



Salisbury University Presentation- Students of SU- , April 9, 2009 by Jeff Banning, President/CEO, Trinity Transport, Inc.

(Beginning with the accompanying Trinity power point and into the presentation- “The Narrow Path- Leading the Trinity Way”)

As you can see, this group has accomplished and achieved much. So I'm sure you want to know what the underlying secret is to their success.

Well, the core of their success has truly come from this. Their secret, is simply their heart, they are individuals that lead from their heart.

They have a heart that is filled with trust, servant hood, giving, caring, perseverance, and passion. In their heart and what truly drives them is a passion to live a life filled with meaning.

They want to experience the reward that comes from a journey down the narrow path. They want to lead the Trinity way; They want to lead from their heart.

I want to spend my remaining time here today talking to you about 4 attributes of Leading the Trinity way. But before I do, I want to spend a few minutes talking about leadership in general.

First, leading is for everyone, and you don't have to have a title or hold a position of power to be a leader. We have leaders everywhere in our organization from the bottom to the top. Many in our organization do not hold any positional power or a title, yet they are individuals that are leaders amongst their peers. They are always searching for ways to capture hearts, to serve, coach, influence and encourage whether it's at work, at home or in the community.

They know that leading comes from the person, not the position. What everyone needs to understand, is your not a leader because you wear a leaders hat, you are a leader when you are getting things done through others.

We are blessed that every individual on our Team is a leader, because everyone is getting things done through others.

Second, some of you may be thinking well, I don't have the skill set or traits to be a leader. Some people believe that leadership is a gift, something you are born with-that if you are born with those traits you can lead, but if you are not, you can't. Some will tell you that, and some really believe it, But it's not So.

I've been a knowledge seeker all my life, and I remember back in my teenage years reading many self help books about how to be successful. And it was in those years that I developed many insecurities that I would not succeed, as I feared that I lacked all the attributes to live a life filled with success, whether in leadership or life in general.

Reading through those books I felt I lacked all the genetic traits of effective leaders, and that God didn't give me the leadership genes necessary to lead. As I was shy, introverted, and not outgoing indeed, I felt I lacked the charisma that I would need to be successful.

Then when I was 24 years old, I was given a unique and frightening opportunity to lead a company. My dad had run the company for about thirteen years and suddenly decided to turn over the reins and ownership to my brothers and me.

At that time, we were a much smaller company having maybe 10-15 people, and I remember thinking, there's no way I, a quiet, reserved and introverted individual, can do this. My first thought was it was 15 people too many. I was definitely a deer in the headlights.

What I have learned over the years, is that leading is a skill you develop. Now 15 years later, I am convinced that leadership is a skill, that it is learned, not in a day, but daily and over time. Leadership is a set of skills that can be learned, developed and applied to organizational involvement

and everyday life. For this reason, Leading is for everyone. – who truly want it.

Each of you will be graduating soon. The single most important thing that you need to learn before you enter the business world, is this:
That Leadership drives success.

That's it- in business, as in life your success will always depend on the type of leader you become. I am a believer everything rises and falls on leadership. The best predictor of success in the future will never be the most brilliant strategies or the smartest minds- it will always be the quality of leadership.

Regrettably, the quality of the “so called” leadership we see in our world today, is lacking. In fact, I'm sure many of you have worked for such a “Leader”. They lead “no one” but themselves. They lead through power and authority. They are driven by ego, insecurities and money, and they have chosen a path of serving themselves.

Now, make no mistake: Using power works in the short term.
But, over time, power diminishes relationships; it never leads to greatness, and will eventually lead to destruction or failure.

Indeed in the words of, Dale Carnegie. “It is the individual who is not interested in his fellow man who has the greatest difficulties in life and provides the greatest injury to others. It is from among such individuals that all human failures spring.”

I am here to encourage you to take a different type of journey- a journey down a narrow path that will lead you to true leadership. At Trinity we call it Servant leadership.

Servant leaders are a Leader among Leaders;
Leaders that have vision and are forward thinking.
That commit to serving their greatest asset, their people.
That are egoless, powerless, and greedless.
That are humble and selfless.
They are teachers and coaches.
Leaders that inspire, influence and encourage.

They are leaders that know that the best way to get the best effort from others is not by lighting a fire beneath them, but is by lighting a fire within them, in their hearts and minds.

When one researches the companies that are on the “fastest growing, most admired and/or best companies to work for” lists, he or she soon finds, that the majority of these companies are practicing this type of leadership.

Of course, the very best example of the power of serving was demonstrated in the greatest leader of all times. He was a servant leader, and the very principles that I am talking about, are actually his principles. No one else in the history of the world has even come close in terms of having so much influence. The person I am speaking of is Christ.

Servant Leaders lead in a way that influences people to contribute their hearts, minds, spirits, creativity and excellence, to give their all for their team and those around them.

There are four characteristics of many that are required to be a servant leader or what we call a leader among leaders.

The **First** characteristic is to be a **Servant or to Serve**. First they understand that the people in an organization are that organization's no. 1 asset.

They know that through people or others, they can achieve anything.

They take that old leadership pyramid that leads from the top down and invert it, and lead from the bottom up. They realize they qualify to be first by putting others first. They are leader's that don't like titles or worry about their position or power. These leaders push power out of the front office, and down into the organization and check their ego's at the door.

They provide a climate for people to bring their souls to work, not just their heads and hands.

I believe this is where most companies fail; they have a difficult time getting past the power, ego and self. They also believe that serving others implies some type of weakness. They think it to be some sort of warm and fuzzy, passive style of leadership. Many skeptics get a horrific mental image of inverting the organizational pyramid by serving.

So Let me ask you, imagine that you worked with a leader, that served you, put you first, appreciated you, involved you, cared for you, recognized you, pushed you, held you accountable, expected your best, and was your biggest cheerleader. How many of you would like to work with a leader that had those attributes?

Do you think you would have a better chance of growing as a person?
Would you be more apt to give it your best?
Would you hold yourself accountable more?
Would you create a culture of caring and appreciation around you?
Would you commit yourself to pursuing excellence?
Would you while being served, become healthier, wiser, more loyal, more dedicated, more committed, and more passionate and feel more empowered?
I know your answer, YES!
There in lies the power of serving- where greatness through others can be achieved.

To Serve is to;

- Understand people are you number #1 asset
- Invert the leadership pyramid & serve from the bottom up
- Involve and appreciate the people
- Take the high road- to forgive
- Not seek credit, but too give credit
- Know you don't have all the answers
- Remove there obstacles and give them every chance to Win

Servant leaders know that by serving it provides for people and engages their hearts and minds which fosters a workforce that understands the benefits of striving for the greater good and draws people forward who end up achieving some amazing things.

As John Gardner said “when people are serving, life is no longer meaningless.” To serve is to live a life filled with meaning.

The **Second** characteristic in servant leaders is that they are **Knowledge Seekers**. They have an unwavering resolve every day in seeking to improve themselves and those around them by instilling a mindset of continuous

improvement. As you saw in Trinity's DNA Strand, did you notice the strand that stood at the top of all of them. It was continuous improvement, Do you remember also what our theme is for 2009, "Advancing Excellence".

Though we know at Trinity there is no finish line to excellence or continuous improvement, what we do know is when we stop striving to improve, we stop growing and moving forward, we become the norm, average or mediocre. For our team members, that is unacceptable.

So what do we need to do to be knowledge seekers?

Commit to **Reading** a book each month, whether a business book, or fiction- what's important is to begin to discipline yourself to build that habit. I remember hearing someone say one time and I'll never forget it, as I truly do believe it. That "leaders are readers, a person that doesn't read, can not lead.

Setting and achieving **Goals** is one of the best ways to measure your life's progress and create clarity. Achieving goals builds self esteem and confidence, betters your life, and the lives of those around you. And the more you achieve the more you want to achieve even more. The alternative is to just drift along aimlessly, waiting for something to fall into your lap. I would encourage you not to go this route- settling for the status quo, the norm- Instead chose to be goal oriented.

Continue to **Develop Positive Habits**- as successful people have positive habits and unsuccessful people don't. Your habits will determine your future.

Say No to negative or harmful people- understand that if you hang around with people who have negative habits, then that environment will strongly influence, and drain the life out of you.

Seek relationships with Successful People- Surround yourself with them, seek mentors that have been successful. Develop relationships with them, seek their advice and learn from them. For the record, I've never had a successful person say NO to me when I expressed an interest in establishing a relationship with them.

Just last week, I called a good friend of mine who is probably one of the most successful female CEO's in southern Delaware, asking her if she would be willing to spend some time mentoring one of our young female leaders at Trinity. Before I could finish asking, she interrupted me saying, I would be honored and humbled as I owe so much to those that have mentored me. I will always continue to pay it forward.

Over the years this has been probably where I have learned the most, I have been blessed to have a multitude of very successful mentors over the years, that have coached me, encouraged me and at times held me accountable.

I read in a survey once, that in a leaders growth and development- 85% of it will come from a mentor or coach.

As you grow as a leader, continually **Focus on your strengths**- on what you do best. Delegate to others in areas that you are weak. If we focus too much time on our weaknesses, we end up with a bunch of strong weaknesses. When you focus on your strengths, there you will find your energy, strength and passion.

Develop the mindset of – how can I make a difference today-

By focusing on how you can make a difference in your life or in the lives of others, I can guarantee that you will impact 100's, 1000's, maybe even million's of people in your lifetime.

The **Third** characteristic Building **Influence- Learning to Win with Others**. I will start this section by quoting one of my favorite authors, John Maxwell. "He who thinks he leads, but has no followers, is only taking a walk. If you can't influence others, they won't follow you and if they won't follow, you can't lead." "Leadership is influence, nothing more, nothing less."

I am a believer that success in life is not about having a PHD or an IQ over 150; It has been proven over and over in the history books that the most successful people have always been those individuals that know how to "win and build influence with others."

So how do we build influence with others? These first two items I believe are the most important, based on surveys of what our people want from their

leader. These two you will always see at the top, and for the record, money is never at the top, it's always a distant 4th or 5th.

Everyone wants to be **Appreciated**, they want to know that what they do matters. That they are here on earth for a reason, that their life matters. As we all want to be somebody.

Half of the harm that is done in this world is due to the people who want to feel important. They do not mean to do harm, they are just absorbed in the endless struggle to think well of themselves.

Show people sincere appreciation, thank them often, reward them, encourage, recognize and celebrate them. Praise every improvement, even the slightest one. As Dale Carnegie would say “give the other person a fine reputation to live up to.”

Our job as that person of influence is not to get the person to think higher of us, it's to get them to think highly of themselves.

Involve people in the process, listen to them, use their ideas. Simply put, make them feel like the company is a part of them. At Trinity, we involve our team members in everything from strategic planning to themes to new projects. Involving them creates ownership, and team members that have ownership feel powerful.

Be humble. avoid taking credit when things are going well, take responsibility when things are not going well. Go to great lengths to give credit to others. You need to be able to “walk in others shoes”. Understanding others circumstances and problems.

Servant Leaders don't lead by the title they carry; actually, they dislike their title. Be a good listener and know that you do not have all the answers.

A humble leader is one who thinks he or she is no better than anyone else. Such as person, knows that they put their pants on the same way as everyone else each morning. In short, Humble leaders have gotten over themselves.

Have **Faith** in the people you influence, and encourage them.

As you put faith in others, people will rise to meet your expectations for them, going the extra mile and doing their best. Indeed, when you believe and win with people, they will do what had at once seemed impossible.

The **Fourth** Characteristic - **Demand & Expect Excellence**. What is inspiring about working for an organization whose people perform with mediocrity and do just enough to “get by”. Who would want to work in such an environment, yet the majority of organizations are exactly that, uninspiring.

It is these organizations that scratch their head wondering why they can't keep their people loyal, motivated and committed.

Servant leaders are convinced and know that the majority of people want to be a part of something special. They long to belong to an organization they can be proud of and where their contributions will matter.

Many leaders fear that by demanding excellence it will drive people away. But the truth is, excellence and accountability will drive- only the mediocre people away, just as mediocrity will drive the superstars away.

Let me ask you, who is your favorite professor here at SU?

Is it the one that let you barely get by? NO, it isn't.

It is the professor that pushed you, believed in you, held you accountable, encouraged you- The one that expected your best.

You need to maintain high standards and demand excellence because excellence builds a healthy pride and confidence in people. When people begin accomplishing goals and achieving results, their confidence level rises, and they begin to set even larger goals for themselves and the organization.

This quest for excellence is contagious, once the people in the company understand that the leader is committed to excellence, people and the organization begin to rise to levels they never dreamed they were capable of.

How do we do that? First, as Jim Collins would say, from his book “Good to Great.” “Get the **Right people on the bus** and in the right seats and the wrong ones off quickly.” In other words, make sure you hire the right people. Our hiring process at Trinity is intensive, as it should be.

Many are involved in the process, from team leader, to their future peers,

at times, we have conducted up to 5 interviews per person. If you spend time on the front end selecting the right individuals, you won't have to spend even more time on the back end.

Hold people accountable, For servant leaders this can sometimes be difficult, as we are leaders that lead from the heart. What I have learned though, is that if we don't hold people accountable then we are not leading honestly.

By allowing their behavior to continue, we don't help them to grow to be their best. In fact, actually we rob them of this opportunity. Of course, a servant leader must provide this accountability in a way that shows they care, that will allow the individual to keep their dignity intact.

Make sure that you **Set clear expectations** for your people. Spend time with them making sure that they understand what you are asking or where you are directing them. When the expectations are clear, it makes leading so much easier.

Servant leaders **Raise the bar** each and every day, they are always pushing their organization and people. They don't spend time for self congratulations or admiring when a benchmark is achieved, as they are searching for the next frontier.

These leaders have an unwavering will, not to settle short of everyone's best, including themselves. They know that excellence is not created by an organization or its leader, but by the people that the leader serves.

Today, I am honored and humbled to have a few of the Team Trinity members here with me. Each of these individuals is a great shining example of what can be achieved by following that narrow path.

I am often asked, what I am most proud of...
My answer is always this, that we are living our internal purpose at Trinity. "To continuously improve people lives by constantly striving to be our best."

We have chosen a journey and committed to following that narrow path, a path that is difficult, filled with many obstacles, it is windy with no guard rails, and requires an abundance of self sacrifice.

Each of these individuals knows the difficulty and the sacrifice of following this path, yet they remain committed, knowing that the rewards far outweigh the challenges.

They know this is the path to a great legacy that is filled with purpose, meaning, and making a difference in our world.

We only get one chance at this life, and it goes fast, and then, each of us will be given a “dash”; That dash on a gravestone, that is between the dates you are born and the day you die.

This simple single line is a picture of our lives and how we lived them, charting everything we have done and said -good and bad. It presents the findings to the world as a total picture of who we were.

If you decide and commit to heading down this path, I pray that you will create a great legacy in the lives of those around you. And that at the end of your journey you can honestly say that you exhausted every gift and talent you had in the interest of your fellow man.

May your dash, be a bright spectrum of colors, expressing to the world the lives you impacted and changed because you decided on traveling the journey of a leader among leaders.

As you leave here today, I hope each of you reflect on the journey you are taking and consider this narrow path. Just know that at the end, you won't be counting the money you made, or the degrees you hold.

You will only be asking yourself one question,
“What mark did I make in each of the lives around me?”

I am humbled and proud to serve this team as we all work to make an impact together. And I thank you coming and for allowing me this opportunity to serve you.