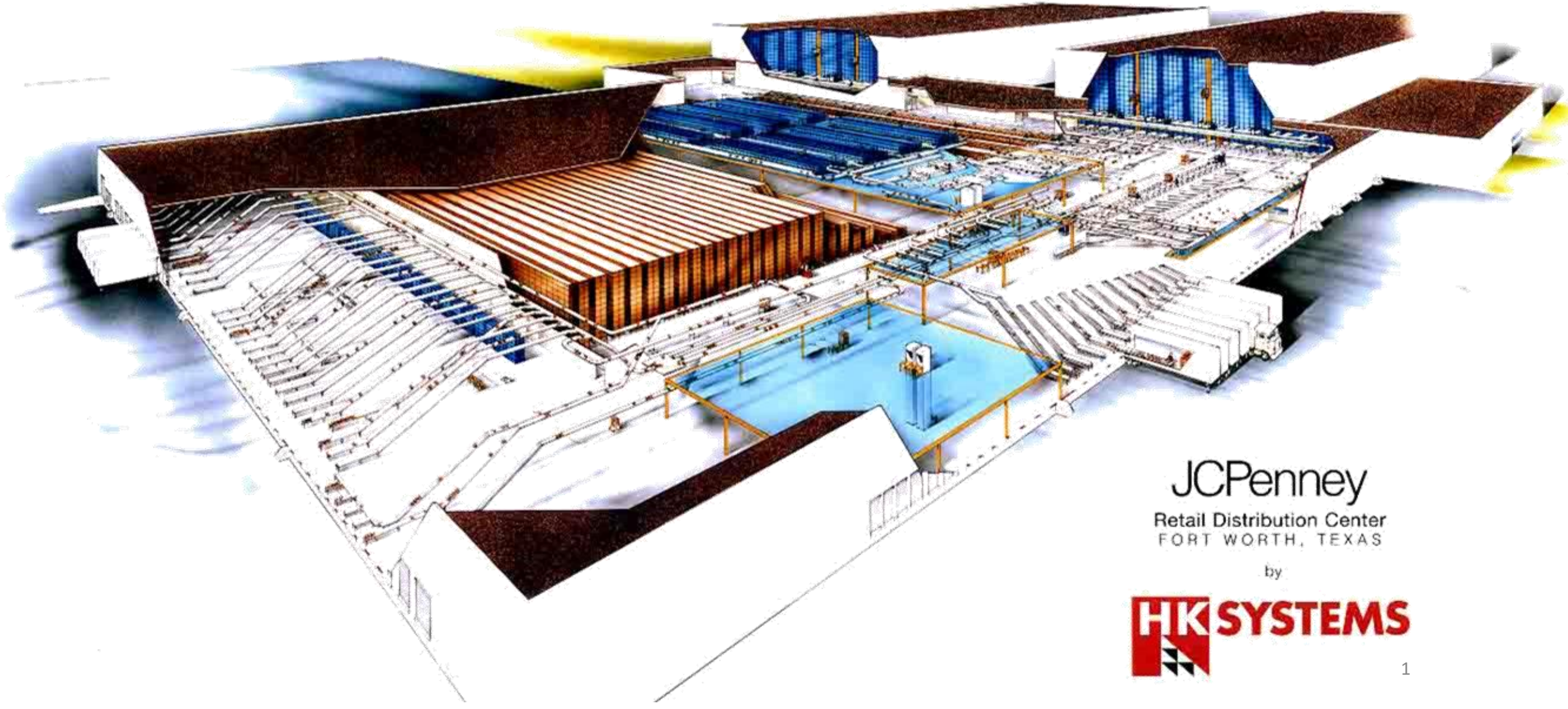
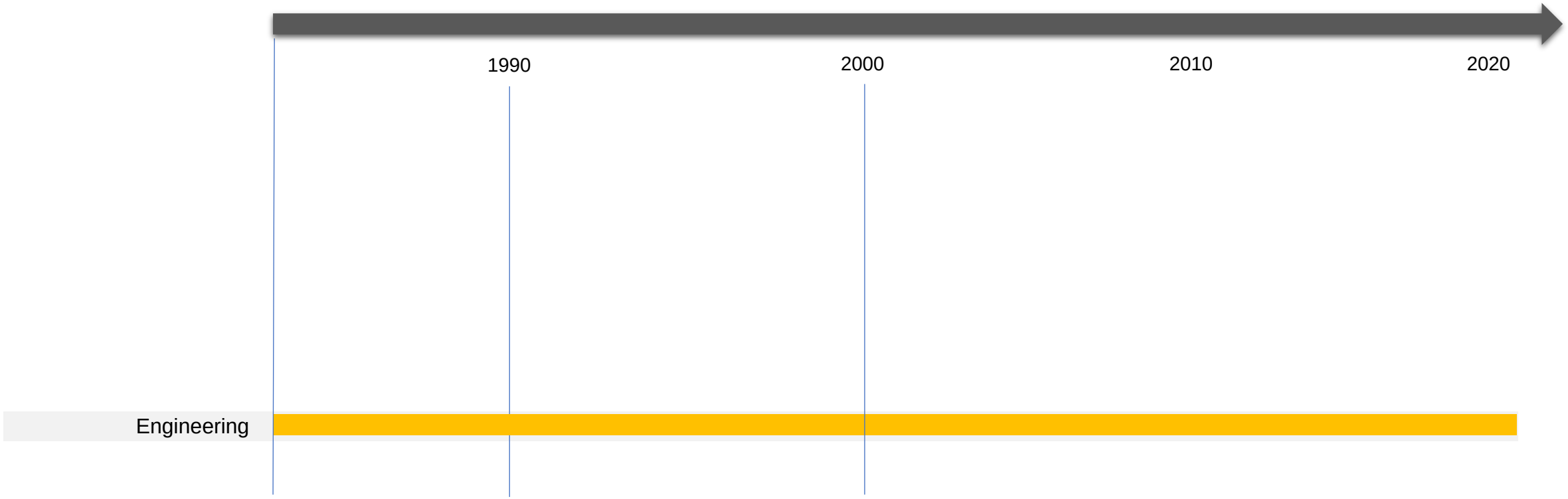
Who's Mike Kotecki?

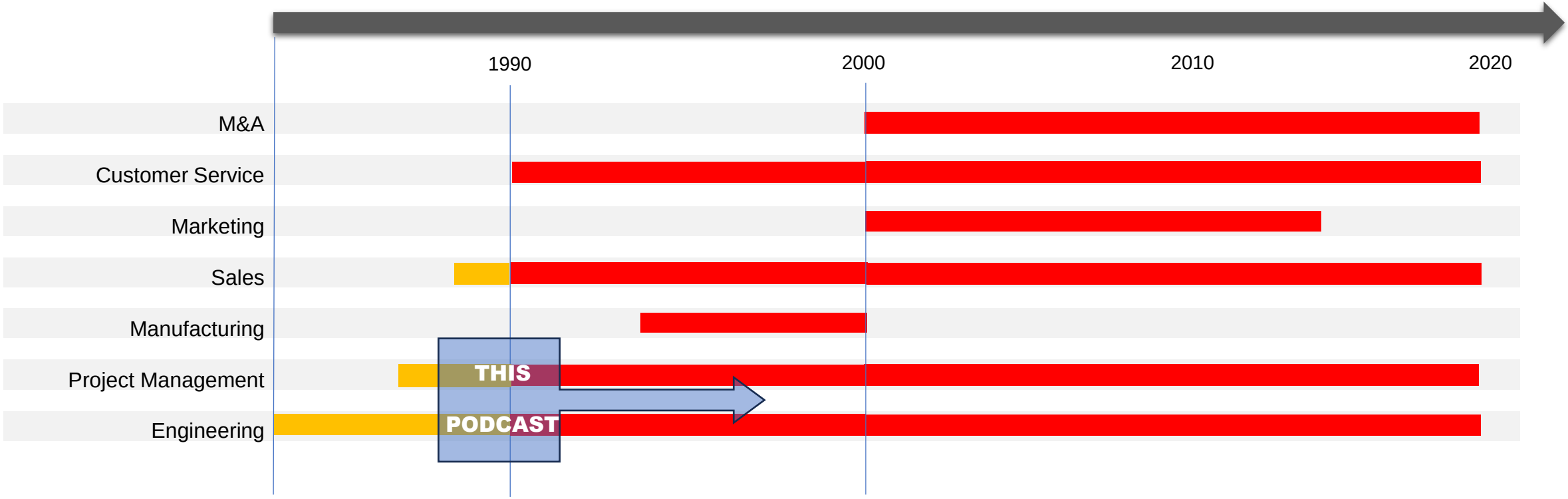


My Plan



Tactical Leadership

My Journey
Responsibilities Over Time



Execution
Management

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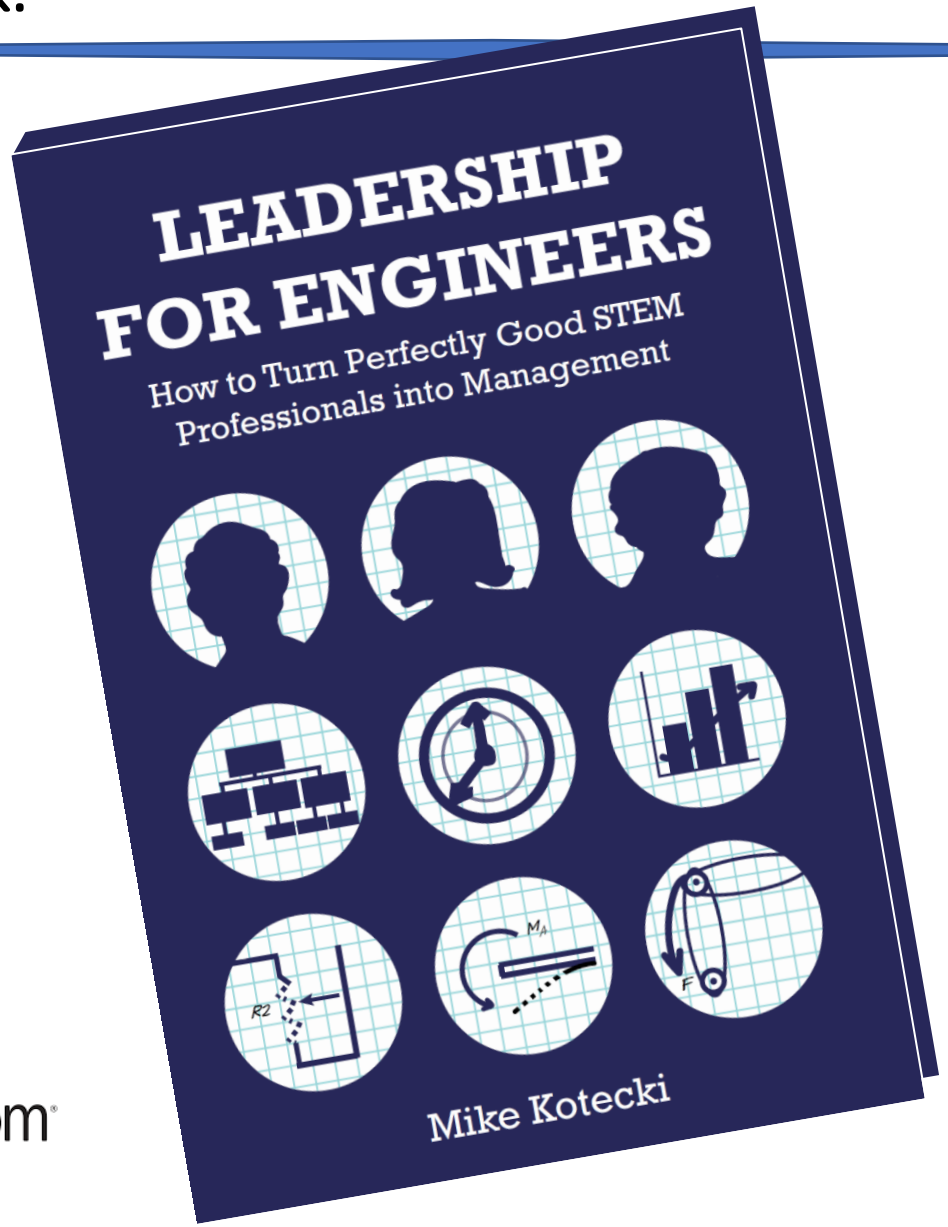
This Podcast

…taken from the Book:



amazon.com

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“Typical” Engineering Qualities

- ORGANIZED – Methodical, sequential thinkers.
- INQUISATIVE - The art of sincere *inquisitiveness* is a priceless characteristic of the progressive leader.
- APOLITICAL - Uncommon objectivity and a chance to leverage their keen self-awareness, enabling unselfish, practical decisions.
- PRAGMATIC – They value the true utility of an asset, process or investment over optics which, odd as it may sound, promotes common sense.
- RESOURCEFUL - Detail-oriented, resourceful problem solver who applies logic and empirical evidence to derive practical, fact-based solutions to unplanned challenges.
- NICE - Engineers are not *usually* psychopathic narcissists, completely void of human emotion.

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So, Why *Not* Engineers?

Things Working Against the Aspiring STEM Leader

Biases
Low visibility
Low self-promotion
They are valuable as is
Lack of business acumen

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The Pros and Cons of Moving into Leadership

PROS	CONS
▪ You get to watch others advance in life and business because of your involvement.	▪ There will be illogical decisions, behaviors and outcomes around you due mostly to the politics of management.
▪ Your compensation grows at a rate equal to the square of your age.	▪ The higher in the food chain you are, the harder it becomes to find a new job if you need one.
▪ You have the opportunity to make a significant impact on the direction and success of the organization.	▪ Errors in judgement and goof ups can have far-reaching and long-lasting consequences.
▪ Fewer people check your math and second guess your decisions.	▪ The list of people that don't like you will be longer than you are used to.
▪ You will be exposed to experiences that will propel your skills and understanding far beyond that of an individual contributor.	▪ If you can't manage stress, it will eat you like a can of Pringles.

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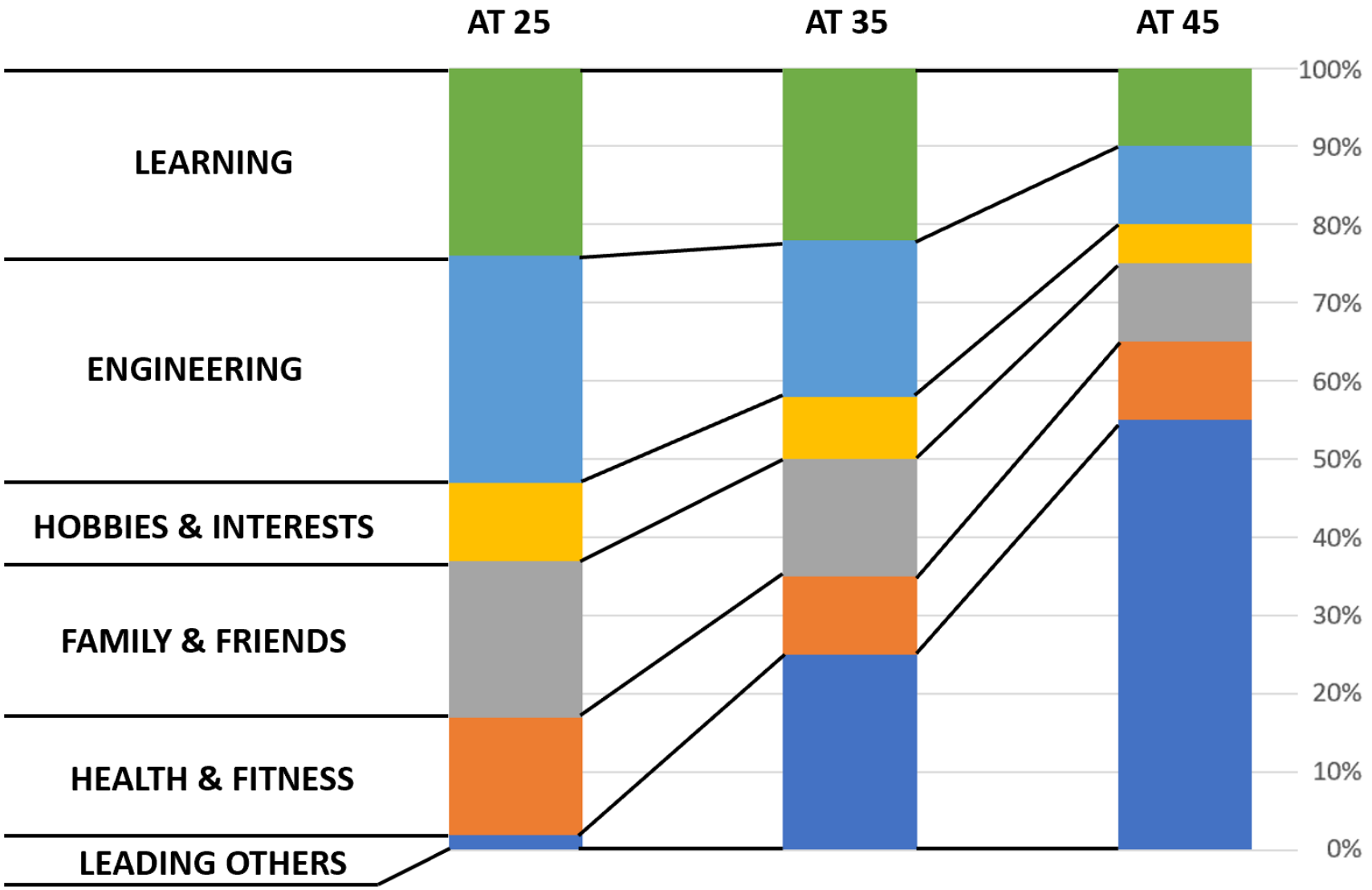
SPOILER ALERT:

You are quite likely to miss your bowling league on Tuesdays.



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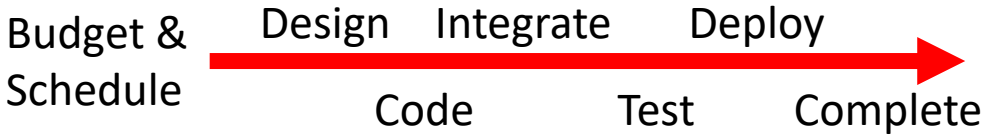
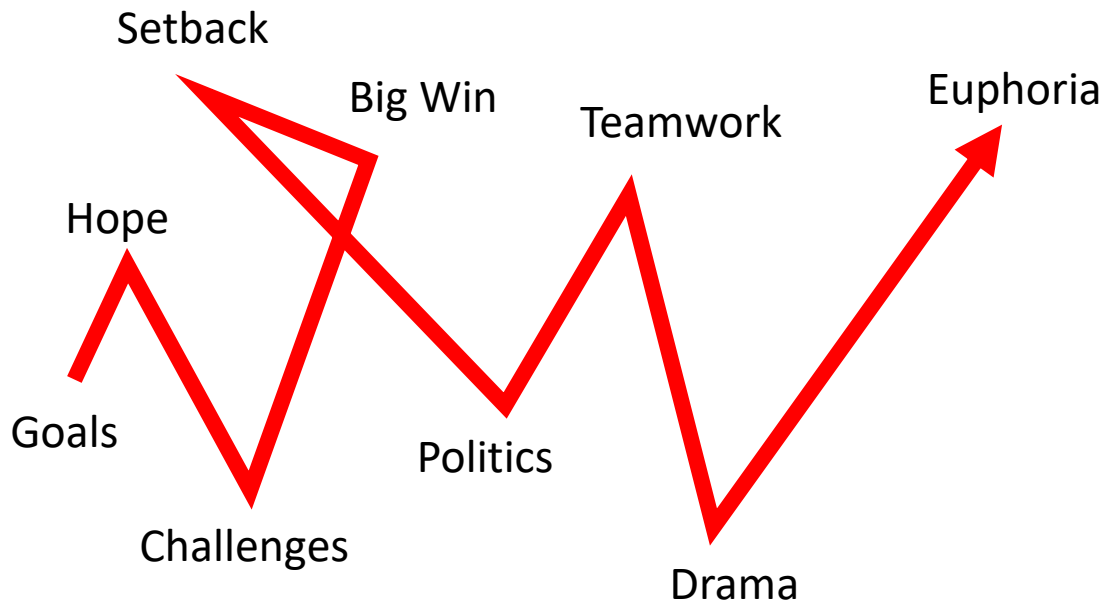
Contributing vs. Leading

THE JOB AT HAND





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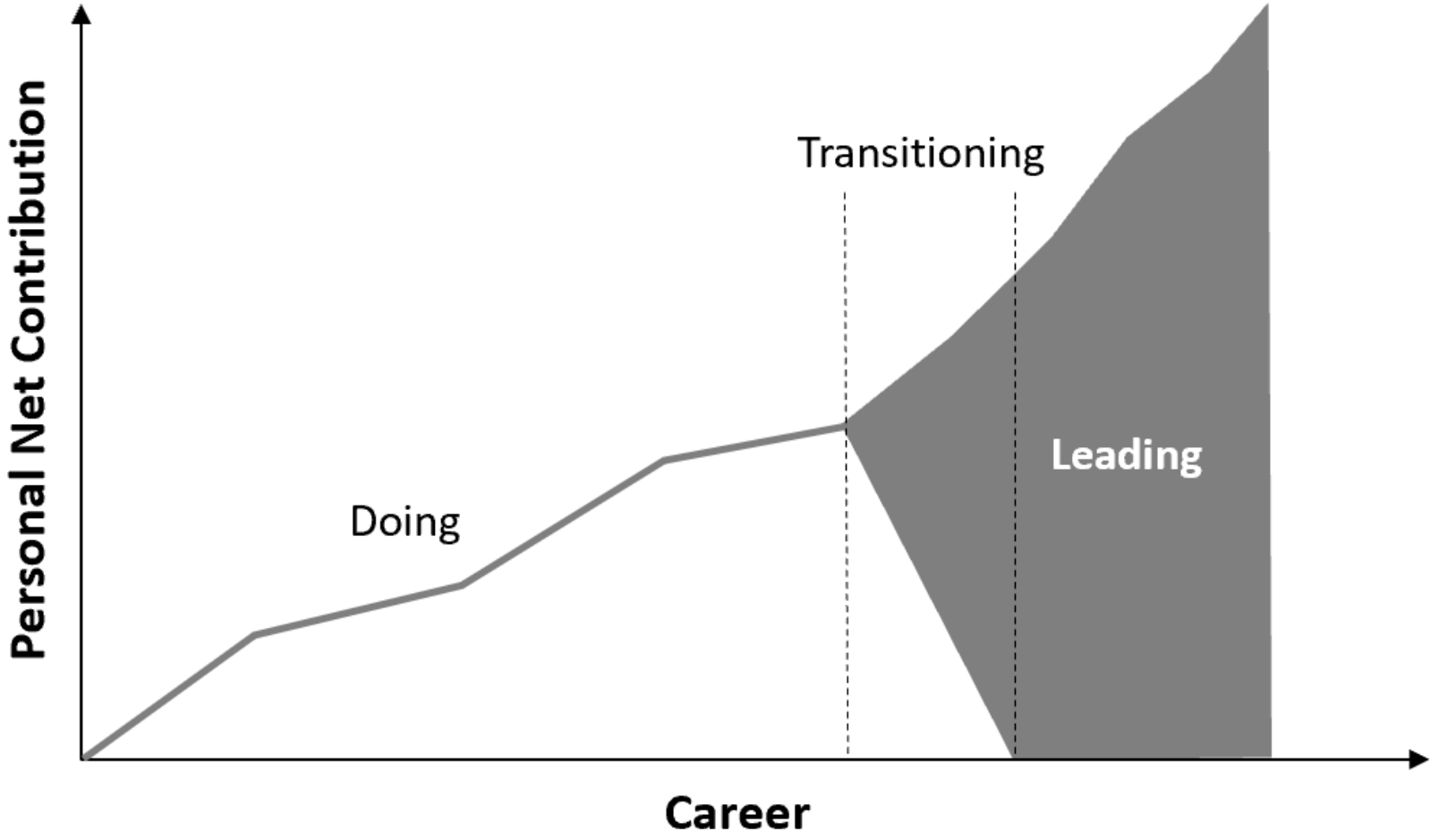
Your Contribution Is No Longer the Line of Your Progress

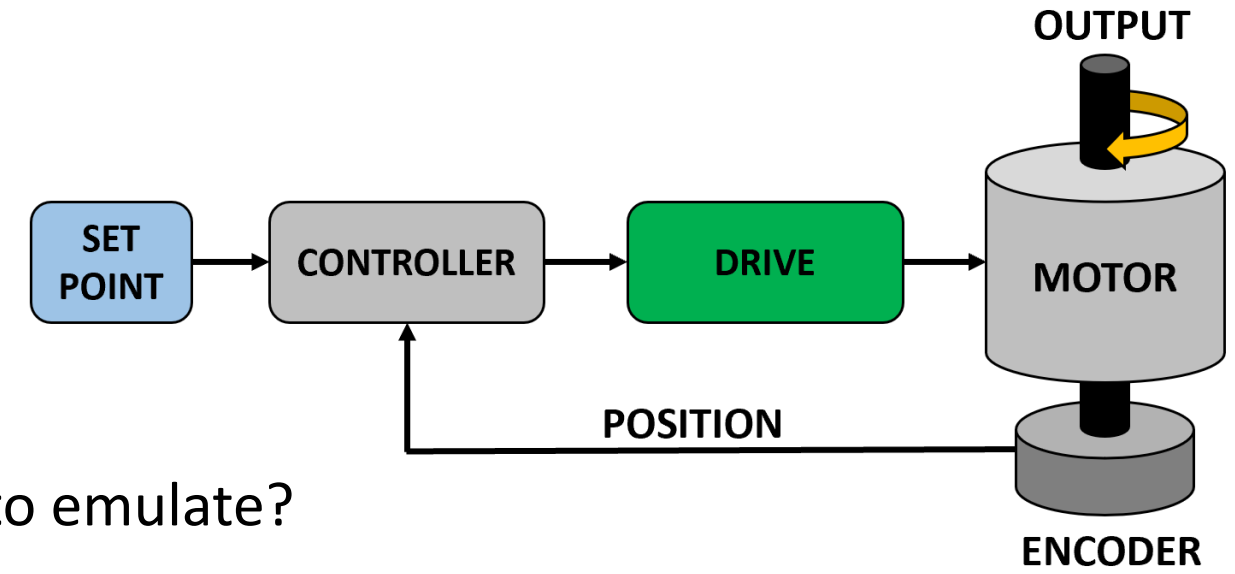
…it is the integral of your progress.



Tactical Leadership

Crafting Your Own Leadership Persona

Build a closed-loop control system and adjust over time



- Establish Set Points
  - What qualities and people do I want to emulate?
- Use a Precision Encoder
  - How will I measure success in my actions?
- Adjust Controller Parameters Over Time
  - Monitor performance feedback and adjust parameters as needed…

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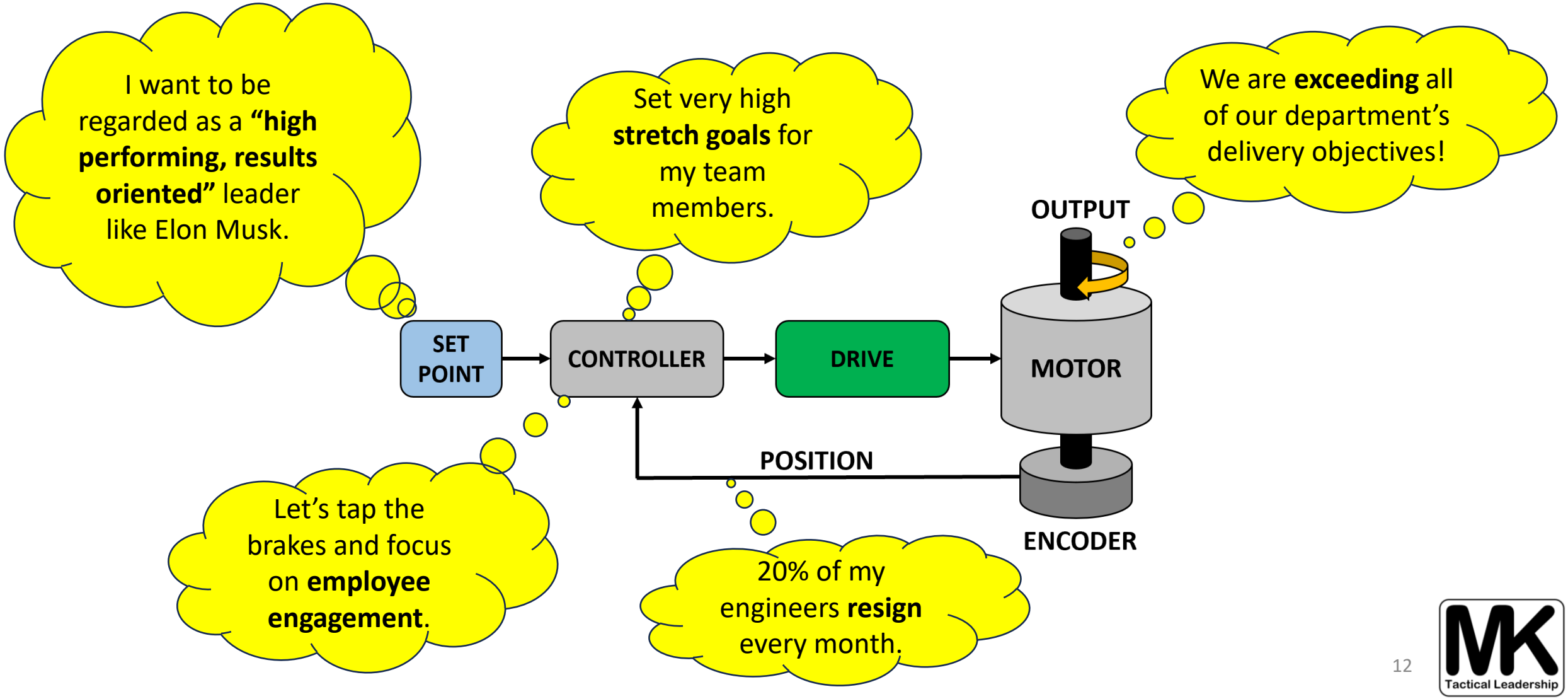
Crafting Your Own Leadership Persona

This is a continuous process, not an event…

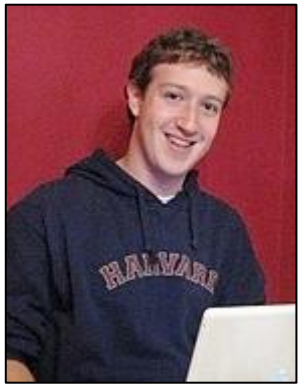


Tactical Leadership

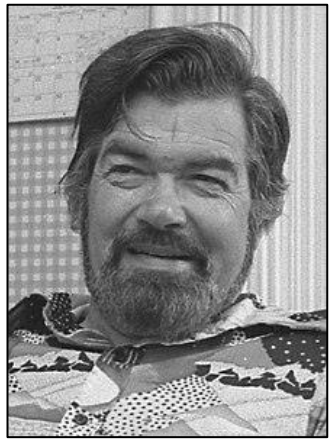
Four Paths from STEM to Leadership

- You were born to lead

- You thunk your way there



- You are a victim of your own success



- You were qualified and groomed

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So, How to Ignite this Transition?

- Ask yourself, “Do I find great joy in humbly helping others succeed?”
- Get comfortable raising your hand when opportunity knocks

  …and even when it doesn’t.
- Share your aspirations.
- Take inventory, then close the gaps in your knowledge and skills base.
- Seek a mentor or 2, and be OK when proven leaders advise you.

Strategic or Tactical? Yes.

It's not a choice, it's a continuum.

Owners Board of Directors C-suite Management Mid-Management Professionals Supervisors Tradespeople

Exit strategy

Enhance valuation

Acquire competitors

Define synergies

Integrate acquiree

Rationalize best practices

Optimize new team

Improve value

Sell company at enhanced value

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Leadership Characteristics at the Ends

	STRATEGIST ⟷	TACTICIAN
Reach	Broad	Focused
Enjoy	Visualizing	Seeing
Thinking	Abstract	Tangible
Data	General	Detailed
Results	Long Term	Immediate

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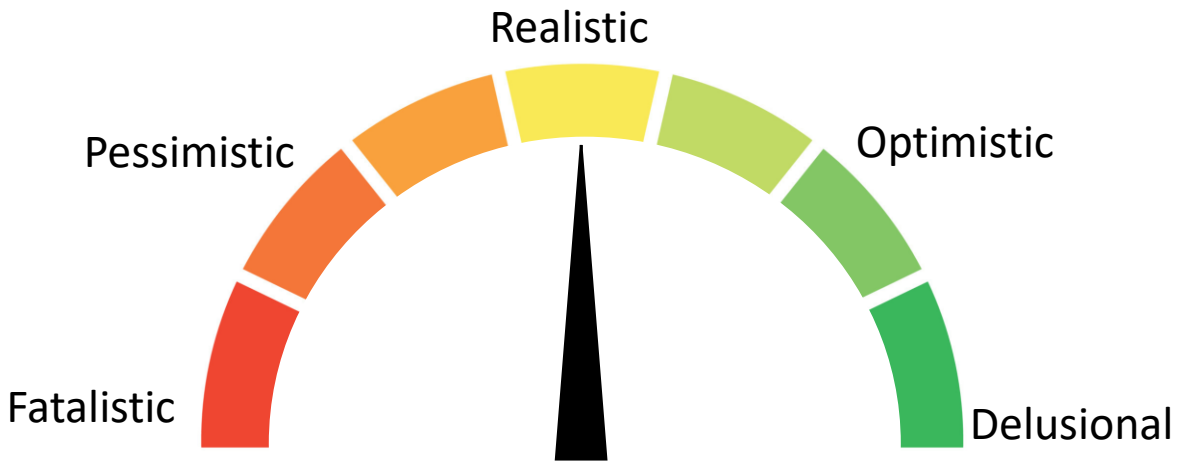
Strength = Attitude + Behavior

ATTITUDE

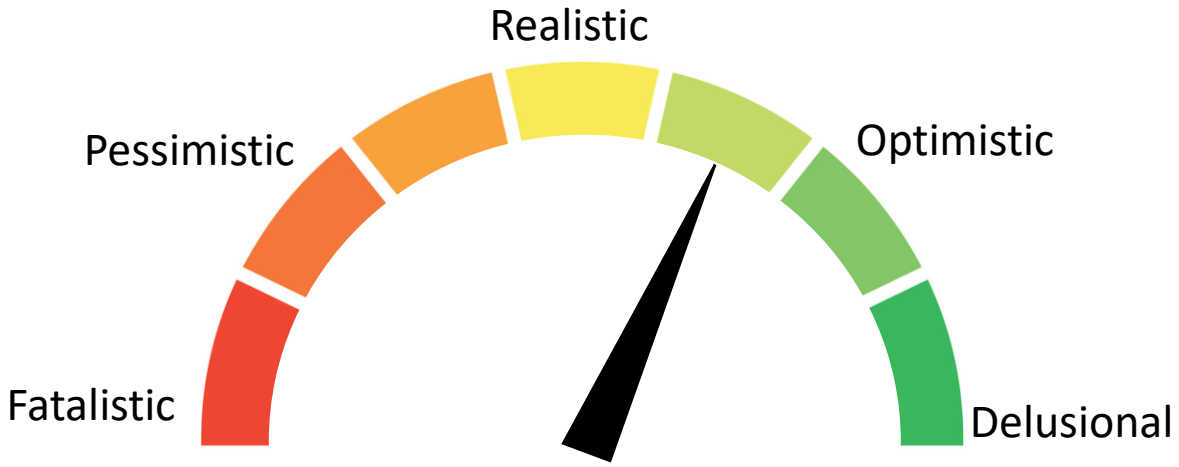


BEHAVIOR

MK Tactical Leadership

Strength = Attitude + Behavior

ATTITUDE



BEHAVIOR

Leaders?

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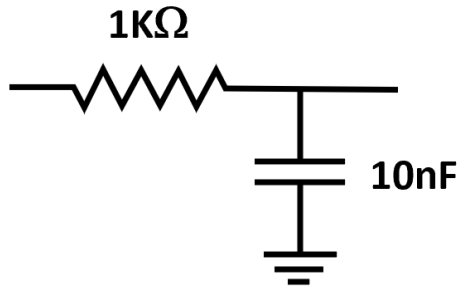
Why Optimism?

- When faced with the unknown, there is no reason to not be optimistic.
- Attitude is contagious and cats and employees can sense fear. Those watching your every twitch will relax their shoulder muscles when they see you as a positive and confident force.
- You may be churning on the inside but let's not keep others up at night worrying about it.
  - It's healthy to churn on occasion.
- Is the issue at hand…
  - Personal? (My dog died)
  - Personal-professional? (I hate my boss)
  - Professional? (Our best patent is expiring)



A LOW-PASS FILTER

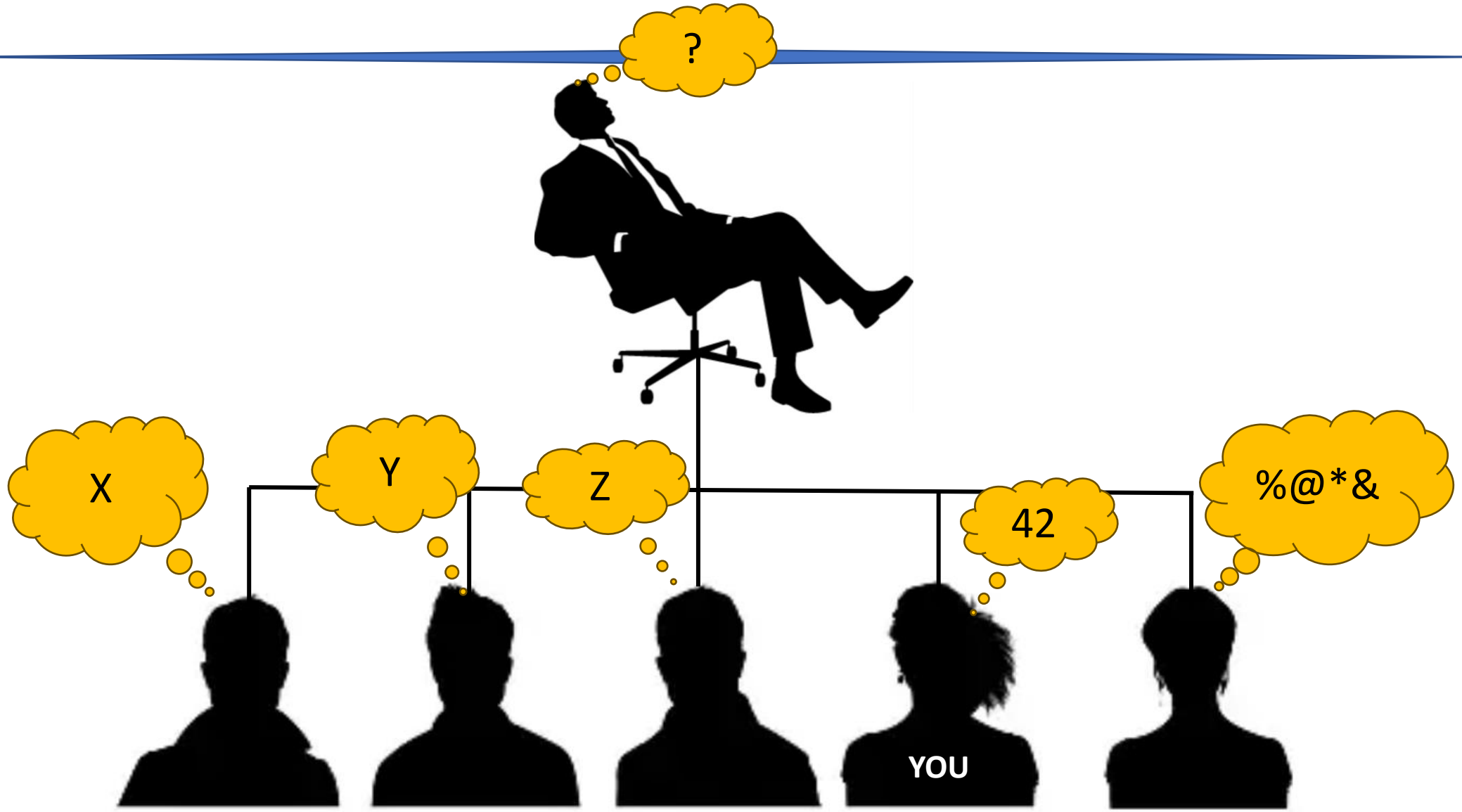
Tactical Leadership

However…

Managing your Optimism in Negative Times

- When a professional situation is becoming dire and could affect the organization, the adults working with you need to know about it immediately.
- There is a correlation between one's level in the company and their ability to process concerning information.
- You are mortal and will be completely flummoxed now and then. Establish and rely upon a network of peers and leaders to be *your* backbone in those times.
- If you save hysteria for *true* emergencies, it will provide the impact necessary at that moment.

Establishing Consensus



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Facts

- The objective is to harvest the value of the entire team and develop the *optimum direction forward*.
- Rank has its privilege…get used to that.
- This is exactly why they call it a “Management Team.”

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The Process

…be it formal or informal…

1. Prepare your perspective and pitch it.
   a. Bring data – if you don't have data…
   b. Be objective in your conviction – bring pros and cons
   c. Love, but don't be *in love* with your view
2. Respectfully caucus.
   a. Seek to find overlap in the varying perspectives
   b. Don't let it become personal
3. Once the direction is set, trust the process and "Salute the flag."
   a. Relegate your original view to cloud storage and move on
4. Communicate down the "optimum" direction and inspire action.

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Dictionary

Definitions from Oxford Languages · Learn more

in·teg·ri·ty

/inˈtegrədē/

noun

1. the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness.
   "he is known to be a man of integrity"

Similar: honesty | uprightness | probity | rectitude | honor | honorableness

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Leading with Integrity
A Few Guidelines and Warnings

- "One's integrity is defined at its lowest measured point, and that's how people will remember you."
  Mike Duke, former CEO of Walmart
- Being regarded by others as a person of principle will greatly improve your effectiveness as a leader and foster the loyalty needed to make a difference.
- You set the bar: If you wear your underwear on the outside of your jeans, everyone will think it's alright to wear their underwear on the outside of their jeans.
- "Goodness" in leadership *may* help a company reach its business potential.
  Conscious Capitalism: Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business, 2012
  John Mackey (co-founder of Whole Foods) and Raj Sisodia
- Be aware, doing the "rightest" thing may be neither the best thing for the company nor your career.
- That said, It feels good and you will never look back with regret.

OK, one more thing…

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
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Continuing Education

BECOMING AN ENGINEERING LEADER

Date: Wed-Thu, May 15-16, 2024
Delivery Method: In-person With Livestream
Time: 9am-4pm CT
Location: UWM School of Continuing Education or view on Zoom
Instructor: Mike Kotecki
CEUs: 1.2, **PDHs:** 12
Enrollment Limit: 35
Program Number: 4860-16086
Registration Deadline: May 8, 2024

uwm.edu/sce/courses/becoming-an-engineering-leader/

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