



TenStep Supplemental Paper

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Exploring for Experience

Leadership and teamwork activities in the most extreme conditions (when success is a matter of life or death) are different from those experienced in a comfortable office setting. Robert Swan, a modern-day explorer and environmentalist, was the first person to walk to both the Poles. This experience gave him a deep understanding of leadership and teamwork.

Swan, one of the world's top motivational speakers, teaches business executives at organizations like Merrill Lynch, Frito-Lay and IBM. His training focuses on the principles of leadership, teamwork, communication and also the environmental problems in the world. The training sessions usually involve taking the executives to expeditions to the South Pole.

'Persistence' and 'brilliance' are the guiding principles of these expeditions. His presentations are intentionally low-tech and include fascinating stories of his journeys and of enormous ambition and success, peppered with episodes of disappointment and difficulty.

The corporate expedition teams usually consist of executives from different regions to achieve team diversity. Swan says, "If everybody in the team is the same, you won't have the diversity that you need to survive. You need to have different attitudes, different ways of thinking and doing things."

The expeditions teach top management the necessity of a genuine vision and the kind of drive and commitment needed to accomplish the vision. The remarkable stories of adventure, exploration, fear, and triumph that Swan provides are apt metaphors for success for many companies today.