

# THE CEO AGENDA 11

## November 2003

### Motivation with orientation, not fear.

**Based on a conversation with Ben Zander (Boston) and articles by Lorin Maazel (New York), both prominent orchestra directors.**

The era of powerful dictatorial bosses is just about gone. Only in corporations where manipulative power struggles on the backs and hives of others and thus develops positions of strength that bring recognition and advancement does the military-like leadership style survive. *Today, corporations seek leaders who rule like Maestros, not like Generals.* Instilling fear is counterproductive; workers and collaborators do not want to be barked at. They want to share their thoughts, concerns, and expectations without fear of retaliation. If you use their ideas against them and do not give them space to err, they will hide things from you and show you what they believe you want to see. They will never be part of the whole. They will only protect their paycheck, and their effectiveness will not reach its maximum potential. Orientation has a long-lasting attitudinal value; fear, on the other hand, is short-lived.

Your appointed managers know their tasks, the tools they have to work with, the mechanics, and the nature of their positions. They tend to be skilled in it; in some, they are better and more experienced than top management. The top is responsible for the overall output achieved,

not for each part as a stand-alone. Often, one manager needs to learn what the other does and how, and the management at the top brings it all together. The orchestra director (CEO) makes the music sound as he wishes it to sound. How? By getting the most out of each part, their contributive goal to the whole picture is achieved at the level and time needed. *That is a mastery of coordination, support, motivation, and mutual trust.*

At least one aspect of the game of management has stayed the same. It still is about respect. No manager can achieve something worthy without respect. In the short term, it can be done based on hierarchy and fear of an authoritative environment, but it cannot be sustained. Empathy for people's difficulties in carrying out their part of the game plan and providing them with the necessary tools and support are essential to gaining respect and producing results.

Authority is still essential in the scheme of structures. However, the authority is only that; with leadership, it will take management very far. In addition, leadership management must show that it knows its business and provide examples of attitude and behavior. Assume that everyone wants to do their best and not complain when they fail; the failure is compliant enough. Management's ability to provide support when people most need it sets them apart from relying on their authority. When this behavior gains the respect of all in the firm, they seek to be guided and oriented, and their response is automatic. The more it happens, the fewer words are needed, and the truly committed collaborators act on singles. *If this attitude is assumed, indeed, management will carry its authority with honor and charm, ready to accept the challenge and responsibility of the Maestro and take on the general's uniform.* When this is not the case, the abusive managers who misuse their authority repeatedly truncate their careers and harm the firm primarily to those they use as scapegoats for their shortcomings.

True leaders do not last long when they drink with the boys. If, as a leader, you are affectionate and have warm feelings towards people who do their best to advance your cause and the company's, then show it and be loving, you will win their genuine, honest commitment and affection, too; they will take a bullet for you because they believe, care and respect not just stay in the line of fire because they were ordered to.

Maestro leaders show their staff they are honored and privileged to share the stage with them. They take on the protective responsibility for the collective performance and thus relax the team. They instill a sense of self-respect in the individuals and the collective team, and this is how people learn to rely on each other with confidence and trust.

*Without it, the team will lack the passion to perform. They will have the discipline to carry out tasks; it is up to the Maestro to develop and sustain the passion.*

*Arrogance will not support Maestros; only generals and neither middle management nor the workers join a fearful army; they have the freedom to walk out. Generals are in love with themselves, which does not allow them to develop a good balance between self-confidence and humility, which Maestros has mastered so well.*

#### SUMMARY TIPS

- Earn respect. It is impossible to follow someone that you do not respect.
- Strike a balance between self-confidence and humility.
- Be nice, just be friendly, and not curry favors.
- To lead and energize, do not limit nor inhibit.
- When you speak, be positive and enhance the behavior you expect.
- Do not demand perfection; demand passion.
- Lead by example, not by regulations.
- Build a positive upward spiral that opens up; do not engage in a downward spiral that shuts down.