"Don't Oil The Squeaky Wheel"
Wolf J Rinke
Notes by Dave Kraft

Wolf J. Rinke, PH.D, is president and founder of Wolf Rinke Associates, Inc., a human resources and management consulting company dedicated to helping organizations and individuals maximize their potential. He has been featured on CNN and NBC news, and his articles have appeared in *Success, Reader's Digest, Bottom Line, Family Circle, Business Life, Selling Power,* and *Men's Life.*

KNOWLEDGE IS NOT POWER

Assumptions that have worked for you in the past that need to be revisited, reevaluated, and maybe even, horror of horrors, changed. (1) There are no failures; there are only *outcomes*. The key, then, is not knowledge but doing, experimenting, making yourself uncomfortable (2); Get rid of "ya-but." (4) So take your *but* out of your mouth; You probably have, but are you doing it? (5)

MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP THEORIES DO NOT WORK

Just about any management or leadership model works *if* you build a strong foundation and *if* you have the guts to stick with it over the long term.
Primary practice 1: Strategy. Identify and practice a clear and focused strategy based on market needs that are consistently communicated to employees, customers, and shareholders. *Primary practice 2: Execution.* Be totally committed to disciplined operational execution. *Primary practice 3: Culture.* Build and maintain a high-performance-based ethical culture. *Primary practice 4: Structure:* Design and maintain a flat, flexible, and fast organizational structure.
Secondary practice 1: Talent. Aggressively recruit and retain talented employees. *Secondary practice 2: Innovation.* Develop industry-changing products and services and internal improvements. *Secondary practice 3: Leadership.* Find and develop leaders with excellent people skills and the ability to anticipate opportunities and solve problems. (9)

We trained hard but it seemed that every time we were beginning to form up into teams we would be reorganized. I was to learn later in life that we

tend to meet any new situation by reorganizing; and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralization. [Please note the date.] --Petronius Arbiter (First Century A.D.) (10)

BE SELFISH

No man is fit to command another than cannot command himself. –William Penn (13) This need-to-be-liked issue prevented Kevin from doing the right thing for the company. (If you are like Kevin, remember that your goal should be to be *respected*, not necessarily liked. Self-awareness without a doubt is the most important leadership attribute. (14) And without ownership, nothing—yes, I do mean nothing—will change! *Positive explanatory style* (PES). Using all your mental energy to find the bad in the bad, that's a negative explanatory style—NES. (15) Chase your passion, not your pay.; how you feel is your choice. (17) And yet you can get rid of your ego with just five powerful phrases expressed liberally and from the heart. *You are right about that. I've made a mistake. I changed my mind. I don't know.* (19) *Let's agree to disagree.* (20);

DON'T MANAGE PEOPLE

You Manage Things; you lead people. –Admiral Grace Murray Hopper;

 Most people crave to be led but don't want to be managed. (*paradigm* comes from the Greek and refers to "a way of interpreting the world around you.") (21); Daniel Goleman studied a random sample of 3871 executives selected from 20,000 executives worldwide…six distinctive leadership styles,…; the organizational climate was responsible for a third of a leader's desired results. Here, then, are the six leadership styles in order of their impact on an organization's climate or culture and the situations in which they will provide you with the best results:

Coercive. This is a leader who demands immediate compliance—the "it's my way or the highway" style. This style has a very high probability of destroying your organizational climate and possibly even you. It may be useful in an emergency, a "turnaround" situation, or as a last resort with a

problem employee. This leadership style has the <u>most negative impact</u> on the overall organizational climate. Avoid it at all costs.

<mark>*Pacesetting.*</mark> This is a leader who sets extremely high standards for performance—someone who wants results yesterday. Even though this leader typically will role-model what's expected from others, it's still a climate killer. It is only successful when you work with extremely highly motivated and competent team members who know the leader extremely well. Others will feel overwhelmed and give up because they cannot see themselves reach the leader's unrealistic expectations.

This style has virtually <u>the same negative impact</u> on the overall organizational climate as the coercive style. Use this style very sparingly.

<mark>*Coaching.*</mark> This is a leader who is focused on "growing people." Coaching leaders are great delegators and are willing to put up with short-term failures provided they lead to learning and long-term (24) development. This style works best when you want to help employees improve their performance or develop their long-term strengths. This style has a <u>relatively high</u> positive impact on the overall organizational climate that is virtually the same as the democratic style. Use this style when employees are interested and willing to learn and be coached.

<mark>*Democratic.*</mark> This is a leader who wants to achieve consensus through participation. This style builds trust, respect, and commitment and works best when you want to get employees to "buy in," achieve consensus, or provide input. It does not work when there are severe time constraints or if employees are confused or uninformed. If handled correctly, this style has virtually the <u>same positive impact</u> on the overall organizational climate as the coaching style. Use this style when you have ample time and work with employees who are knowledgeable and informed.

<mark>*Affiliative.*</mark> This is a leader who is interested in creating harmony and building emotional bonds with employees. This leader is a relationship builder who is focused primarily on the people issues of organizational life. This style works best when you want to motivate employees, especially when they face stressful situations or when you want to build team harmony, improve communication, increase morale, or repair broken trust. This style has a

slightly more positive impact on the overall organizational climate than the coaching and democratic styles. Because this style has virtually no downside, it is the best overall approach. Therefore, if you are in doubt, use the affiliative style.

Authoritative. This is a leader who mobilizes people with an incredible level of enthusiasm and a clear vision. This is a visionary leader who gives people lots of leeway to innovate and take calculated risks provided that they move in the direction of the stated vision. This style works best when changes necessitate a new vision or when employees are looking for a new direction. This style fails when employees are more knowledgeable or experienced than the leader or if the authoritative style becomes overbearing.

Provided that it is used (25) with finesse, this style has the most positive impact on the overall organizational climate. Use this style if you have a clear vision of the future and you can mobilize people to buy into your vision. "…humongous overarching goal" (HOG) (26); *Vary your leadership style in accordance with the situation. If in doubt, use the affiliative leadership style. Check for leader-culture alignment. Use multiple interviewers whenever you hire new team members.* (28);

DON'T BE PROUD

One of the best ways to assess the interpersonal skills of leaders is to observe how they deal with credit and blame. …planting seeds and letting their team members nurture those seeds. (29) If you consistently give your credit away, *you* will—over the long term—get all of it back and then some. (30);

Lester Thurow, a professor of management and economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology said: "Arrogance does not just make you sloppy. It also means when you find a mistake you can't admit it." Thurow believes that humbleness is the most important of Nokia's core values because it is the antidote to the sin of arrogance and pride. (31) *Provide lots of opportunities for your team members to experiment.* Publicly reward calculated risk taking (32) *Publicly admit to your team members when you have made a mistake. Banish the "we are the best" syndrome… Get rid of the "not invented here"* (33)

DON'T BE TOUGH

<u>'Kssing up and kicking down'</u> (35) it is hard work to be a soft manager. (37);

The Law of Liking maintains that *people are more likely to like people who like them. 1: Send out liking signals. 2: Become an active listener so that you can find something to like about the other person. 3: Find what you have in common with another person and let him know about it.* (38); *Judgment in Managerial Decision Making; People are more likely to heed the advice of experts.* (40); that which is less available is perceived as more valuable. (41); "learned optimism"; attitude of gratitude. (42);

DON'T PLAY TO WIN

Leadership is getting people to do what they don't want to do in order to achieve what they want to achieve. –Tom Landry (45); whatever you—the leader—do will be emulated by your team members. (46); your ethics are always showing, and your team members are always—yes I mean always—taking their cue from you,; great leaders will do the right thing, even if it is at their expense. (47);

People are less likely to make high-quality decisions after long periods of success. Dissent is good—no wait, it's absolutely essential. (49) *Get yourself a coach or mentor*—anyone whom you have given permission to tell you what you *don't* want to hear. (50) celebrate employees who demonstrate work-life balance. *Practice open-book management.* Your employees have to know what's going on if you want them to help make things better. (51); managers frequently reward behavior they *don't* want. (56) Celebrate at every opportunity. (57);

PRACTICE KID NOT KITA

Practice KID, not KITA (Kick in Desire, not Kick in the Ass) (59); only 42 percent of the nation's employees consider themselves loyal to their jobs and about a fourth plan to stay at the current job for only two years. 56

percent of 2300 employees surveyed feel that their employers fail to show concern for them (61) The importance of getting people to *want* versus *have* to do something. Desire is a powerful motivator that gets people to take action without the boss being around. (62) Smart Steps: Catch your team members doing things almost right!

Measure job satisfaction at least once a year. Provide team members with career growth opportunities either in your organization or another. (66) Ask for volunteers to serve on a "Fun Team"… Spend at least 33 percent of your time with your team members. Show a real interest in your team members' personal lives. Ask your team members often "What can I do to make your job easier?" "What stands in your way of giving 111 percent?" "Are we having fun yet?" (67) "Could you do me a favor?" This one just doesn't sit well with lots of managers. (71);

DON'T HAVE PEOPLE WORK FOR YOU

Only passionate employees will deliver consistently excellent service and improve the bottom line. (72);

Ask five of your team members to serve on a "Celebration Team." …find out what your team members love to do, and do everything in your power to place them in those positions. (73); High trust starts with telling employees more than they want to know, making sure that your word is as good as gold,; become aware of your conversations, including the ones that you have inside your head. Make it a practice to say positive things, especially about other people, or say nothing at all. (75)

DON'T FOCUS ON THE BOTTOM LINE

Install an execution strategy to keep everyone accountable (79) The magic is *not* in having a philosophy or having it in the right format, the magic is *living it!* (83);

Teeth are the specific benchmarks or metrics that transform the philosophy into reality. (84) *if it's fun, it gets done.* (85) Our mission describes: What we are in business for. What products/services we provide. What our

products/services will do for our customers. What sets us apart from the competition. Our vision describes: Our dream for the future (what we want to be when we grow up). A journey not a destination. What is unique about us. What our real priorities are for the next 10 to 30 years. What we want to accomplish that will cause most team members to be committed, aligned, and proud to be part of this organization/company. Our core values describe: What is important to us (what we will *never* compromise even if it becomes a competitive *dis*advantage).

It's short, to the point, passionate, and memorable. It has no more than five core values. It fits on one page. Most important: Every member of the leadership team "lives" the philosophy! (Even if you don't do any of the above, this one is nonnegotiable.) (85);

DON'T HAVE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The greater danger is not that our hopes are too high and we fail to reach them. It's that they are too low, and we do. –Michelangelo; I recommend that you get *one* humongous overarching goal (HOG) (89); Remember: *Whatever you reward is what you get.* (92);

Exhibit 12-1 HOG Check Sheet…Does your humongous overarching goal (HOG) describe a huge, daunting challenge that:

- Is energizing—gets team members' juices flowing?
- Creates a clear image in people's minds?
- Requires little or no explanation?
- Engages your team members' emotions?
- Is tangible?
- Is clear, concise, and to the point?
- Is compelling?
- Is tied to an incentive system that all employees can affect?
- Has a 50 to 75 percent of probability of success over the next 10 to 30 years?
- Is perceived as feasible by at least two-thirds of team members?
- Will serve as a unifying force?
- Moves you closer to the attainment of your vision?
- Describes a clear finish line?

- Instills passion and commitment in at least two-thirds of team members?
- Is supported by a HIR that keeps team members motivated? (96)

TRUST ALL THE PEOPLE ALL THE TIME

Now stop a moment and think of the incredible costs and loss in productivity sustained by the company all because the leader is unable to trust people and is unwilling to take ownership of a problem that can only be corrected by affecting changes in himself. Trust is the foundation on which all relationships and interactions are built. And once that foundation is destroyed, relationships and interactions can no longer function smoothly, effectively, or productively. Make sure that your word is *always* as good as gold, that your team members never have to second-guess anything you tell them (101) Without high touch, however, in the form of meetings, organizational retreats, and conferences, trust will wither on the vine. (104)

DON'T OIL THE SQUEAKY WHEEL

She had been spending a disproportionate amount of her available time dealing with the troublemakers, the whiners, and the blamers. The way you achieve results is not by what you do but rather by what your people do. Since your people are responsible for 85 percent of your success (108); "Spend more time with the people who make you look great and spend less time with the trouble makers—the squeaky wheels." (109);

Smile Since I just talked about firing someone, here are several phrases you may wish to use the next time you have to engage in this unpleasant part of your job: I don't know what we'll do without you, but we are going to try. It's not that you aren't a responsible worker.

DON'T WORY ABOUT PAY

Public recognition is the breakfast of champions. (117) In fact, you've been responsible for more disasters than any one else in this company. I've always told you that it is not a good idea to mix business with pleasure. Today I'm going (to) break that rule. You're fired. Tell me—how long have you been with

this company, not counting tomorrow? I've got good news for you. You won't have to worry about being late for work again. (110) Whatever you reward is what you will get more of… (111); Place people in positions that enable them to build on their strengths. Do what's unpopular. Strive to have team members respect you, not like you. When you want everyone to like you, you'll avoid the tough decisions. (112); MBE—*management by embarrassment*

There are no secrets in organizations! Please read that again because there aren't too many absolutes that I know about. More important, I can't even begin to tell you how many leaders all over the world haven't figured this out. They keep spending an inordinate amount of energy trying to keep organizational stuff secret. (118)

DON'T TELL PEOPLE WHAT TO DO

The way you get buy-ins is to <u>ask more and assign less</u>, to involve people, and to listen to people. (123); What are *you* going to do about that? What do *you* think? Lead like a coach, not a cop. (127); *…you get the type and quality of performance you expect, measure, and accept.* (128); Remember, your role is to facilitate their thought processes, *not* to think for them. (129);

You also must master the art of letting go. I mean really letting go and giving away your power. …you must tell your team members how far they can go without coming to you, and then you must stay out of their way and let them do their thing. …having the coachee state in her own words what, specifically, the two of you have agreed to. (130); …be sure to put a note on your calendar or your personal digital assistant (PDA) that will remind you of the date and time your coachee promised to provide you with an update or any other kind of feedback. (131); "To consistently exceed our customers' expectations and become the standard by which all waterproofing companies are measured." (135). Define your expectations to every team member… (136) For 2001 were only $761 per training-eligible employee, which translates to 1.9 percent of payroll or an average of 23.7 hours of training per year. (144);

DON'T REPOND TO THE URGENT

THE PRODUCTIVITY OF MOST MANAGERS STINKS. Why? Because they pay too much attention to the urgent. Putting out fires may be a key skill for firefighters, but it will keep you in the minor leagues as a leader. I'm currently in the process of coaching nine senior managers from a global company. and the one thing that all of them have in common is that they are totally overwhelmed.

One of the biggest problems is that they are always connected and that each e-mail and phone call becomes an urgent issue that must be responded to immediately. And the urgent calls just keep on coming, one seemingly more important than the other. And before you know it, another day has (151) passed without any concentrated think time and without any time to attack major projects that have an impact on the bottom line. Instead of managing time, we manage and prioritize the activities in those 24 hours. And we get everything done that we perceive to be important. (152); Similarly, committed leaders dedicate virtually all their time to the organization and expect everyone to do the same. Most of us are overcommitted, overwhelmed, and overinformed. (162); …do you really need eight credit cards, or would you be better off if you had "plastic surgery"? (164);