



## The Advisory Alliance 60-Second Email™

### ***I'm No Susan Boyle or Captain Kirk*** ***May 27, 2009***

*In this month's 60-Second Email™, I readily admit that I can't sing or fly a starship. And we get back to basics.*

One clear impact of this recession is that people, businesses, and leaders are getting back to basics. People are questioning, and in some cases are being forced to question, what's important in their lives. Businesses are examining their business models, delineating between what used to work in the past, from what *must* work in the future. Leaders are focusing on performance now more than ever. Their staff and resources have been cut, and the margin for error in their leadership ability has been narrowed dramatically.

So now's not the time for distraction.

Which is why I'm somewhat amused, and maybe just slightly annoyed, when I see articles, postings, and other contemplations that seek to find leadership lessons in extraneous yet still alleged leader exemplars. Recently I've seen blogging on leadership and management lessons learned by studying Susan Boyle, a 48-year-old singing surprise from Scotland, who appeared on the TV show "Britain's Got Talent", and who's been seen more than 80 million times on YouTube. I also saw a posting asking "What leadership lessons can we draw from Captain Kirk in the latest Star Trek movie?" Frankly, these are really no different than books that tout the 101 leadership lessons from [insert the name of your favorite high profile multinational business leader here].

These times are not the times to be looking outside for guidance. Most of us are not singing phenoms, or starship commanders, or heads of multinationals.

It's back to basics. Start by looking inward.

In the end, the one person you know you get to sleep, shower, eat, work, and live with is you. It's not Susan Boyle. Not James T. Kirk. Or The Donald. Or Jack Welch. For better or for worse, we have just ourselves to deal with.



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So the question we need to ask ourselves is not, "What would Susan or Jack do?" But instead, "What the heck do I need to do?" Let's get back to basics. What are your customers telling you? Your direct reports? Your peers? Your boss?

What one thing, not 10, not five, not even three...just one thing, if you were to focus on right now, would have a major impact on your performance? If you know what it is, do it. If you don't, start asking. Now.

And stay focused on it...for a long while. It could be several months. It could be a year. Real growth, real change takes time. We all know that. But sometimes watching science fiction movies or reality TV characters is a lot more entertaining than getting back to basics. And reading about leadership is certainly a lot easier than doing it.

Next year there will be another Susan Boyle, another popular summer movie, and another business guru touting his innumerable leadership lessons. Hopefully you won't get distracted by trying to divine the multitude of leadership lessons found within a context that is irrelevant to yours.

Stay relevant to your boss, your customers, and to yourself. Stay focused.

You can access all of our 60-Second Emails (TM), including last month's issue, "Leadership Lessons from The Economic Meltdown" via this link: <http://www.advisoryalliance.com/newsletter.php>

Have a comment on what you've learned *not* from Susan Boyle or Jack Welch, but from yourself? Share your thoughts with other readers on our blog: <http://www.advisoryalliance.com/blog>

Best regards,

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