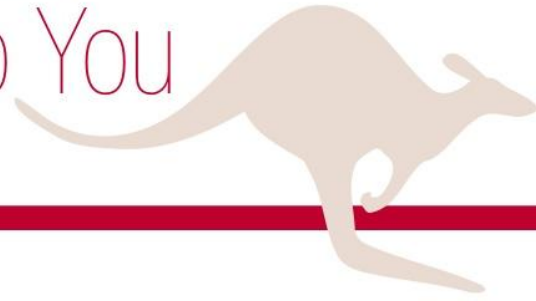


# From Roo to You



January, 2011

## Suit Up and Show Up

Last month I was invited to present a Job Seeking Workshop for veterans who are homeless, or are at risk of homelessness. I spent an hour and a half with a great group of men with skills ranging from leadership to inventory / logistics to IT. During this time we tried to translate military experiences and skills into civilian terms employers can resonate with. We worked together to identify what was unique about each person and how this can be communicated effectively. A key theme throughout the morning was the military concept of “**Suit Up and Show Up.**” This mantra speaks to resiliency, to action despite fear and uncertainty, and to remember that people are relying on you. I am not a big fan of fuzzy feel good sayings, but this one speaks to me. Regardless of how we personally feel any given day, we have a job to do. We need to “suit up” for whatever role we play and “show up” for the people who rely on us.

We hope this month’s newsletter encourages you to be resilient and intentional every day when representing yourself or your organization.

## For You: Up, Down and Across

Every day we can either help or hinder our relationships up, down and across our organizations and in our personal lives. You likely have opportunities every day to take a shortcut, vent your frustrations or avoid a situation all together. You also have the opportunity to do your best work, help out a friend or coworker, or have that difficult conversation while reinforcing the long-term relationship.

You make the choice whether or not to show up or to call in sick. Yet showing up involves more than your physical presence. It means being engaged with people - think about “Being Famous” or the “Be There” principle of the Fish Philosophy <http://www.charthouse.com/productdetail.aspx?nodeid=24103> It also means positively, rather than negatively, impacting a situation or environment. Whatever comments you make at the water cooler, whatever actions you take or do not take, impact how you “show up” up, down and across the organization.

**Up:** Your manager’s boss may not see you regularly; he or she may not even know what your job is. But rest assured that executive is keeping tabs on your progress, at least at a high level. When you play a key role in solving a key customer’s problem, when you take a step forward to volunteer while others step back, and when you help keep projects moving when everyone else has given up, it is noticed. I’ve been on a few leadership teams in both small and mid-sized organizations and company successes and missteps are regularly dissected. Most of these organizations also conduct either formal or informal talent reviews. It is

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the people who “show up” consistently that are identified for plum assignments and development.

**Down:** I am continually surprised by the little regard people show to others, particularly those in public facing service roles. I notice whether someone thanks the server for bringing her soup, because it is such a rare occurrence to even acknowledge people these days. Clerks at the bank or grocery store are often shocked after they offer the perfunctory “how are you” and I take the time to ask them the same question. This usually elicits a genuine smile- what a gift! Regardless of whether or not you have direct reports, how you treat people lower on the organizational chart is noticed, and remembered. The inventory clerk may just be your boss tomorrow and he will remember how you made him feel.

**Across:** Across the aisle, across the globe or across departments there are opportunities for collaboration and for conflict. Some organizations encourage organizational silos and “blaming” other departments for delays or mistakes. Other organizations focus more on the issues and solving problems. Even if you are in a silo’d organization, you can take steps to build relationships across the organization. When working on cross-functional teams, take time to learn about the other team member challenges – what does project success look like? What will be the obstacles and barriers? In what ways do your functions have conflicting goals that need to be addressed? Building relationships across the organization will help establish your organizational identity, enhance your credibility and increase the likelihood of your name coming up when leaders discuss high potential staff members.

## **For Your Organization: Pssst....they’re watching you**

Have you ever found yourself wondering why your staff doesn’t keep you informed? Perhaps they don’t get reports in on time, or maybe they are in continual conflict with another department.

I’d like to share a little secret about the **amplification effect** in leadership. As leaders, we are in the spotlight. Even when we think we are in a closed door meeting or sending a simple email about a customer problem, our employees are watching, and they are learning from you. They are learning what actions garners praise, what frustrates you, and most importantly, they are learning how to “show up” for the boss. Employees want to perform well but they don’t know what their boss is thinking or what she wants from them. So they watch you closely to try to pick up clues as to how to behave. Everything you do is amplified. You must decide whether to use these amplification powers for good.

Positive Amplification. There are opportunities to model positive leadership in how you “show up” every day. Follow through on your commitments. Admit to mistakes. Support employees when they make minor mistakes. Celebrate accomplishment. Tell stories about how individual employees have

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demonstrated company values or accomplished a major goal. Design your performance appraisals to reward both the “what” (results) and the “how” (working effectively with others, ethically, etc.) Have an actual conversation with a staff member rather than relying on email. Make it safe to deliver bad news. Focus on solutions, not blame.

Negative Amplification. We all need to be forgiving when someone has an occasional bad day. But if the occasional bad day behavior is evolving into a standard mode of operation, your organization is at risk of lowered productivity, increased turnover and having an all around unpleasant atmosphere. The other day a client remarked that “we can only treat our members as well as we treat each other”. This is so true. Employees are less able and less motivated to serve internal and external clients well when they are being treated poorly.

I once worked with a person who had a “kiss up, kick down” philosophy. He regularly made comments he thought his boss would like. He started mirroring the boss’ interests. In contrast, he treated his direct reports poorly. He was dismissive and arrogant at best, mean-spirited and vindictive at his worst. His staff was miserable and fearful. People disengaged to trying to stay out of the line of fire. Sometimes their frustration came out “sideways” – overreacting in situations. Others “checked out” either figuratively or actually left the company.

**While human beings have more intentional choices than the duckling imprinting on its mother, your staff is watching you. It is up to you to decide what actions, behaviors and values to amplify.**



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