly, what
often happens is that a high-performing jerk is mentored by another high-performing jerk higher in the organization. This doesn’t control the damage; it multiplies it.

**One-Time Events**

These are annual leadership conferences (internal or external) and other large gatherings, often held in a hotel ballroom or even a sports arena. Sometimes big-name celebrities show up to give the audience an upbeat “shot in the arm” to encourage confidence or inspire growth. Companies who send their people to these events are often well intentioned, but in the end are just “checking the box” on leadership development. They don’t understand that single events—no matter how well presented they are—don’t move the needle on truly growing their leaders.

Leadership, like any other skill set or capability, develops over time—*not* in a one-time event. The desired outcome is not to receive inspiration or motivation that lasts for a couple days. The true goal in leadership development is to add knowledge and skill, to change the thinking and behavior of your leaders, and to enhance the performance and growth of your organization.

**Disguised “Basic Training”**

These tend to be internal leadership development initiatives with very fancy names, such as “leadership institute” or “leadership academy,” or containing key words like “high potential,” “emerging” or “high performance.” Most are put together and led internally by Human Resources (from headquarters or the home office) and are launched by an executive’s request to create a leadership development program because Company X (your number one competitor) has one. While well intended, this kind of program ends up being very limited in its impact on organizational performance.

Why? Because the people responsible for creating it don’t have much real depth or expertise in leadership and are themselves pulled in a
bunch of directions. Yesterday, compensation and benefits; today, leadership. They often have limited or no practical leadership experience (they haven’t been responsible for the success of an organization, run a P&L or, in many cases, even managed a cost center). How can they really be expected to put together a high-quality, highly valuable leadership development program by themselves? Honestly, it’s unfair to even ask them to attempt it.

Over time, these programs tend to become the sole communication channel for HR, and the program becomes a mishmash of HR policies, including such topics as harassment, diversity and inclusion. While these may well be worthy topics for discussion, they don’t help leaders go from good to great.

The purpose of these HR programs is usually just to train first-time supervisors or new-to-the-company managers on administration activities and basic management tools. Frequently, the true goal of these programs is protecting the company from getting sued by employees (or customers) due to the actions of their managers or leaders.

Furthermore, these programs are often peer-group styled, which has two additional limiting characteristics. First, they must be structured to the least common denominator (lowest level of content) of the participants’ current knowledge. Second, since these cohorts are made up of mostly first-time leaders, they can’t learn from each other’s experiences because the experience of all of the members is limited. Therefore, the best expected outcome from programs like these, more times than not,
is getting these managers and leaders to the point they are simply “not bad” (which is very close to “fine”).

But in leadership, “not bad” is not good; “okay” really isn’t; and going from good to great makes all the difference in the world.

When I ask what programs a company has in place to help good leaders become truly great, I usually get the “deer-in-the-headlights” look and a long pause. Then once the person snaps out of it, there’s an extended explanation—full of buzzwords, lofty statements and trendy phrases—that ultimately ends with the person slumping over and admitting he has nothing that helps leaders to continue to progress from good to great. Most companies don’t even have that on their radar.

For most companies, “fine” is just fine. Don’t be one of those companies, or you’ll continue to pay the price (and you now know what that is).

**The Mixed Combo**

This is the approach used by individual leaders frustrated by a boss or management team that hasn’t been doing enough to help them. They struggle on their own for a while, trying different things to see if they help. Some work, some don’t, but the struggling leaders don’t really know why. They decide to buy a leadership book or attend a leadership seminar. Unfortunately, the book says “the devil is in the details,” while the seminar tells them “not to sweat the small stuff.” Now they’re more confused than ever! This is actually the approach used by most leaders. Notice, however, that it is employed by the individual, not the organization. So even if the individual manages to improve, the company rarely gets much benefit from it.

These approaches, as demonstrated by Deloitte’s statistic—“Nine out of 10 companies struggle”—don’t work.

Continued use of these ineffective approaches is also why, according to Development Dimensions International (DDI), 85 percent of executives are not confident in their leadership pipelines. And why Deloitte continues to find that developing leaders is the number one talent chal-
lenge facing organizations worldwide, with 86 percent of companies rating it as “urgent” or “important.”

It probably doesn’t surprise you that most companies invest the most in *experience*, or “on-the-job learning” (aka nothing) in the hope that their leaders somehow become better over time.

I say “invest,” but it’s a pretty bad investment. Remember that, on average, companies waste 40 percent of their people costs every year. Well, that’s a very big “investment” in a very low-return leadership development plan—or *lack of a plan*. Denial or lack of awareness of this fact doesn’t change the truth or your situation.

That’s why I just smile when companies say they don’t have a budget for leadership development. It doesn’t matter if they have a budget or not; they are still spending a *tremendous* amount of money on it without getting a meaningful return.

Fortunately, there is a better way.
Chapter 6

Adopting a Leadership Model

THE BEST WAY TO DEVELOP your leaders is to adopt a leadership model throughout your organization. This is an intentional, organized approach to leadership development that gives all leaders a common language, a common perspective and a common understanding of what leadership really is, getting everyone on the same page in improving the performance of your company. We’ll discuss this in more detail when we examine our third clue in the next chapter.

THE MISSING MODEL

Think about the models, or systems, we employ to improve other areas of our organization:

- Quality has Six Sigma
- Software has Agile
- Manufacturing has Lean
- Small Business Operations has EOS®

And yet, leadership development gets nothing. Even though (according to 90 percent of the companies Deloitte surveyed) leadership impacts everything else we do, we apply no consistent, coordinated effort to improve it.
It just doesn’t make sense. Why do we operate this way, year in and year out?

Again, it’s because we just don’t see it, because we’re crazy busy. And busy with what? Often we’re busy dealing with issues (symptoms of the real problem) caused by our team’s lack of leadership ability. It’s a Catch-22: Our leadership team creates problems—process problems, people problems, communication problems, performance problems—because they are inadequately equipped to lead. We can’t find time to train and equip them because we’re consumed with addressing the problems they create!

We need to stop running around putting out fires and instead build a “fire-resistant” organization. We need to develop a better leadership team.

*Can you think of any other field of human endeavor in which we expect professionals to learn their most important skill set, one critical to their success and the success of the organization, through trial and error?*

Imagine what would happen if we let doctors learn their profession through trial and error. “This person has a fever. Let’s cut his right leg off and see if that helps.” Ridiculous, right? No one would think this is a good idea.

And yet, we seem so willing to let our leaders learn just this way. Leadership impacts everything, but we leave it up to chance.

Employing a leadership model will solve the trial-and-error problem for every one of your leaders, throughout your organization. But it’s important that the leadership model you choose is one that embraces all levels of management and is based on proven, real-world leadership truths.

“You don’t get great performance, or have great teams, without great leaders. It just doesn’t happen.”
The ideal leadership model:

- Is comprehensive, practical and understandable
- Combines and aligns leadership principles, practices and values into a single practical model
- Provides a common language for all leaders, at all levels
- Provides answers to the most challenging leadership questions
- Is universally applicable in all communities and environments
- Is trusted and respected
- Has stood the test of time

All of that may sound like a tall order, but such a leadership model does exist, and it can be applied effectively in your organization. I’ll be happy to have a detailed conversation with you privately about which leadership model—and I know all eight of the major ones—is best for you and your organization, whenever you’re ready. You’ll receive a more detailed invitation toward the end of this book.

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Chapter 7

You’re Missing a Big Payday

WE’VE ARRIVED AT OUR FINAL CLUE. As we’ve learned, ineffective leaders make for companies that waste, on average, 40 percent of their potential. No company wants to take that kind of performance hit, but most do, nevertheless.

That’s the downside. But there’s a corresponding upside for companies that take this leadership challenge seriously by adopting a leadership model throughout their organizations. In one of its recent publications, Boston Consulting Group noted:

Clue #3

Companies that adopt a leadership model have 1.5 times the revenue growth and 1.6 times the profitability of companies that do not.”5
This is why adopting a leadership model—which so few companies actually do—is so valuable. There’s a real, hard-dollar payoff for this approach.

Once again, let’s do the math. Determine your year-over-year revenue growth (either forecast or past actual), multiply it by 50 percent and calculate the revenue increase that you’re missing out on. Write it down. Then take your annual profits, multiply that by 60 percent to see what you’re losing in profitability.

Now, look at the calculations you have just made. Pretty significant numbers, wouldn’t you say? For example, if your normal revenue growth is $8 million, you could be increasing it to $12 million. If your annual profit is $6 million, it’s possible you could boost it to $9.6 million. **Do you have any better ideas for how to increase those numbers that much?**
Chapter 8

Stopping the Silent Killer for Good

A COMPLETE DESCRIPTION of the silent killer, the destroyer of performance and growth that haunts virtually every business, doesn’t just state the underlying problem. It also includes the remedy to eliminate it, to end its unchallenged reign of crime, sabotage and destruction.

The Silent Killer Is . . .

the lack of a strong team of leaders throughout your organization and no effective plan to develop them (by adopting a leadership model).

Remember the good news from the beginning of this book—that “your solution is much easier than you think” and “your reward is much bigger than you think”? Well, adopting a leadership model is surprisingly
easy, and it keeps paying dividends year after year. As your people move up through the organization and their leadership responsibilities grow, it pays off again and again, because they'll already have a strong understanding of leadership and its impact on performance.

Let’s say you promote from within to fill a new leadership role. If you promote someone who has already learned your leadership model, then he or she already understands sound leadership principles. He may need to learn how to manage a P&L or open new markets, but he will have leadership down cold.

Neutralizing the silent killer is accomplished by developing great leaders throughout your organization. Promoting the development of your people, by adopting a company-wide leadership model, really does make all the difference in the world. It makes your job easier, more enjoyable and rewarding and—dare I say it?—more fun!

Q. Stop and Think: What else do you have available that can increase revenue growth by 50 percent and profitability by as much as 60 percent? Anything?
SO THERE YOU HAVE IT. I've given you the bad news and the good news about leadership in your organization. We've done the forensic analysis of the silent killer's impact and exposed the impact that your leadership thinking has on your organization’s performance and growth. I've exposed the silent killer of performance and growth that haunts your business and revealed exactly how to eliminate it.

I hope by this point in your leadership journey you can clearly see the value of the three critical things you needed to know about the state of leadership in your business:

- Your **situation** is much **worse** than you think.
- Your **solution** is much **easier** than you think.
- Your **reward** is much **bigger** than you think.

Now that you've been made aware of all this, you'll begin to notice something. You'll start seeing evidence of the silent killer—the lack of strong leaders throughout your organization—all over the place. You'll hear about its impact on your team and you'll see its impact on their performance. You'll notice you're spending way too much time on “people issues” that are caused by ineffective leaders.

And once you start seeing these things, you'll want to do something to fix them. But before you take action, take some time to **think** about all
of this. Remember, it’s our thinking that drives our behavior, which determines our results.

THE “POSSIBILITY” QUESTIONS

Take some time and ponder the following questions about what your company’s future might hold:

1. If you had “Great Leaders of Great Teams” throughout your organization, how would it impact your company’s performance ... and your personal workload?

2. If you were able to “take the lid off” your people and unleash their full, untapped potential (which you’re already fully paying for), what do you think your company could accomplish or achieve?

3. If, almost magically, your employees were better able to solve problems, attack challenges and pursue the opportunities they come across every day, how far could your company go?

4. What would happen if you had the best leadership team in your industry? What are you doing to make that a reality?

5. Would you like to be the one to significantly increase your company’s performance, without having to work harder or longer? Can you even imagine making your job easier, more fun and feel less like, well, work?

Think through these questions. Imagine the possibilities. Write down your thoughts. Discuss them with a trusted associate who has been concerned about the same issues.

Then, decide you’ll actually do something. Do you want better results? Do you want to improve your situation? Do you want to stop throwing away 40 percent or more of company performance? You can. As I’ve said, the solution is easier than you think, and the reward much bigger. But you have to make a commitment. Once you’ve decided to pursue positive change, you’re ready to take the next step toward progress.
Conclusion

Your Next Step: A Real Leadership Conversation

I FOUNDED CRITICAL INSIGHT GROUP based on my passion for developing “Great Leaders of Great Teams” throughout an organization. That process always begins with a face-to-face, heart-to-heart talk. I call it a real leadership conversation. This is an honest discussion about your business, your leadership team, your current situation and what adopting a leadership model could do for you.

Of course, the question that probably comes to your mind is, “If we’re going to adopt a leadership model, which one should we choose? I wouldn’t know where to begin.” Not to worry—I’ve done the work for you.

I’ve invested years in researching, studying, forensically analyzing and testing leadership models. It’s what I do, instead of having a normal life! I have in-depth knowledge of all eight of the major leadership models in use today. I know who created them, the philosophies they’re based upon, where they apply, and their strengths and weaknesses. I’ve done all the research you wish you could do but don’t have the time or access to do.

As I investigated each of the eight leadership models, I did so with an open mind. But it became obvious in my research that one model stands head and shoulders above all the rest in its practicality and its ability to solve your leadership challenge.
I would be happy to find time to discuss with you what this leadership model can do for your business. If we decide to work together, I’ll provide powerful, proven and clearly structured programs to maximize the development of your team’s leadership skills and abilities. Rest assured, my approach is not to dump a box of curriculum materials on your desk and expect you to figure it out for yourself. I’ll be with you and your people every step of the way, leading interactive sessions with your team that will open their eyes to new potentials for personal development and improved performance.

As I say, it all begins with a conversation. So let’s talk! Why not contact me today? Together, we can put the silent killer out of business for good. I hope to hear from you soon!

Dale Henry, Founder and CEO
Critical Insight Group
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Endnotes

1 State of the American Manager, Gallup Organization, March 2015.
5 The Global Leadership and Talent Index, Boston Consulting Group, March 2015.
DALE HENRY BELIEVES you can only grow your business by growing your people.

As a student, practitioner, forensic researcher, and teacher of leadership and organizational performance for over 30 years, he has demonstrated an ability to develop strong, effective, confident, and truly influential leaders at all levels of an organization—leaders who know exactly how to build incredibly high-performing teams. His personal life mission is helping ordinary people accomplish extraordinary things.

Dale’s comfortable, real-world training style is known for three characteristics:

- As a continuing practitioner, he understands how to best convert valuable knowledge into practical application in actual everyday work settings
- An uncanny ability to find and develop the combination of current strengths and future potential within each person he works with
- An ever-present sense of humor that makes personal growth fascinating, fun and energizing

In addition to founding Critical Insight Group, Dale is also a founding partner in the John Maxwell Team, an international association of master leadership and professional development coaches; and a Master Human Capital Strategist with the Human Capital Institute.
Critical Insight Group consistently develops “Great Leaders of Great Teams” by focusing on the three drives of human performance in business: leadership; teamwork; and team (and individual) performance. Each of these operates on “laws” that determine your success. All of them are learnable. Let Dale show you how.

To learn more about Dale’s work, visit the Critical Insight Group website, or connect with Dale on LinkedIn.