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LEADERSHIP JOURNAL

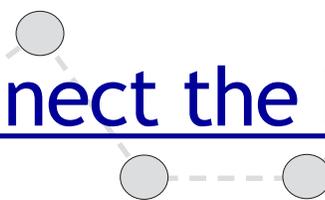
Resource

LEADERS CONNECT THE DOTS



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Leaders Connect the Dots



Remember that childhood experience of drawing a ragged line from one number to another and suddenly seeing a rabbit or a tree or leprechaun emerge? It was magic. It was definitely not like “the storms” I drew without the numbers to guide me.

Wise leaders do the same for those they lead—they connect the dots. They work to insure their people know how the event or project of the moment relates to the big picture.

Without connecting the dots every initiative, every event, every campaign becomes another random drumbeat of disassociated noise. When we fail to connect the dots, we reinforce vision leak and ultimately wear people out.

In the absence of buy-in, leaders often resort to cheerleading in attempts to gain enthusiasm for the next latest and greatest, yet only wear people out. On the other hand, connecting the dots for people sets them up for their own “Aha!”

With less energy, it is possible to achieve greater momentum. Connecting the dots helps your people understand we are going somewhere.

Connecting the dots means helping people understand how each small step connects to the larger and journey. It means taking the time to help those we lead understand the contribution of the moment in light of the big picture. Concretely, it means making sure your people always understand the answers to three questions:

- **WHY** are we doing this? That is, why did we choose to do this versus every other possibility? Why is this a strategic opportunity, decision, plan, etc.? Why is what we are doing now worth the effort?
- **HOW** does this relate to our vision, our goals, the people we are trying to serve, problems we are trying to solve, the other things we are doing, etc.?
- **WHAT** results and relationships do we hope for? and How are these results related to the big picture we are aiming at?

By the way, a simple honest post-mortem after any event or project has great power. By communicating the progress or missteps of any effort a leader not only keeps the dots connected, but also engender’s the trust of those they lead and reinforces the heart of their vision.

QUESTION: Do you consistently connect the dots for those you lead?

noREDcapes.com
and this resource
were created to
provide you and
those you lead with
resources that will
serve you in the
trenches of real life.

—Gary

Reflection and Discussion Guide

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- What strikes you as the most important aspect of connecting the dots?
- What would be easy and what would be difficult for you in trying to connect the dots for people?
- Is connecting the dots a regular discipline for you? If not, why do you think it doesn't happen?
- If the question is, "are your people on the same page together?" How would you respond? How could connecting the dots help you?

A COMMUNICATION SCORECARD:

YES we connected the dots	NO we didn't connect the dots

Instead of only talking about this communication discipline, take it further by assessing your recent behavior:

1. *Gather copies of all your printed communication materials from the past three months.*
2. *Review each announcement in these documents and ask yourself, "In this announcement, did we connect the dots for people or not?" Tally the number of "yes" and "no" answers in two columns.*
3. *Compare the totals of each column. How did you score?*
4. *If you were to convert your numerical score into a grade (from A – F) what grade would you give yourself?*
5. *If you were to repeat this exercise in 3 months from now, what score would you hope to see?*

PROACTIVE CHANGE:

- What immediate steps can you take that will help you start consistently connecting the dots for your people?
- Who or what could help you and your team measure improvement until new behavior is natural?
- What specific action steps will you take?

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