

# The Power of No

Tuesday August 25, 2009

Topic: Leadership Management

Reference: Simmons. Brett L. "Do Your People Ever Tell You No?" [www.brettsimmons.com/2009-08/do-your-people-ever-tell-you-no/](http://www.brettsimmons.com/2009-08/do-your-people-ever-tell-you-no/)

The end of the summer is a good time to evaluate your leadership and management style. People are generally on vacation and preparing for the back to school rush. In Washington there is a correlation between traffic congestion and Congress being called back into session. At this time I like to ask myself how can I improve my leadership?

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The end of the summer is a good time to evaluate your leadership and management style. People are generally on vacation and preparing for the back to school rush. In Washington there is a correlation between traffic congestion and Congress being called back into session. At this time I like to ask myself how can I improve my leadership? The check includes a 360 degree analysis of people, product, organization, P&L statement, and development cycles. I like to focus particularly on execution, metrics, training, and project completion. A hidden gem can often be found in the communication used within and outside of the organization. Is the tone right? Are people using the right level of professionalism? What is being said outside of the building about the organization? Are we doing and reflecting the mission and objectives of the organization? This year the answers seem to be yes on most of these fronts. However, the referenced article suggests that another series of questions also needs to be addressed. Specifically, does your organization have a healthy amount of disagreement? Is positive confrontation part of the organization DNA? The commentator indicates that a lack of dissent is a sure sign of problems. No has to be an acceptable response to a rationale analysis of the facts. If it is not then your group could be suffering from groupthink. Groupthink is a severe case of myopia colored by wishful thinking and not reason. If you are not having real dialogue and some level of conflict in your organization everything is not okay. There has to be a time and place for a full evaluation of all ideas. I have never experienced this myopic euphoria in any setting. Rather I have seen a tremendous amount of dissention and malaise. The problem is not groupthink, but rather inertia-poor problem solving and fear. Building trust is critical to getting beyond these impediments. It also requires a reliance on fact based reasoning to get beyond opinion positioning as the standard for resolution. At the end of the day the results have to stand on their own merit. Let me know how you are dealing with "No" in your organization.