**Taking Your Team from Good to Superior**

Tip Sheet #2 from *Doing the Right Things Right* by Laura Stack

Why do merely good companies still outnumber the superior ones by a factor of hundreds to one? The problem isn't the concept of moving from good to great to superior; it's the imple­mentation. Leadership frequently fails because we can't see our greatest flaws. It's not just a matter of not seeing the forest for the trees; too often, we can't see our flaws because we aren't humble enough to accept a forest exists at all. So I rec­ommend the following four practices:

1. **Set Aside Your Ego.** Youare not your company, your division, or your team. You lead and represent them, and therefore have an obligation to provide vision and guidance in all things. So when you make a decision, don't assume that because it works for you, it works for everyone. Step up to the plate, lead by example, and take every­thing and everyone into account before you swing.
2. **Carefully Pick a Direction and Stick With It.** You can't become the expert in your field if you don't stay the course long enough. Case in point: Warner-Lambert. It began as a consumer products company with healthcare leanings. From 1979 until 1998, when Pfizer absorbed it, Warner-Lambert changed direc­tion at least five times, prompting three major restructurings under three different CEOs. All this did was repeatedly kill its forward momentum, eventually killing the company. Instead of shifting direction repeatedly, pick *one* direction and focus on growing what you do best.
3. **Model Yourself After the Best in Your Field.** What can you learn from things your competitors have done right, as well as what they've done wrong? How can you do them one better by using their own methods against them? More than a century ago, the U.S. Postal Service copied many of the business practices of the original Wells Fargo, including the Pony Express and corner mailboxes. Wells Fargo lost the postal game only when government legislation made the USPS the sole legal postal service.
4. **Communicate Intentionally.** Effective communica­tion makes a huge difference. Steve Gangwish is a vice president at CSS Farms—a main supplier of potatoes for Frito-Lay and other makers of potato-based products. As he points out, "What's made the difference in our team's performance is intentional communication. Every farm has meetings once a week, typically on Mondays, and everybody on the farm knows it. Everybody gets together, planning for the week and thinking ahead… that simple change, toward intentional planning and communication, has made pretty significant impacts in our farms."

**Cooking Up Superior Productivity**

Many ingredients contribute to the good-to-great recipe, including willingness to work hard, inspiration and in­novation, open communication, and encouraging empower­ment. I hope these tips help you break new ground, so you can give your best to anyone who depends on you and your team.

Laura Stack, MBA, CSP, CPAE, aka The Productivity Pro®, gives speeches and seminars on sales and leadership productivity. For over 25 years, she’s worked with Fortune 1000 clients to reduce inefficiencies, execute more quickly, improve output, and increase profitability. Laura is the author of seven books, including *Doing the Right Things Right: How the Effective Executive Spends Time*. See [www.3TLeadership.com](http://www.3TLeadership.com).