

BedTimes

JULY 2007 ISPA

THE BUSINESS JOURNAL FOR THE SLEEP PRODUCTS INDUSTRY

Interzum Cologne

At the stylish trade show

Remembering the 'why'
behind open-flame regs

Report: E-commerce
grows 25% in 2006

Stop making presentations;
start making sales



Employee Relations

Avoiding accidental leadership Make sure you, employees are ready for promotions

By Monica Wofford

Jim had been a production manager for years and was happy at his company. His job had become easy and, frankly, he could almost do his work in his sleep.

Michelle, who held a similar post, was really blossoming and showing true leadership skills. Yet with Jim having far more experience, the president of the bedding manufacturer couldn't very well promote Michelle to director of operations without ruffling feathers.

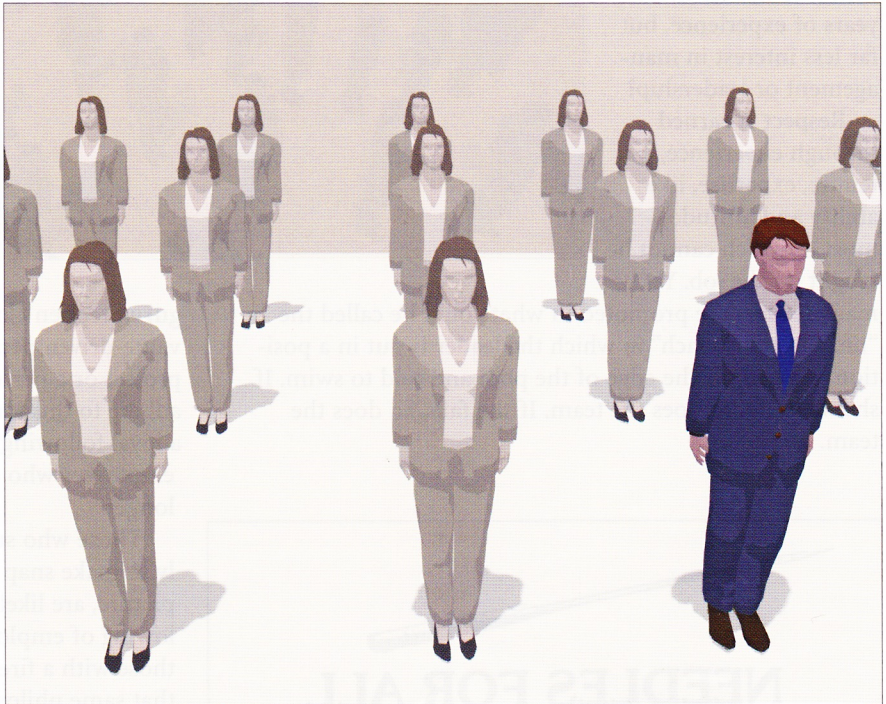
The president had talked with Jim several times about taking a larger leadership role, but he wasn't interested. The director of operations position had become vacant, and the president was thinking of putting Michelle in that post to let her leadership skills shine.

She didn't have all the necessary experience and there were others who were qualified, but he really wanted to give Michelle a chance and he thought she deserved it.

He decided he was going to announce Michelle as the operations director. The only problem was going to be how to break the news to others in the department. He went to see the human resources manager to strategize.

Have you been there? Thinking you've got the job when—out of the blue—someone comes from outside the company or from a completely unrelated department and snatches the job out from under you?

I call this the Phenomenon of Accidental Leadership: When someone is promoted to a position for which he may not be the most qualified. Can someone be a leader by accident? Absolutely. It happens all



the time.

In promotion and hiring decisions, the rule of thumb is often not a rule at all, but more of a guess. Senior and middle managers place employees in roles for which they might have the right skills, but perhaps not the necessary credibility. Or they position employees in roles in which they might have knowledge to impart and teach, but not the ability to teach.

How do you promote and make leaders on purpose instead of by accident? Answer the following questions before making your next promotion or hiring decision.

Does he have the skills?

This age-old question is answered often, but usually not completely. The skills for the job extend far beyond the ability to run the serger-

flanger or place a new line on a dealer's floor. Does the person have the skills to lead, guide, motivate, manage and disperse rewards and consequences to those he will be leading? Does he have the emotional intelligence to defer his own emotions for the greater good or a better solution? Does he have the people skills to manage conflict among the team, handle a major change in the company or calm a customer down in an escalation?

These are the skills that make great leaders. You can easily teach someone to run the computer software on the quilter. The other skills can take months of development and sometimes years of trial and error.

Does she have the team's respect?

This quality is an elusive one as it relies on the perceptions of those the

leader would be leading. Do the potential team members of this leader think she is credible? Would she be respected? Would she be able to handle someone like Jim, who has far more years of experience, but far less interest in management or leadership?

Respect is earned through experience, tenure, expertise, likeability and attitude—most of which cannot be taught on the job. Yet many leaders are promoted in what could be called the “lifejacket approach” in which the leader is put in a position, pushed off the edge of the pool and told to swim. If she makes it, so does the team. If she fails, so does the team.



Why put people in these positions without first investigating if they have the credibility to command the helm and, if not, helping them develop it over time?

What’s his philosophy?

Employees increasingly show us that they want to be valued and considered a vital part of the team or company.

First Things First, a book by management

guru Stephen Covey, details the skills needed to be a value-driven person, looking at the value of a decision, a project or a person prior to taking action. Those who adhere to this kind of philosophy are more likely to create a loyal following of well-developed, highly motivated employees who complain less and wish to stay on a job longer.

Those who subscribe to a fire-drill philosophy are likely to make snap decisions without considering the larger picture, are likely to be reactive and will likely have a following of employees with similar reaction patterns. Thus those with a fire-drill philosophy develop employees with that same philosophy—and the entire epidemic of reactionary behavior becomes contagious.

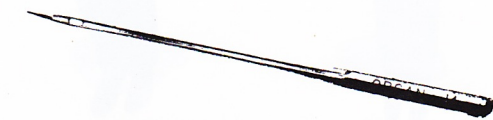
No matter the questions you ask of those you intend to promote or the questions asked of those promoted above you, there will be times when leaders get there by accident.

One way to combat this is by preparing a funnel of candidates for leadership roles before a vacancy exists.

In order to be successful, leaders must have strong communication skills and rapport-building behaviors. They must be able to create trust, earn respect and allow people to grow.

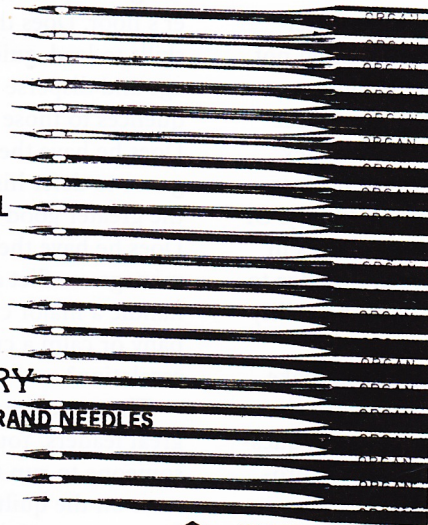
Most of us do not acquire those skills or behaviors by accident. Why would we expect that being given a title would suddenly make them appear? Only with intention and preparation can one truly become an effective leader. **BT**

Monica Wofford, founder of Monica Wofford International, has more than 17 years of experience as a business consultant, trainer and speaker. She leverages scientific research and data to design curricula and presentations that positively impact both behavior and performance. She is the author of Contagious Leadership, Contagious Confidence and Contagious Customer Service. For more information, check www.monicawofford.com or call 866-382-0121.



NEEDLES FOR ALL SEWING APPLICATIONS

- PATHE**
- GRIBETZ**
- EMCO**
- MAMUT**
- UNITED**
- SINGER**
- UNION SPECIAL**
- JUKI**
- BROTHER**
- QUALITY**
- ECONOMY**
- FAST DELIVERY**



Featuring **ORGAN BRAND NEEDLES**



Diamond Needle Corp



60 Commerce Road
 Carlstadt, New Jersey 07072
 800-221-5818 201-507-1771
 FAX: 201-507-1715 (domestic)
 800-833-3363 (international)
www.diamondneedle.com
sales@diamondneedle.com