

A Viking with a mother's heart - leadership lessons from Shackleton

(extract from "Conquest Management - a guide to the top".
Whitepaper available from www.davidparmenter.com

By David Parmenter

Where does one start to describe Shackleton's feat. He saved the lives of the whole Endurance party that lived for two years in the harshest environment in the world, with turn of the century equipment, no support form outside agencies, he managed to make a home on a floating ice shelf, sail to his men to an uninhabited island (Elephant Island), sail a small team across 800 miles the roughest water in the world in little more than a life boat, and then cross unclimbed mountains and glaciers in an epic 30 hour traverse. This article attempts to pull together much that has been written about Shackleton in a way that it can be digested and embedded in daily routines. The story is best told in a must read book called 'Shackleton's way' by Morrell and Capparelli.

The title of this article will be explained as you read on.

1 Crisis management

1.1 Letting go of the past

With the amount of carnage that many CEOs and senior management watch over it is quite clear they have no qualms in moving on.

When Shackleton (known as the Boss) witnessed the final sinking of the Endeavour and the subsequent near bankruptcy it would mean never let this event affect his optimism of getting his team off the floe and back to safety.

1.2 The old dog for the hard road, every time

The boss respected the old dogs. On all his perilous journeys where life and death were in the balance he always had the old dogs in the advance party. He made an interesting observation one day. The old dogs, eat less, complained less, slept less and were injured less!

In today's worlds where recruitment is often run by young HR officers and equally young managers the old dogs find it hard to move jobs when over 50. This is stupid.

Much of one's best work is done when you are over 50, well this is what I chose to believe, with of course a vested interest! You are wiser, have seen it all before, know where to conserve energy, know when to put the hard yards in. In Arthur Andersen & Co partnership was made early and partners expired early. The lack of old dogs I am sure led to the demise of the values and thus to the collapse of the once great firm.

In the Boss's dash to the Nimrod (earlier expedition), he took Frank Wild leaving the younger ones in the Hut, says to Frank, 'The old dog for the hard road, every time'.

1.3 Be flexible in tactics

The vagaries of business and an expedition are the same. You will never be able to predict accurately the future. We need to provision for worst case scenarios and accurately assess what are the best options to take in the given circumstances. The Boss was always thinking ahead. However some decisions would have to be reversed on a daily basis as conditions changed.

When they knew it was time to leave the breaking ice floe the Boss had to assess what was the safest option being in mind the various attributes of three potential destinations. The conditions of the men, the sea, the third flimsy life boat had to be weighed up. In a sequence, over the course of just three days the destination changed: Clarence Island or Elephant Island; King George Island; Hope Bay (on the Antarctic mainland); and finally, Elephant Island, where they landed safely.

1.4 Managing anger

The Boss was able to manage his anger and frustration. He had seen many times leaders letting go at the subordinates and had promised himself never to be like that.

He was very advanced for that time. He had the capability of choosing if he wished to get angry. When you possess this mechanism you soon realise that anger does not help as the emotional damage caused by the outburst cannot be healed quickly and in some cases the damage done can never be repaired.

If you have an anger management problem the behavioural change takes around 12 weeks of constant change. I know as I went through a behaviour change programme myself.

It took a failed marriage for me to realize that I had an anger management problem. The classic trait was that I, when frustrated about my own performance, would take it out on those close to me - my work colleagues and my partner. I went to an anger management course that provided a learning venue for those who expressed their anger violently and those, like me, who expressed it verbally. After eight weeks the penny dropped. I realized that the anger was in most cases transference. In addition I realized that I had a choice to get angry or not. Now I never lose my temper. Soon after the course a flooring company laid my entire house with the wrong patterned carpet! I worked my way around the problem without ever losing my temper, to the amazement of the flooring company CEO. I created a win-win and at the same time felt very proud of my new found skill.

1.5 Maintaining a sense of humour when all looks lost

The Boss's sense of humour was always to the fore. He was in fact the life and sole of the group. He was constantly looking for ways to maintain morale.

1.6 Prepared men for unpopular orders by giving warnings far in advance

The bad news was never unexpected. The Boss always canvassed the men when the likely options were unpleasant. In other words when he said we will need to risk the trip to elephant island the men knew that this was the only likely option.

2 Recruiting

2.1 Pick your second in command with care

The Boss's second in command was Frank Wild. An old dog as the Boss would say. He was totally dedicated to acting on behalf of the "Boss" in his absence. He was in many respects a Shackleton clone. Frank Wild followed the Boss on all his adventures. He started off as a seaman and became a great explorer.

The Boss and Wild were the perfect fit. Wild left the planning to the boss and focused on maintaining a happy and friendly nature no matter what prevailed.

2.2 Recruit carefully

The Boss chose his people carefully he was always looking for character, competence and multi skills. The Boss's interview questions penetrated the individual to see if they had a positive attitude and a light-hearted, even whimsical nature. He asked one successful applicant why he wore glasses, to which Macklin replied, "many a wise face would look foolish without spectacles." This answer would certainly have amused the Boss.

His recruitment strategy was as follows:

- "Loyalty comes easier to a cheerful person than one with a heavy countenance" the boss's words
- His inner core had to be loyal and be strong leaders. The Boss knew the importance, of not just leading by one's self, but ensuring leadership by others within the team.
- He set difficult tasks for the interviewees to see how keen they were to join.
- He used trails to test if some applicants were up to the difficult tasks of mucking in.

This reminds me of an article I wrote about airline service called "born to serve".

I am sitting in the cattle class of Cathay Pacific, on route to NZ. The staff are exceptional. Studying them I have come to the conclusion that service is not something you can simply teach at all. Your recruits first have to have the basics.

I called the Cathay Pacific bursar across to speaker to her. She asked if I had a problem. During the discussion I asked "can you train staff to be this good or do they have to be born that way". She said immediately that their staff were born with the desire to serve. This made immediate sense to me. For how do you expect a person who is not innately service orientated to remain so for 12 hours.

3 Optimism

3.1 Many minor celebrations

The Boss loved a party. Every Saturday night they would celebrate and toast their loved ones. Birthdays were always honoured. The Boss even went to the trouble of taking a Xmas pudding on the arduous walk to the then "furthest South" with Scott. On Xmas day out came a small pudding with a piece of holly. Through near starvation he had kept this to share with Scott and his other companion even though Scott was doing his best to kill them all. Scott later of course achieved this feat, and I believe, misguided immortality.

3.2 Young at heart

“The Boss was so young at heart that he appeared to be younger than any of us”. McIlroy was quoted as saying. Shackleton was always looking for ways to amuse his team, plays, sing-a-longs, cards, football matches under moonlight.

Yet this trait is seldom seen in the modern CEO.

3.3 Never give up

The Boss never gave up: he was a believer in “there's always another move, you just have to find it”. The Boss took 17 months to get his men to firm ground, Elephant Island, took 17 days to sail 800 miles to South Georgia in a 23 foot open boat in the worst seas in the world, took 36 hours to cross uncharted and inhospitable territory on South Georgia, took three attempts to rescue the men from Elephant Island and a further seven months to rescue his men stuck on the other side of Antarctic.

Scottish King, Robert the Bruce and the spider, the Boss and the Antarctic and the Apollo 13 crew are legends that the current executive can read about and be inspired by. These tales say “the shit I am in pales into insignificance to what they had to deal with!”

The Boss was always a purveyor of hope and optimism. When setbacks occurred, he had to remain outwardly optimistic, despite his own feelings, to prevent a growing despair among his men. He knew that such despair could, in the face of adversity, lead to dissension, mutiny, or simply giving up. The Boss's story has been successfully used by CEOs to help pull around staff who currently only see despair and downturn in the future.

The optimism that the Boss showed include:

- He noted that the moodiness of the expedition's photographer, was improved by flattery and by being included in consultations about the expedition's course.
- by keeping the men so busy that they would have little opportunity to brood over their predicament.
- when he sensed that the mood of the men was darkening, he would use a holiday observance or some other pretence to justify extra rations of food to boost morale.

As Hurley said “I always found him, rising to his best and inspiring confidence when things were at there blackest”

4 Psychology of communication

4.1 A student of psychology

The Boss was ahead of his time. He read widely in psychology and wanted on his success return to England to write his thoughts on the psychology of leadership. Generations have lost much by his failure to complete this task.

His understanding of psychology played a big part in saving the lives of this team. He appreciated the importance of understanding the team's physical needs and their psychological needs.

- On the hike over the mountains of South Georgia, his two team members wanted a small sleep. The Boss new that would be the end of them and his crew stuck on Elephant Island. He let them sleep for 5 minutes and then woke them up saying they had slept for 30 minutes.

- His selection of crews on the escape from the sinking ice flow took account of the dynamics of the friendships, the seamanship and finally the state of the boats. One team had to handle a constantly sinking boat.
- He would sow a seed if he thought a change might be inevitable.
- He never, during all the trials and tribulations, ever shared any doubts he might have had about their predicament.

4.2 Avoided public fights

The Boss had little time for Scott but only had a positive word about him when expressing an opinion in public. He knew it is a small world and he might need Scott's support one day.

4.3 Work the PR machine

The Boss loved the press and they loved him back. Many great CEOs are the same. One that comes to mind is Richard Branson. There is no better at working the PR machine.

On one occasion when Virgin were opening yet another route they organized a party for staff, their partners, and the staff person's best friend. Branson stood by the door all night kissing the women, and shaking the hands of all men. A professional photographer and support crew were on hand to ensure every party had a photo of them with Richard Branson. Where do you think the photograph went? Centre mantelpiece wedding photo moved to the right. Well not quite.

What do you think the best friend thought every time he looked at the photo, 'what a great friend I have who got me in on that great night'. Simply brilliant. We cannot all be like Branson, but we should be able to be recognized and be spoken to by any staff who see us. You know when you have got it right when all staff at any time feel confident enough to come up and wish you 'Good morning, Pat' when you arrive to work.

4.4 Emotional damage

The Boss was the master of conflict resolution: he avoided emotional outbursts. He would gently point out the reason why it should be done a different way. He would only tell staff off in private and when this was done it was normally in a careful manner.

The Boss did not like all his team. One stole personal possessions left in the ice. During the difficult 18 months he worked with everyone. Only on returning to England did he truly punish those who had crossed the line of acceptable behaviour. He did not permit them to be holders of the Polar medal.

The Boss philosophy was when staff fail you do not blame them. There were a number of instances where team members failed the Boss. There was one near mutiny and one captain sailed off early leaving the Boss and a small South Pole party to die (Nimrod expedition). The Boss, I am sure gave the captain a cool reception, but it is said he did not have a cross word with him. Shackleton's view was if they fail it is because I have not trained them well enough or should not have recruited them. In other words it is my fault.

4.5 Informal one-to-one communication

The Boss always personalised communication. If a major change was about to be made he would mention it in passing individually so when he publically announced the change it was of no surprise.

Yet the modern manager has meeting after meeting seeing that as more efficient than one-to-ones. Yes in one hour ten people are listening to the manager, but at the end ten people will walk out and carry on as if the last hour did not exist.

The key to effective management is hold less meetings and use more one-to-one sessions. They do not have to be long if you are doing plenty of walkabout.

4.6 Keep trouble close to you

The Boss engaged the dissidents, and avoided needless power struggles. At critical times he ensured they shared the experience with him rather than pollute the minds of the younger members.

On the famous boat trip he took two members who would be of no use but could not be left behind. These two were the negative soothsayers who would have poisoned the minds of those left on the god forsaken elephant island.

The Boss feared that the worrying of the expedition's artist would spread like an infection to the other men so the Boss ensured that the artist always resided in his own tent or Wild's tent.

5 See the future

5.1 The future has to be owned by the leader

The Boss could visualise things ahead and plan accordingly. Extensive planning needs to be performed. The extent of the Boss's detail in planning included:

- Different gear to avoid the problems he had experienced in past expeditions.
- Provisioning food and equipment that saved their lives many times.
- The standardisation of packing cases made of a new material (ply wood) that could be reconstituted into building material for a hut.
- The change in circumstances constantly meant a change in what could be taken on the next leg of the return journey.

5.2 Bold in planning but careful in execution

The Boss and other great leaders, such as Sir Edmund Hillary were meticulous with their planning. This of course was more relevant to them as there was no courier to deliver missed items.

Whilst the vision must be bold every conservable risk was minimised to ensure a safe outcome. He like Sir Edmund Hillary over provisioned. Sir Edmund so that he could if the "gods were smiling" surprise Fuchs by getting first to the South Pole in motorised transport.

The Boss's original plans were to be away for just over a year but had wisely provisioned for two years based on 4,000 calories a day.

5.3 Provision for the team

Only the best was good enough for the Endurance expedition. New equipment never tried before was designed, back up equipment was the best that money could buy. Last but not least the food on board was fit for a King. Unusual treats that were capable of being stored for years were taken. In the bleakest moments the Boss used a treat to say to his men 'there is more of this when we get home'.

It is interesting to note that the leader, if you can call them that of the team that saved the UK financial sector, did not worry about food. It is said that team members had to resort to raiding bins to eat pizza that treasury officials had discarded.

This is a common failing of many managers. They expect their teams to work at 100 mph without the correct equipment. Rarely have I seen a CEO who has put the equipment that the staff use high up on their agenda. Most CEOs have long since stopped worrying about 'the mechanical provisioning of routine wants' this is left to their secretary. If the secretary is no good at this 'provisioning' he/she are replaced. In fact some CEOs can barely run their diary because they have become so dependant.

When Scott's Terra Nova expedition called in on the Boss's hut (Nimrod expedition) they dined on boiled chicken, kidney, mushrooms, ginger, mutton, cutlets and candied orange peel. Can I go too?

6 Engage and develop

6.1 Removing barriers of rank to build cohesion

The Boss was anti establishment. He would have loved the changes of open plan offices, rotational teams, etc. Tasks were assigned based on an individual's skills. All members including the Boss did the dishes, cleaned the floor etc.

When it came to rationing the fur lined sleeping bags to the team, straws were drawn, the three main leaders drawing a blank in a rigged draw, benefiting the younger men.

The Boss always minimized status differences and insisted on courtesy and mutual respect between all members of the team.

6.2 Knew his staff inside out

The Boss spent time with each member of his team to find out what made them tick, how he could best lead them, and how he could serve them. It is no wonder he was called the "Boss". I am sure Margaret Thatcher was called many colourful things by all those who had to work for her. Her style of managing through fear was a totally different model. I have yet to come up with any stories that talk of Ministers and government officials who would gladly go over the trenches with her. Yes she was fearless, incredibly intelligent and operated on only 4 hours sleep but her leadership qualities were flawed in many respects.

6.3 Fitness and health of the team are to be cared for

Great leaders care about their staff. The Boss devised many activities on the ice flow to keep the team in good health. In fact by the law of averages at that time, I am sure some of the team would have had more serious health issues had they been marooned in the UK!

Health, fitness, and general well being of staff is a core value some pursue vigorously and other CEOs merely pay lip service to.

I know of one organisation where teams are vying for the competition with the greatest weight loss. Each person in the organisation has been given a walk counter. It is encouraging people to walk at lunch time, go up the stairs in stead of the lift, walk to work etc. The team say it has made a big improvement to staff satisfaction.

It is of no surprise as the Jungle book song says "the hip bone is connected to the thigh bone".

6.4 Walkabout

Every night, no matter how many degrees below freezing it was the Boss would visit each tent for a pep talk. He would wake in the early hours of the morning to keep the man on watch company (his need for a basic 4 hours sleep would no doubt have been a considerable advantage).

The Boss always found time to cheer up members were feeling depressed about their prospects. In modern management today it is more often than not the “old dogs” that do the walk about. The young guns believe an email will do!

7 Reinvent yourself

7.1 Constantly innovate

The Boss always learned from prior experiences. His experience of Captain Scott showed him the type of leader he did not want to be. Frank Wild had an instance where he had to disobey Scott’s orders otherwise five men would have died. Scott managed that feat later.

He designed special clothing, the equivalent of a breakthrough as cortex is today. He also designed a tent that quickly could be erected in a blizzard. These two innovations no doubt saved lives.

The ‘*James Caird*’ life boat that made the crossing to South Georgia was modified, and these modifications saved them all as a rouge wave 40 foot plus swamped the boat during the journey. The wave was so large the Boss first mistook it for a cloud!

7.2 Cross train and rotate teams and develop staff

The Boss broke down any and all barriers that would get in the way of a cohesive team. He devised rotas where all team members, including himself, were involved.

He changed all the given rules for expeditions to arrive at a team that were multi skilled. The doctor was skipping the Endeavour when it docked at Buenos Aires on the fateful Endurance voyage.

Sir Edmund Hillary also used this technique successfully in his Antarctic expedition.

7.3 Leadership is task specific

The Boss was a brilliant leader of an expedition but was spectacularly unsuccessful in business. His skills were at the fore on an adventure where there would be not bailout from others. Would the boss have been able to lead a massive enterprise like BP Oil successfully? His track record says no. The lessons from Shackleton have to be seen in perspective. He led in one of the most extreme survival stories of the human race.

We need to realise that a great business person may never be a great leader. In fact they may be mutually exclusive. In addition can the “Shackleton way” apply to leaders in major organisations, medium sized ones and small ones. I believe it can and should be the building blocks. If all the managers practiced and mastered some of the Bosss style they would begin to fly.

A leader needs to have experience in the enterprise they are running. I firmly subscribe to the theory that a CEO from outside the company and outside the sector has a slim chance to succeed. They will find it extremely difficult to have what John Gardner calls “the capacity to win and hold trust.”

7.4 Leadership can be learnt

Whilst truly great leaders are probably born not made many good qualities can be embedded in one's make-up.

The Boss trained himself from being an ordinary man to become exceptional leader. He learned from prior mistakes, he was a student of other explorers' experience and he too had as a hero the Norwegian Roald Amundsen. He admired and sought to emulate the skill, preparation, and attention to detail displayed by Amundsen in the 1911 race to be the first to the South Pole.

He had carefully prepared himself for this across the South Pole expedition from experiences of earlier explorations of which he was a member.

It is thus important for leaders to be prepared carefully for their role. Too often today a young bright eyed executive is thrust into a leadership role totally unprepared. The Board of Directors mistakenly confusing technical competence with leadership and management.

The Boss preparedness and the ability to learn from mistakes was the difference between death and survival.

8 Value results and People

8.1 Never took unnecessary risks with the lives of his men

The Boss valued life. No goal no target was worth the loss of life. Yet how many senior managers and CEOs have killed staff or been killed through presiding over a system whereby staff had to take unnecessary risks. Making staff drive home after working 12 hours, demanding that a chartered flight go when the pilot has warned that it is too risky, sending staff to war torn countries with inadequate support, training or escape route. The list goes on. I have not yet mentioned all the meaningless loss of life due to stress.

The Boss and Sir Edmund Hilary would have been scathing about the adventure guides who without a care in the world regularly take clients to their death on Everest. It is said that passing frozen dead climbers is now part of the scenery.

History proves that the Boss would never attempt a summit if the return journey was not guaranteed. The Boss could have been the first to the Pole but he knew that they would have died doing it.

As Sir Edmund Hilary once said about the George Mallory and Andrew Irvine attempt on Everest "I always thought conquering mountains meant coming back alive".

8.2 Leaving a legacy

The Boss left a profound legacy to management and by the changes he created in his devoted men. His leadership has been appreciated over the years. I am however disappointed that he did not better plan his legacy. It is a lesson for us all to learn. The Boss did not:

- Nurture his children or wife – on death they were left to fend for themselves.
- He did not write the leadership book that would have no doubt saved countless lives in the second world war.
- Stay in the UK to spread the word – he instead went to his unnecessary premature death in South Georgia - a worn out prematurely old man.

9 Embody the values

9.1 *Love thy neighbour as thyself*

The Boss was a religious man. He took the bible with him from his first trip on the sea as a cabin boy. He knew many of the scriptures and had a profound love of the common man. It is to a degree appropriate that he did not have to suffer the feat of seeing his men die a pointless death in the trenches as many of his peers did.

Whilst an atheist can be a great leader s/he must have a love for the 'common man'. Worshipping the dollar, will always limit the potential a manager has.

Maybe the problem is that many of us in the corporate world do not love ourselves enough, and that is why we quite happily create conflict in our working environment. Corporate life is littered with examples of unnecessary litigation, which has led to the demise in health of those individuals who are caught up in this self-inflicted process. If you look at most of the major religions that exist today, the statement 'love thy neighbour as thyself' is a key building block. Based on some of the sad events of the recent past which have undermined peoples' belief in the corporate world e.g. Enron, World Com etc. It might be appropriate for the CEO or the senior management team to start bringing some 'spiritual elements' into the business world which would help reinforce good and sound business ethics.

What I am talking about is:

- respecting your colleagues and your team member's time (in other words allowing them quality time to progress initiatives rather than interrupting them with another meaningless task).
- investing time to actively listen (even when you're on the verge of exploding with frustration).
- conducting your working relationships effectively with all colleagues (even those who you would not choose to invite to your weekend barbecue!).
- not setting demanding goals when they are unnecessary (e.g. avoiding asking for a report by 9am tomorrow when you will only get around to reading it 3 days hence)
- appropriate assistance to poor performers.
- better handling of stress, of yourself, your staff and your colleagues.
- taking control of your stimulant intake (don't underestimate the impact it has on your work colleagues).
- better treatment of your suppliers.

Many of us pray to our God during the weekend and yet, on Monday, we seldom practice 'love thy neighbour as thyself' with our workplace relationships (suppliers, direct reports, colleagues etc.). I recall two images, one of an elderly couple having left my church forcing an oncoming car to give way in the one-way street, outside the church. The other driver shouting the memorable words 'I suppose you have just been to church'. Another is of a dysfunctional professional firm where the language between the partners was not fit for 'The Simpsons', yet the partners would be 'devout' at the weekend.

9.2 Humility

Whilst the Boss loved the lime light, enjoyed the public adoration and the attention from the fairer sex, he was very humble when communicating to his team, whether it be in a recruitment conformation or in day to day leadership.

In other words those gifted leaders who are higher up the Hierarchy of needs realise that through humility greatness can be achieved.

The simple yet poetic gesture of Nelson Mandela of inviting his jailers to his inauguration will be remember long after he has left us. No doubt the outpouring of grief, world wide will reach proportions only seen for the special ones.

Humility does not mean that you do not use public relations, nor does it mean you do not lay claim to what is rightly your achievements. It simply means when dealing with individuals you treat them as equals.

I will never forget the day I visited the CEO of Pilkington Automotive Glass in New Zealand. On arrival the security man at the gate was expecting me. At reception instead of going up to the executive floor the CEO came down and greeted me. The first and only time this has happened. During the discussion I asked about the TQM practices that they were famous for such as the way any worker on the factory floor has the right and obligation to stop a production batch if they think there is something wrong.

I ended up asking the CEO why he greeted me at reception, to which he replied 'I take great care vetting meetings. Once I have agreed to a meeting I will personally greet my guests at reception and return them there after the meeting. It is a sign of respect'. Yes it is, one that I have never forgotten.

9.3 Set values and live by them

I have had an unsavoury dealing with a Malaysian bank. They sent four team members along to a public course in front of an in-house course I was to deliver. They happily took all the intellectual property over the two days and then cancelled the in-house course, leaving me stranded in KL writing this article.

The moral of this story is that there is a breakdown in values within that bank and no doubt the CEO has not either invested time establishing values or embedded them in their daily activities so the staff learn to follow.

In cultures where "money is the god" you will constantly see a lack of values and behaviour among executives and staff that are only fit for the wilds of the Serengeti.

The Boss set high values and when these were compromised he was unforgiving. The four staff that had jeopardised the safety of his men were later severely punished on return to the UK by the withholding of the Polar medal.

10 Serving leader or a self serving leader

The Boss looked after the comforts of the team. He was a mother hen. He genuinely cared for his team members as if they were his own flesh and blood. He saw a leader as one who served rather than one who was served. He dutifully took his turn performing the most menial of chores and expected his leadership team to do the same. He was "a Viking with a mother's heart".

Ken Blanchard's book "the Secret" neatly records that a leader serves others rather be served to. The boss would be the first to nurse an ailing member, he would be the first to make a cup of brew if he knew his staff were at the end of their tether.

In fact Ken Blanchard has gone one step further. In the great little book he has outlined leadership as a mnemonic SERVE.

See the future

Engage and develop others

Reinvent constantly

Value results and relationships

Embody the values

The book, describes the leadership model successfully used in a fast food chain and I know the boss would have approved. He was always generous with his praise.

I have added to this a mnemonic CROP.

Crisis management

Recruitment

Optimism

Psychology of communication

As JFK said once “It is not what America can do for you, but rather what you can do for America”. We want this kind of servitude to be seen as an asset not a weakness.

11 An address to ‘The Boss’

Oh how I would have dearly loved to have had a fireside chat to fully understand your methods. Your greatest achievement, I believe, it is not the saving of the 28 lives on the Endeavour expedition but the countless millions of staff who over the years will benefit from working with leaders who are “Vikings with a mother’s heart”. I salute you. I am awe struck by the magnitude of your legacy. You are an inspiration to me, a hero. Rest in peace.

12 Score yourself against the Boss

This is my checklist for you. Score yourself against Sshackleton who would have been able to tick every box in the affirmative.

Checklist	Is it covered?
1 Crisis management	
Can you let go of the past and move on?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you have enough ‘old dogs for the hard road’ in the senior management team’?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you always have alternative plans in the times of crisis?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you seldom have outbursts of anger and even so have had the ability to chose to do so rather than the outburst being a reaction?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are you known for your sense of humour in difficult times?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you prepare your team for unpleasant news?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2 Recruiting	

Is your leadership style based around what you can do for the team?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you got a core team of experienced workers around you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is your second-in-command (2IC) a close confidant and capable of filling your shoes when you are absent?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is your 2IC reliable, loyal and shares the same views on leadership?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Could it be said that you and your 2IC both command respect, confidence and affection?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you invest considerable time in interviews?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you try to put the applicants off so that only the committed will join?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you seek people who really want the job?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have your team members been recruited for experiences and expertise you lack?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do all the staff under you know what is expected of them?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3 Optimism	
Are you always organising small celebrations so that fun is alive at the work place?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Would you be described by your staff as 'young at heart'?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you believe 'there's always another move, you just have to find it'?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are you always a purveyor of hope and optimism?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
4 Psychology of communication	
Have you read widely in psychology?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you understand your thinking preference? (see Hermann thinking preference www.hbdi.com)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you know where you stand on the enneagram? (See www.enneagraminstitute.com)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Can you manage staff who operate very differently to you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you avoid discussing any negative thoughts you have about key stakeholders in public?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you have a good working relationship with the press?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do all your staff know who you are, and feel comfortable to talk to you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you only tell staff off in private and in a careful manner?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If there is to be a major change would you mention it in passing individually so when publically announced the change was of no surprise?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you have more one-to-one sessions than meetings?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you engage the dissidents and avoid needless power struggles?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

5	See the future	
	Are you constantly looking ahead and planning accordingly?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Do you have a blend of exhaustive foresight and an interest in the mechanics of provisioning of routine wants?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Are you bold in vision and careful in planning?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Do you ensure that your staff have the most appropriate equipment?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Is capital expenditure that will improve working conditions 'fast tracked'?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
6	Engage and develop	
	Is your leadership style based around what you can do for the team?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Do all your managers chip in with the chores?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Have you removed the barriers of rank to build cohesion?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Have you spent time with each member of your team to find out what makes them tick, how you could best lead them, and how you could best serve them?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	When your direct reports move on do they still maintain contact with you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Do you see the Health, fitness, and general well being of staff is a core value which you pursue vigorously?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Have you initiated health initiatives which you personally have taken and active role in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Are you known for your regular walkabouts?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
7	Reinvent yourself	
	Do you actively participate in innovation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Do you constantly seek 'new learnings' to apply to your understanding?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Is innovation a daily activity in your operation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Are you learning from great leaders of the past?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Have you a mentor which you engage on a regular basis?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Have you undertaken formal leadership training?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
8	Value results and people	
	Do you value your people over your targets?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Have you visited sick staff at their home or at hospital?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Have you gone out of your way to look after the welfare of your staff?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
9	Embody the values	
	Do you have a spiritual side to you that helps guide your direction?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Do you seek a win-win solution with third parties rather than resort to litigation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are you currently nurturing any young managers-in a quasi mentoring role?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are you humble when communicating to your team?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you make your visitors to your organisation feel special?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is your daily work consistent with the values you want your organisation to be known for?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
10 Serving leader or a self serving leader	
Is your leadership style based around what you can do for the team?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

13 Three month planner

Set out in Appendix 1 is a planner which I hope will get you started.

14 Writer's biography



David Parmenter is an international presenter who is known for his thought provoking and lively sessions, which have led to substantial change in many organisations. David is a leading expert in the development of winning KPIs.

David's work on KPIs is recognized internationally as a breakthrough in understanding how to make performance measures work. His book, 'Key Performance Indicators: Developing, Implementing, and Using Winning KPIs' is one of the best selling performance management books on Amazon.com. John

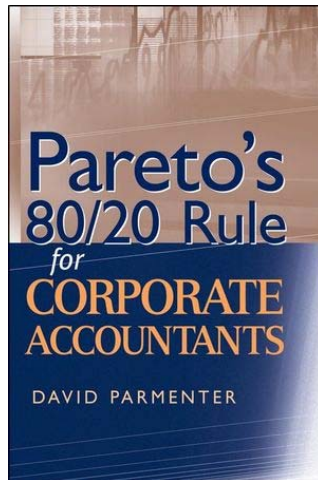
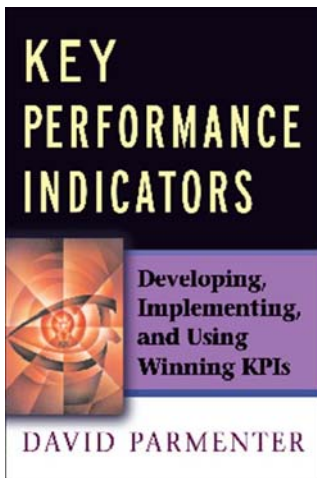
Wiley & Sons Inc have also published his second book "Pareto's 80/20 rule for Corporate accountants".

David has delivered workshops to thousands of attendees in many cities around the world including Sydney, Melbourne, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Tehran, Johannesburg, Dublin, London, Manchester, Edinburgh and Prague.

David has worked for Ernst & Young, BP Oil Ltd, Arthur Andersen, and Price Waterhouse, and he is a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

He has written over 30 articles for the accounting and management Journals including "quarterly rolling planning - removing the barriers to success", "Throw away the annual budget", "Beware corporate mergers", "Implementing a Balanced Scorecard in 16 weeks not 16 months", "Convert your monthly reporting to a management tool", "Smash through the performance barrier", "Is your board reporting process out of control?" "Implementing winning Key Performance Indicators", "Quick month end reporting" etc.

He can be contacted at parmenter@waymark.co.nz or +64 4 499 0007. He has recently completed a series of white papers which can be purchased from his website www.davidparmenter.com



Locking in good leadership habits

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Have you done a few walkabouts this week? (target daily when in the company of staff)													
Have you found out about a staff members life, needs, ambitions this week? (target one staff member a week)													
Have you demonstrated, by an action/deed your concern over the welfare of your staff this week?													
Have you provided a service to a staff member this week?													
Have you thanked someone this week?													
Have you shown your humourous side to staff this week?													
Have you read a management article, a chapter in a development book this week?													
Have you met your mentor this week?													
Have you approved an innovation to be implemented this week? (target is 10 a year per every staff member)													
Have you undertaken actions this week that clearly demonstrate the values the organisation has?													
Have you performed tasks this week to improve public perception? (speaking engagement, press release, acted on a professional body or charity etc) (target at least 2 actions a month)													
Have you had a one-to-one with all of your direct reports this week?													
Have your supported your 2IC this week?													

Have you been conveying optimism this week?													
Have you personally orchestrated a celebration this week?													
Have you been involved in some future gazing this week to ensure you have thought of options if circumstances change?													
Have you ensured that difficult and complex assignments have a few “old dogs” in the team?													
Have you promoted any health initiative? (target at least one per month)													
Have you invested time developing your staff (target one person a week’s training will be influenced positively by what you have actioned)													
Have you taken measures to reduce risk of injury in your organisation by observing and thinking about safer alternatives?													
Have you practiced this week any psychology in the way you act with your staff?													
Have you been active in recruitment process of staff? (weekly involvement)													
Have you coached any young leader this week? (target 2 a month)													
Have you introduced the “Shackleton way” to your direct reports? (quarterly reminder)													
Have you spent time this week thinking about the future?													

ⁱ Shackleton’s Way – leadership lessons from the great Antarctic Explorer by Margot Morrell and Stephanie Capparell ISBN1-85788-318-7