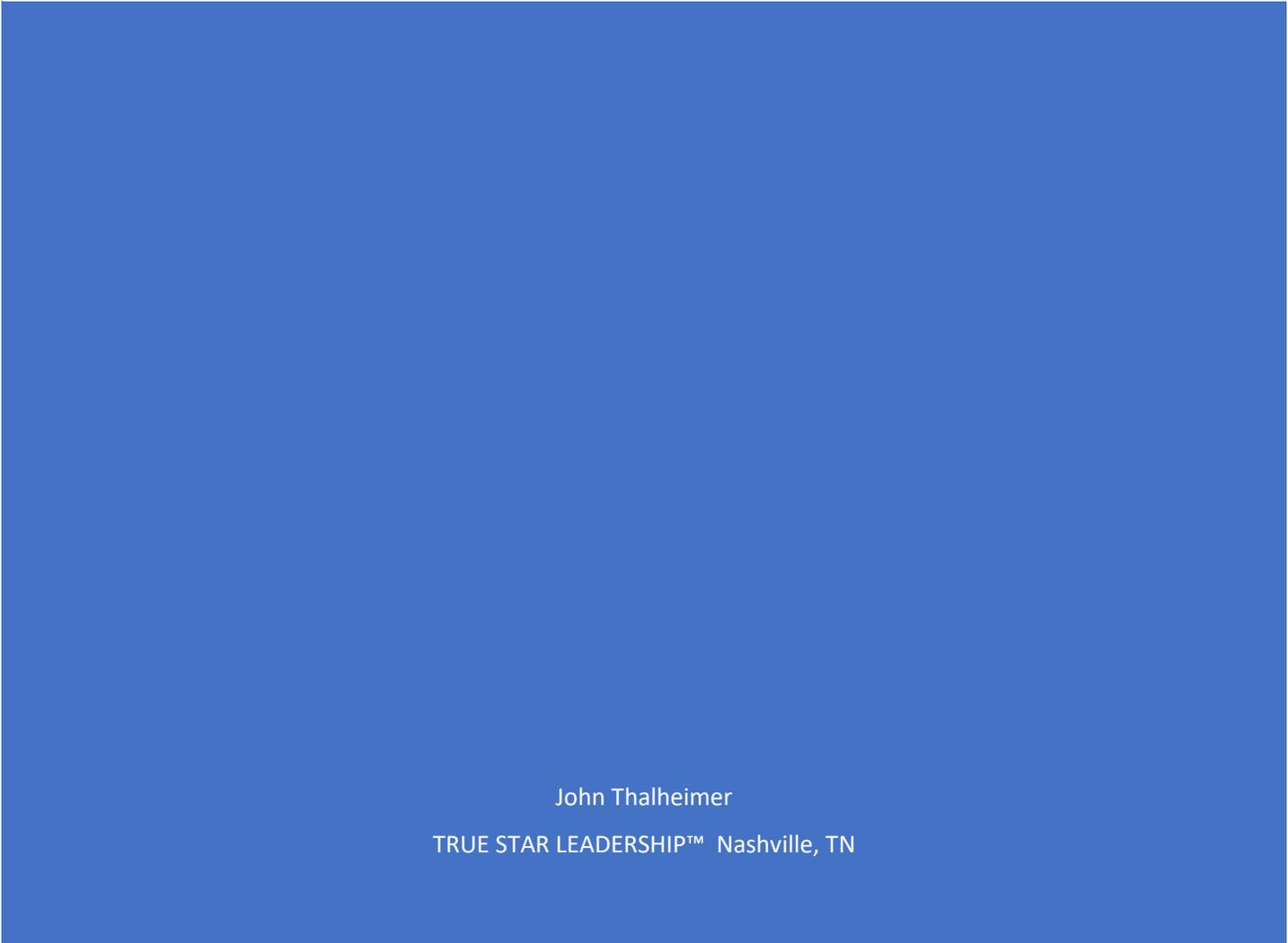




STATE OF LEADERSHIP IN 2017



John Thalheimer

TRUE STAR LEADERSHIP™ Nashville, TN

THE STATE OF LEADERSHIP:



A leader is anyone who influences the performance of another.

Recently, I was working with a client who asked me a simple question: "How does our leadership compare to similar organizations?" My quick answer: "Does it matter?" Over the next hour or so, we debated whether it really matters to him and his team; in the end, we concluded, it probably didn't—except to provide a comparison. Regardless of where he fell in the comparison, he knew it would take work to better his organization's leaders.

However, it got me thinking about the present state of leadership—which led me to this report. I have always been fascinated by the expertise of leadership; by the skills, knowledge, and experience needed to be a

successful leader. In part because I wanted to be a successful leader, but also because I wanted to help others become successful.

My goal is to review research and data on leadership from a variety of sources, and present it to subscribers of the True Star Leadership Newsletter. ([Subscribe here today](#)). This year, I used information from the Gallup Organization, the Brandon Hall Group, the Ken Blanchard Companies, and the Harvard Business School. In the future, I hope to conduct an annual survey of my subscribers to better understand the challenges they are facing.

Overall, leadership and management continue to struggle with the unsatisfactory execution of responsibilities due in part to too many managers being in the wrong roles (Gallup, 2016). The biggest challenge for organizational leadership is that most individuals do not see leadership as a separate expertise, and instead continue to promote people based on their technical knowledge rather than their skill in influencing other's performance toward a common goal.

In one case study, True Star Leadership found that one individual who was promoted because of his technical skills negatively impacted his department for the two years of his tenure. Unfortunately, instead of recognizing the problem, the organization continued to add additional responsibilities to this individual's plate. It was not until the company's employees sought intervention that the team began to understand the leader's deficit and brought in a leadership coach to improve the person's leadership skills.

According to Gallup, the Brandon Hall Group, and The Ken Blanchard Companies, the biggest challenge for managers is that over two-thirds of all employees are not engaged in the objectives and goals of the organization. The research is clear—those employees who are not involved are less productive, take more sick days, and in some cases act against the best interest of the organization. A recent study by Blanchard stated that

employee disengagement from weak leadership cost businesses 7% of their total sales.

Poor leadership cost businesses up to 7% of their total sales.

Unfortunately, Gallup also found that 51% of managers are not engaged in their work. The good news is that when managers are engaged, their employees are 59% more likely to be engaged as well. Employees like working with individuals who care about them, and who are willing to work to improve their job environment.

The second biggest challenge is the lack of leadership development opportunities for leaders at all levels of the organization. 36% of organizations surveyed had no leadership strategy or development. Among the organization that did, 71% stated that their leadership strategy did not line up with their business strategy.

In working with one leader who was struggling to lead her department, she revealed that her organization had little to no opportunities for her to increase her leadership capabilities. It was not until she sought support from outside sources that her leadership abilities improved. Unfortunately for the organization, she made the decision to leave the company to pursue a better job with available career training.

The Harvard study stated that the four top reasons that organizations have not improved their leadership development are **time constraints, no visible ROI, workplace in flux** and **lack of funding**. What other researchers suggest is that without investing in leadership, there is a cost to the organization of between \$5,000 and \$50,000 per employee. Some of the

cost is due to a higher turnover because individuals are leaving companies due to poor leadership, while the other high cost of a bad leader is a reduction in productivity at work.

*There is a real cost to poor leadership:
It can range between \$5,000 to \$50,000+ per employee.*

The research was clear that the number one trait that leaders needed to improve was the ability to develop employees. The Brandon Hall Group said that 64% of the surveyed organizations stated that developing leaders so that they can coach employees was the biggest opportunity their organization had. This challenge not only impacts employee engagement but also affects the performance of the organization.

64% of all leaders need to be trained in coaching employees

The second trait that all leaders needed to improve was their communication skills. The Ken Blanchard Companies found that 43% of all respondents felt that how leaders communicated impacted their leadership outcomes. The art of listening to employees and responding appropriately is an immense opportunity for today's leaders.

*43% of all respondents felt that how leaders communicate
impacted their leadership outcomes.*

The third trait that leaders need to have in order to be effective is a high level of social and emotional intelligence—in other words, empathy for their

employees. Study after study has shown that emotional intelligence is critical to leadership success. The ability to be aware of your emotions and the emotions of others, and to make the right behavioral choices, continues to be a struggle for leaders at all levels of the organization.

Leadership is at a crossroad.

My conclusion is that leadership is at a crossroad. As we progress into a knowledge-based workforce, and as leaders are asked to lead individuals who have greater and greater technical knowledge, the leadership gap will continue to grow. People who are to be considered for management positions will not only need education, but will also need experience and coaching to be successful.

For more information, read the e-paper called, “Improving Your Leadership Strategy.”

Leaders are not born with some innate ability to lead but are cultivated into leaders by education, experience, and coaching. At True Star Leadership, I work with individuals and organizations to improve their leadership capabilities, so they can continue to be important organizations into the future.

Ask yourself these simple questions:

- 1. “Can leaders at all levels of your organization develop employees, so they continue to be productive members of your organization?”**

2. **“Are your leaders providing clear and concise communication to their teams, to ensure there is no confusion about the goals and objectives of the organization?”**
3. **“Are your leaders aware of their emotions and how they impact their behavior at work?”**

If your answer is “no” to any of these three, let’s get together and talk about how True Star Leadership can help set you on the right path to providing a strong leadership strategy for your organization.

We provide the education and coaching your leaders deserve. Our first step is to evaluate through assessment, surveys, and interviews the level of organizational leadership within your company. Based on this information, we create a plan that will provide the proper training, experience assignments, and coaching to make sure your leaders are impactful.

At True Star Leadership, we realize that every business is different and that no single solution will work for all companies. However, we do know that when leaders are educated, offered experience, and properly coached, they will improve their leadership capabilities and impact your organization positively.

Contact us at info@truestarleadership.com to set up a complimentary conversation about how we can impact your organization.