

THE LAW OF TIMING

When to Lead Is As Important As What to Do and Where to Go

Good leaders recognize that when to lead is as important as what to do and where to go. Timing is often the difference between success and failure in an endeavor. Every time a leader makes a move, there are really only four outcomes:

THE WRONG ACTION AT THE WRONG TIME LEADS TO DISASTER

If you lead a department or a team and you take the wrong action at the wrong time, your people will suffer. And so will your leadership.

THE RIGHT ACTION AT THE WRONG TIME BRINGS RESISTANCE

When it comes to good leadership, having a vision for the direction of the organization or team and knowing how to get there aren't enough. If you take the right action but do it at the wrong time, you may still be unsuccessful because the people you lead can become resistant. Good leadership timing requires many things:

Understanding – leaders must have a firm grasp on the situation.

Maturity – if leader's motives aren't right, their timing will be off.

Confidence – people follow leaders who know what must be done.

Decisiveness – wishy-washy leaders create wishy-washy followers.

Experience – if leaders don't possess experience, then they need to gain wisdom from others who do possess it.

Intuition – timing often depends on intangibles, such as momentum and morale.

Preparation – if the conditions aren't right, leaders must create those conditions.

THE WRONG ACTION AT THE RIGHT TIME IS A MISTAKE

People who are naturally entrepreneurial often possess a strong sense of timing. They intuitively know when it's time to make a move – to seize an opportunity. They sometimes make mistakes in their actions at those key moments. The greatest mistake made by entrepreneurs and other people is knowing when to cut their losses or when to increase their investment to maximize their gains. Their mistakes come from taking the wrong action at the right time.

THE RIGHT ACTION AT THE RIGHT TIME RESULTS IN SUCCESS

When the right leader and the right timing come together, incredible things happen. An organization achieves its goals, reaps incredible rewards, and gains momentum. Success almost becomes inevitable. If you look at the history of nearly any organization, you will find a pivotal moment when the right leader took the right action at the right time, and it transformed the organization. Winston Churchill described the impact leaders can make when they take the right action at the right time. He said, *"There comes a special moment in everyone's life, a moment for which that person was born. That special opportunity, when he seized it, will fulfill his mission – a mission for which he is uniquely qualified. In that moment, he finds greatness. It is his finest hour."* Every leader desires to experience that moment!

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

Maya Angelou

"Few things can help an individual more than to place responsibility on him, and to let him know that you trust him."

Booker T. Washington

"The miracle is this: the more we share the more we have."

Leonard Nimoy