

WHAT'S ON YOUR DASHBOARD?

By Kevin A. Rafferty

We are familiar with the dashboard of a car, boat, or airplane. The dashboard has various dials that tell us what we need to know when we are in motion. Recent automobile dashboards have become very sophisticated, and can inform us of many things, such as internal and external temperatures, and whether our safety systems are operational.

So, what does the dashboard of your life look like?

We probably don't think of ourselves as needing such an item. But, metaphorically, what do we use as a substitute for a dashboard to help us navigate our life's journey? Most people have no answer, no dashboard. How can you get anywhere in a car or plane if you have no dashboard?

In working with clients, I have devised a simple tool that helps people determine which gauges they need on their dashboard for their organizations and themselves. These "dashboards" provide the necessary visual cues and deliver powerful personal reminders of what the company or person feels is necessary to help them navigate their own trip.

Imagine an airplane cockpit for a minute. You're sitting in the seat, the wheel in front of you, looking out ahead. Think first about the windshield — this is your *Field of Vision*. What does the vision for your life, your work, your company look like? Can you see it clearly, easily and often? Does it ring true, make you want to continue your journey?

Some of the gauges you might have on your dashboard are:

Attitude Indicator: How balanced is your vehicle? Think of this as your *Wheel of Life*. How balanced are you in the different areas of your life, such as physical, mental, work & financial, social, spiritual, personal development and family? When things are in balance, the trip is smooth and enjoyable.

Heading Indicator: Which direction are you headed? This might equate to your *Core Values*. What is important to you, and which values will lead you to where you want to go in life? Life without values is directionless.

Altimeter: Measures your height above ground. Picture this as your list of key *Success Strategies*. Those are the clear set of priorities that, when focused on constantly, help take you higher and closer to your destination.

Airspeed Indicator: Tells you how fast you are going. Your energy level is dependent upon your basic *Personal Characteristics & Strengths*. These allow you to lead, get things done, work with people and

interact in team/ group environments. The better honed your leadership abilities are, the faster you and your organization can go, with much less effort.

Fuel Gauge: How much fuel is in the tank? This is related to your *Passion*, and whether you have enough of what it takes to fuel the entire journey. In a work setting, this reveals itself in your energy, enthusiasm, interest in people, your processes, and the technologies you employ. Remember, the best technology and processes are utilized by the best people driven by passion.

Flight Plan: This is typically found on a clipboard, and includes your route details and anticipated time of arrival. This is your list of *Key Objectives*, those critical goals and activities that must be carried out in order to complete the trip. Successful people create and update their plans as needed.

So, what does your dashboard look like? Do you even have one or something close that helps keep you and your people on course? Do you even know where you are headed? These are just some of the pertinent questions that all leaders must answer. A working dashboard is a vital tool in all our journeys. Those who have one and steer their ship by it find the journey less perilous and more rewarding. Can you say the same?

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