



Building Future Leaders

Lasting legacies start with how you treat people

One of the greatest opportunities we have as leaders is to shape the future of this amazing business we are in. The work you are doing today forms part of your body of work that will be on display for generations to come.

A month ago, my wife and I received a call that no one wants to receive. A good friend of ours was killed in a workplace accident that afternoon, leaving behind a wife and two young children. Yes, he had insurance, both personally held and through his work, but what he did not have was an advisor who was working with him on a regular basis to ensure that it was adequate for his needs.

It was a stark reminder of how without leaders continually training, coaching, and developing advisors, good people are left without the coverage they really need. It will stay with me for the rest of my life, and I hope it helps you understand that what we do, or do not do, has real consequences for those who do not have a say in things — the beneficiaries.

So what kind of legacy are you building? Is it one where new advisors cycle in for a couple of years, make some sales and then head off to do something else, leaving a wake of orphan policyholders? Or is it one where you know that you and your team have done everything in your power to help that new advisor learn how to build a business that is sustainable and profitable? With only three in 10 advisors making it through the first four years of business, we can all look for ways to improve our legacy. Only you can answer that question, but I challenge you to take the time to critically look at your business.

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into the office and they're throwing you a surprise party for 20 or 30 years of service and telling you how wonderful you are. Congratulations, your legacy is pretty much built, and you probably didn't spend a minute thinking about it over that window of time.

When the final analysis is complete, will you be happy with what you are building? If you were to even look at these next few areas as you go about your daily routine, you'd have a much better picture of what that legacy might be.

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First off, how do you treat people and how do they treat you? Take five minutes at the end of each day for the next week and just close your door and reflect on your interactions with people that day. Self-awareness is hard at full speed. You need to slow everything down to really see how you are coming across to people. You may even want to ask for feedback from others close to you. You might be surprised by what they say.

As for how others treat you, this is probably a little easier to identify. If you find yourself complaining about how everyone is picking on you or shutting you out of con-

versations, maybe it's time for you to examine your interpersonal relationships again. It might be them, but it's probably you.

Now, how are you doing at enabling others to act? This is often referred to as empowerment or empowering others. For me, this is a key element of your legacy as you will not be able to build a great team unless you help others get established and become successful. It's great to show someone how to run a client meeting or make an initial contact, but can they take that learning and replicate it over and over again? As leaders, you have to reverse the current trend of low appointment activity and sales results. Your advisors need you and so do the beneficiaries of the people they meet.

As a leader, you have an obligation to ensure that your people are skilled, they have time to practise, they are compliant, and, most importantly, they truly understand the value of the work they are doing. When you have a team of people that understand the economic value insurance brings to a family or business in times of tragedy, or how the accumulation of wealth leads to a stream of income in retirement and they can convince others of that powerful effect, then you have built a solid foundation.

Finally, how do you help others accelerate their careers? Are you a builder and promoter? Do you encourage talent to thrive and grow, or do you hoard it all for yourself?

If you are going to build a strong legacy that provides a great base for future generations to succeed, you need to not just enable others, but also constantly look for ways to help your teams grow. Are you investing in people? Do you know what drives them? From leadership development to coaching and mentoring, your role as a leader, regardless of your title, is to make the world better through your efforts.

As you set out your plans for the next few years, I hope you will take the time to consider your legacy as a leader. I know that everyone you come into contact with will benefit from it. **E**

ROB POPAZZI, CLU, CHS, is the president of GAMA International Canada, a conference of Advocis that provides professional development and networking opportunities for leaders in the financial services industry. He can be reached at Rob.Popazzi@sunlife.com or on LinkedIn.

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