



**Brian Braudis** <http://www.energycentral.com/c/hr/four-ways-combat-lukewarm-leadership>

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## Four Ways to Combat Lukewarm Leadership

The CEO of a software firm was tasked with a major change initiative after a large and lengthy acquisition. The Board of Directors wanted to see a definitive integration plan that included a timeline, and an organizational management plan that would ensure the merging of cultures and continued growth for the long-term.

What followed was a classic case of “lukewarm leadership.” The CEO appeared halfhearted, indifferent and his inconsistencies mounted. The Board would hear positive progress reports from the CEO and senior leadership team members would report the direct opposite. From his weak stance on commitment to the flurry of mixed messages, this CEO earned the moniker “Tepid Tommy.” He seemed to be waiting in the wings for the flawless change initiative plan to find *him*.

**Leaders Take Note:** Followers pay attention and watch more closely than given credit for. Indifference, lackluster communications and lethargic efforts are often more conspicuous than appreciated. When change is at hand and the future seems unstable, a leader’s performance can either diminish chaos or enflame it. In the backdrop of uncertainty, a mere spark of ambiguity or apathy can ignite the pervading fuel of

resistance among the masses.

Lukewarm leadership is not just a phenomenon of the C-Suite. From the top to the front lines, followers everywhere watch intently. They are tuned-in and sensitive to the message that leadership sends. The leader creates the climate. If an apathetic message is conveyed, the employee will respond in kind. Team members follow in direct correspondence with what they see and feel from leadership.

## **Here are 4 Ways to Combat Lukewarm Leadership**

- 1. Set the Tone:** What you do as a leader has tremendous influence throughout your team, your employees and even your stakeholders. People respond to what you initiate. Begin with the energy and gusto you want to see in others. Demonstrate how much you are willing to give and show that you are duty-bound early and often. Make your messages steadfast. When people see and feel your energy, enthusiasm and promise they will not only buy in, they will help spread your “all-in” message. When you show unbound energy, your team will give more energy. When you are engaged, unwavering and decisive, your team will follow with their engagement, unwavering effort and decisive action.
- 2. Communicate:** Communication is more than a word. It is the standard by which leaders guide, direct, motivate and inspire action. Leadership quite simply depends on communication. Clear, confident, resonant communication will engender trust and followership.
- **Get Specific:** Simple and concise is more effective than complicated and confusing. Attention is a precious commodity and time even more so. Hit the high points in your speeches and save the granular details for in

person communications.

- **Get Face to Face:** Nothing can substitute for face-to-face dialog. Yes, dialog rather than monologue. This does not have to be the top leader. Employees and team members know the demands on leaders and managers. They know the value of authentic live contact and informal dialog where they can see and feel that their message is being received. Your team appreciates being heard.
- **Demonstrate Beyond Words:** What you do supersedes what you say. Remember Emerson and his famous dictum, *what you do speak so loudly I can't hear what you say*. The proven formula for personal communication is 55 percent body language, 38 percent tone and 7 percent communication is through words. Body language and tone will validate everything that you say. Sending protocol out in a memo is not nearly as effective as walking around and informally sharing your thoughts and expressing yourself on the need for procedure. At bottom, lead at all times and if necessary use words.

### 3. **Be the Island of Commitment in a Sea of**

**Uncertainty:** The new economy is well known to leaders. Increased global influence, more demanding customers and disruptive new players are challenges to be surmounted. But to your team members the new economy means uncertainty. Uncertainty leads to anxiety that makes people susceptible to stress, less productive and more vulnerable to conflict. During times of upheaval we need leaders who are anchored in commitment. Team members are quietly watching for the leaders who are islands of commitment in a sea of uncertainty. They bring commitment, a calming presence

and their higher perspective to the context of uncertainty. There will always be some degree of uncertainty. But when leaders show resolute certainty in their commitment anxiety drops and morale climbs, team members take note and follow suit.

- 4. Show Consistent Enthusiasm:** Nothing great was ever accomplished without enthusiasm. Leaders who show enthusiasm as a way of operating remove any hint of lukewarm. People can visibly see and feel your heart-felt passion, energy and commitment and they buy in. Your team wants to win and they want you to be successful. No one tries to be second. Show consistent enthusiasm and your team reciprocate with buy in and enthusiasm of their own.

Leaders have a significant role in creating a calm and productive culture. Most important, they have the power to conceive, articulate and inspire actions that lift people out of their fears and petty preoccupations. When savvy followers see and feel your energy, commitment and enthusiasm shining through the daily challenges and frustrations, there's nothing lukewarm about that.



### **Brian Braudis**

Brian believes “leadership” is a verb not a title. Brian’s passionate and inspiring presentations are based on the foundation that regardless of your position or role everyone is a leader. [www.thebraudisgroup.com](http://www.thebraudisgroup.com)