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*“Providing Strategies for Success”*

**Leadership Thoughts**  
for  
**Prospering**  
in the  
**21<sup>ST</sup> Century**

by

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This work is dedicated to  
improving the skills/competencies  
of Leaders  
(Executives & Managers)  
who either consciously or  
unconsciously make life  
challenging for the  
American workforce.

The thoughts contained in this  
work come from the heart and are  
based on personal experiences  
observations and feedback from  
the global workplace.

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# **LT**<sub>1</sub> - *On Leading Change In Your Organization*

- **See yourself as being a change agent.**
- **Provide a clear “vision.”**
- **Be dissatisfied with satisfaction.**
- **Keep up on trends and developments in your industry.**
- **Respond quickly to environmental threats and opportunities.**
- **Know the internal and external driving forces that impact your business.**
- **Understand the personal and systemic sources of resistance to change in your organization.**
- **Build commitment to change by involving and communicating with your people.**
- **Keep “stretching” the change process to avoid complacency.**
- **Make change an “accelerated evolutionary” process rather than a “sudden revolutionary” process.**
- **Allow for thoughts of the past—then create excitement for the future.**

# **LT**<sup>2</sup> - *On Managing the Changing Workforce*

- **Demographic shifts will dramatically change and drive the makeup of America's workforce to include more women, minorities, and immigrants.**
- **Learn to embrace diversity and understand the strengths of having a diverse workforce.**
- **Challenge stereotypes and avoid generalizations about people.**
- **Respect the differences and values that employees bring to the workplace and reinforce each other's strengths.**
- **Understand that competence is gender/race/and minority neutral.**
- **Create policies that do not tolerate demeaning behavior by employees.**
- **Treat people as they would like to be treated.**
- **Encourage continuous diversity training and retraining at all levels of your organization.**

# **LT**<sup>3</sup> - *On Marketing Your Organization*

- **Remember-Everybody is a Marketer.**
- **You are the “Lead Dog” as the spokesperson.**
- **Strive to create a “Life Time Client” relationship with your members and customers.**
- **Use technology to its fullest capability to market products and services to your members/customers.**
- **Inconvenience yourself for the convenience of your members and customers (extended 7x24x365 service).**
- **Create a “Toddler to Tomb” product marketing strategy for your members/customers.**
- **Invest heavily in your marketing activities. Remember, repetition is education!**
- **Learn how to segment and market to culturally diverse American consumer groups.**

# **LT**<sub>4</sub> - *On Developing an Effective Team*

- **Believe in the team credo: *Together Everyone Achieves More.***
- **Create work teams where the “Task is the Boss”.**
- **Articulate the shared values and purpose of your team to everyone in the organization.**
- **Establish a team mission and goals for high output.**
- **Hold teams accountable for their performance.**
- **Celebrate victories and accomplishments.**
- **Create an organizational structure for team effectiveness and success (horizontal/mobile structure).**
- **Break down organizational “fiefdoms and silos”.**
- **Reward and recognize outstanding team performance on a regular basis.**

# **LT**<sup>5</sup> - *On Creating a Positive Workplace Culture and Inspiring, Not Motivating Employees*

- **Don't lie to or deceive your people.**
- **Celebrate accomplishments.**
- **Treat your staff like customers or members and treat your customers/members like the staff.**
- **Get out of your office and out from behind your PC. Spend more time interfacing with staff, customers, and members.**
- **Follow up on all feedback with employees.**
- **Revamp your policies to make sure they focus on supporting employee needs/growth.**
- **Train, and then train some more to create a "learning organization".**
- **Instill a "Purpose and Passion before Profit" business credo.**

# **LT** **6- *On Keeping Your Edge In a Chaotic “.com/mobile” World***

- **Maintain a life-long learning philosophy.**
- **Let the world be your classroom and always be a student.**
- **Be a “scanner” of new information to keep up with trends and developments in your field.**
- **Learn to unlearn old behaviors and re-learn new ones.**
- **Keep focused on your goals.**
- **Create a “passion” for what you do and always align yourself with your passions.**
- **Develop the ability to respond to changing situations and look at problems as potential opportunities.**
- **Keep yourself visible, accessible, and flexible.**
- **Be a survivor. Learn to be resilient and not be thrown back by crises, defeat, or failure.**
- **And Never Let Go of Your Dreams!**

# **LT**<sup>7</sup> - *On Maintaining a Positive Balance in Your Life*

- **Learn to laugh more.**
- **Live life in a more “vertical vs horizontal” fashion & do not spread yourself out too much and focus on key priorities.**
- **Learn to take care of yourself emotionally, spiritually, socially, and physically.**
- **Remember the “Greek Golden Mean”—Nothing in Excess!**
- **Personally engage in a socially responsible activity helping to improve the quality of life in your community.**
- **Keep yourself “grounded” by staying connected with family, friends, or other significant people in your life.**
- **Learn to take time and truly engage in outside interests.**
- **Think of your work as a “hobby” and your hobby like work.**

# **LT**<sup>8</sup> - *On the Key Competencies for Effective Leadership*

- **Learn to be a visionary-see the possibilities and the preferred future.**
- **Maintain a curiosity of the world.**
- **Grow your people: Become a Human Horticulturalist!**
- **Build awareness of and use technology as a tool to achieve business results.**
- **Promote and facilitate change.**
- **Develop coaching and mentoring skills.**
- **Develop an understanding of financial management practices.**
- **Maintain high ethical standards for yourself and in conducting business.**
- **Learn to build partnerships and alliances.**
- **Strive to become a servant leader to your staff, board, and constituencies.**

# **LT**<sup>9</sup>– *On Keys to Being an Effective Leader*

- **Love yourself/Love your people/Love your product.**
- **Always seek out challenges and new opportunities to grow your business.**
- **Encourage risk-taking in yourself and others and allow people to learn from their failures.**
- **Model the behavior you expect (it's not what you say that counts, it's what you do!)**
- **Value diversity and cherish the abilities people bring to the workplace.**
- **Focus on product quality and supreme customer/member service.**
- **Spend more time in strategic and critical thinking activities i.e. analyzing the marketplace, your competition, synthesizing competitive intelligence and information.**
- **And most important—keep yourself growing, learning, and have a “passion” for what you do at all times!**

# **LT**<sup>10</sup> - *On Your Legacy*

**How Do You Want To Be Remembered  
In Your Profession By Your  
Staff/Board/Peers/Members &  
Customers?**

**Write Your Professional Epitaph**

**HE/SHE WAS A . . .**

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***More Importantly - Write Your Personal Legacy, In Other Words How Do You Want To Be Remembered By Your Family/Loved Ones and Friends?***

## **Write Your Personal Epitaph**

**HE/SHE WAS A . . .**

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# LT **11- On Your Personal Commitment**

## **Contract With Me**

*As a result of my recent reflection and enlightenment regarding my current leadership practices, I will commit to the following action steps toward becoming a more effective leader.*

*I will stop doing the following:*

1.

2.

3.

*I will start doing the following:*

1.

2.

3.

*Signature* \_\_\_\_\_

*Signed this day of* \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** *This contract is binding and should foster a personal commitment to change.*

*And In Closing Remember...*

*“Life is a gift...That’s why we call  
Today the Present”*

*Start enjoying your gift today by  
living and leading your life to the  
fullest and helping to bring out the  
success in others!*

# **About the Author John A. Vardalas,** *CAE/CUDE,* *CEO/Founder The American Boomer Group*

## ***Personal Mission: To Help Individuals & Organizations Reach Their Potential***

John A. Vardalas is an International Business Consultant, Speaker, Author, Sage, and Founder/CEO of *The American Boomer Group*, a Madison Wisconsin-based Speaking/Consulting Business dedicated primarily to developing staff/leaders and organizations to reach their potential.

His work as a speaker/trainer and consultant focuses on helping people become more effective, business growth strategy, world-class service, and building productive workplaces. An international trend-watcher and provocateur, John also helps leaders synthesize industry trends into strategic organizational directions. He has spoken before thousands of financial industry and association staff and volunteers during his 40-year professional career.

John is also committed to improving the quality of life of America's baby boomer generation by providing lifestyle resources and making a difference in consumers' lives. John is the Co-founder of [\*Today's Boomer\*](#) magazine, an online publication of *The American Boomer Group*, focused on providing articles and information to educate and engage baby boomers.

As a professional speaker, John conducts and facilitates high-performance leadership/management and board development workshops, seminars, and keynote presentations for executives, staff, and volunteer leaders of national and international organizations/industry business groups and associations. He also facilitates strategic planning sessions for a variety of asset-size organizations throughout the USA.

John is also a featured guest on talk shows and speaker on international educational credit union cruises with [\*EduCruises\*](#) during the year. He has authored numerous articles published in financial journals and magazines and is a regular contributor for [\*CU Insight\*](#). He has also authored a booklet titled "Leadership Thoughts for Prospering in the 21st Century."

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