

## President's Message

# Skills Every Modern Manager Must Have

*How to stay ahead of the pack*

**T**here are lots of management gurus who profess to have the secret to managerial success in today's workplace. Some of them have a list of ten or twelve basic skills they consider as a prerequisite for rising to the top. For me personally, there are just three essential skills that you need in order to make it in your industry or career.

These skills are the ability to communicate, negotiate and educate.

What separates the great from the good in the modern workplace is having good communication skills. This is not just the ability to make a good presentation. The trick to mastering communications is to balance the output with input. You do that by listening, first to learn from others on how to do things. Then you must listen more carefully for signs that things may be going wrong and know how to correct them.

The best managers in the world make great speeches and can motivate people from the front of the room. You will not find them sitting in their office very much. They are out amongst the people – their employees, customers and stakeholders. They are busy listening and learning. Some people think they can get by on their charm and they can for a while. But the best communicators not only arrive, they stay a long time.

The ability to negotiate is often undervalued and under-appreciated in the modern workplace. It is true that some people have an innate ability to negotiate. Those are the kids in your elementary school class who were trading their apples for cookies. However, negotiation can also be learned. If you want to be a great manager, you better learn quickly. The fact is that almost everything we do at work is at least part negotiation. If we figure out how to do it well, we'll have a better chance of getting ahead in the rat race.

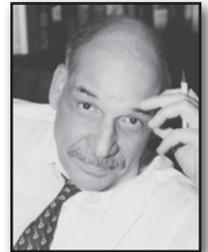
The best negotiators are those who practice win-win strategies, ones where everybody gets something out of the transaction. Watch the master negotiators at work in your office. They are the ones who exchange old accounts or projects for ones that they have a better chance of succeeding at without taking anything away from anyone else. You will notice that they sometimes take risks, but that's part of negotiating too. If you haven't been paying attention, you may want to look a little closer so that you can see how well these risk takers are actually doing.

Finally, the ability to educate yourself and others is crucial to your managerial success. If you stop learning, you stop growing. If you are not able to teach others, you will never be able to delegate anything. How much fun would that be?

Continuous learning is a positive attribute of the most successful people in the new working world. They find ways to learn new skills and new techniques or to expose themselves to new ideas and great thinkers on a regular basis. If you want to achieve your full potential, you need to add ongoing education, both formal and informal, to your business repertoire. You also need to practice teaching, skill transferring, coaching and mentoring so that you can train not only the next generation, but your cadre of helpers, assistant managers and supervisors.

After giving you all this advice most of which you have heard many times before, I will leave you with sager advice from the king of managerial delegation, Ronald Reagan. He said "Surround yourself with the best people you can find, delegate authority and don't interfere."

*Brian Pascal is President of IPM [Institute of Professional Management].*



Brian W. Pascal  
President