Employees’ Advisory Council – Representative Meeting Minutes
County Office Annex, Room 429, Clearwater, FL
Wednesday, November 14, 2018, 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Prepared by Lisa Arispe

Call to Order
The EAC Representative meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m. by Chair, Charles Toney. Donna Beim, Jackie Warr and Randy Rose could not attend and sent an alternate to represent them. Lisa Arispe agreed to fill in as secretary and record the meeting minutes until the new EAC Secretary is elected at the December Representative meeting.

Approval of Minutes
- The October 17, 2018 Representative meeting minutes were approved with an addition to add the substitute for Marion Nuraj; with motion by Linda Cahill, seconded by Bill Gorman.
- The September 27, 2018 Delegate meeting minutes were approved with motion by Marion Nuraj, seconded by Clare McGrane.
- The October 15, 2018 Employees’ Advisory Council and Appointing Authorities joint meeting minutes were approved with motion by Richard Carvale and seconded by Charles Toney.

Comments from Holly Schoenherr, Director of Human Resources
- Holly handed out results of a survey that was taken at the EAC Delegate meeting in September (attached).
- Holly passed out a sheet on benefits feedback and communication (attached).
- Holly stated Taleo is being updated and will be live no later than February 2019.
- Evergreen is wrapping up reviews. They will be shared with employees the week after Thanksgiving [the timeline was later extended]. Jack Loring stated those with a downward classification still have further appeal rights available. There is no further appeal for those that didn’t. Discussion ensued on the changes, compression, and downgrade issues.
- Charles stated that although communication on the Classification and Compensation Study was sent out, most was not meaningful until after the information including the classification crosswalk was provided to the Personnel Board at the August meeting and became public record.
- Health care benefits were discussed. Insurance costs are up although Pinellas County is self-insured due to large claims and rising health care costs as Holly explained. Terri Wallace spoke on the personal responsibility of employees when it comes to their benefits.
- Clare McGrane asked Holly if she had any suggestions on workplace safety for those in open public buildings. Holly suggested speaking to her management and/or the Risk Department.
- Holly questioned as to why the EAC suggested putting the Bullying Policy in the Office of Human Rights and removing it from Employee Relations in Human Resources. Lisa Arispe stated that the Office of Human Rights already takes discrimination complaints and has the expertise to determine if a federal rule or a County policy has been violated.
- Holly spoke about the Employee Benefits Committee that was an agenda item at the Board of County Commissioners meeting on October 23, 2018. While the BCC has the authority to create a committee, it does not have the authority to assign work to the Human Resources Department. She stated that HR has no obligation to abide by a resolution and recommended
that it be formalized with an agreement. This will be taken before the Personnel Board. Lisa Arispe pointed out that the BCC had received a letter of agreement from Dr. Rick Davis, Chairman of the Personnel Board. Holly stated that Chairman Davis cannot speak on behalf of the Board until the Board discusses it in the Sunshine.

**Personnel Board**
Charles gave an update on the Personnel Board Meeting held November 1, 2018. He will address several statements in the Evergreen Pay Plan that was provided to the board members at this meeting. The termination appeal scheduled was postponed until December. Charles spoke with Assistant County Attorney Carole Sanzeri after the meeting concerning the rules of the Personnel Board in the Special Act that anyone with relatives working for Pinellas County UPS are not allowed to serve on the Personnel Board. Charles would like to look into this rule to possibly have it changed.

**Committee Reports**
- Advocates - Currently there are 6 advocates including Serena Williams who just volunteered to be on the committee.
- Awards Committee - No updates.
- Leave Accrual Committee - Charles stated that the committee suggested adding 2 Floating Holidays. Some surrounding public employers have more total leave time than Pinellas County. The Leave Accrual Committee suggested adding the Floating Holidays because it will be easier and have less budget impact vs. increases in accrual leave. This request to add 2 Floating Holidays will be forwarded to the Appointing Authorities with supporting information for consideration for approval.
- Merit Pay Committee - Ways to implement a merit pay system were discussed. The recommendation for merit pay is that it will be in addition to a general increase not replacing it. The cost to hire and train a new employee is 6-9 months of the position salary. Employees should be able to reach the mid-point of their pay range in about 5 years. The general across the board increases should be tied to a general index, something that is already established. Ideas were given out, such as a 360 review for supervisors, this would show accountability. The top 3 reasons why people leave a job: retirement, money, and management issues.

**Old Business**
- Camille gave an update on the elections. Ballots will be sent out via email on November 26, 2018 and due on December 7, 2018.
- BTS is working on a new website; long term EAC minutes will no longer be kept on the website.

**New Business**
The new County Administrator, Barry Burton, will be speaking at the Delegate meeting tomorrow. Charles has a scheduled meeting with Barry on Monday November 26, 2018. It was also stated that the Delegate meeting for January will be at Heritage Village.

Roundtable Discussion: Marion asked about time off for pet deaths. Henry asked what the County Policy is for medical marijuana. The policy is being looked at; currently the policy is zero tolerance.

Lisa Arispe made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Clare McGrane.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lisa Arispe*</th>
<th>Donna Beim</th>
<th>Linda Cahill*</th>
<th>Richard Carvale</th>
<th>Leena Delli Paoli*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bill Gorman*</td>
<td>Clare McGrane*</td>
<td>Doris McHugh*</td>
<td>Marion Nuraj</td>
<td>Alicia Parinello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randy Rose</td>
<td>Charles Toney*</td>
<td>Jackie Warr</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*EAC Representatives in attendance at this meeting. Henry Gomez was also in attendance
EAC Delegate Straw Poll Regarding the Classification & Compensation Study and Communications

September 27, 2018

Summary
44 out of a possible 75 completed the survey. Most stated they understood the purpose of the study, viewed the web page, found information easily and found it helpful. About 75% said they attended an information session but responses were mixed as to their value. Most understand how the study affects their position. About 75% of respondents think HR communicated often enough or more than enough but reviews were very mixed as to whether or not the right information was sent to employees. Half thought the messaging was clear and one quarter thought it was somewhat clear.

Q1. Did you understand the purpose of the study?

Yes = 38
No = 4
Skip = 2

Q2. Did you view the study web page?

Yes = 37
No = 6
Skip = 1
Q2.a. Were you able to easily find information about the study?

Yes = 33  
No = 3  
Skip = 8

Q2.b. Was it helpful?

Yes – 24  
No – 8  
Skip – 12
Q3. Did you attend an information session?

Yes – 33  
No – 11  
Skip – 0

Q3.a. If so, was it valuable?

Yes – 16  
No – 12  
Skip – 16
Q4. Do you understand how this first implementation phase of the study affects your position?

Yes – 35
No – 2
Skip – 7

Q5. Do you think HR communicated often enough?

More than enough – 3
Just the right amount – 24
Not enough – 15
Skip – 2
Q6. Do you think HR communicated the right information?

Yes – 17
Some of it – 17
No – 9
Skip - 1

Q6.a. Explain:

- Not in time, did not make sense to average employee.
- People who thought they were eligible for the adjustment and provided info didn't get it.
- It seemed filtered.
- Was not sure if received a declass would $ be lost?
- For crew chief 1 to be bumped to 2 and 2s to 1s, there definitely was not enough info.
- Blue collar employees had no say in putting Evergreen in effect.
- FAQs were addressed up front.
- I believe the information was given to EAC Delegates in each meeting. However employees not having access to each stage of the process was confusing for them.
- Possibility of class pay reduction not clearly communicated.
- Yes till the last phase
- Should have been explained in more detail prior to study as though it wouldn't include reviewing duties of each position also.
- untrue
- HR held back on giving all the info. e.g.: the initial # of employees affected by the compensation study in a negative way were much MORE than we were led by HR to believe (26-30 individuals). As a result, 525 employees have felt the NEED for a second review by Evergreen.
- No specifics in advance. People were blindsided.
Q7. Were HR messages clear?

Yes – 22
Somewhat – 12
No – 7
Skips – 3

Q7.a. Why or why not?

- Said any did not send email on day indicated
- Just kept everyone guessing
- More info could have been shared as to the problems the compression of career ladders.
- Every communication was value and not direct in reference to the reclassification.
- I was under the impression everybody under the midpoint would be raised 3%. But I now understand after the change was made.
- Difficult to understand the 3 options.
- I believe HR was transparent in the reason for the study.
- just ell staff to look at website. Explain in layman's terms.
- untrue
- Nothing known til study completed; JATs not all read.
- too general

Q8. Do you have suggestions for future communications on any topic?

- Say things straight forward instead of in circles
- Be open be honest, do not set expectations unless you can deliver
- Although HR does provide information through various aspects of the process, unfortunately there will always be those employees who ignore the emails and information. Because of that fact there will always be questions and complaints at the end.
- More updates when addressing one’s position and/or salary.
- Be 100% truthful in plain English.
- Make sure that supervisors are passing on all communications to the staff.
- Talk to people don't listen to people off the street (consultants). Think it was a sad.
- Gain feedback from ALL workers before agreeing to anything that may affect their position.
- Communications were great. That was not an issue.
- Maybe more emails to employees.
- Holly needs to be let go.
- Ensure the company hired actually reads each job description and JAT. I believe due to evidence, they did not real all JAT and job descriptions.
• Don't tell EAC Delegates "you don't want to hear" about the details. A question was asked so answer it as best as can, and we'll ask for clarification on anything not understood.
• If you're in DROP, "catching up" on salary doesn't affect you long term.
• Why? All you hear is your hands are tied.
• Communicate earlier not at last minute.
• There needs to be a follow up "post" session to explain the changes.
• People should have received info related to them prior to implementation.

More comments:

• Re Evergreen info session: Very generic conversation.
• Re Evergreen info session: Very generic conversation.
• Re communicating often enough: We were not prepared for the disaster this created.
• Only cared about people with less than 5 years.
• Re understanding purpose of study: Not until today. Took a while.
• Re frequency of communications: Was great up until the end once the option decision was made.
• Re purpose of study: Thought would include job description review so duties actually matched description. That did not happen. So disappointing.
Benefits Feedback and Communication

Human Resources strives to provide an excellent benefits package to invest in our employees’ health and in their future. We meet regularly with our consultant, Willis Towers Watson, to look at trends and strategies for improving employee benefits. Outlined below are examples of how Human Resources shares benefits information and receives feedback from our employees, including the Appointing Authorities and the Employees’ Advisory Council.

Appointing Authorities

- Discussed proposed health plan changes and provided an opportunity for feedback:
  - 2017: February (special meeting focused on the health plan), July, August
  - 2018: July, August
- Provided Health Plan Performance Updates
  - 2017: April, August
  - 2018: February, May, October

Employees’ Advisory Council (EAC)

- Discussed health plan changes and provided an opportunity for feedback:
  - 2017: July, August
  - 2018: June, July, August
- Address benefits-related questions posed by employees:
  - 18 EAC meetings annually (12 Representative meetings and 6 Delegate meetings)

Annual Enrollment for Benefits

- See attached Communication Plan for 2019 Annual Enrollment, including the website, newsletter articles, emails, home mailers, and meetings (in-person and webinars).

Employee Feedback

- Employee Voice Survey (every 2 years): Per the 2017 survey, 87% of employees feel that they receive competitive benefits.
- Benefits Satisfaction Survey (annual): See attached results from 2018 survey
# Communication Plan for 2019 Annual Enrollment

**Employee Annual Enrollment:** November 1 to 14, 2018  
**Retiree Annual Enrollment:** October 29 to November 16, 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/17/18</td>
<td>Website launched: <a href="#">www.pinellascounty.org/hr/annual-enrollment</a></td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/17/18</td>
<td><em>Pen</em> newsletter distributed to all employees by email with Annual Enrollment article (page 4)</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/26/18</td>
<td><em>Retiree Connection</em> newsletter distributed to retiree subscribers by email with Annual Enrollment article</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/5/18</td>
<td><em>To Your Health</em> newsletter distributed to all employees by email with Annual Enrollment article (page 4)</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/8/18</td>
<td>REPCO meeting for retirees to provide information on Annual Enrollment</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/15/18</td>
<td><em>Pen</em> newsletter distributed to all employees and retirees by email with Annual Enrollment article</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/25 - 10/30</td>
<td>Employee meetings held (4 total)</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/22/18</td>
<td>Home mailers sent to all retirees</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/25/18</td>
<td>Home mailer sent to all employees</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/29/18</td>
<td>Home mailer sent to current employees who “opt out” of health plan coverage, including a copy of the affidavit to be completed</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/31/18</td>
<td>Email to all supervisors asking them to share information with their employees (especially field workers) about Annual Enrollment on 11/1</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/1/18</td>
<td>Email to all employees: Annual Enrollment Open (including link to a video “What You Need to Know for 2019”)</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/5 - 11/6</td>
<td>Live web meetings (2 total) and webinar recording posted to the website</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/7/18</td>
<td>Email to all employees: Annual Enrollment reminder (one week left)</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/13/18</td>
<td>Email to all employees: Last day to enroll is November 14, 11:59 p.m.</td>
<td>E</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The survey link was mailed to 3,042 UPS employees on January 18 and was open for 13 days with a close date of January 31. 854 employees (approximately 28%) responded. General demographic data was collected however the respondents are not identifiable.

Respondents were mostly classified service (72%), most had 5 or fewer year’s tenure (36%), were mostly female (61%), and 51-60 years old (36%). Only 23 respondents declined to answer demographic questions.
Respondents ranked “Time Off Programs” as the most important benefit (98.45%) with medical, dental, vision and prescriptions benefits as the next most important benefit programs. “Time Off Programs” was also ranked as the benefit program employees are most satisfied with (84.42%).

### Ranked in order of Total Favorable Importance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>% Very Important</th>
<th>% Important</th>
<th>Total Favorable Importance</th>
<th>% Very Satisfied</th>
<th>% Satisfied</th>
<th>Total Favorable Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time Off programs</td>
<td>91.76</td>
<td>6.69</td>
<td>98.45</td>
<td>54.10</td>
<td>30.32</td>
<td>84.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>89.66</td>
<td>6.82</td>
<td>96.48</td>
<td>28.50</td>
<td>43.35</td>
<td>71.85</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dental</td>
<td>71.36</td>
<td>21.72</td>
<td>93.08</td>
<td>19.36</td>
<td>36.58</td>
<td>55.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>64.71</td>
<td>22.10</td>
<td>86.81</td>
<td>22.60</td>
<td>37.50</td>
<td>60.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescriptions</td>
<td>66.31</td>
<td>20.34</td>
<td>86.65</td>
<td>22.04</td>
<td>39.34</td>
<td>61.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Insurance</td>
<td>55.64</td>
<td>28.97</td>
<td>84.61</td>
<td>34.33</td>
<td>45.05</td>
<td>79.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred Compensation</td>
<td>53.06</td>
<td>23.17</td>
<td>76.23</td>
<td>29.06</td>
<td>32.27</td>
<td>61.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>32.17</td>
<td>37.71</td>
<td>69.88</td>
<td>23.99</td>
<td>39.55</td>
<td>63.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellness</td>
<td>31.17</td>
<td>29.69</td>
<td>60.86</td>
<td>20.73</td>
<td>39.10</td>
<td>59.83</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAP</td>
<td>29.04</td>
<td>28.55</td>
<td>57.59</td>
<td>14.82</td>
<td>25.30</td>
<td>40.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rewards</td>
<td>26.37</td>
<td>28.43</td>
<td>54.80</td>
<td>19.06</td>
<td>33.81</td>
<td>52.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition Reimbursement</td>
<td>28.86</td>
<td>22.71</td>
<td>51.57</td>
<td>13.51</td>
<td>17.54</td>
<td>31.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Leave Exchange</td>
<td>25.39</td>
<td>20.53</td>
<td>45.92</td>
<td>18.07</td>
<td>20.33</td>
<td>38.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinellas Federal Credit Union</td>
<td>20.51</td>
<td>14.04</td>
<td>34.55</td>
<td>15.86</td>
<td>14.91</td>
<td>30.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You Decide Discount Program</td>
<td>11.80</td>
<td>20.92</td>
<td>32.72</td>
<td>9.16</td>
<td>21.40</td>
<td>30.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following graph shows the respondents’ rating of importance versus satisfaction.

Paid Time Off Comment Section Review (241 comments)
There were at least 37 mentions sick leave, employees preferring to have a sick leave bank rather than have to use annual leave (perceived as vacation leave). Unscheduled leave was often mentioned as was the Presidents Day In-Service Day. Many felt that it should be a time off holiday. Many cited child care issues since their children have the day off from school. There were some comments – both for an against – the recent change around Personal Days. The rate of accrual of annual leave was another popular topic, especially for new employees and also with regard to the classified versus exempt rates.

Medical Plan Comment Section Review (318 comments)
Costs and coverage topic areas dominated the comments section, including the increased emergency room copay amount. Also many seem to think the medical plan is difficult to understand. Confusion remains over the difference between the 3% pay increases and percent increases in medical premiums.
Dental Plan Comment Section Review (298 comments)
Most responders noted the plan is sufficient for minor procedures but the coverage is poor and therefore the employees’ out of pocket expenses are very high for major things like root canals, crowns, surgery, and implants. Several indicated they have put off treatment due to costs. There were also many comments about difficulty finding suitable participating providers especially with the “free” plan.
Employees’ Advisory Council Merit Pay Committee Meeting Minutes  
County Office Annex, Room 429, Clearwater, Florida  
Wednesday, November 14, 2018, 1:15 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.

Prepared by Charles Toney

1. Call to Order

2. Introductions
   - Committee open to all EAC Representatives – Present: Richard Carvale, Cindy Adkison for Randy Rose, Lisa Arispe, Clare McGrane, Charles Toney
   - Human Resources Representative – Meagan Decker.

3. Approval of Minutes
   - 10-17-18 EAC Merit Pay Committee minutes – motion to approve: Richard Carvale, 2nd: Charles Toney. Minutes approved.

4. Objective
   - Develop a merit based pay system to forward to Human Resources, Appointing Authorities including the County Administrator, and Personnel Board for consideration. Have a draft available and distributed prior to the April EAC / AA joint meeting.

5. Discussion
   - What is the cost of replacing an employee? This is the value added worth to keep an employee that is performing the job duties in a satisfactory manner. Meagan provided information on this question. Studies on the cost of turnover are all over the board depending on the position, difficulty of filling the position, location of position etc. but typical estimators are around 6-9 months of salary. It might be a high estimate but it is hard to take into consideration all of the impacts of turnover including your basic effort and time involved in recruiting, interviews and onboarding, training of new employee, and the cost to the department in terms of loss of productivity and impact on morale.

   - Employees should be able to achieve or be close to mid-point (market pay for satisfactorily performing the job) of their pay grade within five years.

   - Meagan provided information from exit interview surveys that indicates that one of the major reasons that people completing the survey report leaving is management issues. A possible solution discussed surrounding this issue was perhaps including a 360 input on management or supervisory level reviews to help with accountability and reduce turnover, grievances, and absenteeism.
- The recommendation for merit pay is that it will be in addition to a general increase not replacing it. The general across the board increases should be tied to a general index, something that is already established.

6. Previous Items Noted
- The committee discussed the previously used merit pay system and will look at examples of the way it was used in the past and suggested changes for current situation use.

- Review previously used points / weighted merit based pay system. Examples of old form with impact and performance rating numbers – in process.

- Review previously used points / weighted merit based pay system. Reviewed the 400 point System - < 100 needs attention no merit, 100-200 Good 0-1% merit, 200-300 Very Good 1-2% merit, 300-400 Excellent 2-3% merit. The 100 point spread in each category could be divided by four and merit awarded at 0.25% increments.

- What is the cost of NOT having a merit pay system? – increased turnover, repetitive hiring, increased time for training. See cost of replacing an employee under Discussion items.

- Out of the box suggestion - Employee self-funding merit pay – retain an ongoing % of suggestion awards continued cost savings, capture a % of non-tax county income (fertilizer, real estate, energy, etc.)

7. Other Items to Consider
- Reminder – Clerk of the Court budgeting – all / any recommendations are to include Clerk of the Court personnel and a method for funding.

Lisa Arispe*  Donna Beim  Linda Cahill  Richard Carvale*  Leena Delli Paoli
Bill Gorman  Clare McGrane*  Doris McHugh  Marion Nuraj  Alicia Parinello
Randy Rose*  Charles Toney*  Jackie Warr

*EAC Representatives in attendance at this meeting. (Cindy Adkison for Randy Rose)
Call to Order/Pledge
The EAC Delegate meeting was called to order at 8:05 a.m. by Chair, Charles Toney.

Introduction of Guests
Welcome Mr. Barry Burton – new County Administrator. Mr. Burton provided a brief work history and answered questions from the Delegates.

EAC Updates
- The January 24 EAC Delegate Meeting will be held next door at the Heritage Village facility. The Clerk of the Court, Ken Burke, is the guest speaker for this meeting.
- Updates to the Personnel Rules concerning the Drug-Free Workplace policy approved at the October Personnel Board Meeting.
- Comments on the Pay Plan provided by Evergreen.

Comments from Holly Schoenherr, Director of Human Resources
- The Taleo system is scheduled for upgrades. Chris White and Meagan Decker will be working on the upgrade to include improvements to the areas of recruitment, performance (FACE), and onboarding. A contractor will assist in the changes.
- Holly shared the results of the survey on communication regarding the Classification & Compensation Study that was presented at the September 27th EAC Delegate meeting.
- Classification & Compensation Study update – 525 employees have requested a secondary review by Evergreen. Response is expected by the last week of November. The Crew Chief corrections have been addressed with changes approved by the Personnel Board at the 11-01-18 meeting.

Delegate Concerns
- Standby vehicles allowed to be taken home when employees live out of Pinellas County – delayed response times are a major concern – Utilities issue.
- 10-hr shift vs. 8-hr holiday issue.
- HIPAA and biometric screening concerns.
- Prescription plan issues.
- Safety Shoe allowance.
- Additional “voluntary” benefits at increased costs to the employee (example: dental).
- Rally and UnitedHealthcare – disconnect.
- Personal Days – allowed to be used in 2-hr increments.
- FACE – use varies significantly by Appointing Authority and some departments.
Keeping It Real: Values Determine Trust in Leadership

There has been a long-standing debate about whether leaders are born or made. There have been many theories offered over the decades by renowned research psychologists and leadership gurus about what produces followership. A few things stand out that greatly impact trust in leadership.

As a few of these characteristics and competencies are described, think about your own experience with people who have been positive influences in your life.

> **Believable** – What makes a person believable? How do I determine if I can trust what someone is telling me?

- What is their track record? Do they follow through? What is the perception of others that I trust regarding this person?
- Do they have courage? Will they “go to bat” and speak up when something is out of sync with what we say is important?
- Is the person an independent thinker who will listen to others, yet form their own opinion even when it may not make them as popular with the masses? Do they deliver their message in a respectfully assertive way?
- Is the individual willing to explain why they make decisions; and do they show appreciation for other perspectives yet are willing to disagree to do what is best for the organization?

> **Humility/Humanness** – Does the leader have confidence, yet have an open mind to be influenced by new information?

- Does the individual show vulnerability by admitting times when they are unsure, frustrated, and demonstrate how they have worked to improve so that others feel more comfortable in making mistakes and learning?
- Does the person seek feedback from multiple sources (peers, supervisors, direct reports and “naysayers”) to understand their impact on others? Can they be vulnerable enough to admit that they struggle the same as people at all levels?
- Is their openness and accessibility demonstrated? We can say we have an “open door” yet do we display that other people’s needs are very important by making time for people to express concerns? Listening is demonstrated by action.

> **Actions Match Words** – If we were to record what the leader is saying, would a video recording of what they do match what they are sharing verbally? Of all the areas of agreement, this is the one that stands out as the most important for people to assess whether someone is worthy of followership, credibility and trust.

- In cases where there does not seem to be a match, can the person be approached to ask about this incongruence? What will the response be … one of appreciation, or one of defensiveness?
- What are we doing to make sure we understand how we are being perceived?

Every action, every word, every exchange is determining how each of our relationships progresses in the area of trust, integrity and potential for positive leadership. These competencies are sometimes called “soft”, yet they require more courage, energy and humility than any other area of focus for development.

The mission for leadership self-improvement is critical for individual, workgroup and organizational effectiveness. If you choose to accept the challenge, it will lead to increased productivity, higher engagement, physical and emotional retention, succession planning and personal/professional fulfillment.

Will you accept this challenge?