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Leader’s Guide Written by Janice Wargo

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TRAINING SESSION OVERVIEW

The Law of the Harvest is seven and one-half minutes of insight and wisdom shared with the viewer by potato farmer Grant Neibaur. Stephen Covey challenges the viewer further with his insightful comments pertaining to quick fixes, trends, and shortcuts.

The Law of the Harvest video and Leader’s Guide highlight solid workplace standards based on the core values of planning and preparation that lead the individual worker and organization to meaningful and productive outcomes.

The Leader’s Guide lists and summarizes each of the seven exercises, providing the trainer with helpful concepts, additional questions, and special points for emphasis.

The target audience represents white-collar managers and supervisors. This training program can stand-alone or can be part of a day-long leadership training program using all four Lessons in Leadership pieces. This could be part of a larger organizational change initiative or incorporated into an ongoing OD process.

Twenty-five or fewer participants is ideal for this allows for a combination of small/large group interaction and discussion within the short timeframe of one and one-half hours. Flexibility is the key. If an exercise takes longer than the suggested timeframe, the trainer may decide to omit another exercise so that the time can be spent in the topic areas that seem most pertinent to the participants.

Materials needed:

- Flipchart or whiteboard with marking pens
- Handouts of Exercises
- Prepared flipchart or poster for Exercise 5
- 3x5 index cards for Exercise 7
- Inspirational quotes are provided at the end of this Leader’s Guide. Trainer may want to post these throughout the classroom prior to the session.
Learning Objectives

After viewing this video and participating in the one and one half hour workshop, learners will be able to:

- Identify three benefits of taking shortcuts.
- Identify three drawbacks of taking shortcuts.
- State three advantages of thorough preparation and detailed planning.
- Explain why handling change and the unexpected is easier when you have a clear sense of priorities and a solid foundation of core values.
## Class Sequence and Timing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Session Activity</th>
<th>Approximate Time (in minutes)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self Assessment: Exercise 1</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>View Video</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Large Group Discussion: Exercise 2</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Small Group Discussion: Exercise 3</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>Brainstorming - Large Group: Exercise 4</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>Core Values: Exercise 5</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key Learning and Future Intentions: Exercise 6</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Closing</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td><strong>Approximate total time</strong></td>
<td><strong>1 hour, 40 minutes</strong></td>
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EXERCISE 1: SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS (5 minutes)

INDIVIDUAL WORKSHEET

Leader: Introduce yourself and have the participants introduce themselves.

Today we’re going to explore the core values of planning and preparation, which are often critical to insure meaningful and productive outcomes. We’re going to see a video called The Law of the Harvest that illustrates the principle of “reaping what you sow.”

Hand out the Self-Assessment Exercise.

This is a short form that, once filled in, will reflect your current personal work standards. You will not be turning this in. It’s just for your information.
SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1: HANDOUT

**Instructions:** Place a check mark next to the response that best reflects your viewpoint and behavior. There are no right or wrong answers; these questions are to gauge your current personal work standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
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1. I agree with the statement that short-cuts may save a bit of time, but prove ineffective for long-term results.

2. Because of quick deadlines, I often find I am not putting out my best work.

3. I think the end justifies the means.

4. I need a clear sense of direction and priorities.

5. I am challenged by the unexpected and do my most creative work when faced with changing circumstances.

6. I work better with tight time pressures and multiple tasks.

7. I find that a “quick fix” is better than no fix at all.

8. I don’t compromise on my work habits and standards of excellence.

9. I agree with the statement “Do it until it’s done right.”

10. I have a reasonable balance between patience and goal-directed urgency.
Leader:

This video provides an overview of the importance of “reaping what you sow.” It is important to know when to take shortcuts, but equally important to discern when shortcuts or the latest trends may fall short of obtaining long-term goals. Combining preparation and planning with flexibility to “expect the unexpected” can lead to the richest rewards and successes. While you personally may not identify with a potato farmer from Idaho, if you listen to the strength of his message, you will understand the lessons you can learn from his years of experience.

**View Law of the Harvest Video**

**Video Synopsis:**

This brief video is packed with concepts and clues to move someone who feels they are “just an employee” to a deeper and fuller understanding of how their contributions and values can significantly impact organizational goals. In this video, we meet Grant Neibaur, an Idaho potato farmer who shares a lifetime of wisdom and experience with us.

The video begins and ends with Stephen Covey clarifying the concepts, as he discusses the harvest principle of “reaping what you sow.” Dependency on shortcuts, quick fixes and the latest trends are often the way to fail rather than succeed in the long-term.

We learn from Grant that it takes three to four years to yield a crop of high quality potatoes. There is no market for poor quality potatoes, so the process is something that cannot be compromised. Part of this lengthy three to four year process involves the planting and harvesting of other low return crops, like wheat, as a way of properly preparing the soil for optimum potato growth.

Ironically, after three to four years of slowly and methodically preparing the soil, planting, watering and fertilizing, the farmer’s timeline is suddenly shortened to what must feel like a mere moment. They have only three weeks to get the potatoes out of the ground, or they run the risk of having the ground turn too cold, thereby ruining the entire crop. As Grant says, “In farming, we have no roof over our head.” There is no safety net. One must sacrifice and work almost non-stop during that three-week window so as not to have wasted three to four years worth of work.
So we see that in farming, the Law of the Harvest is all about building a strong foundation through planning and preparation, making sacrifices where needed, having incredible patience and persistence and combining competency with timeliness.

Most of our workplaces are not as subject to the whims of Mother Nature as are those of the farmer, but from their example we stand to learn a great deal about:

- doing what is necessary to ensure a quality product
- developing a plan and being diligent in the execution of that plan (no matter how long it takes)
- reacting quickly when necessary
- making sure everyone, from the leader on down, understands what is at stake when a project is undertaken, is committed to the process, and has the skills and competencies to do what is required
**LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION: EXERCISE 2** (10 minutes)

**Leader:** Address the group as a whole. Write the responses on a flipchart or a whiteboard.

*Reflect on the statements of Grant Neibaur and Stephen Covey. What impressions come to mind that you would like to share with the group? Are there any lessons here?*

Elicit responses such as:

- Teamwork and cooperation are needed to ensure quality products and services.
- Commitment to a plan of action and diligent implementation are necessary components of reaching successful outcomes.
- Ability and experience are necessary components to assure quality.
- Technology and the proper resources, while also needed, do not replace a solid foundation of work principles and standards.
- Preparation is a key to unlocking successful outcomes.
- Cutting corners may work in the short-run, but it typically doesn’t produce effective long-term results.
- Any harvest is risky, there are no guarantees, just methods to limit the risk.
SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION: EXERCISE 3  (20 minutes)

Leader:

You’re going to take a look at how you act upon the concepts we just discussed. Take five minutes to answer the following questions.

Pass out the handout. After five minutes break the large group into small groups of three to four people.

OK, now I’d like you to meet in groups of three to four people to discuss these questions. Choose one person to take notes to report back to the large group. You will choose one key story or learning point to share with the group. You have 15 minutes.

Visit each group to make sure they are staying on track. Give them a two minute warning when the time limit is near. When the time is up, go from group to group to listen to each report.

Pick one key story, example, or learning point that you want to share with the large group.
SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS:
EXERCISE 3 HANDOUT

Instructions: Read the following questions and briefly jot down a few thoughts.

1. What does success look like in your personal life?

2. What does success look like in your workplace?

3. Think of an example where a quality product or outcome is desirable. What might you have to sacrifice in order to reach sustainable and meaningful long-term results?

4. What are some of your workplace’s unchangeable Laws of the Harvest? (Neibaur mentions weather, proper soil and limited timeframe.)

5. Can you think of a time when you failed to plan and the results were unfavorable? What did the results look like? How were the final outcomes improved upon?

6. What did you personally and professionally learn from this experience?
**BRAINSTORMING - LARGE GROUP: EXERCISE 4**

*15 MINUTES*

List a few of these examples on flipchart.

Next, label a heading **SHORTCUTS** and ask for a listing of the **pros** and when those ideas seem depleted, move on to list the **cons** of shortcuts.

*(Note: If not suggested by the group, here’s a listing of possible responses that can be mentioned. However, it works best if you allow the group to come up with their own list. Respectful debate and dialogue will lead the group to a new appreciation of the value of each perspective.)*

Elicit answers such as these:

**SHORTCUTS:**

**Pros**

- Doesn’t have to be perfect, just needs to be done
- Deadline is fast approaching
- Deal with the crisis — put out the fire
- Stay on top of change
- Customers want it ASAP
- More creative under time pressures
- Beat out the competition
- Quick Fix is addictive...adrenaline rush

**Cons**

- Due to quickness, mistakes are made
- Quality suffers
- Shortcuts don’t allow for creativity, and change is a creative process
- Customers aren’t well-served
- Reactive response may be “knee-jerk”
Leader:

Now let’s think about the benefits and drawbacks of planning and preparation to reach desired results. When do preparation and planning led to successful outcomes? Let’s brainstorm about the benefits and barriers to preparation and planning.

Elicit answers such as these:

**Preparation & Planning**

**Benefits**
- Planned strategies lead to high-quality results
- Process may be as important as product
- Pride increases with a solid approach and outcomes
- Avoid costly mistakes — “measure twice, cut once”
- Reflects mission & values of organization

**Barriers/Drawbacks**
- Everyone expects instant results
- Too much focus on the future draws attention away from current concerns
- Getting product to market fast is key
- Time is money
- Plans in the past haven’t worked

Leader:

I’m going to ask you three questions to reflect upon:
- What do you need “to plant” to make your company even more successful?
- What corners are you cutting that may be cheating those you serve?
- Who are you cheating by taking an easy way out?
CORE VALUES: EXERCISE 5 (15 minutes)

**Leader**: (Note - You will need a prepared flipchart or poster that corresponds to the statements on the Exercise 5 Handout.)

What are the core values of our organization? You’re going to form small groups of three to four people to rate these ten statements in order of priority.

Point to the prepared flipchart of these statements. Then distribute the handout.

Put a number “1” in front of the statement that you think is our organization’s highest priority and continue, in order of priority, until each statement is numbered from “1” to “10.” Try to reach a consensus.

You can reach a consensus by carefully listening to each person’s response, viewpoint and perception. Agreement is reached (hopefully) when all have shared their opinions and feel their perspective has been heard. Work towards reaching a consensus, but if it’s not possible, record people’s opinion with a tally mark and add them up at the end to try to pick priorities. You will only have 10 minutes so you’ll need to move quickly.

Go around the room to make sure each group is progressing. This will be a spirited discussion. Give a two minute warning when the ending time is drawing near. After the groups have completed the activity, summarize by asking each group what their top one or two statements are. Someone may mention that this task was impossible, as all of these reflect the core values and mission of the company. The Leader can respond by stating that this exercise was indeed impossible, but was a process to reinforce the core values and strong work ethic needed in the workplace, especially in times of change and quick turn-arounds.
Planning and preparation are even more necessary today than in the past, because of the speed of change and the constant re-definition of workplace norms, standards, and values. It is important that your team is aware of your organization’s core values. As challenges and opportunities arise, your team can work in concert on a solid foundation of common values. Remember the potato farmers. The common outcome of producing quality potatoes guides them through all of their decisions. As weather conditions change, they are ready to mobilize to do whatever is necessary to insure the quality of their product.

Handling change and the unexpected is easier when you have a clear sense of priorities and a solid foundation of core values. When conditions change, don’t forget the importance of communication. To be an effective leader, you will need to communicate changing priorities as the needs of the organization shift.
CORE VALUES: EXERCISE 5 HANDOUT

Instructions: How important are these statements to your organization? In your small group, prioritize by group consensus your perception of the importance of these core values for your organization. A consensus is reached by carefully listening to each person’s response, viewpoint, and perception. Agreement is reached (hopefully) when all have shared their opinions and feel their perspective has been heard. It may not be possible to reach consensus, but work toward that goal. If you reach an impasse, simply record each person’s opinion with a tally mark and tally them up at the end. You have 10 minutes.

1=highest priority                          10=lowest priority

_____ 1. Managers trust their people to do their best.
_____ 2. People feel proud of what the organization does.
_____ 4. We are willing to be flexible when timelines are tight and customers need to be served now.
_____ 5. We are committed to team and corporate goals, not our individual agendas.
_____ 6. People are willing to take risks for what is important (tickle the dragon’s tail).
_____ 7. People prepare and plan so that rewarding and significant results can occur.
_____ 8. People go beyond their job requirements to ensure quality products and service.
_____ 9. Leaders clearly communicate the organization’s mission and vision.
_____ 10. Leaders can be trusted and are credible.
Key Learning and Future Intentions:
Exercise 6 (10 minutes)

Leader: Pass out 3x5 index cards to each person.

Does anyone know what a personal intention statement is? It’s a call to action and a commitment to do something, often new or different, in your personal or professional life. It’s helpful to write down your intention and place it somewhere you visit frequently, as a reminder. You can place this on your computer, the bathroom mirror, the dash board of your car, or in your Palm Pilot™ as a daily reminder.

Think about something that you learned during this workshop that you would like to try in your workplace. Write a brief personal intention statement on your index card.

When everyone is done, have them turn to the person next to them and share their statements.

Closing Comments (5 minutes)

Leader:

We’ve identified the advantages of advanced planning and preparation. We’ve discussed when shortcuts have benefits and when they have drawbacks. And we’ve discovered that different people have different ideas about our organization’s core values and priorities. It’s critical to clarify these values and shifting priorities. This will enable us to create high quality outcomes and, also, enable us to mobilize quickly, when needed, to problem solve and to respond to change and new opportunities.
QUOTES TO POST IN THE CLASSROOM

Success seems to be largely a matter of hanging on after others have let go.

- William Feather

Hold on; hold fast; hold out. Patience is genius.

- Comte De Buffon

Take time to deliberate, but when the time for action has arrived, stop thinking and go in.

- Napoleon Bonaparte

Experience is not what happens to you; it is what you do with what happens to you.

- Aldous Huxley

If you prepare yourself at every point as well as you can, with whatever means you have...you will be able to grasp opportunity for broader experience when it appears. Without preparation you cannot do it.

- Eleanor Roosevelt
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