

## The *Unpopular* Leader Here's a thought ...

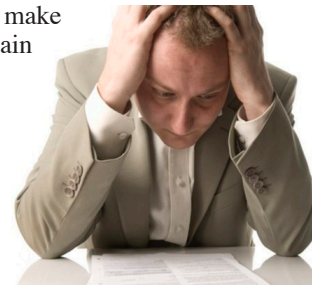
I can't give you a sure fire formula for success, but I can give you one for failure. Try to please everyone all the time.

It's a challenging market out there. I speak with people who are wrestling with how to make tough decisions every day. (Their unspoken intent is often 'how do I do that and maintain popularity?')

If you are being honourable, it's impossible to please all of the people all of the time. That's it. Full stop.

Ironically, the vast majority of people want to hear 'bad' news ASAP - so that they can make plans, deal with it and get on with their lives. They won't thank you for procrastinating or bull\*\*\*\*ing them. (Do you like to be kept in the dark?)

Being unpopular does not mean being nasty, disrespectful or that you are a bad person! On the contrary. Credible 'unpopular decisions' that land as bad news for the few, are often a means to an end in securing a future for the many.



The less I shirk away from unpopularity (and I do) while leading people, ironically, the more popular I have become. It's a work in progress for me. I like to be liked. Just recently, in a senior leaders session, we got talking about 'being authentic'. Being authentic inevitably means being unpopular, taking risks and 'telling the truth'. In a moment of authenticity, I told the truth about how difficult and unpleasant I found the experience of the first two years of parenthood. Some people in the group thought that it was 'not right' to have those thoughts, let alone talk about them. However, half a dozen other gents in the room were relieved to find out that they were not alone in wrestling with that reality. Authenticity = unpopular with some, inspirational for others... more on authenticity in the next edition.

**Truth is, people want their leaders to make the unpopular decisions and to make them quick.**

### What's needed right now?

In tricky times, the first principle is that you must not fool yourself... and you are the easiest person to fool! Try out the strategy below to check if you are playing the popularity contest and shirking a tough decision that needs to be made.



#### Strategy:-

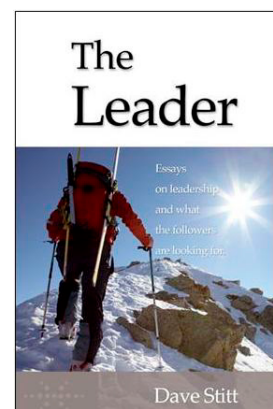
1. Ask four honest people their view on which critical tasks will require you to create an inevitable bit of discomfort - to make business progress.
2. If you concur, being rigorously honest with yourself, you have some unpopular work to be done.

If you would like some help on this give us a call or send me an E mail to [paul@leaders-connect.com](mailto:paul@leaders-connect.com)

Our next issue is 'The Authentic Leader' ..... to you on Tuesday 6th January 2009.

### Why do we send you this? What is the purpose of The Leader?

Answer – simple, our mission at Leaders Connect is to provide practical support for leaders in the construction industry. The Leader is one of our 'tools' and is our contribution towards Thought Leadership; for other routes to practical support check out our web site. Also, we are writing a book, to find out more click on the cover.



Regards,

*Paul Fox*