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LEADERS & SUCCESS

Character Is Core Of Effective Management

▶ **Professor Urges Accent On Principles, Values, Personal Discipline, Not On Facade**

By Alexa Bell, *Investor's Daily*

"Private victories precede public victories," states Stephen R. Covey in his new book about the personal work often involved in obtaining public success.

Covey, a business professor and chairman of the Covey Leadership Center in Provo, Utah, rejects the belief that lasting success can be achieved without self-mastery.

His book, "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People" (Simon & Schuster), offers no fast formulas for success. Instead, it offers a streamlined curriculum for those willing to undertake the difficult task of building character.

The unattractive alternative, as Covey sees it, is a life dedicated to what he calls the "personality ethic" — the belief that a good public image, personable behavior, interactive skills and other "techniques" will smooth interpersonal relations and win rewards. To Covey, this is the public relations version of success: It looks good on the outside but has little to do with true happiness.

Stephen Covey

"A lot of people accomplish their goals well on the personality ethic," Covey said in a recent interview. "But study their long-term relationships and see how long they last. They might make a lot of money because they know the techniques, but they are often emotionally impoverished inside. There is duplicity and manipulation involved."

Covey sees the devaluation of character — along with such virtues as compassion, integrity and honesty — as a problem affecting both personal and business life. The companies that come to his leadership center, including a number of Fortune 500 members, are usually suffering from the effects of lack of character and are seeking some deep healing.

"When a company comes to us, it's usually hurting," he noted. "The culture is often split apart, with no commitment to quality. It may not be serving the customer as well as the competition is.

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or there may be an adversarial feeling (among colleagues) or negative synergy."

Covey tries to solve such dilemmas by teaching "principle-centered leadership" to top executives and charging them to spread the message through company ranks. He hangs his teachings on seven interlocking "habits" culled from his experiences as a consultant and as an adjunct professor of organizational behavior and business management at Brigham Young University.

These habits, Covey believes, form the framework for personal and interpersonal effectiveness. They are:

■ Being "proactive." Each individual is the author of his own life, Covey insists, and needs to actively shape it. Those who do not will be reactive — allowing others' perceptions and agendas to determine their fate.

■ Beginning with the end in mind. Once you have realized that you are in charge of your life, it's up to you to decide what you want to do with it. "Carefully think through your mission and your goals for each of your roles in life," Covey said. "Try to get a sense of what's important to you."

■ Putting first things first. Set priorities and stick by them, Covey advises. Develop discipline. "Most people get bogged down in the minute details of their lives," he said. "They're run by their moods instead of by their plans of action."

■ Thinking win/win or no deal. People who seek mutual benefits will reap better deals, Covey believes. However, negotiations also require the willingness to walk away from a bad deal. "Unless 'no deal' is deep inside you as an option, you will be vulnerable to being manipulated or manipulating," he said.

■ Seeking to understand, then being understood. Practice "empathic communication" by listening closely to others' problems, then by explaining yours. When people understand each other's problems, anger dissipates and cooperation is fostered.

■ Synergizing. Look for a third alternative that benefits all parties and moves beyond the original goals and mind-sets.

■ Investing in your own development. Covey recommends that clients spend at least an hour each day renewing their physical, spiritual, social and mental dimensions. From this "daily private victory," he says, comes the mental toughness needed to discipline life around values.

Most of these habits, Covey admits, sound like lessons learned at a parent's knee. But, he says, although they encompass basic values, such lessons are ignored more often than embraced. Or else they are just partially embraced.

A common misconception among business people, he says, is that they can have two lives: a kind, principled life at home and a tough, practical life at work. This sort of split eventually fails, Covey says, because it ultimately undermines trust and cooperation at the workplace.

"You can force people into a win/lose situation (at work), but what happens when you're not there?" Covey asked. "You should treat employees just as you want them to treat your best customers."

Image-Obsessed Times

Covey, who has a master's degree in business administration from Harvard University and a doctorate in business, psychology and philosophy from BYU, sees the erosion of principles as a result of our image-obsessed times. But as much as he decries the trend away from principles and character, he remains essentially optimistic about America's basic nature.

"I think there is, in mainstream America, a lot of character, but there has been such a heavy emphasis on public relations and cosmetics that a lot of people have forgotten the basic values they learned," he said.

"I have faith in Middle America (because when I) ask them to write their mission statements, they are absolutely wonderful," he added. "But we've lived in fat city now, and people have become loose about discipline."

CONTRASTING PARADIGMS
OF ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

OLD PARADIGM   **NEW PARADIGM**

ORGANIZATION

OLD PARADIGM	NEW PARADIGM
Bureaucratic	Entrepreneurial
Mechanical	Organic
Closed System	Open System
Hierarchy	Holarchy
Vertical Integration	Horizontal Integration
Function-based	Process-based
Individual Based	Team Based
Extrinsic Motivation	Intrinsic Motivation
Win-Lose (competetive)	Win-Win (cooperative)
Scientific Management	Socio-technical Systems
Division of Labor	Integration of Work
Economies of Scale	Management Molecule

MANAGEMENT

OLD PARADIGM	NEW PARADIGM
Low Trust	High Trust
Directive	Participative
Heroic/Lone Ranger	Developer/Coach
Superior-Subordinate	Partnership
Parent-Child Archetype	Adult-Adult Archetype
Manage Others	Manage Self/Lead Others
Manage Downward	Manage Upward and Outward
Power Motivation	Achievement/Affiliation
Control Based	Empowerment Based
Rule Driven	Principle Driven