

OC LEADER BOARD

Opinion, Analysis, Insight

Leading Transparently Through Open Communication



By Scott Maccabe
President & Chief Executive Officer,
Toshiba America Business Solutions &
Toshiba Global Commerce Solutions

In my nearly 40 years in leadership positions, I have come across many different leadership philosophies. I have always made a point of fostering a work environment that is both engaging and challenging—one in which ALL employees can prosper. A key component in that effort is a belief that effective leadership must embrace transparent leadership. As the leader of two Toshiba-affiliated companies—Toshiba America Business Solutions (TABS) here in Irvine and Toshiba Global Commerce Solutions (TGCS), a global company based in Durham, N.C.—coast-to-coast travel has put this philosophy to the test.

This style of leadership is very personal to me, as I believe it is fundamental to creating a collaborative and rewarding experience for EVERY employee. My executive teams have taken my philosophy to heart in managing our 6,000 global employees. It is important to peer at it through my CEO lens to encourage employees to ‘pull in the same direction.’ It is critical to ‘walk the talk’ and lead through consistent, open and candid communication with every person in both companies.

Our team members deserve to know the state of our company just as much as I and my executive leadership team do. This means they must have a complete understanding of the business—from the goals and strategies in place to meet our objectives to the challenges standing before us. Of course there is always a need for balance. There are always elements of the business that, for several reasons, can’t or shouldn’t be universally shared. As a basic premise, it’s also critical for our staff to have confidence that the people entrusted in leadership roles have the skills and ability to perform their duties. Using a transparent communication practice can reinforce that confidence.

Building a transparent environment can be challenging and needs to occur bidirectionally, from the top down and be reinforced from the bottom up. On the surface, transparent equates with self-evident and clarity, but it goes much deeper than that. Establishing a transparent culture takes time. Consistency is key. It reinforces open, direct and mutually respectful communication, which in turn generates trust, increases collaboration, and develops stronger teams with higher productivity.

Because the essence of transparent leadership is to be predictable, receptive and open, I ensure our workforce is informed on the state of the industry and our business and employee performance. Every six months we hold town hall meetings at both TABS and TGCS. We provide updates on the status of the business. We close our meetings by opening up the floor to staff and encourage them to make comments or ask ques-

tions pertaining to our business goals and performance—no subject is off-limits. Though our meetings are formal in structure, we strive to add a level of interactive informality. Our goal is to establish communication “free zones,” reinforcing this bidirectional communication practice.

Face-to-face communication is another key element of leading transparently. In today’s digital world, we all know that electronic channels are faster and easier for one-to-many communications—and the millennial segment of our population unequivocally prefers them. But you often lose the ability to completely capture the purpose, intent or sentiment in the communication. I have found meeting face-to-face is essential for real open, honest and candid dialogue.

“... meeting face-to-face is essential for real open, honest and candid dialogue.”

Transparent leadership also means personally opening up, which requires letting down the protective walls and offering insight into our personality, interests and core beliefs as leaders. The benefit in doing so is that it helps to humanize us. Even injecting an occasional and appropriate level of humor can be beneficial. Laughter is a very basic form of bonding and fosters connectivity. It’s

also essential not to always take ourselves too seriously!

Another one of my core tenets is ensuring that our staff is taken care of to the greatest extent our business allows.

The human element is the most important asset of any business. People are integral to every aspect of the business process. Mentoring and investing in staff to provide them with opportunities to increase personal satisfaction and meet their career goals reinforces a foundation of trust and fosters greater transparency. I absolutely believe in an open-door policy and expect my management teams to, as well.

Before embracing this style of leadership, today’s leaders must keep in mind that there is an element of risk.

Though rare, legal and cultural issues may prevent some matters from being addressed directly or in an open forum. As such, these factors should always be considered.

I firmly believe the benefits of leading transparently far outweigh any risks. You’re striving to establish a culture in which people feel safe and enjoy working together for a common goal. Throughout my career, I’ve found transparent leadership creates far more engaged, collaborative and productive employees, which leads to positive business results.

Editor’s Note: Toshiba America Business Solutions was founded in 1999 and is headquartered in Irvine; 2,564 total employees, 284 here. Scott Maccabe become president and CEO in July 2013.

ORANGE COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL

18500 Von Karman Ave., Suite 150, Irvine, CA 92612
(949) 833-8373 • FAX (949) 833-8751 www.ocbj.com

PUBLISHER
RICHARD REISMAN reisman@ocbj.com | ext. 219

VICE PRESIDENT, ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER
LAURA GARRETT garrett@ocbj.com | ext. 210

EDITOR
PETE WEITZNER weitzner@ocbj.com | ext. 216

MANAGING EDITOR
HANNAH MITCHELL mitchell@ocbj.com | ext. 254

EDITOR AT LARGE
RICK REIFF reiff@ocbj.com | ext. 208

COPY EDITOR
ALYSSA MATSUHARA matsuhara@ocbj.com | ext. 231

REPORTERS
PETER J. BRENNAN Financial Editor, accounting, banking, finance, engineering brendan@ocbj.com | ext. 229

CHRIS CASACCHIA Technology Editor, sports, aerospace & defense casacchia@ocbj.com | ext. 225

MEDIHA DIMARTINO Photo editor, autos, marketing, apparel & retail, manufacturing, government, trade & logistics dimartino@ocbj.com | ext. 224

SHERRY HSIEH healthcare hsieh@ocbj.com | ext. 242

PAUL HUGHES Web & Data Editor, hotels & tourism hughes@ocbj.com | ext. 236

MARK MUELLER News Editor, real estate mueller@ocbj.com | ext. 226

DEIRDRE NEWMAN startups, education, innovation, law, media, nonprofits newman@ocbj.com | ext. 271

RESEARCH DIRECTOR
DANA TRUONG truong@ocbj.com | ext. 247

EXECUTIVE DINING COLUMNIST
FIFI CHAO chaothyme@aol.com

LUXURY HOMES, PHILANTHROPY COLUMNIST
KIM HAMAN luxury@ocbj.com, philanthropy@ocbj.com

PHOTOGRAPHER
LAUREL HUNGERFORD

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS
MEGAN COLE features@ocbj.com | ext. 205
MADELINE VEALE deals@ocbj.com | ext. 208

ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER
STEVE GALL gall@ocbj.com | ext. 221

DIRECTOR OF AD OPERATIONS
SUMER BOWLES sbowles@ocbj.com | ext. 223

SUPPLEMENTS EDITOR
JULIE VO vo@ocbj.com | ext. 270

EVENTS DIRECTOR
TIFFANY BONANDO bonando@ocbj.com | ext. 227

SENIOR EVENTS MANAGER
JAYNE KENNEDY kennedy@ocbj.com | ext. 209

MARKETING COORDINATOR
TANYA HALATA halata@ocbj.com | ext. 212

NATIONAL SALES MANAGERS
BRENDA BALSIGER balsiger@ocbj.com | ext. 220
AMY SFREDDO sfreddo@ocbj.com | ext. 246

SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS DIRECTORS
SHELDON ASCHER ascher@ocbj.com | ext. 217
SUSAN CAUMMIANT scaumiant@ocbj.com | ext. 230

SENIOR ACCOUNT MANAGERS
TERI AIKIN aikin@ocbj.com | ext. 211
CORINNE DEKKER dekker@ocbj.com | ext. 228
BOBBY DORMAN dorman@ocbj.com | ext. 201
CAROL FOX fox@ocbj.com | ext. 213
KIM LOPEZ lopez@ocbj.com | ext. 263

CIRCULATION COORDINATOR/AR SPECIALIST
KELLY BOWLES bowles@ocbj.com | ext. 238

CIRCULATION SPECIALIST
ABBY MADAIN madain@ocbj.com | ext. 243

CIRCULATION MARKETING MANAGER
MIKEL PETROSSIAN petrossian@ocbj.com | ext. 215

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR
RICH LOYD loyd@ocbj.com | ext. 245

GRAPHIC ARTISTS
BRETTE MILLER miller@ocbj.com | ext. 240
MARTIN NILCHIAN nilchian@ocbj.com | ext. 253

DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION
JANET COX cox@ocbj.com | ext. 203

DIRECTOR OF ACCOUNTING & FINANCIAL REPORTING
LUIS MARTINEZ martinez@ocbj.com | ext. 204

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE PUBLISHER
CYNTHIA NEWCOMB newcomb@ocbj.com | ext. 218

RECEPTIONIST
SYLVIA PINKHAM moody@ocbj.com | ext. 200



Promote Your Employees & Company

PEOPLE on the Move

Announce new hires, promotions & philanthropic activities by going to
www.ocbj.com/people-on-the-move-form

For more information, contact Sumer Bowles at 949.833.8373 x223 or sbowles@ocbj.com.