

Leadership Perspective: What's Different About Leading Today?

I'm sure every generation of leaders has sensed differences in the world they face. Today is no different, and leadership faces a variety of unimagined challenges. Over the next ten weeks or so, we'll look at the uniqueness of our work environment and economy. Although these areas are common to all leaders, the results we see now are for the most part a result of direct marketing and today's contact centres.

To put it in some context, I watched an ad on TV last night with the infinity sign whirling around two people in an attempt to reestablish the "connection" between them as they moved through their busy day. It started me thinking about where "relationship management" is today. Nowadays, leaders must be obsessed with the entire question of establishing, maintaining and leveraging relationships with their staff and through their staff with their customers, with their peers and those that lead them - all the while containing or cutting costs to the bone.

Faith Popcorn, John Naisbitt and Tom Peters all hinted at the forthcoming backlash to cocooning and bunkering or whatever you want to call the desire to "check out, put up protective fences and live out of your personal computer".

In Australia, Hugh Mackay was the first to discuss the ever-growing problem of managing "invisible money". A variety of other Australian thinkers and authors have raised the red flag at some of the changes to warn us to be careful for the future. Two in particular, beside the work of those above, stand out for me.

In Naked Truth, Fabian Dattner has written one of the most compelling books, she calls "an open letter to the Australian working community" to discuss many of the most significant changes. Professor Robert Spillane of the Macquarie Graduate School of Management has made his observations on the clash of Australian culture with American and UK leadership theories known through the media and in his lectures.

As someone who has worked in and consulted to the "invisible" world of direct marketing and contact centres for over 20 years, I've witnessed many developments in the industry as I've worked with over 50 contact centres in ten countries.

So for this section of "Management Focus", I've reviewed my observations and condensed them into ten observations to consider for yourself. They are what I call the ten "Ts" of Difference for Today's Leaders.

The Ten "Ts" of Difference for Today's Leaders

Truth	Trust
Technology	Time
Temperament	Touch
Training	Trophies
Tradition	Transformation

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