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## March 2009 – The Director’s Desk

Welcome to the first edition of *The Koru* for 2009, where once again I’m certain you’ll find plenty of interest to both you and your colleagues. In what are clearly some of the most trying times to confront many New Zealand companies, we’ve decided to dedicate portions of this edition to potentially aiding you in your quest to find some resolution to those challenges. More particularly, we’ve dedicated our most recent three Golden Rules of Leadership to recommendations we consider pivotal to dealing with whatever circumstance you and your business may find yourself in. In addition, our face-to-face column is a transcript of a recently aired interview that appeared on Sky Television Australia in which political report Kieran Gilbert speaks to Prime Minister John Key about New Zealand’s response to the global financial crisis and his impressions of trans-Tasman relationships. Our feature article for the March quarter is titled “A Small Hole Can Sink A Big Ship – The Poor Performer and Other Like Obstacles”, and contends with the most frequently sighted reason for employee disillusionment – the inability of management to adequately deal with poor performance.

With staggering figures to back (excuse the pun) a back epidemic, we dedicate this edition of “The Doctor’s Room” to an insightful overview of back pain as the second most frequently identified (behind headache) cause of pain amongst populations. “Eat Yourself Holistic” sets about providing some simple options to help your family eat healthier, whilst our “Fit For Life” column in this edition of the Koru investigates the viability of “cardio” workouts when it comes to losing fat – and provides some staggering revelations in the process.

The “Practical Exercise” segment of The Koru introduces the “Measuring Self-Confidence” inventory, an inventory designed to help you evaluate your confidence regarding characteristics important to being successful in competitive situations. With so much occurring in business operations in the prevailing economic climate, we believe it to be critical that each of us looks into ourselves to truly ascertain our perception of worthiness.

Finally, and once again in light of a tumultuous economic climate, we propose to take you surfing into a website that’s going to keep you up to the play with events as they occur. “Business Week” is the world’s largest selling business magazine, with the [www.businessweek.com](http://www.businessweek.com) website an absolute must read for everyone likely to be affected by changing times

So join with us as we take you on our quarterly journey to the attainment of your better self, and take an injection of inspiration as we

seek to find resolution to these most trying and challenging of times. In addition, keep up-to-date with everything that's new by logging onto [www.leadtosucceed.co.nz](http://www.leadtosucceed.co.nz).

March 2009 - Feature Article:  
A Small Hole Can Sink A Big Ship –  
The Poor Performer and Other Like Obstacles



**By Craig Lewis**

Of all the *non-actions* likely to negatively impact on a team's morale, it seems none is quite so damning as a failure to respond promptly to a team member's poor performance. Research consistently contends that business leaders lose most kudos when poor performance is left unattended and poor performers are able to continue their inappropriate behaviour without repercussion. In truth, the condemnation highlights one very critical point of differentiation between effective and ineffective leadership – effective leaders remain focussed on their teams and its members. As easy and non-confrontational as it may seem to simply tolerate and ignore poor performance, the truth is that such a strategy invariably culminates in disillusionment from the very people the business relies most upon – those who consistently produce encouraging outputs.

It is a truth that leaders – both good and bad – have a tendency to react too slowly to incompetent performance, choosing instead to let matters run on too long in the hope they will resolve themselves. This is rarely – if ever – the case! Of course, whilst Jack Welch might suggest the annual removal of ten percent of a company's poorest performing workers has proven successful in his business exploits, it does appear that such a strategy may be too prescriptive. In truth, such a blanket approach opens one up to the kind of deceit and manoeuvring within the ranks that invariably leads to disharmony, and often culminates in valuable employees being sent packing more for their inability to *play the game* than their value to the company. It is my belief that the elimination of poor performers requires a far more personalized approach – an approach that can only be implemented when a leader remains close enough to his workforce to accurately appraise performance.

Business leaders have a duty of care to ensure any team member accused of poor work performance is given every initial opportunity to redress their performance discrepancies. In truth, any performance

failings that have become terminal should be treated as an indictment on a system that has failed to recognize the trend toward inappropriate performance. By ensuring team members are properly inducted into the requirements of their roles, and then ensuring a sufficiently frequent process of monitoring is completed, it has been my experience that most episodes of poor performance can be resolved before they become incurable. Moreover, because businesses rarely set out to employ people they believe to be incompetent, it must be assumed those who are later accused of poor performance are either victims of poor appointment procedures, or a culture that fails to ensure their growth. In either case, there appears merit in business leaders assuming some responsibility for the ultimate lack in performance.

Nevertheless, of all the commitments a leader must make to their staff, none is as critical for work productivity than a commitment to both identify and remove the obstacles that are most likely to hinder overall work effectiveness. By putting themselves in a position to step back from the business leaders of quality are best able to identify downward trends in a staff member's performance and most able to create an environment most conducive to an efficient workflow.

And potential obstacles can be many and varied, including poorly conceived and inappropriate system through to personal habit that inadvertently restricts the individual staff member's ability to realize their potential. Obstacles can be in the interactions of teams - some of which are conducive to an enhanced workflow whilst others are dysfunctional and hinder the convivial atmosphere that is a precursor to work effectiveness. And the astute leader ensures they are in a position to most ably recognize and rectify whatever the potential distracter may be – regardless of what the specific obstacle may be, a leader's job is to remove any obstruction that can negatively impact on the performance of others. Of course, being able to spot impending dangers and impediments is not a skill freely given to all, but rather it is a compilation of empathy, immersion in the business and awareness of both the self and the business.

It is to this affect that many potential obstacles can go undetected by the unsuspecting custodian, or more particularly by the custodian too immersed in a *head-down* task that inevitably engages their attention away from a looming catastrophe. Invariably, the kind of dysfunctional habit or process that culminates in significant disturbance to an organization's otherwise effective performance can commence as a very minor distraction that could easily have been resolved. However, it is through a procession of ignorance that even the most minor of hiccups can blossom into terminal heart disease. It has been my experience that most significant obstacles commenced their lives as

blips on the radar, but left either unnoticed or resolved these blips can soon spread, much as a forest fire takes a hold of its prey.

Removing obstacles for people is a fundamental responsibility of leadership, but one that is frequently ignored or undervalued. It should be the aspiration of all leaders to generate the kind of atmosphere and engagement that makes every person's working life as fulfilling as it can be. Sadly, the frustration associated to obstacles at work (including the performance of others in the workplace) is one of the primary determinants of a person's satisfaction or otherwise – and yet a simple process of surveying would in most circumstances deflect any such impediments long before they had time to gain traction in a business. It is a fact that disease festers if left unattended – and unattended obstacles are the single greatest disease of any business.

Astute business leaders remain on the lookout to detect anything in their environment that may indicate a trending in the wrong direction. These leaders ensure they position themselves so as to regularly survey their landscape, in the pursuit of any occurrence that has the potential to grow into something less desirable in the organization. They recognize that negative trends and incidences can spread like forest fires if left unattended, and set about extinguishing them before they are given any flicker of evolving. Perhaps there is a conflict between team members, maybe a sense of disillusionment around the poor performance of a work colleague, a potentially redundant product line, or even the coffee in the lunchroom is being served cold – it doesn't matter how inconsequential the actual event may seem, diligent leadership is active in its endeavours to reverse anything they detect that has the potential to fester and grow.

Within the Kiwis' campaigns of 2005 and 2006 we applied a similar understanding. Through strategies such as the core group (our senior leadership strategy) and by regularly engaging team members in conversation around how they perceived the team were travelling, we were able to enlighten ourselves to anything that had the potential to derail us to any extent. I vividly recall a core group meeting conducted primarily through the team's vice-captain and veteran player. Nigel Vagana. Nigel attended the meeting with a sequence of grievances or queries his team-mates believed could be righted if so desired. Much of what was raised appeared to have little bearing on the playing of the game - maybe the balls weren't inflated to the correct weight, or the team required an adjustment in the timing of our pre-game meeting. Each item was communicated, discussed and a resolution found, whilst Nigel sat in his chair graciously ticking off each of the agenda items as they were raised and resolved. No item on the surface appeared to have the potential to derail the campaign, but accumulatively they

contained at least a potential to trend us in the wrong direction. It is a simple example, but one that has implications for all business houses who choose to ignore any possible indicators of discontent.

Astute leadership retains alertness to prevailing circumstances and potential trends, and is always quick to react to any condition it perceives to predispose it to harm or hardship. A small hole can sink a big ship, and quality leadership is committed to regularly surveying its landscape in pursuit of both dysfunctional happenings and inventive opportunities. Hence, whilst business leaders must ensure they remain aware of all opportunities to develop their staff and reward their efforts, they must also remain alerted to unsuitability for task and – possibly more importantly – outright poor performance. Of course, the dilemma for most leaders rests in being able to determine when a person's lack of accomplishment transcends beyond simply not understanding their role through to genuine incompetence.

It has been my experience that when people don't understand their role and don't grasp the purpose of what they are doing, they are irrefutably condemned to achieving no more than sixty to seventy percent of what their potential may reveal they are capable of accomplishing. And the question really is where does blame lie? Is it the fault of the team member that they have not been educated fully in the requirements of the role, or is it the fault of the leadership that failed to provide such knowledge? For mine it is unequivocally the latter, which has failed to unleash the reservoir of talent available to them – or more critically, failed to generate an environment that promotes it. Nevertheless, even with the best laid plans and diligence there still exists the simple *lost cause*, where genuine achievement is never likely to be an option and effort invested amounts to little more than wasted time.

Business leaders must encourage employees to move into other areas when it becomes unequivocal that they are pursuing a *lost cause*. Whilst it may seem harsh, the fact remains that many people will simply not possess the necessary attributes to accomplish anything of consequence in a particular role or profession. Even from a personal perspective (regardless of the company's needs) participation for the sake of participation may be a good thing to a point, but at some point in time putting one's energies into an alternate activity is the most appropriate thing to do. Whilst one would never want to advocate quitting, somehow quitting isn't quitting when it becomes abundantly apparent that the team member is investing in something to which they have no natural ability or inclination. My reality is that most people (and maybe all people) possess a unique skill from which they can gain personal definition. I suspect often the business leader is ideally

situated to instigate movement toward such a person's natural path, and should feel a certain obligation to support such a transition.

Similarly, some people possess extreme talent in a multitude of pursuits. Business leaders should similarly be altruistic in the advice they provide to the likes of such people. Leaders should always ensure their advice is delivered in the best interests of the person regardless of any self-centred motivations. Quality leadership is as much about integrity and honesty as it is about winning – and (in any case) experience would indicate winners prefer an association to people of integrity!

And regardless of whether we're talking about the multi-talented or those in pursuit of a *lost cause*, the fact is that movement needs to happen abruptly. Whilst many leaders may opt to avoid the situation of a poor performer and choose instead to alienate them in the hope they will leave of their own accord, the disharmony created through such a strategy is frequently so great that it infiltrates into other facets of the business. Business leaders must confront all indicators of poor performance quickly and effectively. They must first locate the poor performer within the hierarchy of their business so as to immediately identify the most appropriate person with whom the team member must build a relationship. Second, they must ensure the poor performer is fully aware of their position requirements, and set about assisting them in prioritising work focuses for greatest value. Third, the leader must ensure a more convivial environment of communication exists so as to ensure any indicators of discontent and uncertainty are immediately identified. Finally, true success for any leader may lie in the awareness to recognize a *lost cause* and the empathy to guide others into alternative possibilities sooner rather than later.



March 2009 – The Doctor's Room  
Back Pain – The Epidemic

By Gerry Van Dyke, PT, SCS, ATC

Did you know that each year, more than 65 million Americans experience back pain? 80% of us will suffer from back pain at some point in our lives. ....80%...That's 4 out of every five people! Does that make you a little nervous? It was previously thought that 90% of all back pain resolves on it's own within 4-6 weeks, but now studies are showing that only 20% of people will have no other symptoms within the year. 70-80% of people will have some form of reoccurring symptoms in the year to follow. For 3-4% of the people, back pain will turn into a chronic (long standing) problem. If you talk to the folks around you, you may find that up to a third of them will have had some form of back pain within the last 30 days. Any guesses what the only type of pain that people have more frequently than back pain? It's headache. That's the only one. Not hip pain or knee pain or carpal tunnel pain. So not only do most of us get back pain, but we also get it frequently!

Here are some other statistics that may scare you. If they don't scare you, at least concern you. The direct cost to treat people in America with back pain is \$26 Billion dollars a year. That's 2.5% of the total health care costs in America. If we add in, all the indirect cost (such as welfare, disability, lost tax revenue and lost productivity) the amount exceeds \$90 Billion dollars. Some sources report up to \$100 Billion dollars per year. Those are some pretty staggering numbers, so let's break it down a little more.

**What does this mean if you are an employer?**

Back pain is the number 1 cause of job related disability in the United States. Back pain accounts for ¼ of all workers compensation claims. Back pain is also the 2nd most common reason to miss work. It is 2nd only to "cold symptoms". Have you ever hurt your back and still had to go to work? What happens? Do you slow down? Do you get as much work done? Do you have to get a fellow employee to help you with certain tasks? Did you know that the cost (of back pain) to employers is \$61.2 Billion dollars a year? The majority of that amount (76.6%) is when the person with back pain is still at work, but in pain and not as productive. An average workers compensation "back claim" costs an employer \$20 thousand dollars. That is just an average claim. So, as an employer, back pain means, a big loss of money.

## **What does this mean to you if you are an employee?**

Well, let me ask you this: Do you feel you pay too little money on your health care? Do you wish your premiums were higher? Do you think you should pay more? If you do have back pain, you will pay more. You will most likely pay 2 ½ times as much on health care costs as someone without back pain.

Now let's talk about lost wages. Those of you who have been on disability know it doesn't pay as much as your normal wages. A study has shown that a person with back pain will miss on average 6.8 days of work (in a 12 month time period). This number is slightly more if the injury is job related (9.2 days), and a bit less for injuries outside of work (4.9 days). That's about 1 week of missed work, with a possibility of less pay or even no pay.

## **What else?**

This is not to mention the difficulty or inability to do your normal day-to-day activities. Mow the lawn, take out the trash, play basketball with the kids, work in the garden or go to the gym. The truth is, when your back hurts, it can affect every part of your life.

That is why it is so important to be proactive when it comes to your back. It is important to learn a little about the anatomy of your spine and how it works. Do you know what the spine is meant to do, and what it is not meant to do? Do you know how to protect your spine and prevent back injuries? If you have hurt your back in the past, do you know the best ways to keep it from happening again? Do you know the safest way to lift things? Do you know what to do if you hurt your back? A physical therapist can help to answer some of these questions. We, as physical therapists, have a unique view of back care. We don't just want to treat your back; we want to teach you how to care for your own back and maintain a healthy back for life.

*Gerry Van Dyke is an Owner and Director of California Orthopedic and Sports Therapy Rehabilitation Services (COAST Rehab) located in Capitola, California. He has over 20 years of experience in sports medicine including working with Olympic, professional, and major college athletes.*

Article Source: <http://physicalfitnessarticles.net>

March 2009 – Fit For Life  
Do You Really Need “Cardio” Workouts?

By Mike Geary

**Are cardio workouts or weight training more effective for losing fat...**

You may know I've been called the anti-cardio guy before, but this week I'm back posing the question to you... Do you really need cardio training to get lean and in great shape? By the way, you'll see in a minute that I'm not really "anti-cardio", just "anti traditional cardio".

Most fitness buffs, weekend warriors, or anyone trying to get in shape or lose body fat, consider it a fact that they need "cardio" exercise to accomplish these goals. They would never even question it.

However, I'm not only questioning it, I'm going to refute it! In fact, you may be surprised to know that some of the leanest and meanest people I know (men and women), NEVER do any type of normal or traditional cardio. And I've spent over 15 years working out in various gyms, and hanging out with athletes of all sorts, so I've seen it all.

I will say that there can be a place for low-moderate level cardio for really overweight or de-conditioned people, but even in those cases, there can be more effective methods.

**But what exactly is "cardio"?**

Most people would consider cardio to be pumping away mindlessly on a treadmill, riding a stationary bike, or coasting on an elliptical machine, while watching the TV screen at their state of the art gym. This is what I call "traditional cardio". Hmmm, no wonder the majority of people get bored with their workouts and give up after a couple of months without seeing results.

But if you look closer, "cardio" exercise can be considered any type of exercise or activity that strengthens the cardiovascular system. I'm not going to get into anything technical like increasing your VO2 max or anything like that. To keep it simple, if it gets your heart pumping, and gets you huffing and puffing, it's cardio. I don't care if you're holding dumbbells or a barbell and everyone calls it a weight training

exercise...it's still conditioning your heart.

Let's take a look at a couple examples. Take a barbell (or dumbbell, or kettle-bell) clean & press for example, which involves lifting a barbell from the floor up to shoulders, then push pressing overhead. And listen up ladies, because even though this is usually seen as a manly exercise, it doesn't matter if you're not lifting 250 lbs; if 45 lbs is challenging to you, then you will still benefit just as much.

At first glance, most people think of the barbell C&P only as a weight training exercise or strength exercise. However, I challenge you to do a hard set of around 10-15 reps on the C&P. If you used a challenging enough weight, what you'll find is that your heart rate is probably up to about 80-90% of your recommended max, and you are huffing and puffing like you just ran a 100-meter sprint (which by the way, sprinting kicks the crap out of jogging any day if you want the easiest way to lose the flab).

Try the same thing for a set of 20 reps of one-arm snatches or swings with each arm with a kettle-bell or dumbbell, and tell me your legs aren't burning, heart racing, and you're gasping for breath. How about trying 5 minutes straight of bodyweight squats, lunges, and pushups with very little rest. Again, notice your heart pounding, sweat pouring off of you, and chest heaving for breaths!

Try and tell me you're not conditioning your heart with this style of training! Conventional thinking says that these are weight training or strength training exercises. However, they are fulfilling your cardio workout needs as well (saving you time!).

Not only do you save time, but you strengthen and condition almost every muscle in your entire body with these full body exercises if you do them with enough intensity...something that can't be said for that boring stationary bike ride or treadmill jaunt while reading or watching TV.

### **Reading or watching TV while you workout is a joke!**

Seriously, if you can read or watch TV while doing any exercise, you're not concentrating enough on what you're doing, plus you're probably not working out hard enough to see any real results.

I challenge you to give the "traditional cardio" a rest for a month or two, and start training the way I explain in my internationally-selling [Truth about Six pack Abs Program](#), and see how you start getting leaner,

more defined, and your six pack starting to show through what used to be stubborn stomach fat deposits.

*Mike Geary is a Certified Nutrition Specialist and Certified Personal Trainer*

*This article has been sourced from [www.truthaboutabs.com](http://www.truthaboutabs.com)*

## March 2009 – Eat Yourself Holistic

### Healthy Families: Six Simple Ways To Help Your Family Eat Healthier

By Jamie Jefferson

If you can help your children to adopt a wholesome diet when they are young, you may be able to set them up for a lifetime of healthy living. Here are six simple ways to help you create healthier meals and snacks for your family.

1. Be the change. One of the most important things that you can do is to adopt healthy changes yourself. When you begin to eat more healthy foods, you will naturally exude more energy and you will likely be excited to share the abundance of fruits, vegetables, whole grain, and lean protein with those you love. Even without setting new eating rules, your family will begin to take note of positive changes that you experience. Modeling healthy behaviors will go a long way in helping your children to adopt these new lifestyle choices themselves.

2. Don't preach. While it's important to let your family know why you are working to create a more healthful family diet, be careful not to preach. When parents spend too much time vociferously extolling the virtues of peas, carrots, brussel sprouts and broccoli, it can turn off even the most open-minded kids (and spouses). Start slow and take your time. Let the new dishes speak for themselves sometimes.

3. Make fruits and vegetables easily accessible. Our kitchen table centerpiece is a heaping mound of bananas, avocado, tomatoes, clementines, apples, and lemons. It's colorful, and my kids have been known to eat a tomato whole, like an apple. We find that, when it's in front of them and it looks appealing, they are more likely to eat it.

4. Eat meat in realistic portions. If your family eats meat, keep in mind that a recommended serving of meat is the size of a deck of cards. Help your kids fill up with vegetables and whole grain side dishes instead.

5. Think variety. The next time you are at the supermarket together, ask each family member to choose a different fruit or vegetable, perhaps one that no one has tried before. When kids start to open their eyes beyond the veggies that they may have a particular aversion to, a whole new world can open up to them.

6. The only way to ensure that your kids will eat more healthy snacks is to rid your cupboards of most of the junk snack foods. Of course, the

changes that you make might have more staying power if you make the changes gradually. Don't eliminate all the junk food in your home at once, for example, and make small changes to rituals such as family pizza night, so that you all adopt a more healthful attitude over time. In doing so, you are modeling balance and moderation to your children, which will serve them well for years to come.

*Jamie Jefferson writes for Momscape.com, where you'll find online coupons and product reviews, including reviews of leading weight loss plans and other weight loss programs.*

*This article has been sourced from [www.articlehealthandfitness.com](http://www.articlehealthandfitness.com)*

## March 2009 – Golden Rules of Leadership



In recognition of the continuing emphasis on leadership and the acquisition of leadership skills, we continue our Golden Rules of Leadership by adding a further three fundamental and critical considerations for business leaders. With our list of rules now expanding to forty-eight, we first invite an opportunity to revisit and reflect on the previous forty-five rules espoused throughout this segment of The Koru (all of which can be reconsidered by tracing back through the archives)

In this addition of The Koru, we pay homage to what are clearly proving to be testing times in business, and look to provide subtle insights and general guidelines that might best enable you to combat the challenges you're confronting:

1. Show Respect For Everyone
2. The Power of Love
3. Recruit People Who Can Work in a Team Environment
4. The Power of WOW
5. When the Right People Become the Wrong People
6. Recognise Your Key Stakeholders
7. Define Your Values and Constantly Reinforce Them
8. Benchmark Off #1
9. Regularly Look to Develop Your Sense of Self-Awareness
10. Lead By Example
11. Understand the Importance of Emotion
12. Smile and Laugh
13. Think Big
14. Become a Process Oriented Thinker
15. Convey Positivism
16. Become a Refined Listener
17. Working With Quality Feedback
18. Provide Constructive Criticism
19. Take Control of Your Emotions
20. Alert Yourself to the Emotions of Others
21. Become Adaptable
22. Know The Leader You Want To Be
23. The Barbecue Theory



24. The Leader As Salesman
25. Blame The Action, Not The Person
26. Expertise Means Persuasion
27. Talk Business Through Rapports
28. Reflection Matters
29. Creating Peak Performance in the Workplace
30. Tell Me And I Forget, Show Me And I Remember, Involve Me And I Understand
31. What's Your Point of Difference?
32. "Captain. My Captain!"
33. Laughter is the Best Medicine
34. The Law of Attraction: We Get What We Expect
35. The Sixth Sense
36. The Leadership Framework
37. Conscientiousness Pays
38. Embrace Your Passion
39. Operator V's Manager V's Leader
40. Creating Time: The Importance of Systems
41. Even The Right Decision is Wrong if its Made Too Late
42. In a Family You Are Never Alone
43. Promote Your Efficiencies - Leanness In The Operation
44. Show the Face Your Team Needs to See
45. Resilience Rewards: Disappointment Not Disillusionment
  
46. Company First! If It's Good For the Company, DO IT!

You won't need me to tell you that businesses globally are in times of unprecedented difficulties – times that are uncharted by all but those of a distant era. International economies are unstable, and the world in which we live is being constantly reshaped and remodelled on a near daily basis. Unquestionably, we are paying for the excesses of our thinking, and the burden of resolution is falling on our business houses and their leaders. Unemployment is set to sky-rocket as businesses fight for their very survival through strategies of streamlining that were once simply the tales of folklore. Everyday brings new casualties, as retrenchments become commonplace and the complications of an uncertain future envelope a growing number of discarded employees. Business leaders are being asked to play Russian roulette with their once loyal workforce – forced to make decisions they know will change the landscape irretrievably. There is little scope for the invasion of emotion, as survival becomes paramount and hardship inevitable.

"Company First. If It's Good For The Company, Do It!" is as much an edict for survival as it is a guideline for good business practice. Whilst

the ability to appreciate, interpret and work with emotion will always be critical, leaders must invariably decide based on the facts before them rather than an awareness of feelings. Of course, that's not to excuse an absence of empathy, but rather to promote a principal for business endurance that ensure difficult decisions are made in a compassionate manner. Relying on a commitment to take actions and make decisions based solely on what we know to be appropriate is as significant an essential for business as any essential can be. "Company first. If It's Good For The Company, Do It!" has the potential to shape our existence, and is a question that must be constantly reinforced in periods both of hardship and optimism.

Ruben Wiki was a highly regarded captain to the New Zealand rugby league team, the Kiwis - a man at the helm when his team first ruled the rugby league world. Quiet of disposition, Ruben was a charismatic leader whose very presence invited respect and loyalty. And he was also a leader who lived to a very simple edict – "Kiwis first. If It's Good For The Kiwis, Do It!" Like very few others, Ruben understood the importance of that decree, and set about creating an environment that encapsulated it. Nobody appreciated the value of such a proclamation quite like Ruben.

Prior to the 2005 tri-series of rugby league, the New Zealand-based Kiwis would assemble every alternate day with the intention of "staying in football." Unable to prolong their season into the post-season they aspired to, this group of players would toil in the *backstreets* whilst their peers entertained to the adulation of their fans. These were less manic days, when football was a by-product and companionship the goal. Often we'd assemble to one side of the paddock, eating and chatting our way through our sandwiches. It was the most innocuous of times - but sometimes learning can be derived even through such innocence. One day whilst settled on the sideline for lunch, we came to the realization that our drink bottles had been left on the opposite side of the field. It was a simple observation, but never a request! Ten minutes later, our charismatic leader returned armed with our bottles. Ruben had walked the confines of the field on a retrieval mission – a simple enough action that carried a powerful message. "Kiwis First. If It's Good For The Kiwis, Do It!"

#### 47. Play What's In Front Of You

Rugby league is a game of territory. It's a game of inches, where teams strive to claim and reclaim lost ground. It's also a game of shared possession, where teams get (supposedly) equal usage of the football in an endeavour to stake their territorial advantage. It's a game where

each team receives consecutive use of the football (six consecutive turns in possession to be exact), each of which should be carefully created so as to build on what has transpired on each previous occasion.

It's a game of using your possession in an attempt to manoeuvre the defensive structures of the opponent, in the hope of establishing a vulnerability that should be exposed and manipulated. It's all about breaking the defensive line of the opponent, and in order to do that the team in possession must employ each individual turn at play with the accuracy and precision of a surgeon. It's absolute creation, fully structured with a dedicated purpose. Right up until, that is, that moment when the defensive line is breached – for at that moment there can be no pre-determined strategy for how to play. At that moment rugby league becomes child's play, with no rational sequence and absolutely no hindrance. It's the attacking team's opportunity to play on instinct – to play what's in front of them!

And, at that point in time, business could do well to take heed of its lesson. Playing what's in front of you is about accepting what you've got, and dedicating yourself to make the most of it. It's not about past regrets or wishing for things that aren't presently in your possession. In business, it's about accepting the team members you have and working to make the most of their collective talents. It's about devoting yourself to the development of a team's chemistry in preference to a constant pursuit of additional and preferential expertise. Rather than fall into a business structure that consumes leaders with concerns over what they don't have, leaders who appreciate a *play what's in front of you* ideology are prepared to back themselves to make a difference – prepared to work with what they have, rather than worry over what they don't have!

Astute business leaders are best known for their ability to transition average teams into champions, capable of securing victories in often unusual and unexpected circumstances. By carefully analysing the playing deficiencies and strengths of their team (and implementing a program of development based on this analysis), business leaders of quality are able to founder some significant talent from within their ranks. By leading what's in front of them, it has been my privilege to witness powerful programs in which unforeseen opportunities have been bestowed upon previously understated employees, sometimes who have been assembled as rejects from other more glorious projects.

Alternatively of course, I have witnessed the exact opposite end of this spectrum. The business world is littered with failed leaders, all of who spent their every waking moment wishing for talent they couldn't see in their group. I've evidenced wish lists of potential targets! People to be

spoken to in the hope of resurrecting a leader's lost belief in an existing group! A desperate indicator of a leader's insecurities, and an even stronger prevailing message to his team! And I've seen many of these teams flounder in challenging and intense periods – lacking the belief required to endure in such situations. A team's belief comes from the belief of their leadership!

*Play what's in front of you* is about a leadership prepared to back itself and its ability to make a difference.

#### 48. Change What You Can, Accept What You Can't

Change what you can. Accept what you can't. Business throws up potential opportunities on a near daily basis – opportunities that can leverage a company to places it never believe existed. It can also throw up curve balls and crevices with almost the same frequency. Crevices that can be as small as the slightest hierarchical restructure or as large as a slowing economy - and it is up to the business's leadership to formulate the alterations that make sustainability more feasible. Astute business leaders must interpret their environment and adapt their approach to the demands of a changing world. They must also identify where their time and energies should best be devoted, recognizing in the process what constitutes true opportunity and what constitutes lost causes. Many a business has fallen whilst attempting to rectify a circumstance it simply had no control over – fallen whilst committing all its resources to a situation it was never in a position to change,

Of course, equally as many companies have suffered an ignominious death due to their inability to change as required. The readying of your team for an imminent and essential change is always a challenge for any business leadership – the need for change is not always greeted with a warm acceptance! Identifying the need for change is at the discretion of the leadership, who must then convey a sense of urgency to team members in preparation for the pending adaptations. The inability to promptly unite a team in the need for change is often a cause of failed endeavours, invariably due to the leadership's lack of conviction or occasional apathy. Either way, without *buy in* there can be no change - regardless of how critical the change may seem.

Generating change within an organization relies on the leader's ability to gather support and momentum for a variable philosophy. Astute leaders work diligently to provide opportunities for small victories along the journey. Pursuing change is a relentless quest. Once the need for essential modification becomes eminent, business leaders must dedicate themselves until a revised process becomes the norm.

Implementing change in any business can be a longitudinal challenge, but once the need for change is realized there can be no turning back!

Nevertheless, whilst knowing what you can't change may be one thing, accepting it is another altogether. Whilst the need for change can be readily identified in many instances, the formulation of a plan to bring such change to fruition may not be as controllable. An idealistic game plan without the personnel to support it is no game plan at all. Continuing to advocate a method of play without consideration of prevailing circumstance or access to the appropriate expertise is a recipe for condemnation. The 2005 Kiwis playing roster was clearly deficient in several key areas – sourcing replacement players is never an option! Accepting what couldn't be changed was critical to success. Changing what could was equally as vital! Alterations to the manner in which we would play ultimately transformed into a strategy that both maximised our strengths and compensated our limitations. The circumstance that confronted us (regarding the personnel) could not be controlled, but the way we reacted to it most certainly could – and this we unequivocally recognized and accepted.

Change what you can and accept what you can't. Business leaders should spend little time concerning themselves over things they can't change - but should recognize the critical nature of their reactions in such instances.

## March 2009 – Face to Face With John Key



In recognition of the trying times confronting New Zealand business, and the strong association existing between business in both New Zealand and Australia, this quarters edition of face-to-face is dedicated to a transcript of an interview between Australian Sky News political reporter, Kieran Gilbert and New Zealand Prime Minister, John Key. Showing on Sky Television in early March, the interview provides a good insight into Mr Key's perceptions of trans-Tasman relations and the global financial crisis, as well as his burgeoning relationship with Australian Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd.

Kieran G: How is New Zealand weathering the global economic crisis?

Mr Key: We've been in recession for three quarters – albeit a very shallow recession (basically a contraction of 0.1 or 0.2%, something in that order). The challenge for New Zealand is how we can come out of this recession and actually use this time to redefine our economy so that we're travelling faster (hopefully) than a lot of other countries when the recession finally abates. We're very dependent on the Australian economy – about a quarter of our exports go to Australia – so the fact that Australia is still strong and that the Australasian banking system that dominates New Zealand banks is still strong, gives us a real advantage. But they're challenging times, and it's hard to know whether we're at the bottom of them yet.

Kieran G: In your response and in your policies you've cut taxes – individual taxes and business taxes – cut red tape for business, but there hasn't been a cash splash like we've seen here. Explain the logic behind your approach?

Mr Key: It's slightly different an approach to Australia and what we've seen from the rest of the world – although only marginally. We've been describing it as a rolling maul of initiatives. In other words, we think that the recession will run for a period of time – at least 2009 looks like it will be very challenging. And we want to be able to respond to those events as they occur, so that we can keep confidence going in the economy. One of the reasons why we haven't had a big bang approach is that because we campaigned on issues like personal tax cuts (one of which starts on April 1, 2009), in essence a lot of those things have been pre-announced. So we've gone back and looked at the total level of our stimulus, and our package looks like we're in about the type five in the world. So we're still very similar, but a lot of it's been pre-announced so it feels like it's a little bit different to the 42 billion dollar package that Kevin Rudd announced over here.

Kieran G: It looks more in line with what our coalition – our opposition – has been arguing for. And that is the tax cuts, less spending and no cash splash. Their arguing is that the tax cuts change people's spending behaviour over the longer term, rather than the cash splash, which is a one off. Do you agree with the Malcolm Turnbull and coalition argument on that?

Mr Key: It depends on the circumstances really. There's some argument that if you give people a cheque up front they will actually go and spend it. And it depends on who is receiving the cash. Certainly lower income Australians in your case, and lower income New Zealanders are more likely to spend. Higher up the order they might repay debt. I actually think either is appropriate. It depends on the circumstances of the individual. But I guess where we come from we just say, "the private sector is a huge part of our economy, putting more cash in the pockets of New Zealanders is important." But actually in both countries – Australia and New Zealand – probably the thing that's most likely to stimulate the consumer will actually be the reduction in interest rates. That's going to have a tremendous impact on what's going into the wallets of Australians or New Zealanders. Much lower interest rates flow through to much lower debt servicing costs for their homes and businesses.

Kieran G: You have said that you don't want to saddle the next generation with debt. That's something that Malcolm Turnbull has been critical of Kevin Rudd over. So there's a similarity on that front – and you've been praised for that approach in various quarters including the Wall Street Journal which pointed to that. So on that front, you'd be on a common footing with the liberals.

Mr Key: Yeah, I think again it's not for to critique what's happening in Australia – it would be inappropriate for me to do so. All I can say from a New Zealand point of view is that we go into the recession in a slightly worse financial position than Australia. Our gross debt levels are still very low – they're 19% of GDP and net debt is virtually zero – so of the OECD 30 countries we're in the third best position, the third least indebted balance sheet. But Australia is stronger. Effectively it's had no debt and while New Zealand is on negative outlook for SMP ratings, Australia is not. So we're treading a slightly finer balance here between spending money to stimulate the economy and on the other side of the coin making sure we don't precipitate a downgrade or as I've said, saddle future generations with debt – which ultimately has to be paid back.

Kieran G: And you'll be holding your talks with Prime Minister Rudd. Obviously economic matters will dominate, and moves toward a single economic market. How important is that, and can it take the relationship much further given that the free trade agreement's been in place for decades now?

Mr Key: Firstly, if you look at CER it's been around for twenty-six years, and it's the most comprehensive trade document that's been ever developed and adhered to. So it's very comprehensive. But the move toward a single economic market is an attempt to really integrate the investment protocols and ultimately the behind the border issues that both countries face. From New Zealand's point of view, as I said earlier, you're a very large part of our economy. A huge amount of our tourists that come to New Zealand, a million of them come from Australia – so you dominate those stats. You're a quarter of all of our exports. You're a huge amount inbound foreign direct investment. New Zealand is dependent on Australia and a strong Australian economy. The more we can do to make that integration more seamless the better, whilst still preserving the national rights that both countries want. And I think there is further



integration that can take place. There's a number of issues that we're going to work on, and climate change will be one that we'll have a close look at. If you think about the concept of CER and a single economic market, it seems to run counter to that for each country to be developing a different response to climate change. It runs the risk where you've got multi-nationals investing on both sides of the Tasman, getting different investment signals if we get too far out of line with each other.

Kieran G: So you're talking about synchronising tax systems. I've seen as well suggestions that the flights from New Zealand and Australia could be treated as domestic flights. Is that something that's realistic?

Mr Key: For us, that's something that's very important and I raised that with Kevin last night. I think it's something that Australians would value as well. So the way that would work is that if you went through immigration at the Australian end for a New Zealand bound flight, you would effectively clear customs and security at the Australian end, land at a domestic terminal in New Zealand, get off the flight, pick up your bags and go to the hotel – and vice versa. There are cost saving advantages to that, but also huge time advantages. And as I've said, with a million tourists basically coming on each side of the Tasman it's got to be a huge advantage. And if the Europeans can do it I can't believe that it's going to take New Zealand and Australia six years – which is the current prediction – to sort that out. It's a pretty simple thing.

Kieran G: There are that many linkages, and if this single economic market does eventuate as we're anticipating, what's the politics of this like in New Zealand. Will people be seeing New Zealand as just another state?

Mr Key: Rushing to join the federation....Probably not. We had that chance back in 1901 or whenever it was. There's always a rivalry between Australia and New Zealand and that manifests itself most profoundly on the sporting fields, and it's a great rivalry. But there's also a great sense of comradeship. And you saw that with the outpouring of support from New Zealanders for the Australians that were lost in the bushfires. In pretty much every sphere, whether it's trade, cultural economic – you sort of name it – sporting, social, people to people links. There's massive links

between New Zealand and Australia. So I think that competitive rivalry will always remain, but it's one of those debates where do you believe the sum of the parts is greater than the individual pieces. I do, and I think the medium term challenge for both countries is actually to be fully integrated into Asia. I'm convinced Asia will be the massive growth area over the next twenty years. Europe's got various issues - both in its banking systems and its labour markets alike. United States will recover. But Asia's going to be the growth engine, and for both of us we've got to focus on that target.

Kieran G: Mr Key, I want to ask you a couple of other questions on a few other different issues. Executive pay has become a real issue in Australia in the last week or so, with a couple of companies closing down. Parallel to that there's been some reports of very high executive wages. Do you have any concerns about executive pay and any ideas on how the government here might move toward reigning them in.

Mr Key: Obviously, you've got to get balance here. Firstly, you're running very large corporations over here and you compete for that human capital on a global basis. Quite a number of the CEO's that were around the table last night that Kevin Rudd had kindly arranged - major corporations. There were a few of them Australian-born nationals. Now you've attracted that capital and that human capital, and you need them to succeed. There has to be a recognition that you compete in a borderless world. On the other side of the coin, these sort of obscene pay packets that you've seen out of Wall Street which have led to a culture of greed and ultimately the demise of Wall Street because there's been far too much leverage - with a system that's been fundamentally flawed - needs to be kept in check.

Kieran G: Do you have any ideas on how you'd do that? Malcolm Turnbull suggests that shareholders have binding votes.

Mr Key: That's one way of doing it. Ultimately, the best way of doing it is always aligning the performance of the company to the remuneration of the chief executive and the management team. I think that'll be a debate that will never go away, because in reality there will always be telephone numbers paid out to chief executives of these big corporations. But on the other side of the coin, we need to put that in perspective and say that these are also chief executives

that have enormous responsibility. The head count that they employ – hundreds and thousands of Australians at times. We do need to make sure that they make the right decisions – there always needs to be balance.

Kieran G: Finally, there's been a tradition of New Zealand Prime Ministers and Australian Prime Ministers not always getting on that well at a personal level, but you said you were at Kevin Rudd's house last night. Do you get on with him?

Mr Key: Extremely well actually. The funny thing is that often when politicians come from the opposite side of the political fence, that actually strengthens rather than weakens it. It's counter-intuitive I know, but that's often the case. In Kevin's case, he has gone out of his way to show a lot of kindness and support for me. He was the first leader on the phone after I won the election. He's invited me over here for a state visit. He made a personal effort to introduce me to other leaders I didn't know when I went to APEC soon after I was sworn into the job. We're on the phone to each other reasonably regularly. We had an hour and a half together, just on our own last night. It's a good relationship, and it's a sense of his commitment to New Zealand. To give John Howard some credit, it's a continuation of the decade of leadership that John Howard showed, and the sense that New Zealand is important to Australia and that it's important we work together to try to solve the issue in our region – particularly in the Pacific where there's significant issues.

March 2009 – Let's Go Surfing

[www.businessweek.com](http://www.businessweek.com)

With the business world in such tumultuous times, it seems inappropriate to direct you to any website other than one that's going to keep you up with the play in ever changing times. And when that comes to business, there can be no other commendation than the Business Week website. The online version of the world's largest selling business magazine provides compelling analysis that covers a wide range of issues including daily news and e-commerce. Written in a lively inspirational style, [www.businessweek.com](http://www.businessweek.com) is absolutely essential reading for anyone hoping to both cope with challenging times and retain the motivation to succeed when in them.

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March 2009 – Practical Exercise  
Measuring Self-Confidence

At a time when many of us are finding ourselves at the discretion of events we have little or no control over, we think it's appropriate to look into ourselves to re-discover the real you. When uncontrollable events have the potential to eat away at your self-definition of worthiness, we think it's worth an investment of time to truly take stock of how confident and able you really are.

Measuring Self-Confidence was primarily introduced as a group exercise, but its reflective powers have proven so great that I now advocate it for use as a self-appraisal exercise to be completed on a relatively frequent basis. The exercise invites participants to assess their ability to perform across a number of circumstances, and is anticipated to highlight the more controllable aspects of both your leadership performance and your working day.

The inventory is designed to help you evaluate your confidence regarding characteristics important to being successful in competitive situations. Read each question carefully and think about your confidence with regard to each item. For each item, indicate the percentage of time you feel you have too much (to the extent of being complacent), too little, or just the right degree of confidence.

The total percentage should always be 100%. You may distribute this 100% anyway you feel appropriate.

		Not confident enough	Just confident enough	Overconfident
	<b>With respect to your ability to...</b>			
1.	execute physical skills necessary to be successful	%	%	%
2.	make critical decisions	%	%	%
3.	concentrate until a task is completed	%	%	%
4.	persist until a task is completed	%	%	%

5.	perform under pressure	%	%	%
6.	execute strategy successfully	%	%	%
7.	relate successfully to co-workers	%	%	%
8.	maintain a high degree of effort	%	%	%
9.	control your emotions	%	%	%
10.	relate successfully to associate networks and/or clients, etc	%	%	%
11.	continuously develop your skill set	%	%	%
12.	cope with adversity	%	%	%
13.	complete things through to a successful outcome	%	%	%
14.	structure an approach that is coherent to team members	%	%	%
15.	respond empathetically when the situation demands it	%	%	%