

## Leadership Legacies: Distinguishing Your Goals From the Expectations of Others

by Suzanne Lowe

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Most of us in professional services marketing clearly understand that we must meet expectations that are really not our own—shareholder expectations, board expectations, market expectations. But what about your own "Leadership Legacy"? Have you thought about your personal hopes, goals, desires, and expectations for creating an impact on your firm?

The authors of the new book *Your Leadership Legacy: Why Looking toward the Future will Make You a Better Leader Today*, Rob Galford and Regina Maruca, explain in an [interview](#) in Management Consulting News what they mean by the term:

*Legacy thinking is about the day-to-day. What decisions am I making today? How am I spending my time? How am I acting? How am I influencing others' thinking/behaviors/outlook today? Am I satisfied, even happy, with my actions and the effect I might be having on others today? (Maruca)*

*Your legacies are defined by others. But right now, without huge effort, you can gain enough perspective about yourself to see how those legacies are taking shape, and you can try to influence them for the better. (Galford)*

The people who are in marketing leadership positions at professional firms today will have an enormous impact on the shape of the profession in the next decade. How conscious and intentional about their leadership are senior-level professional marketers today? Do they have a sense that they are shaping the future of the profession?

There was one way to find out. I sent queries to some senior marketers at prominent global service firms asking them to share a sentence or two about the hopes and aspirations they have for their impact on others, and the actions they will take to bring their legacies to fruition.

### Leadership: Intentional or Accidental?

As I awaited the responses, I had high expectations. As a business owner of a 10-year-old firm, I have had to deliberately contemplate, and occasionally re-clarify, my own personal aspirations for my career and business trajectory. I wanted to hear how others considered this concept. Imagine my surprise when several responses came back like those shown below:

"I've been giving thought to your question regarding one's 'legacy of leadership.' I don't yet have a well developed response."

"Sorry—I just don't feel that I have a leadership legacy to share! Never given it any thought."

How can this be possible, I thought. Doesn't one think about one's professional *raison d'être* at least at some point during one's career? What do these people think as they get up each morning and expend, in many cases, extraordinary effort to achieve the goals their firm has asked them to accomplish? Isn't there a personal interest in there somewhere, one that perhaps supports the efforts these folks make every day?

And what about their own firms? Why haven't their firms done something to foster in their senior marketers some notion of a leadership legacy, or helped them do more to connect their personal aspirations to the firm's achievement of strategic objectives? Since when is all execution, with no relationship to an intentional direction, a good business idea?

### Get a Grip on Your Leadership Legacy

Many people thanked me for asking them to talk about their leadership legacy, even as they admitted they hadn't really considered it before.

Rich Marcello, a senior executive at HP, when asked by authors Galford and Maruca, wrote in his blog: "It's not really an easy question if you've never spent any time on it before. At the same time though, it's probably one of the most important questions any of us can answer during our lifetimes."

I submit that now is as good a time as any for senior marketers to begin to get a grasp of the subject. I think one of the key underpinnings of defining one's leadership legacy is the ability to recognize the interplay between personal aspirations and the achievement of company objectives. If we can recognize the need to integrate these two "sides," perhaps we will begin to see where true professional passion really begins.

To get an idea of what I mean, take a look at Rich Marcello's fascinating thought process about his own [leadership legacy](#).

### Creating a Trail of Marketing Footprints

I send my sincere thanks to the following individuals who shared with me their thoughts about their leadership legacies.

*Three dimensions that I hope for...that my staff is better prepared than ever to meet tomorrow's challenges; to leave the firm with greater capabilities than when I arrived; and finally, that what we have already built stands the test of time in contributing to the firm's ongoing success.*

Charlie Agin  
Vice-President, Global Marketing Development

[Gen Re](#)

*I think an individual goes through cycles, or stages, in their marketing career. A period of time is spent finding one's voice, defining a philosophy of marketing and learning by trial and error; the next time period is focused on demonstrable success...winning...getting to "yes" and all of its rewards; then one thinks about the footprints they are leaving along this trail, and ask the question, "what is my legacy?"*

*I want people to consider marketing a human driven interaction...merely supported by process, databases, systems, images, and the like. The most valuable skill or attribute one can develop is empathy. Empathy for the human being with whom you're interacting...whether it's your prospective client or colleague. Empathy for their goals and aspirations, and their fears. I want to nurture empathy in the marketing process.*

Bill Viehman, AIA, LEED AP  
Principal

[Perkins + Will](#)

*My legacy is in seeing the best in people, making it visible to the individual and others, and instilling in them a true sense of pride and ownership about the services they are providing.*

*I also feel that I have the chance to get exposed to a myriad of new ideas in the marketplace, and to see the changes in our world. I then have the vantage point to connect some of those new ideas to the changing marketplace and to usher in innovations in our company. This championing of new ideas brings renewal, energy and positive expectations to our people who can then share them with our clients to positively impact their businesses and workplaces.*

*I have made it my responsibility to be that coach, that promoter of both people and ideas that will give the design profession the respect it truly deserves.*

Ann Althoff  
SVP and Director of Marketing

[HOK](#)

*Eventually my hope would be to have induced and lived two leadership principles about which I am passionate:*

*1) In essence, leadership is about creating an inspiring air of entrepreneurship. This is done two ways. First, you lead people by providing clear, purposeful, strategic direction that gets employees excited and engaged in the business. This includes shaping a company culture that challenges the team to aggressively look for, embark on and implement new effective ways of doing business which is very tolerant for failure and rewards success generously. And while leaders pave the way to sell ideas and develop and execute a plan, they must also be adept at reassessing and realigning through the process while keeping the team focused and energized.*

2) Secondly, leadership is about empowering and inspiring a team of people. Employees are the driver and true source of success for a company. Individuals can lead a team, but the team drives a plan to fruition. The most effective leaders spend time sharing knowledge and ideas with associates. They understand that listening to ideas is crucial. And they know how satisfying it is to help get things started and then watch how brilliant teams go beyond expectations.

Uwe Krueger, Ph.D.  
SVP and CMO  
[Turner Construction Company](#)

*I'm passionate about helping others see what they're good at and then building upon those strengths. That means helping people identify their own passions and then working with them so that they can excel. That fits perfectly with my role as a marketing director of a PSF because I work with each of our professionals (and the whole firm) in a way to build up each of them. I love finding what they are good at and helping them realize their talents and use them.*

*It took me a while to come to that realization. I'm not here just to get the next marketing campaign off the ground. I'm here to help our people help themselves, and in turn, our clients.*

Barbara Walters Price  
SVP of Marketing  
[Mercer Capital Management](#)

*My aspiration for my legacy is pretty simple. I want to be remembered in business as a person who did everything possible to help others achieve goals that they perceived as unattainable and have fun doing it.*

Tom Markert  
Global CMO  
[ACNielsen](#)

*In addition to ensuring that Skadden's core values are reflected in my performance, I am keenly interested in helping to develop the next generation of leaders, including both the attorneys I support and the marketing/business development group I oversee. It is critical to continue to elevate the standards for creativity, performance and effectiveness that will be expected of professional services firm marketers in the future.*

Sally J. Feldman  
Director, Marketing & Business Development  
[Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP](#)

*Instilling in others a passion for excellence and winning with client-focused business development relationships. To quote Gen. MacArthur, "There is no substitute for victory."*

George Friedel  
SVP and Director of Strategic Sales  
[Parsons Brinckerhoff](#)

## **Conclusion**

Like other senior professional service marketers, you've probably had occasion to wonder who's really in charge of your career "journey." Despite your best intentions and efforts, so much of your business circumstances are shaped by the actions of others or circumstances beyond your control. Sometimes it feels great; sometimes it's mortifyingly bad.

But this notion of being able to imagine and steer one's own Leadership Legacy strikes a perfect balance between self-determination and the interactions we have between colleagues and organizations. Rob Galford and Regina Maruca have reminded us about the importance of carefully considering and creating outer-directed professional goals, desires, and hopes. Their work is a legacy, indeed!

The field of professional services marketing, and all those who are engaged in its health and growth, will be much enhanced if more of us start thinking like leaders of the future and if we intentionally develop a clearer view of what our legacies will be after we have made our marks.



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