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Management Consultants  
In Communications

# GETTING THE BOSS TO LISTEN:

## Becoming a Trusted Advisor

### *Participant Guide*

*A Web Seminar Sponsored by the*  
**International Association of  
Business Communicators (IABC)**


*Presented by*  
**James E. Lukaszewski,  
ABC, APR, Fellow PRSA**

**Wednesday, December 16, 2009  
12:00 – 1:30 p.m. EST**

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### *Contents*

- Participant Letter
- PowerPoint Presentation
- Handout
- James E. Lukaszewski Biography



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In Communications

December 2009

Dear Web Seminar Participant:

Thank you for registering for the IABC virtual seminar, *Getting the Boss to Listen: Becoming a Trusted Advisor*. During the brief time we'll be together by telephone on December 16th, I'll talk about the crucial, personal beliefs and actions that will enable you to become a more truly strategic thinker.

The content of this program is in five sections:

1. What management expects
2. What management wants
3. The seven disciplines of the trusted strategic advisor
4. Strategic tools
5. Questions and answers

Please review the enclosed materials. I'll use these thought blocks during my presentation. During the last 20 minutes of the program, time will be devoted to the specific questions and concerns of those participating.

Should you wish to contact me ahead of time with the issues or questions you'd like me to address during the seminar, you may do so by phone or E-mail:

914.681.0000 – Office  
tlg@e911.com – E-mail

This program is based on my latest book, *Why Should the Boss Listen to You? The Seven Disciplines of the Trusted Strategic Advisor*. The program is a 90-minute snapshot of those behaviors and skills that can make you a much more sought after influential advisor.

If you would like to visit my Web site to get a flavor for the extensive knowledge and background brought to bear on today's topic, please go to:

[www.e911.com](http://www.e911.com) – Web site

Thank you for participating in this Web seminar. I know you'll find the program very helpful, useful, and important. I hope it will change your life in some respects.

Sincerely,

James E. Lukaszewski, ABC, APR, Fellow PRSA  
Chairman and President  
The Lukaszewski Group Inc.

P.S. *Why Should the Boss Listen to You? The Seven Disciplines of the Trusted Strategic Advisor*, published by Jossey-Bass, is now in bookstores and is also available on [www.e911.com](http://www.e911.com), [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com), [BarnesandNoble.com](http://BarnesandNoble.com), or [800ceoRead.com](http://800ceoRead.com). The book describes a powerful approach to getting into the inner circle.

Welcome to the IABC Web Seminar  
Wednesday, December 16, 2009

## Getting the Boss to Listen: Becoming a Trusted Advisor

By James E. Lukaszewski,  
*ABC, APR, Fellow PRSA*

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## Questions for Jim

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## Questions for Jim

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August 22, 2007

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 \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Please Tell Jim Where You Work**

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## Today's Program

- The Trusted Strategic Advisor
- Management Perspective
- Seven Disciplines
- Strategic Tools
- Question and Answer

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## It's About the Boss

- What they want
- Who they are
- What they need
- Who they trust and why
- How they choose who'll be at the table
- What they expect from consultants and advisors

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## It's About You

- How to be truly strategic
- How to get their attention
- How to give advice they'll use
- What you have to know
- How do you get there earlier, or at all
- Teaching them to take your advice
- How to get to really know these people
- How to get them to recognize your real value

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## My Assumptions . . .

1. You are the table
2. You recognize what you need to do to be trusted
3. You are willing to change yourself to get there
4. YOYO

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## My Philosophy

1. All problems are management problems before they are any other kind of problem.
2. All management problems are leadership challenges.
3. Leadership resides with those who can maintain more supporters than detractors.
4. Staff functions exist and are funded by leadership to help leaders do their jobs better.
5. Managers and leaders want to make the decisions . . . often based on the advice they receive from trusted strategic advisors.

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## Getting the Boss to Listen

- Provide on-the-spot advice.
- Candor.
- Say things that matter, from the boss' perspective.
- Say things the boss doesn't already know.
- Always provide (at least three) options.
- Help the boss with what to do next.

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## What Does It Mean to Be Trusted?

1. You are genuinely there to be of service
  - Even beyond your area of specialty
2. Your perspective begins with the boss' perspective.
3. You question productively, rather than prosecutorially.
4. You are careful with what you know.
5. You can manage the additional pressures access will cause:
  - The agendas of others
  - The politics at high altitudes
  - Your own biases

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## Understand Management

- Leadership and management
- Staff and operations
- Strategy and stuff
- Optimism and pragmatism
- Management thinking styles

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## Look at Their World Through Their Eyes

- Why bosses lose their jobs
- New stresses and issues
- Longevity shrinkage
- Integrity declining
- Enormous peer pressure

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## Discipline One Be Trustworthy

- Trust and influence
- Trust and loyalty
- Loyalty has limits

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## The Ingredients of Trust

- Candor
- Credibility
- Competence
- Integrity
- Loyalty

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## Discipline Two Become a Verbal Visionary

- Offer advice on the spot
- Be outcome-directed
- Tell stories
- Be memorable
- Be thoughtful
- Be inspirational

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### Discipline Three Management Perspective

- Helps the boss achieve his or her objectives and goals.
- Helps the organization achieve its goals.
- Is truly necessary.
- Aspects of the business will fail or not progress without it.
- Keeps money.
- Makes money.
- Saves money.

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### Management Perspective (Continued)

- Use management language.
- Provide truly strategic insight.
- Talk, think, and recommend in an operational context.
- Focus on the ultimate outcome.
- Provide substantive intensity.
- Recommend conclusive actions.
- Go for the useful increments.
- Ask managerially relevant questions.

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### Managerial Relevant Questions

- How does the current situation affect strategy?
- Which management mistakes change the strategy?
- How can we gain employee commitment to changing circumstances?
- What resources can management allocate now?

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## Managerial Relevant Questions (Continued)

- What have peer companies done in similar circumstances?
- Is this a situation that requires adaptation or dramatic shifts?
- Have any rules, regulations, or laws been bent, broken, or compromised?

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## Discipline Four Think Strategically

### Thinking Models:

- Process
- Intuitive
- Strategic

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## Strategy

**A unique mixture of mental energy verbally injected into an organization through communication, which results in behavior that achieves organizational objectives.**

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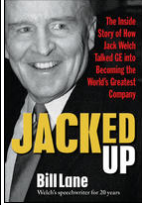
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## Jack Welch Strategy

**"The evolution of a central idea through continually changing circumstances."**



Quoted in *Jacked Up: The Inside Story of How Jack Welch Talked GE into Becoming the World's Greatest Company*, copyright © 2008, Bill Lane, McGraw-Hill, page 33

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## Strategy Is

- Positive energy
- Constructive
- Inconsistent
- About tomorrow
- Key product of leadership

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## Process Model

**Problem**

→

I

II

III

IV

V

→

**Solution, answer, ideas**

Time

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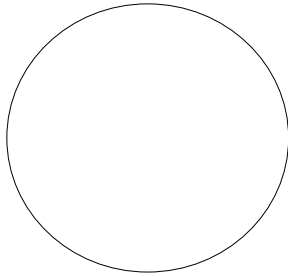
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## Intuitive Model



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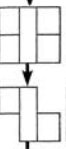
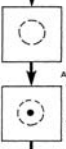
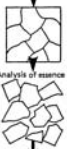






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Handout  
Page 23

### THE MIND OF THE STRATEGIST

	Mechanical systems thinking	Intuition	Strategic thinking
Problem prototype			
Process of thought			
			
Solution			
	Rearrangement of elements	Local optimization, or seeing the tree not the forest	Transformation or changed configuration

Taken from  
The Mind of the Strategist: The Art of Japanese Business,  
Kenichi Ohmae, © 1982 by McGraw-Hill, Inc.

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## Inconsistency

- Always seek alternatives.
- Believe in laggershship and entropy.
- Have intentionally different views/analyses.
- Question all assumptions.
- Simplify.

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**Discipline Five**  
**Be a Window to Tomorrow**

**Pattern Intuition**

- All incidents and circumstances have prior history and patterns.
- Draw existing information together to extract new insights.
- Find a solution by working against the patterns.
- Forecast based on pattern knowledge.

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**Discipline Six**  
**Advise Constructively**

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**Make Recommendations in an Operational Context**

**Step 1: *Situation description:*** Briefly describe the nature of the issue, problem, or situation. **(60 words)**

**Step 2: *Analysis/explanation/interpretation:*** Briefly describe what the situation means, its implications, and how it threatens or presents opportunities for your organization. **(60 words)**

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**Make Recommendations in an Operational Context** (Continued)

Step 3: *The Goal:* Where are we headed? What's our destination? What's the end-point? How far do we have to go? (60 words)

Step 4: *Options:* Develop at least three response options for the situation you're presented. You can suggest more, but three is optimal for management to choose from. Make sure that one of the options is "doing nothing." (150 words)

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**Make Recommendations in an Operational Context** (Continued)

Step 5: *Recommendations:* This is what you would do if you were in the boss' shoes, and why. (60 words)

Step 6: *Justification:* Identify the negative or positive unintended consequences, events, and problems that could arise due to the options you have suggested or by doing nothing. (60 words)

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**Discipline Seven  
Show the Boss  
How to Use Your Advice**

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**The TSA's Strategic Tools**

- **Provide processes for action:**
  - Action/readiness templates
  - Checklists
  - Prioritized action steps
  - Timelines
  - Chronologies
  - Steps, parts, elements, ingredients, phases, levels
- **Issue forecasting using patterns**
- **Option sequences: The Three-minute Drill**

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**You Are the Table**

- **Understand what leaders think and need.**
- **Recognize and anticipate what leaders expect.**
- **Study leaders and leadership.**
- **Have relationships built on trust and service.**
- **Practice the disciplines of the trusted strategic advisor.**
- **YOYO**

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**See You at the Table**

Please let me know what you learn along the way.

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**James E. Lukaszewski,  
ABC, APR, Fellow PRSA**



**Questions  
&  
Answers**

To ask a question via phone, please press \*1 on your telephone keypad.

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**January 27**      *Mobilizing Employee Attitudes to Build & Maintain Workforce Consent*

**February 24**    *Transforming Managers Into Better Communicators, Even Leaders*

**March 24**        *Managing Contention: Building Relationships, Bringing Constituencies to Agreement*

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Thank You for Attending the IABC Web Seminar  
Wednesday, December 16, 2009

**Getting the Boss to Listen:  
Becoming a Trusted Advisor**

By James E. Lukaszewski,  
*ABC, APR, Fellow PRSA*

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# GETTING THE BOSS TO LISTEN:

## Becoming a Trusted Advisor

### *Handout*

*A Web Seminar Sponsored by the*  
**International Association of  
Business Communicators (IABC)**

*Presented by*  
**James E. Lukaszewski,**  
*ABC, APR, Fellow PRSA*

**Wednesday, December 16, 2009**  
**12:00 – 1:30 p.m. EST**



### *Contents*

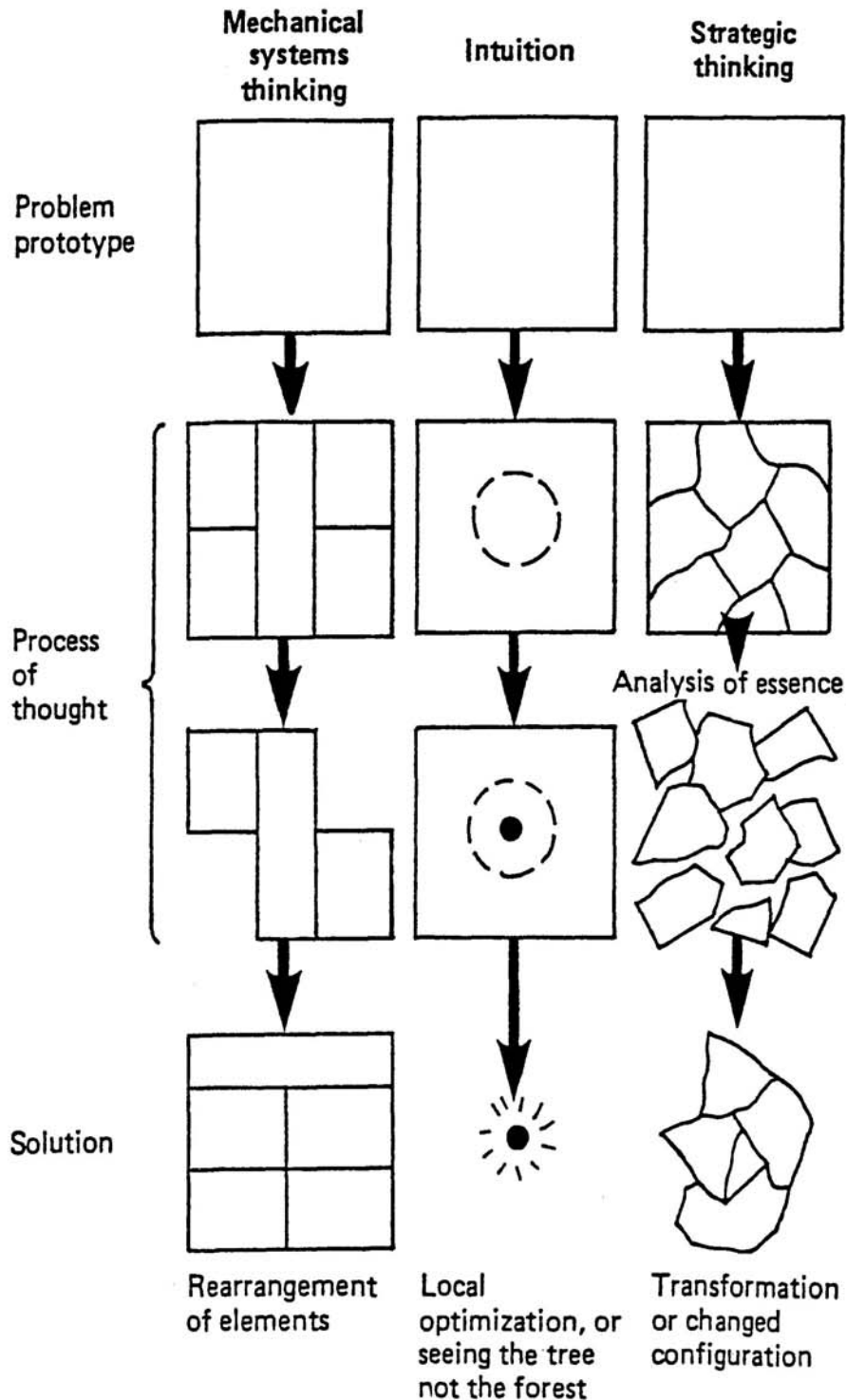
- Mind of a Strategist Diagram
- The Executive Decision Model: Three Minutes to Strategic Executive Decision Making
- Inside the Mind of the CEO
- CEO Survival: The First 100 Days (Plus 800 More)
- Discussion Outline

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# THE MIND OF THE STRATEGIST



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# *Executive Action*

## *Urgent Information for Executive Decision making*

October / November / December 2004

FILE: Management Communication

TO: Executive Addressed

FR: James E. Lukaszewski, *ABC, APR, Fellow PRSA*  
Chairman

RE: The Executive Decision Model: Three Minutes to Strategic Executive Decision Making

One crucial reality of being a trusted advisor is that the best and most useful advice is often needed in a brief period of time (on-the-spot) under the pressure of events. The Executive Decision Model is a compact, direct process for giving those you help focused, accurate, and complete information – framed in a strategic way – from which to choose a course of action.

The discipline is to use this highly focused, structured, time-sensitive approach to get your recommendations promptly put forward. This allows the balance of discussion time, meeting time, or face time with those you advise to be productive and directed toward helping them make better decisions. The six elements of the process are described below.

**Step 1: Situation description (60 words):** Briefly describe the nature of the issue, problem, or situation. This is the factual basis for “what we know now,” “why we need to take your time, now, to discuss this,” or “This is a new and important topic we need to talk about, now.”

**Step 2. Analysis (60 words):** Briefly describe what the situation means, its implications, and perhaps, how it threatens or presents opportunities. Include one or two key assumptions that validate the analysis. Managers always need to know why, but not in great detail. They’re also interested in the intelligence you’ve gathered or know about that supports your analysis, assumptions, and recommendations.

**Step 3: The goal (60 words):** The clear, concise statement of the task to be accomplished. Goals keep everyone focused forward. The goal should be stated as the behavioral, emotional, or intellectual change in your target constituencies. Useful goals are understandable, brief, achievable, positive, and time/deadline sensitive.

**Step 4. Options (150 words):** Always present at least three options for action. You can suggest more, but three is optimal for management to choose from. The goals you suggest are to “do something,” “do something more,” or “do nothing.” Having multiple options keeps you at the table and avoids the “death by question” syndrome that often strikes should you have only one recommendation. Lose that single recommendation through a crucial unanticipated question, and you’ll be out of the discussion for the duration.

**Step 5. Recommendation (60 words):** Be prepared to say what you would do if you were in your boss’ shoes, and why. The recommendation is usually selected on the basis of which option will cause the least number of negative unintended consequences. This is where you earn your paycheck and a place at the table. The boss always wants to know what you would do if you were in his/her shoes. Be prepared to walk through a similar sort of analysis for each of the options proposed.

**Step 6. Justification (60 words):** Identify the negative unintended – but fully predictable – consequences of each option, including the option to do nothing. These are the reactions or circumstances that could arise resulting from the options you suggest (including to do nothing). Every management decision or action has consequences that can be forecast. Each also has unintended consequences that can also be forecast. Inadequate provision for consequences is what can sabotage an otherwise useful strategy.

Striving to provide advice in this 450-word format (three minutes) is powerful, conserves management time, and coupled with the discipline of suggesting three action options every time, will get you invited back to the table again and again. Anyone who can spontaneously provide three decision options, on-the-spot, every time, is an extraordinarily valuable individual. If you want to be where the important decisions are made, when important decisions are being made, the three-minute strategy process will help get you there.

## **INSIDE THE MIND OF THE CEO**

Worry and whining about who and what the CEO is listening to – in place of or in addition to us – is one of the age-old traditions of those in public relations. It is the source of much teeth gnashing among other staff functions as well: law, finance, accounting, human resources, security and even strategic planning.

The odd thing, of course, is that none of these functions knows anything about being a CEO, becoming a CEO, or what the challenges of the CEO's job happen to be. Before talking about what most staff functions would like to accomplish, and the strategies to do so, let's do a reality check on the business of being a CEO.

The position of CEO is less and less like it used to be:

- The average tenure of U.S. CEOs is now under 30 months. By contrast, most organizations develop five-year strategic plans. It would appear that this is a fundamental disconnect, which probably needs a remedy.
- One in four CEOs of major British businesses (sales over £500 million) left their jobs ahead of schedule in 2000. That's twice the 1990 rate.
- Huge compensation packages allow CEOs to drop out before they are fired or forced out.
- More and more non-business issues, e.g., globalization, adverse legislation, anti-corporate activism, are intruding on management. These interruptions seem soft and distracting, often requiring moral rather than monetary or business judgment.
- CEOs have yet to be measured on their morality or belief systems, but this is coming.
- In both the U.S. and in Europe, career-defining risks for CEOs are increasing.

Believe it or not, there is no school for CEOs, anywhere. There is no educational organization to teach the next CEO of Coca-Cola how to do that job. Being a CEO is a completely on-the-job training experience. There is only one such position in any organization and each is completely unique.

Public relations concerns itself with reputation. However, I have yet to sit in on any top-level meeting where there was serious discussion of the actual concept of corporate reputation. I have sat in on discussions about building admiration and how a CEO's peers or peer companies have behaved or experienced similar circumstances, and the

lessons potentially learned from those experiences. The concept of reputation is the creation of the public relations industry. The CEO is far more interested in admiration – from his/her peers, employees, the industry served, and from Mom.

Several acquaintances have announced that they have achieved the position of reputation manager or vice president of reputation. My response always is, “How long are you going to have that job? An organization can lose its reputation in a blinding instant; then what are you the vice president or manager of?”

On the other hand, CEOs as well as the empires they create are fulfilled when *Fortune* magazine, for example, lists them among the most admired companies. That’s something you can call Mom about – and crow about on the 19<sup>th</sup> hole.

To understand the CEO’s environment, one has to recognize the four general divisions of tasks the CEO faces daily, *alone*:

- Soft intrusions
- Hard obstacles
- Nagging problems
- Career-defining moments

**Soft intrusions** include negotiations with employees; anti-corporate government action; poor sales; nagging negative news; personal, professional, corporate embarrassment.

**Hard obstacles** are situations such as a 50% stock price drop in less than 30 days; job actions and walkouts; major product market loss; product failure.

**Nagging problems** include activist attacks on individual executives and board members; rumors; unfounded and founded allegations; mergers and takeovers.

**Career-defining moments** include a 50% stock price drop in a 24-hour period; criminal indictment; serious people failure; serious, high-profile product failure; continuing bad product performance; embarrassing, needless, obviously stupid events.

The CEO is completely dependent on his/her organization for success. Organizations are composed of essentially two kinds of people – those who lead the organization and manage its future, and those who are watching and counting what these leaders and managers do everyday.

Most CEOs soon learn one of the most fundamental lessons of their tenure: There is a difference between leadership and management.

Managers are generally those who run the organization by the numbers. The manager’s goal is to make the bullet as forecast or exceed it, to achieve the targets as forecast or exceed them; to stay focused on producing primarily tangible results or exceeding expectations.

Leadership depends on verbal skill and personal example. Leaders lead through inspiration, motivation, verbalizing strategic vision, conducting strategic evaluations and questioning, and solving people problems.

To build followership and achieve a vision, the enlightened CEO expects feedback from those in staff positions. Whether it’s a crisis or operations crucial to success, the CEO needs essentially four kinds of information continuously:

#### 1. Data:

- A sense of the market: A sense of the acceptability of the organization’s goods and services.

- Temperament of investors: What are they feeling? What are they saying? What are they telling other investors and analysts?
- Emotional state of the organization: What are people saying? How are they behaving? Are we a “happy” ship? Is anyone having fun? Or is there a feeling of dread, doom, or simply a rearranging of the deck chairs on a daily basis?
- Candid assessment of the existing situation: Options for action based on the data; do the issues to be faced and the situations we find ourselves in fit known patterns we can plan against or leverage ahead?

**2. Perception issues:** Reality is what others perceive if situations aren’t managed effectively.

- What is the wake being left behind by our actions?
- Who is assessing perceptions constantly?
- What are we learning; how and who should benefit from those learnings?

**3. Responses to be executed in real time:** Building or rebuilding confidence and trust requires real-time, face-to-face communication between top executives and key constituencies.

**4. What to do next:** What is the next step? What is going to happen next? What are the barriers to success? What are the unintended consequences of our actions?

The communication burden on CEOs is growing, almost daily. In fact, the inverse of Morris’s Law applies: “The more sensitive, the more damaging, the more victims a situation creates, the less time is allowed before the public expects massive communication from the boss.” Verbal communication and the communication of leadership ideas today must be faster than timely, faster than promptly, faster than instantly. Those communications must be done *NOW*.

To coach, to counsel and convince the CEO requires some important and fundamental shifts in mindset for the public relations strategist. Here are the most important:

- Develop a management-oriented mindset, behaviors and the attitude that attracts management attention.
- Be strategic because the CEO is the chief strategist. Those who work at that altitude must talk and think from the CEO’s point of view. Examples of effective corporate strategies, verbally elaborated upon by their respective organizations include:
  - Federal Express: Absolutely positively overnight.
  - General Electric: Each product group will be #1 in its category; if #2, there must be a plan and deadline to become #1; and if neither, there must be a plan for exiting General Electric.
  - Walt Disney: We make people happy.
  - Convert management energy into strategic ideas and leadership statements that combine strategy/mission/vision.

For the staff executive to assist the CEO requires that the staff executive understand the differences between:

- Leadership and management
- Staff and operations
- Strategy and stuff

Strategy is a unique mixture of mental energy verbally injected into an organization through communication, which results in behavior that achieves organizational objectives.

- Strategy is the key attribute of leaders and leadership.
- Strategy is the energy that drives business and organizations, guides leadership and directs the team.

- Strategy draws people in the same direction.
- Strategy is a positive, energizing state of mind.
- Strategy provides the energy and momentum for the current plan of action.
- Strategy is always positive.
- Strategy is always about the future.

There are a variety of behaviors that are clearly non-strategic. These include:

- Focusing on the unimportant.
- Teaching the value of staff functions.
- Labeling actions and ideas as strategic.
- Suggesting the creation of stuff.
- Self-validated theories and observations that have no basis or foundation in experience or empirical proof.

If you spend a fair amount of time talking with, working with and counseling CEOs and other operating executives, their perspective is quite interesting. Their questions most always are, “How do I manage all these people who constantly yak, yak, yak at me, who know virtually nothing about the business or what I care about, but want to tell me how to run the business? They are all clamoring for a seat at a table that doesn’t exist, but if it did, it would be so full of whining, angry people that it would be a totally useless exercise for me. It would be overcrowded with folks who don’t know how to help me. How do I spare myself from these amateurs? Who are these people anyway?”

From the most practical of perspectives, the advisor to the CEO:

- Has exceptional verbal skills.
- Communicates effectively in real-time, on-the-spot, because that’s how managers make decisions.
- Focuses on what is truly and indisputably important.

- Provides valuable, useful, applicable advice beyond that which the boss already knows.
- Provides well-timed, truly significant insights (the ability to distill wisdom and useful conclusions from contrasting even seemingly unrelated information and facts).
- Understands patterns of events and problems and can plan against them.

There are four crucial tests that ideas, concepts and recommendations must pass to be useful to management, especially the most senior managers:

- Ideas must help the boss achieve his/her objectives and goals.
- Ideas and suggestions must help the organization achieve its goals.
- Ideas and suggestions must be truly necessary (and pass the straight face and laugh tests).
- Without acting on the recommendations, some aspect of the business will fail or fail to progress.

In the good old days, when major brands and important organizations had difficulties, the business community, at least, could be counted on to cheer for success, resulting in increased admiration. In today’s world, when trouble comes the betting is often against a CEO’s success.

If you put yourself truly in the CEO’s shoes, look at his/her tasks, challenges and loneliness from their perspective, then chances are you will be sought after, respected and have important influence on what the CEO does, what the organization does and the success the organization achieves.

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\* For more information on this and other crisis communication management topics, visit the author’s Web site at [www.e911.com](http://www.e911.com).

## **CEO SURVIVAL: THE FIRST 100 DAYS (Plus 800 MORE)**

Recently, I found myself sitting in a corporate boardroom helping a large company and its newly named, soon-to-be CEO revise its strategic plan (something of an oxymoron, actually). When the discussion turned to doing a five-year plan, I raised the question of how long the last three CEOs had lasted. The average was 23 months. In fact, as a consultant, I had outlasted them all. I suggested to the recently elected CEO that it might be wise to develop a new strategic approach that more closely matched his probable tenure rather than to revise the current plan by establishing an optimistic set of principles and ideas that wouldn't pass the straight-face test, no matter how sincerely they were developed. The meeting immediately got down to business. This is the memo I sent to him following that meeting.

TO: Our New CEO

RE: Your First 100 Days (and the next 800 days after that)

There are important, urgent *Executive Actions* you need to take immediately to assure your success as CEO. Focusing on these actions will help you move through the first few months and speed your mental transition to chief executive (you aren't there yet... it takes a little time... you won't "get it" down cold until you have the job... you'll see).

Your perspective will change. Your problems will be different. Just how success-ful you will be, in my judgment, will be determined in your first 100 days. It will take about nine 100-day periods before you know things are truly moving in the direction you expect, or that you will survive, perhaps for another 900 days. By that time, you will have survived longer than any of your predecessors, if that matters to you.

Before we get to those important actions, there are some interesting realities, some of which you are already experiencing. These are the expectations and realities that flow – with you – from your first day as CEO:

1. ***People Want Action From Day One.*** They expect you to walk in the door and begin making changes and making things happen.
2. ***People Expect Change Even Though They Fear It.*** Everyone is well aware of the tension during transition. Tension increases apprehension. Employees cannot understand why the people at the top of the mountain can't work everything out. They actually believe there is a plan. You can't take the time to worry about this now because the clock is ticking on your own performance and on the future.

3. **Change is continuous.** From your perspective and strategic view, the organization will change significantly about every 100 days during your first three years, even if everything goes smoothly. The first 600 days present your principal opportunity to have an impact on corporate culture. Corporate culture can only be modified through significant fundamental change within the organization as a whole. Old habits never die; they need to be removed.
4. **Cultures are modified in only one way:** The recipe for culture modification has four crucial ingredients:
  - A strong, positive leader (a visionary).
  - Verbally driven management styles.
  - Goals everyone can understand, accept, and achieve.
  - Constant direction, clarification, and validation.
5. **Nothing you learned prior to taking over will seem to be of great value...** because it cannot be. You haven't yet really begun to know the organization. Being totally in charge is totally different. No one will understand this but you.

Now, let's talk about the **success behaviors** you'll need from the beginning. You must be prepared to:

1. **Act fast:** Implement a time-lined program of action the day you begin. If that is impossible, set incremental goals and guidelines that achieve rapid situation assessment and the elements of a "move-forward" timeline within 72-to-96 hours of becoming CEO.

This approach will:

- **Test** those who could be your key advisors and future leaders.
- **Beat** the bureaucracy that's probably the reason for past non-progress and is the repository of the "good old days."

- **Scare** the nesters who think they have finally found a place to retire.
  - **Subvert** the could of's, would of's and should of's that torpedo progress and your success.
2. **Communicate immediately:** Plan a daily one-page newsletter or plainspoken e-mail or voice mail written by you. Winston Churchill did this throughout both World Wars I and II. He called them "Minutes." Why not think about starting, "<Name>'s Minute" of your own? Churchill also wrote special orders called "Action This Day." You might want to institute a similar approach for things you need done now.

Your "Minute" is a daily early morning 150 to 300 word message stressing three major topic areas: productivity, performance, and items of interest. The first two sections are factual and relate to operational goals and objectives. The last section is your direct communications link to everyone in the organization. It's talking directly each day to each employee about things that are on your mind and theirs.

**Caution:** If you start this, your people will like it a lot and hope that you continue it. Its purpose is clear: it is anti-rumor, anti-corporate politics, anti-counterrevolution within the organization; it is pro-progress, pro-organizational objective setting; it is pro-success, pro-personal recognition – yours and theirs – and says:

- We will talk.
  - We will tell the truth.
  - I will listen.
  - What I do is your business too.
  - There will be no "b.s." between us.
  - We will continuously recognize achievement and achievers.
  - Every question will be answered.
3. **Walk:** The land of the chief executive is full of wanna-be CEOs, who dwell most of the time in their own silos. Get out and

talk to the real people who punch clocks and who move the product. Eat, talk and work with employees. This means dozens to hundreds of employees seeing you, talking to you, understanding your goals and objectives directly and asking questions of you.

It sends powerful messages to supervisors and managers that they too must communicate accurately, effectively, promptly, verbally and in real time.

When employees have an opportunity to speak with you directly about concerns, issues, or fears, it's very much like the commander visiting his troops in the field. It's a chance to personify your leadership and vision, to rally and motivate.

Shake their hands; be with them. You are going to have to change some jobs and take other jobs away. Better make it as pleasant and quick as possible. Enemies accumulate.

4. **Manage the self-appointed:** The greatest disasters will be the result of the work of those who think they know you best and who try to help you most. After all, because they know you so well, they are the only ones who can shoot you down – and they will. They might not mean to ... but they will. It can be death by question or by negative interpretation. Stay focused on your goals, communicate, and you will manage the self-appointed, self-anointed.
5. **Be the boss:** Eight out of 10 decisions you make will disappoint, anger or offend some individual or group. Welcome to life at the top. Be satisfied with the good things you will get to do and accomplish. They are going to be spectacular. Stay focused. Be positive. Lead verbally.
6. **Talk and act in real time:** Do company-wide live teleconferences, which allow employees and managers to hear from you, directly and in real time, and to ask

questions and hear you provide on-the-spot answers. Recognize individual performance, achievement, passion and enthusiasm through brief handwritten notes. When it comes to recognition, e-mail is very unsatisfactory and perhaps even insulting. Take the time to write little notes to people. They will tell their moms, remember forever, and will almost never become your enemy.

7. **Managers will manage:** Bureaucrats will try to count, measure and restore the past. They are the last to know that the goals have changed. They figure it out when they find out. Then, they mindlessly manage without new direction and new orders to follow.
8. **Leadership is primarily a verbal skill:** Your job is to go out to the horizon, look over the edge, then come back and tell us all where we're going and show us how to get there in 150 words or less. The bean counters can't do this, the price-cutters and slick marketers can't do this, neither can the management consultants... only you can do it by telling and showing us.
9. **The world moves at verbal speed:** your verbal speed. No matter how much is written, no matter how flashy the slides shows and PowerPoints, the organization will move forward at about 150 words per minute (the verbal speed of English-speaking cultures). Plans not verbalized, taught and retaught will fail.
10. **Repeat yourself:** More than half of the people in your organization aren't listening at any given time. The distracted and the disengaged need to be told perhaps as many as 10 times before they begin to realize that you really do require them to change.
11. **Build followership:** The most powerful way you build the followers you need is to recognize people personally, publicly and frequently.

There are some important external actions you need to orchestrate early on as well:

1. **Get local help:** Find a peer or fellow CEO or senior level counselor of whom you can ask those embarrassing and sometimes silly questions all new CEOs have. If it's a consultant, keep their work separate from other agency-like things you will do in sales, marketing and merchandising. Find someone who can keep his or her mouth shut and who will be completely loyal to you.
2. **Be visible in the community and the countryside:** Even though you may be uncomfortable with a reasonably high profile, **this is expected of you.** These times are opportunities to share your vision, draw your employees toward the goals you've selected, and to build a base of support for those times when things won't go well – and there surely will be some of those. The most powerful agent of change is you. You are the chief strategist, cheerleader and score keeper.
3. **Change expectations:** Exercise the discipline of the strategist. Effective strategies are time-sensitive, brief, stated positively, understandable and clearly achievable. If you can combine your goals with your strategies, your odds of success go up dramatically. Two of the best models are:
  - **GE's Jack Welch** – Be #1 in your category, or #2 going for #1, or be preparing an exit strategy for leaving GE.
  - **FedEx** – Absolutely, positively overnight.

Teach and live the ingredients of leadership:

1. **Be and stay positive:** Avoid the use of negative language.

2. **Be constructive:** Insist on useful, positive suggestions rather than criticism, questions and complaints.
3. **Be prompt:** Do it now, ask it now, fix it now, challenge it now and change it now.
4. **Be outcome focused:** Work in the future rather than in the past. Everyone owns the past in ways that cannot be overcome. As Stephen Covey would say, plan with the end in mind and you'll move forward with twice the velocity.
5. **Be reflective:** If you must examine the past, look only for those lessons that will usefully inform future actions.
6. **Be pragmatic:** Move the organization toward those things that can actually happen. Dreamy, foggy, unintelligible goals are as detrimental as turgid, impersonal, mindless mission, vision and values approaches. Do what people can understand, then stretch their imagination.
7. **Be relentlessly committed to positive incremental personal and organizational improvement, every single day.** Increments accumulate and form the foundation for luck and success.

Build new leaders who can move the organization where you need it to go because no matter how good you are, the company is still run every day by the people who show up to do their jobs.

You'll find me available 24/7 by phone, e-mail, fax, or page.

With respect, admiration, and warm regards,

James E. Lukaszewski, APR, Fellow PRSA

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\* For more information on this and other crisis communication management topics, visit the author's Website at [www.e911.com](http://www.e911.com).

## **DISCUSSION OUTLINE**

### **Getting the Boss to Listen: Becoming a Trusted Advisor**

*IABC Web Seminar  
Wednesday, December 16, 2009*

If those who listened to this program with you would like to have a follow-up discussion, here are some questions to begin the conversation:

1. What do you know now that you didn't know when the program began?
2. What's the most important concept or idea you learned from this program?
3. What question has the presentation raised for which you need to find answers?
4. What key skills, ideas, or knowledges did this program confirm for you?
5. Based on what you learned and heard today, what is the first thing you're going to do when you return to your office?
6. What's the second thing you're going to do?

## **JAMES E. LUKASZEWSKI, ABC, APR, FELLOW PRSA**

James E. Lukaszewski (loo-ka-SHEV-skee) advises, coaches, and counsels the men and women who run very large corporations and organizations through extraordinary problems and critical high-profile circumstances. The bulk of his practice is in the Western Hemisphere, although he has clients from many parts of the world.

He is an expert in managing and reducing contention, counteracting tough, touchy, sensitive corporate communications issues. He counsels companies facing serious internal and external problems involving: activist counteraction; community conflict and grassroots campaigns; corporate relations failures; reputational threats; employee relationship building; ethics/integrity/ compliance; litigation visibility; Web-based attacks; and threats to corporate survival. His broad-based experience ranges from media-initiated investigations to product recalls and plant closings, from criminal litigation to takeovers. He is frequently retained by senior management to directly intervene and manage the resolution of corporate problems and bad news. The situations he helps resolve often involve conflict, controversy, community action, or activist opposition. Almost half of his practice involves civil and criminal litigation.

He is a teacher, thinker, coach, and trusted advisor with the unique ability to help executives look at problems from a variety of sensible, constructive, principled perspectives. He teaches clients how to take appropriate, highly focused, ethically appropriate action. He has personally counseled, coached, and guided thousands of executives in organizations large and small from many cultures representing government; the military and defense industry; the agriculture, banking, computer, financial, food processing, health care, insurance, paper, real estate development, and telecommunications industries; cooperatives; trade and professional associations; and non-profit agencies. He is a coach to many CEOs.

Jim helps prepare spokespersons for crucial public appearances, local and network news interviews including *20-20*, *60 Minutes*, *Dateline NBC*, and *Nightline*, and for financial analyst meetings, and legislative and congressional testimony. He also provides personal coaching for executives in trouble, or facing career-defining problems and succession issues.

He is a prolific author (six books, hundreds of articles), lecturer (corporate, college and university), trainer, counselor, and public speaker. He is a member of *Public Relations Review's* Board of Professionals, a contributing editor for *Public Relations Quarterly*, member of InfoCom's *Media Relations Insider* editorial advisory board, frequent columnist and member of *PR News's* editorial board, columnist for *O'Dwyer's PR Services Report*, and columnist for PRSA's magazine, *The Strategist*. His 1992 book, *Influencing Public Attitudes: Strategies that Reduce the Media's Power*, remains a classic work in the field of direct communication. In 2005, the Public Relations Society of America published the final volume of his four-volume *Executive Action® Crisis Communication Management System: War Stories and Crisis Communication Strategies, An Anthology; Crisis Communication Planning Strategies, A Workbook; Crisis Communication Plan Components and Models: Crisis Communication Management Readiness; and Media Relations During Emergencies, A Guide*. His newest book, *Why Should the Boss Listen to You?*, was published by Jossey-Bass in 2008. He has published 25 monographs on critical communication subjects since 1994 and hundreds of articles throughout his career.

He is an internationally recognized speaker on crisis management, ethics, media relations, public affairs, and reputation preservation and restoration. Over the past 36 months he has addressed conferences of the U.S. Air Force Public Affairs Officers, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, National Information Officers Association, Puerto Rico PR Association, ABERJE in São Paulo, Brazil, Health PR & Marketing Society, Media Relations Summit, the College & University PR Association, Choice Hotels Annual Convention, CCEP World Conference on Disaster Management, National Air & Waste Management Association, National School Public Relations Association, Society for Human Resource Management, and Syracuse University; as well as the 2007, 2008, and 2009 International Conferences of IABC, the Public Relations Society of America, and ASIS International. He has addressed several Canadian trade and government conferences including the National Agriculture Awareness, the Government of Canada Communicators, and most recently Natural Resources Canada, Service Canada, Transport Canada, Purchasing Management Association of Canada, and the Canadian Investor Relations Institute. Visiting his Web site, [www.e911.com](http://www.e911.com), is like attending the University of Crisis Management.

An accredited member of the International Association of Business Communicators (ABC) and the Public Relations Society of America (APR), Mr. Lukaszewski is a member of the PRSA's College of Fellows (Fellow PRSA); Board of Ethics & Professional Standards; the Corporate and Public Affairs/Government Sections; and the New York City and Westchester/Fairfield Chapters. He is a member of the International Churchill Society, ASIS International, and the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). He lectures annually at the U.S. Marine Corp's East Coast Commander's Media Training Symposium and was the second recipient of its Drew Middleton Award. He is the recipient of Ball State University's National Public Relations Achievement Award, Patrick Jackson Award for Distinguished Service to PRSA, *PR News* Lifetime Achievement Award, Lloyd B. Dennis Distinguished Leadership Award, and named 2007 Minnesota Metropolitan State University Alumnus of the Year and the 2007 Practitioner of the Year by the Southern New England chapter of the PRSA.

Lukaszewski received his BA in 1974 from Metropolitan State University in Minnesota. He is a former deputy commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Economic Development and assistant press secretary to former Minnesota Governor Wendell Anderson. He founded Minnesota-based Media Information Systems Corporation in 1978. Prior to founding The Lukaszewski Group Inc. in 1989 he was senior vice president and director of Executive Communication Programs for Georgeson & Company and a partner with Chester Burger Company, both in New York City. His biography is listed in several editions of Marquis *Who's Who in America*. His name was listed in *Corporate Legal Times* as one of "28 Experts to Call When All Hell Breaks Loose," and in *PR Week* as one of 22 "crunch-time counselors who should be on the speed dial in a crisis."