



Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

Fourth Quarter. Welcome to the last period of the '07 game. If you're behind on the scoreboard right now, you're feeling it - even though the forecasts were made a year ago, when the economy felt warm and fuzzy. Today, the *realities* have challenged the *rosies*... but expectations still reflect last year's confidence. You've got 90 days to turn lead into gold; *any idea what you're going to do next?*

How to move the ball down the field, when the defense is shifting and the gale winds are blowing: the demand for dynamic leadership has never been greater. Oh, and one more thing: *what do you do if the league's leaders are meeting during the second half... and revising the rules of engagement?* What if the new rules take affect while the clock is running? "Not fair," you say. What if there's no place to file a grievance? *What if?*

If you're a leader, you've got to be on the field, managing the team and playing the game. But you also have to have an ear to the wall where the powers-that-be are discussing the operating systems down on the field. The ground rules can negate your next score, if you're not careful... especially if someone declares the "head coach" to be "too many men on the field." *What?*

One of the hot business books right



now is ***The Starfish and the Spider: The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations***, by Ori Brafman and Rod Beckstrom. In it, they make a strong case for the fact that hierarchal structures - power-at-the-top, command-and-control, I'm-in-charge (*and you're not!*) - are in trouble... while decentralized movements - marked by no clear leader, no hierarchy, no headquarters, an open system, with spiritual and/or cultural leaders who have influence but no authority - are exploding (*think Osama, and Al Qaeda... or Wikipedia*). If that's the future, *what's the nature of the road ahead, for leaders?*

Spiders have heads... and eight legs. Cut off a leg, and you've got a spider with a disability. Cut off its head... and you have a dead spider. Starfish? You might not know it from looking, but it reflects a completely different design, from the Creator. *Cut off its head? Good luck; there is no head. Carve out its organs?* Again, good luck: redundant sys

tems in each of the arms. *Cut off an arm or two?* Wait around, bucko: you're about to see magic. Give it time, and it will grow those missing appendages back. *Cut it in half?* You'll be amazed to see two starfish where - originally - only one existed. The old way to operate, according to Brafman and Beckstrom, was spider-like; *the new world belongs to the starfish.*

But, wait! Without a need for a head... where's the place for the leader? Is my target customer - leaders with a personal faith in Christ that makes them current players, and eternal leveragers - going away?

Not so fast. The starfish - if it is the model for the future - creates more opportunity for leaders who get it. What will the world of tomorrow look like... and how do we (leaders) get ready to leverage it for good?

If decentralization is before us (and, I believe it is), here are two personal strategies for you and me to employ ASAP:

1. Get your downline ready to be on-line. If you've got direct reports looking to you for leadership, get them ready to function with self-direction and self-confidence. Replace yourself, in their lives, with an internal compass that gives your underlings an overview, incentive and self-management.

2. Shrink your authority... and grow your influence. Authority *pushes*; influence *pulls*. Authority can be *repulsive*; influence must be *attractive*. Authority *limits your impact* to the folks who occupy the lower levels of your org chart; influence *expands your impact* to include anyone who is within the sound of your wisdom and example.

A sure thing: *leaders will always be needed*. Another sure thing: *leaders must be*

ready to lead in the manner that is most likely to mobilize followers toward the right vision(s).

Jesus dispatched 12 Influencers, not One Pope. Every Christian leader today carries an undivided share in the delegated responsibility that He left our forebears: "*Go - into all the world - and make disciples...*" (Matthew 28:19) Welcome to the spiritual starfish movement...

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