



## **Effective Leadership: 3 Leadership Clues You Should be Aware of to Avoid What Happened to Me**

"You cannot be a leader, and ask other people to follow you, unless you know how to follow, too." ~ *Sam Rayburn*

### Effective Leadership: 3 Leadership Clues You Should be Aware of to Avoid What Happened to Me

When I speak to grassroots organizations, I often start off by telling them the story of how I almost lost my club...and how effective leadership, or the lack thereof, had everything to do with it.

It was about 7 years ago, my club met every month on the same day and it was time for me to set up for that month's meeting. I was President and I did most of the work. I was very proud of all the things my organization had accomplished during the years and I had lots of ideas on what we could do in the future [see the effective leadership problem yet?].

As I said, it was time for the meeting and I was waiting for everyone to arrive. I waited...and I waited. The meeting room was empty except for me. [Really effective leadership right?]

Being a dutiful President I started calling members to see where they were. I got answers like, "I could not get a ride". "I did not know we were having a meeting". And finally I was asked, "Why are we still having meetings?"

Participation had been dropping off for months and I kept ignoring it – that was until I was in a room by myself. The problem for the lagging membership was me. As its President, I was not providing effective leadership. Rather, I was running it like it was my club and ignoring what others wanted.

Needless to say, I came to a decision point. Should I fold the club due to lack of interest? Or, should I change how I ran the club in hopes of bringing it back someday?

It is very easy to get confused when leading. Are you doing what you want? Or, are you basing your choices on what is best for the organization and truly providing effective leadership? Below are three clues you should be aware of when leading your club so that you won't be the last person standing.

1. Are you the one who comes up with the ideas? By itself, this is not a problem. However, if you are the only one planning activities for your group, maybe you should step back and examine your motivations and ask yourself if you're providing effective leadership.
2. Do you share ideas with others? If you find yourself reluctant to share your thoughts because they may be rejected this is not effective leadership and is another clue that your choices may not be the best for your organization.
3. When you do share ideas, is it with a small select group of followers? Again, reluctance to share ideas with those whose ideas may differ is not effective leadership and can indicate weakness in your decision making system.

Be aware of how you come to your decisions when leading your group. There are several clues that can indicate that you are doing what you want rather than what your membership wants to do and therefore not providing effective leadership.

After the loneliest meeting I ever hope to attend, I decided to continue the club with one big change. I decided to provide effective leadership and lead in activities that were of value to my membership and not just to me. Two years after that night, my organization had grown to be the second largest chapter in the state of Virginia. All this just by ensuring my group's activities resonated with the goals and values of the membership.

Effective leadership of any organization can be a challenge. To help ensure that your efforts are the most productive they can be, call me 703-994-2040. I can help you create a crystal clear mission that attracts those who can help you reach it.

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John Bailey is an internationally recognized expert who helps associations, organizations, and government agencies overcome such obstacles as leadership, change, and membership development. John does this through keynotes, seminars and personal training. He is the author of "Build Membership Mojo: 98 Proven Steps to Build, Grow, and Maintain a Thriving Membership Organization," as well as dozens of nationally-read articles.

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