

Application Guide

HARNESSING THE POWER OF FOCUS



BOTTOM LINE:

The bullseye of great leadership is to focus on only doing what only you can do.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

I. These leadership **myths** are roadblocks to harnessing the power of focus:

- A. Good leaders are good at everything.
 - 1. Most leaders are generally good at one or two things.
 - 2. Good leaders learn to *focus* on those things.
- B. Good leaders focus on their weaknesses in order to make them strengths, rather than developing their strengths.
 - 1. Weaknesses will only improve marginally no matter how hard you work at them.
 - 2. Fully exploited strengths are of far greater value to an organization than marginally improved weaknesses.

II. The **best kept secrets** of leadership:

- A. The less you do, the more you accomplish.
 - 1. When you focus on the areas where you add the most value, you will ultimately accomplish more.
- B. The less you do, the more you empower others to accomplish.
 - 1. As you delegate, you create more space in the organization for people to do what they do best.

III. Five reasons we often miss the power of focus:

- A. We buy into the “well-rounded myth.”
 - 1. The goal should be to build a well-rounded *organization*, not to be a well-rounded leader.
 - 2. Tip: Play to your strengths and delegate your weaknesses.
- B. We don’t distinguish between our authority and our core competencies.
 - 1. As a leader you may be given responsibility in an area you know little to nothing about. But when we impose our authority in areas we lack competence, we undermine the efficiency of the organization.
 - 2. Tip: Leverage your authority as little as possible and encourage others to make decisions in the areas they hold the most expertise.
- C. We’re not aware of our strengths.
 - 1. We assume we’re good at something simply because it’s the thing we’ve always done.
 - 2. Admitting weakness does not diminish our effectiveness, but refusing to admit weakness does.
 - 3. Tip: It’s okay to not be good at something, but it’s not okay to keep doing the things you are not good at.
- D. We feel guilty delegating things we don’t enjoy because we assume everyone else hates them too.
 - 1. Not everyone has the same likes and dislikes or strengths and weaknesses.
 - 2. Tip: Your weakness is someone else’s opportunity.

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- E. We don't take time to develop other leaders.
 - 1. Being committed to growth requires teaching someone else how to do something.
 - 2. Tip: Leadership is not primarily about getting things done right; it's about getting things done right *through other people*.
 - a. When we do it all ourselves, we get stuck in roles we shouldn't be in.
 - b. We can multiply our efforts through others by positioning them to do what they do best.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION OR TEAM DISCUSSION

- 1. Where do you add the most value to your organization? Are you able to spend a good amount of your time and energy in this area?
- 2. Is there anything you need to give up in order to focus on the things that you do best? If so, what is it?
- 3. If you could write your ideal job description based on your strengths, what would it say?
- 4. Which of the five reasons listed typically cause you to miss the opportunities that come from focused leadership? Are there other reasons? How can you challenge yourself to push past these reasons?

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