



Liz on Leadership

Are You a Leader Who Does Too Much?

If you are like many of my executive clients, you are a leader who started out as a doer.

Earlier in your career, you were a star individual contributor whose talent got the attention of your manager and other company leaders. They recognized your skills and dedication. They identified you as a future leader with untapped potential. And so, you got promoted.

You became a manager, director, vice president and above. You went from being the person who gets things done to the person who manages the work, then manages the managers, runs the department, leads the business unit or region, or runs the entire company. You may have ascended rapidly or gradually over the years. And today, you're a leader.

But... are you a leader who does too much?

Truth be told, even great leaders can have trouble letting go. After all, it's not easy to change how you see yourself or your beliefs about the value you bring. And chances are, you are very, very good at what you do. You are an expert. You are dedicated. You can get things done quickly and you do them well. So why shouldn't you jump in, especially when there's so much work to be done?

I'll give you three good reasons. Here's what will happen if you are too hands-on:

1. **You will deprive your team the opportunity to learn.** How can your people develop new skills if you keep doing their jobs? Step back, let them stretch, grow and learn. Yes, they may work a little more slowly than you (at

first). They will make more mistakes. Give them time. They'll get there.

2. **You will have less time to attend to leadership activities.** Don't lose sight of what you're really being paid to do. As a leader, you should be spending your time on strategy, vision, inspiration and influence. You also need to develop strong successors. If you're busy doing the work, you won't have enough time to thoughtfully assess the talent in your organization and set them (and the company) up for success.
3. **You won't look like a leader.** You may be the best implementer your company has ever seen—but if you keep on doing, you will lose credibility. You won't be viewed as the person to lead your team and company into the future. And once you've lost the confidence of others—the board, your boss, peers or employees—it will be awfully hard to get it back.

You've worked hard to become the leader you are today. Make the most of it. Slow down, step out of the daily busyness, and home in on the actions that will help you, and your organization, truly thrive.

Did you miss my last newsletter?

Are Broken Promises Damaging Your Brand?

A broken promise is a powerful thing.

I am writing to you the weekend of Prom—specifically, Pennsbury Prom, known by many as “The Best Prom in America.”

Over the years, Prom has grown into a significant community event, with volunteers of all ages working together for nearly 12 months, putting in thousands of hours in collective preparation. Prom has drawn some big-time performers over the years, including John Mayer, Maroon 5 and Metro Station.

This year's big act is Questlove, a Philadelphia local and leader of the Tonight Show house band. Exciting stuff for the Pennsbury community—but it almost didn't happen. As of Thursday, Questlove had apparently canceled the performance, just 48 hours ahead of Prom.

You can imagine the uproar that ensued. Students immediately took to Twitter and Facebook to cajole, complain and denounce the artist's failure to live up to his commitment. The story was quickly covered by local media. It literally became the talk of the town.

They say any publicity is good publicity, but this is not the kind of attention you want to attract.

The truth is, there is little that will more rapidly rouse the ire and mistrust of your organization (and customers and business partners) than a promise broken. When you don't stand by your commitments, you run the risk of a damaged reputation and sullied brand.

Once people begin to perceive you as unreliable, they may also label you as inauthentic and untrustworthy. They might stop taking you at your word. They may grow reluctant to enter into agreements with you. They may begin to guard important information, reflecting the serious breakdown in trust.

Under these conditions, it can be awfully difficult to lead.

Here are three ways to protect your reputation from tarnish.

1. **Be careful what you promise.** Only offer or commit to actions that you are confident you can deliver and over which you have full control.
2. **Be upfront about it.** If changing circumstances absolutely mandate a change in plans, don't wait for word to slip out. Provide context. Offer a valid explanation. If you can provide a legitimate rationale, people are more likely to forgive.
3. **If you can't deliver, take the heat.** Apologize for the miss. Don't shy away from blame or point the finger at anyone else. A good leader is accountable for her actions. Anything less will erode trust and credibility. Once that's gone, it's gone.

The social media campaign apparently got Questlove's attention. He made it to Prom, reconnected with his fans, and put on a terrific show. And that's a very good thing. If he hadn't lived up to his word, the damage to his reputation may well have been irreparable.

Interview - Marilyn Russell's Remarkable Women

On April 19, I joined Marilyn Russell of CBS Philadelphia radio to discuss my forthcoming book, *Slow Down to Speed Up!* Marilyn and her listeners got the inside scoop on how to be more strategic, efficient and focused, even as information and demands come at us at a breakneck pace. Listen in for a sneak peek at my tools for improving impact and accelerating success in today's 24/7 world.

[Listen to the April 19th interview here](#)

About Dr. Liz

Dr. Liz Bywater has been called a one-of-a-kind leadership expert. Working at the intersection of business and psychology, she brings together pragmatic experience, advising top executives across the Fortune 500, with an advanced degree in Psychology and a dynamic personal style to inspire, engage and counsel her clients.

For more than a decade, top global organizations have requested Liz's help in resolving issues such as creating extraordinary client relationships, increasing market persuasion, and driving productive collaborations in an increasingly complex world.

Liz advises senior leaders at some of the world's most successful companies, including Johnson & Johnson, Nike, Thomson Reuters, Bristol-Myers Squibb, AmeriSourceBergen and more. She uses her expertise in human behavior to drive commercial success. She helps her clients propel innovation, exert influence and lead their organizations through change.

A thought leader in organizational excellence, Liz provides expert commentary for such publications as the Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Fast Company and USA Today. She is on the editorial advisory board for **Life Science Leader** magazine and is a featured expert on such radio broadcasts as CBS Philadelphia's **Philadelphia Agenda** with Brad Segall and **Woman of the Week** with Marilyn Russell.

Liz earned her PhD in Psychology at the Derner Institute for Advanced Psychological Studies at Adelphi University. Her undergraduate degree is from Cornell University, where she graduated Phi Beta Kappa and Cum Laude. She is a longstanding member of the American Psychological Association and the Society for the Advancement of Consulting. She lives in scenic Bucks County, PA, with her husband and two teenage children. Stay tuned for Liz's forthcoming book, **Slow Down to Speed Up!** (Business Expert Press, Fall 2017).

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