



## TenStep Supplemental Paper

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### **Beyond the Open Door**

*CEOs are opening up to discussions about their shortcomings*

Any CEO would shudder at the thought of having to inherit a company that has a less than favorable reputation in the market. If the company's stock isn't doing well either, implying a loss of faith on the part of the investors, it makes things even more difficult. To top it all, imagine his or her plight if the company's 'integrity' is under scrutiny too.

How can the CEO ever hope to turn around the company's fortunes? The answer lies in just three words - leading by example!

#### **Leaders should...**

The list of things leaders (especially in business) should do while in command has been debated and discussed incessantly. One concept that has gained momentum during the past decade or so is the open-door policy that many company heads have adopted.

Briefly, this policy says that the leader or CEO should be accessible to his executives instead of being caged behind a glass wall. Symbolically, leaving the 'door open' implies that the CEO is open to suggestions and complaints alike.

But there is an interesting twist to this concept now - opening doors to suggestions and complaints could also mean that the suggestions and complaints are directed at the CEO personally!

#### **The boogieman!**

Gone are the days when CEOs were those mysterious figures that very few had seen or heard from, much less made a suggestion to. Now, it's the day and age of CEOs like Michael Dell (of Dell computers) and Larry Ellison (of Oracle), who have become eye candy for the media. The media is largely responsible for bringing the exclusive lot of CEOs out of their high towers and making them public figures.

Being in the media eye prohibits CEOs from just brushing aside bad decisions, so the pressure on CEOs to improve themselves has increased. This in turn has forced CEOs and high-level management to venture out in search of new ways to learn without having to give up or undermine their positions.

For a while, business coaches and consultants became the order of the day. Like personal trainers who help you get back in shape, business coaches became the missing link between the company and the CEO. However, even this practice has evolved slightly as CEOs are now turning to the best resource at their disposal to enhance their own efficiency - their employees!

CEOs are often seen as facilitators for the company and are often looked up to by the junior officers. However, they can make mistakes too - who is going to point them out?



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A feedback loop from the employees is a way out. CEOs are being encouraged to take feedback from their employees about their decisions and behavior.

### **Walk the talk**

Apart from taking feedback from their employees, another thing that CEOs can do to improve the organization is set an example themselves. A leading expert on how CEOs should behave to survive in the market advises: *Say what you do and do what you say. Create the right environment for people to learn from their mistakes. Listen with your ears, your eyes, and your heart.*

### **Get your fingers dirty**

*Do unto others what you would have them do to you!*

To be effective, CEOs should be capable enough to do the tasks that they delegate to others. Leading by example does two very important things: it inspires people and it garners respect.

Gaining respect becomes harder when the CEO stands up in front of an audience and talks about being punctual in the office when he reports in at noon. If the boss sets an example, especially, in times of crisis, he is inspiring the rest to follow his lead. In a way, he shows his employees that he puts his money where his mouth is. It proves that the boss is an honorable person who willing to do his bit apart from barking out commands for others to follow.

The new age CEO (if we can call him that) is one that is willing to talk about issues, even if it is concerning his own shortcomings. The door is finally open to all sorts of discussions!