

The Advisory Alliance

60-Second E-mail – March 23, 2005

Rigorous Leadership: Making People Decisions...Now

Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great*, puts it simply: First Who, Then What. First, get the right people on the bus (in your company) and get the wrong people off the bus before you decide where to drive it (set strategy and goals). Second, be incredibly rigorous about people decisions if you want to build a great company. But rigorous doesn't mean ruthless. In the words of Mike Feiner, former Chief People Officer at Pepsi and author of *The Feiner Points of Leadership*, high-performance leaders are the ones able to make "a tough decision about a subordinate - those situations where it is as difficult for the leader to speak out as it is for the subordinate to hear."

This is reflected in the findings of Charan and Colvin, which we discussed in last month's 60-Second E-mail. Why do leaders fail? "More than any other way, by failure to put the right people in the right jobs - and the related failure to fix people problems in time. Specifically, failed [leaders] are often unable to deal with a few key subordinates whose sustained poor performance deeply harms the company" (Charan and Colvin, *Fortune* - 06/21/99). Furthermore, the failure by leaders to act has little to do with awareness, and everything to do with inner strength. As one leader says, 'It was staring me in the face, but I refused to see it.' The failure is one of emotional strength."

So what's a leader to do? How can one be "rigorous"? According to Collins, there are 3 practical disciplines:

1. When in doubt, don't hire—keep looking.
2. When you need to make a people change, act.
3. Put your best people on your biggest opportunities, not your biggest problems. (Collins, *Good to Great*)

We'll explore these issues in greater detail in upcoming 60-second e-mails. If you'd like a copy of Mike Feiner's article "Laws of Leadership" and Jim Collins' article "The 10 Greatest CEOs of All Time", please reply to this e-mail and we'll be happy to e-mail you a copy.

Additionally, you can access past 60-Second E-mails, by clicking on this [link](http://www.cnsltng.com/detail.php?page=resources) (for those receiving text-only e-mails: <http://www.cnsltng.com/detail.php?page=resources>).

Best regards,

David

David Harper
Member & Directing Manager

The Advisory Alliance, LLC

www.CNSLTNG.com

912.898.2255

© 2005 The Advisory Alliance, LLC. All Rights Reserved.