

FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

A message from Victorian Institute of Teaching Chairperson Don Paproth

Dear Colleague,

Welcome back to the 2014 school year.

I trust that you spent the summer break doing little other than recharging your batteries because this will be a challenging year for you, as it will be for us here at the Institute. But it won't be more challenging than last year was, or than the next year will be. Such is the lot of the leader.

Towards the end of last year I sent you a letter outlining some of the changes to policy and practice we had made here at the Institute. The changes were necessary and they have been beneficial. The reason they have worked is the planning and leadership shown by the CEO and the Senior Staff – that word 'leadership' is the basis of this first letter to you of 2014.

If we choose to lead people in an organisation we should enjoy the roller-coaster ride that it can be. And the word 'choose' is chosen carefully – we have all had a choice. It is rare that anyone is forced into a leadership position, we choose to apply for it and we most certainly choose to remain in it.

For me the most difficult part of 'leadership' was always defining what it is – and what it is not. A simple potted definition that I have used came from the book *Leadership Jazz* which states that "... leadership is the ability to create followership..." – in other words, others having sufficient faith in you to want to be part of the vision and direction you set.

Several years ago my son sent me the article that forms the bulk of this letter. I have shared this article by the late Richard Pratt with several groups of Principals and it is usually very well received. It is written from the point of view of a leader of industry in the private sector but its message is universal.

I particularly like the simple style that Pratt uses; the references to his own experience, not relying on the research or understanding of others – in particular this paragraph:

"You manage by walking around. You never tire of going on to the shop floor where your people are. You ask them what you can do to help them do their job better ..."

This resonates with me. Many of us do this early in our leadership career but tend to do it less and less as we become more 'comfortable' in the role and other tasks overtake us. The inimitable Malcolm Millar said to me many years ago, "Every teacher in my school is entitled to a bit of my time every day". Such wisdom is simple but priceless.

I hope that the Pratt article strikes a chord with you. I would also like to acknowledge that our success is one that is dependent on the leadership you demonstrate in your school community. Your support of the importance of registration, promulgation of the standards for teachers, the Codes of Conduct and Ethics and the mentoring program has a direct link to the success of the Institute.

I wish you well for 2014.

Don Paproth
Chairperson



Richard Pratt AC, AO

LEADERSHIP

A fine **DISTINCTION**

Richard Pratt AC, AO

Richard Pratt was Global Chief Executive of Visy Industries and Chairman of the Victorian Arts Centre Trust from 1993 to 2000. Mr Pratt's interests ranged from supporting many charitable and sporting bodies throughout Australia and overseas to fundraising for the Arts and welfare.

Most people have trouble defining leadership, although they recognise it when they see it.

Leadership is not management, but they are equally important. If you do not know the difference between leadership and management, you are a manager.

Leadership involves getting things started and facilitating change. Management comprises activities that keep an organisation running, and it works through hierarchy.

To be a successful leader you must have a mission. You must have long-range vision and must share your vision with everybody in the company.

You must have a bias towards action. Often you would rather make the wrong decision than no decision at all.

You have to look for ways of making things happen, and not try to find reasons why things cannot happen.

You must know and practice what I call the **FOUR RULES** of BUSINESS.

1. Income must exceed expenditure
2. Collect your debts
3. Look after your best customers
4. Look after your best employees.

You must know your real strengths and weaknesses, not what you or others perceive are your strengths and weaknesses. You must know whether you are at your peak in the mornings or in the evenings. Then plan around your peak performance times. You must be aware that you do not get what you deserve; you get what you negotiate.

You must never say: "Get it at any price." Get it, *and* get the best price.

Timing is not the most important thing; it is the only thing. You know it is better to be approximately right at exactly the right time than to be exactly right at completely the wrong time.

You learn to operate by the 80/20 rule: you expect 80% of the result with 20% of the time. The 80/20 rule achieves five times as much as those who strive for perfection.

You put your family first and your business second.

You read biographies. You seek mentors. You ask yourself what your mentors would do in each situation, not just what they would say.

You never apologise for wanting only exceptional people to work for you. And you pay those people well.

You congratulate employees publicly but criticise them privately. You write thank-you notes and send them to your employee's homes.

You put up whiteboards about production figures and costs. After all, how would you like playing in a football game every day with no scores?

You never ask anyone to deliver what is beyond them. You are generous, understanding that the more you give the more you get.

You do not compete with the economy. The economy is the excuse people use for underperformance.

You protect your reputation. It is your most important asset.

You remember that there is more profit in getting high prices than in keeping costs low. But you are relentless about cost reduction.

You never have more than seven advisors.

You work long and you work smart. You work five to nine, not nine to five.

You manage by walking around. You never tire of going on to the shop floor where your people are. You ask them what you can do to help them do their job better.

You celebrate success and involve everybody in the celebrations.

You hire mavericks, who think outside the square and challenge conventional thinking. They can produce spectacular results.

You expect your people to be fired with enthusiasm. Otherwise you fire them, with enthusiasm.

You allow your people to make mistakes, but not the same mistake twice.

Persistence is the key. My favorite quote is from former United States President Calvin Coolidge. I have it framed by my desk. It says:

Nothing in the world can take the place of perseverance. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan "press on" has solved, and always will solve, the problems of the human race.