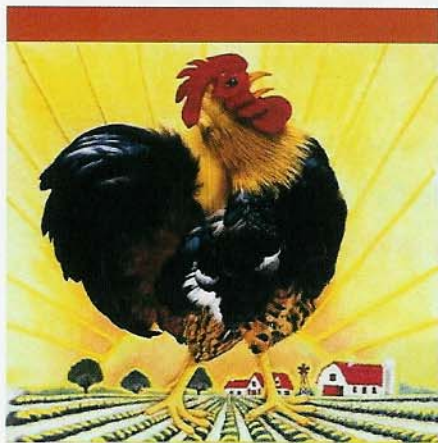


The Pecking Order Principle



Most producers want to upgrade their market, thereby increasing their success, but find the transition difficult. To help them master the challenge, I have occasionally shared the pecking order principle, which I borrowed from my academic beginnings when I majored in the biological sciences.

Let me explain. A frequent experiment used on chicken farms is to put a group of chickens unfamiliar with one another into an enclosed area for observation. The experiment always begins with uproar and lots of pecking at one another. Fighting breaks out, usually with no real physical harm done. After a short time, all the chickens quiet down.

The chickens begin to interrelate, but something new is evident. When they are fed, some chickens in the flock eat first, while the others wait patiently. When they roost, the early feeders choose the most desirable places first, and the others take what is left. Even among established groups, an all-powerful king chicken dominates the entire flock and a hierarchy follows down the line to the chicken that is subordinate to every other chicken. Once this dominant and subordinate relationship is established, it remains in place without any more pecking and fighting until a subordinate musters the courage to challenge a superior that has perhaps weakened, and a new king chicken is crowned.

Many species of birds and animals have the pecking order psychology,

including the human being. We might be the king chicken with some prospects, recruits, associates, friends and family members. Just as likely, we are the subordinate chicken to many others. In my career, I have watched an advisor visit a person over whom they feel the king chicken power and totally dominate a successful sales interview. Likewise, I have seen how that same advisor behaves on the very next interview with a wealthier, more successful prospect. The same person becomes a subordinate chicken and fails miserably. Pecking order strikes again.

I have been asked by hundreds of advisors: How can I upgrade my market? How can I grow to the next level? In the past, I have talked about the pecking order, but it does not explain how to grow to king chicken status.

Having had the privilege of dealing with king chickens among prospects, recruits, associates and friends, I have concluded that king chickens are leaders, and subordinate chickens are followers. So, the real answer of how to grow to the next level is to achieve the attributes of leadership.

I believe there are five attributes that create leadership—king chicken power—represented by the acronym VICKS. It is necessary to excel at all five components, but as you achieve success with each individual attribute, you will move up the hierarchical ladder.

Vision

You must have a big dream and aspiration that clearly defines what you want to achieve, and you must be committed to its achievement. Once it is identified, you must not only aspire to it, but you must also share it with your “flock”—the people with whom you work or play—and get them to buy into it as well.

Vision may mean going where no one has ever gone before, but if you know in your mind how to get there, give it a shot.

Inspiration

You must not only be an enthusiastic, positive person, but you must also influence and inspire those around you so they are positively affected by your presence. Leaders are inspirational pied pipers, and the flock dutifully follows its leader.

Courage

You must have the strength of your convictions to do what’s right, even when it may be more difficult—and perhaps more costly—or it might result in the loss of business. You must also have the courage to go where no one has ever gone and, in doing so, help others bravely travel a new road.

Knowledge

Leaders are the resource for correct information and direction for the followers. This cannot be achieved without constant reading, studying and exposure to other great achievers.

Skills

I’m referring not only to how-to skills, but also to people skills. Leaders provide their followers with a positive feeling of well-being.

One basic skill that is effective in this area is being a great listener, not just a dominating speaker. Learn what those around you want—and then, with sincere compassion, help them get it.

In a world where finance and security are—by some accounts—in crisis, we desperately need king chicken leaders. Follow the VICKS approach to powerful leadership and you’ll attain greater success in your practice. [INN](#)

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