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**Do You Have Permission to Lead?**

*When I learned that leadership was the topic for this issue of CEOnly, I immediately thought of Henry Givray, the CEO of SmithBucklin Corporation and a sought-after speaker on the topic. When I recently attended a leadership seminar given by Givray, I was blown away by his presentation, and I knew that CEOnly readers would benefit from his ideas just as I did. That's why I'm grateful that Givray agreed to contribute his thoughts for this installment of Partner Perspective.*

-- Tom Noonan, president & CEO, Visit Baltimore

The past few years, fraught with economic turmoil and corporate scandal, have caused many workers and the general public to mistrust those in powerful positions within organizations. Some might say that corporate leadership needs an overhaul. But Henry Givray, president and CEO of SmithBucklin Corporation, would say that a CEO who has deceived his employees or the public, or who has been motivated by self-interest, was never a leader in the first place.

"Leadership is not something that is bestowed upon you. Nor is it something granted to you by virtue of your title, status, money or power. It is not the same as having authority," Givray says. "In fact, leadership is invited and can only be given willingly by others based on who you are and what you do, and it is revealed by what you inspire and what you enable."

According to Givray, the ability to inspire and enable others stems from certain distinguishing, nonnegotiable qualities, including: readily giving and striving hard to earn trust; having the courage and self-confidence to do the right thing versus what's convenient, expedient, popular or personally beneficially; honoring one's word by always delivering on promises and commitments; and, possessing a high-degree of self-awareness resulting in successful self-management.

And contrary to popular belief, a leader is not created through a simple hire or appointment. That may be how someone becomes a CEO, but just being a CEO doesn't make one a leader. According to Givray, the words 'CEO' and 'leader' have mistakenly become synonymous, but there are a number of important differences between the two.

"CEOs drive annual quantitative results. Leaders build great, enduring organizations," Givray says. "CEOs develop and possess strong skills in strategy development, finance and negotiation. Leaders are shaped and defined by character. CEOs measure success in terms of increased sales and profit margins. Leaders measure success through the success of all of those they serve, including customers, employees and stakeholders," he says. "And true leaders live by a fundamental tenet, that service to others is one of their highest honors and greatest obligations."

Givray says that the core essence of leadership is profoundly uncomplicated involving three critical actions.

1. Visualizing – imagining – a better future state.
2. Inspiring others to join in the journey.
3. Getting there by creating the conditions and providing the means.

CEOs who want to become true leaders must understand that developing leadership capacity is an ongoing process. "While the core essence of leadership is uncomplicated, there are no simple formulas, set rules or playbooks on becoming a true leader. There are only principles, guidelines and concepts," Givray says. "And that's why leadership can't be taught, it must be learned through a process of personal, active engagement, self-reflection and self-discovery." According to Givray, "Earning an invitation to lead others depends not on who our teachers are or what books we read but rather on what we do with the lessons learned."



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