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**Why Bother With Distributed Leadership?**

**By Kerri Salls**

I'm an alumni of Boston University Graduate School of Business, so I receive the Alumni magazine

Bostonia. To be honest, that doesn't mean I read it faithfully at all. But this issue was different. George Labovitz, a professor in organizational behavior at the school wrote an article recently on his research into the application of alignment to achieve extraordinary results in organizations.

He caught me with the first sentence: "More than thirty years of research has shown that aligned and integrated organizations outperform their nearest competitors in every major financial measure."

He admitted not many organizations do it, but those that utilize it well also realize a significant competitive advantage!

By definition: alignment is the optimal state in which strategy, people, customers, and key processes work in concert to propel growth and profits. When business leaders implement this kind of alignment, the whole organization enjoys greater customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, greater returns for investors. To do this, they de-emphasize hierarchy and distribute authority, information, knowledge, and customer data. As a result, every employee top to bottom, understands the strategy and goals of the business. Consequently, everyone knows how his/her work contributes to it.

There are many ways to measure alignment. But you can only achieve alignment across the board through distributed leadership. Implementing such strategies develops leadership in each unit of your operation and at different levels of your organization. You actually end up empowering employees to act and give them the knowledge about what must be done.

With this kind of clear vision and strong communication, you can allow your team to run with tasks and projects independent of your day-to day management, freeing you for higher level leadership tasks and responsibilities.

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## Why Bother With Distributed Leadership?

- \* Keep people connected – so they know what is at stake.
- \* Help people think holistically. You can't expect them to make good decisions if they can't see the big picture.
- \* Keep people connected to the company vision, mission and goals – raise the horizon of understanding so they are not limited to seeing only department or job specific goals.
- \* Reward and recognize people for working toward the main goal – not just department goals.
- \* How you bring this into the review process will drive it home for future behavior.
- \* Create opportunities for people to interact – they work better with people they know personally and can empathize with.
- \* Make the process iterative – taking action is not a one-time thing.

To answer the question I posed: Why bother? Is it worth it? I think so. These are the same tactics we all need to cultivate in business and organizations, to make the leap from good to great. Excellence is like the family silver, the more you use it and polish it up regularly, the better it looks.

Kerri Salls, MBA runs a virtual business school to train, consult and coach small business CEO's and entrepreneurs in 10 key strategies to make more profit in less time. Learn more at

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### **On St. Valentine's Day, Or Any Romantic Interlude, Woo Your Sweetheart With Chocolates,**

### **Roses ... AND A Leadership Talk**

**By Brent Filson**

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Word count: 415

Summary: Leadership authority Brent Filson asserts that wooing one's sweetheart can be done with a

## Why Bother With Distributed Leadership?

special kind of communication methodology which he has been teaching leaders worldwide for 21 years.

On St. Valentine's Day, Or Any Romantic Interlude, Woo Your Sweetheart With Chocolates, Roses ...  
AND A Leadership Talk  
by Brent Filson

On Valentine's Day, or any romantic interlude, lovers should woo their sweethearts with chocolates and roses — but also a Leadership Talk.

My experience in teaching the Leadership Talk to thousands of leaders worldwide for the past 21 years confirms that the Talk is a boon for leaders of all ranks and functions in their jobs and careers.

But I've also learned, to my surprise, that many leaders are employing the Leadership Talk effectively outside their jobs in their personal relationships.

Giving Leadership Talks helps leaders get a lot more results in organizations. Leaders see how much more effective as motivational tools Leadership Talks are than speeches and presentations.

Speeches and presentations communicate information. But Leadership Talks have you establish a deep, human, emotional connection with your audience.

That human connection is important in getting great results in your job; but it is also important in getting great results in your personal life — even your love life.

If you want to win or sustain the fondness of a loved one, a Leadership Talk may just make it happen.

Mixing leadership and love may seem like mixing apples and oranges. But great leadership and love share common elements. For one thing, when you are wooing your lover, you may be taking the lead. And for another, using a Leadership Talk, you're fostering a deep, heartfelt relationship — as great leadership often does.

Here are a few pointers on giving a Leadership Talk that you can put into effect this Valentine's Day or any other interlude for love. Before you speak, simply ask three questions: Do you know the needs of your lover? Can you bring deep belief to the relationship? And can you have your lover take action? If you say `no' to any one of those questions, you can't give a Leadership Talk.

The questions apply to lovers as well. To foster a deep, human emotional relationship, you must know what your sweetheart needs, the deep belief you bring to the relationship, and finally, the action you want your sweetheart to take.

However, the questions are not meant to be stumbling blocks to your Leadership Talk but stepping stones. If you answer `no', step back and assess your situation. Think through what you might say so that you can `yes' to each question. Then speak. Give a Leadership Talk. And, by the way, don't forget the chocolates and roses.

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The author of 23 books, Brent Filson's recent books are, THE LEADERSHIP TALK: THE GREATEST LEADERSHIP TOOL and 101 WAYS TO GIVE GREAT LEADERSHIP TALKS. For more than 20 years, he has been helping leaders of top companies worldwide get audacious results. Sign up for his free leadership e-zine and get a free white paper: "49 Ways To Turn Action Into Results," at [www.actionleadership.com](http://www.actionleadership.com)



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