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## Employees must learn leadership skills

*Ed Brenegar*

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Real Life Leadership

Question: Our business, like so many others, is suffering. The thought keeps coming to mind, however, that now is a time of opportunity. I don't know why I feel this way, but I do. Can you explain this, and tell what I should do?

Answer: The current decline is really not the death of our economy. Instead, it is as a major transition in our business environment. No one knows what the future holds, but already there are some indicators.

We know that people will think more carefully about every business decision they make. We know that every business will be leaner. We know that there will be fewer competitors and greater demand for some products and services.

And there are two things that we know for certain: First, business will increasingly be conducted online. It is efficient and people are increasingly comfortable doing business there.

Second, businesses have to expand their leadership capacity throughout the organization. Employees — every single one — will have to develop leadership skills to function in the new business environment. I call this development “leading from the middle,” and it is already true of many businesses.

This is the future we face on the other side of the recession. The key question for now is how to get from where we are today to where we need to be.

There are two things we can do. First, we need to expand our knowledge and skills about these trends in business. Second, we need to find people of like interests and motivation, and begin talking with them about how these ideas are practically relevant to our day-to-day business.

On January 20, we have an opportunity to learn how to make this important transition in our business. “Lessons In Leadership,” a highly successful event first held a year ago, returns this year sponsored by the Andrew Institute for Leadership Development of Eblen-Kimmel Charities and WNCLeaders.

The event includes an afternoon of workshops on various facets of leading a business in challenging times, followed by an evening of motivational presentations by Bob Proctor of “The Secret” fame and Betty Young, president of A-B Tech.

The afternoon keynote presentation is by business futurist Joyce Goia-Herman, followed by workshops led by Bill Kelley of the Grove Park Inn and local consultants and business strategists Meredith Elliot Powell, George Fleming and myself.

This is an ideal time for conversation and networking. All the presenters are donating their services for this non-profit charity event. Proceeds go to the Eblen-Kimmel Charities. You can register at [www.wncleaders.com](http://www.wncleaders.com).

Making a successful transition to the future means taking advantage of opportunities like this. It is going to a great and transformational event for all who attend.

This is the opinion of Ed Brenegar, president of the Community of Leadership, a leadership development and transition planning consultancy. He writes a blog at <http://edbrenegar.typepad.com>. Send questions to him at [ed@edbrenegar.com](mailto:ed@edbrenegar.com).

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