




ENLIGHTENED LEADERSHIP: THINK STRATEGIC, ACT TACTICAL

| KAREN BEAMAN

“Think strategic, act tactical” a former boss used to tell me and I can’t think of any better advice than this for HR leaders in today’s turbulent times. Maintaining a long-term, strategic focus while working on short-term, concrete activities is one strategy for results. There is no question that this is hard to do when we’re under increasing pressure to do more with less. But the only way to do more with less is to take a smarter approach. And the way to find a smarter approach is to take some time out of the day to read and reflect. What could you do better, faster, cheaper, easier if you just did it differently?

Josh Weston, long time CEO of ADP, used to call it “39 and 1”. Take one hour out of your 39 hour work-week (or two hours out of your 50-hour week) to think about how you could make your job better, improve customer service, increase revenues, reduce costs, or whatever improves business in your area of responsibility. Then implement it. Small, incremental process improvements are significantly easier to implement and, over time, can produce profound results.

So stop waiting to get the approval or the budget for this or that project. Rather, keep the strategic goal in mind, but keep moving forward tactically, step-by-step. You’ll not only improve the company’s business, but you’ll make your job more fun and effective too. Some the best reading I think to get the strategic thoughts flowing include: Harvard Business Review, McKinsey Quarterly, Economist, and Systematic HR.

Make reading and learning part of the first hour of your day every day. Use those ideas and learnings to “think strategic and act tactical” for the rest of the day. You’ll be on your way to enlightened leadership! 

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