

Gagen
MacDonald
Presents

LET GO & LEAD

LEADERSHIP DISCUSSION GUIDE



BUILDING
CRITICAL MASS

Perspectives from Dan DiZio
CEO & Co-founder, Philly Pretzel Factory

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Ideas for Application

In conjunction with the video clips from the conversation with Dan at letgoandlead.com, you can use this guide to think about leaders' role in:

- Enabling Growth and Innovation
- Inspiring and Engaging Employees
- Building Corporate Culture
- Defining Corporate Character and Brand
- Setting Direction, Alignment and Decision Making

Instructions

This guide was developed to complement the Let Go & Lead™ interview with Dan DiZio and encourage learning on the individual, team, and organizational level.

- Use the Questions for Individual Reflection for yourself or as pre-work before your team comes together for the Group Exercise.
- The Group Exercise can be tailored to the needs of your organization and team, but is meant to encourage deep conversation around new ways of thinking about and acting on leadership.

Questions for Individual Reflection

Hiring people who know things you don't can lead to great outcomes.

- What does “having the right people in the right positions” mean for your business?
- How much time and energy do you spend identifying talent requirements needed to execute your business strategy?
- Do you have the talent you need to grow?
- How open are you to hiring people who have more knowledge or expertise than you do?

Employees often have the answers to your toughest challenges.

- How do you “stay in touch with customers”?
- Do you directly engage with your front-line employees to discuss better serving your customers?
- How so and how often?
- What do you do to encourage your frontline employees to provide customer feedback?

When leaders love the brand, their passion permeates throughout the organization.

- What does your company stand for in the marketplace? What's your purpose?
- What do you consider the most important aspects of your company's brand?
- What do you do to show passion for your brand that inspires others? What more can you do?

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Listen to your employees. They have valuable insights that you don't.

- Do you have two-way dialog with your employees and actively solicit their point of view and insights?
- Do you feel your employees have the opportunity to candidly, honestly and fully answer your questions?
- Are you able to listen to employees without judgment?
- Can you identify valuable insights employees have shared that have resulted in positive outcomes?
- What more can you do to create opportunities for effective two-way communication?

Control and fear. Two common issues leaders struggle to let go of.

- What do you find is the most difficult thing for you to let go of?
- When do you feel most compelled to be involved with your people?
- Why do you think that is?
- What is the impact of your involvement on the development and confidence of your people?
- What else might you do to best support your people?

They don't teach you how to be a CEO in school.

- How self-aware are you regarding your leadership capabilities?
- What are your greatest personal leadership growth opportunities?
- What more can you do to become an even better leader?

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Group Exercise

1. As pre-work, ask your team to watch the Dan DiZio videos on letgoandlead.com and answer the Questions for Reflection.
2. Open the discussion by asking about the video conversations with Dan DiZio: What was meaningful for you as a leader? **(5-10 minutes)**
3. Group discussion: What benefits did Dan talk about related to listening to employees? *(Possible answers are: employee engagement, demonstrating that you care about them, product and service innovation and improvement by leveraging employee customer insights...)* **(5-10 minutes)**
4. Divide the team into groups of 4 people and ask them to answer the questions below. **(15 minutes)**
 - What are possible performance benefits if we better engage and listen to our employees? *(Possible answers are: improve ability to serve customer needs, product and service innovation and improvement, better employee alignment, higher productivity...)*
 - What gets in our way of engaging and listening to our employees more effectively?
 - What can we do differently, individually or collectively, to better engage and listen to our employees? *(Possible answers are: creating employee round tables or forums for two-way communication, asking open questions to seeking feedback, be present - not distracted by technology, spending time on the front-line, listening without interruptions, acting more visibly on employee ideas...)*
5. Ask each group to identify the top 3 things we could do differently to better engage and listen to employees. Have each team report out their top 3 things and capture on a flip chart. **(5 minutes)**
6. As a large group, dialog and decide 3 or so “team commitments” to better engage and listen to our employees. **(5 minutes)**
7. Ask individuals, to make personal commitments to better engage and listen to our employees. Ask each team member to read aloud one of their commitments. **(5 minutes)**

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About Let Go & Lead

letgoandlead.com

Let Go & Lead is an online project to explore leadership in the 21st Century. Maril MacDonald, CEO of Gagen MacDonald, has engaged thought leaders from different walks of life for conversations on what it means to “let go” and lead people to create meaningful, sustainable change. Video highlights from each conversation are posted for you to view and share your comments and perspective.

Most of all, Let Go & Lead is a community. It is a celebration of diversity and a genuine embrace of different points of view in an attempt to come to an unprecedented understanding of how the most powerful ideas come to life within the most complex environments and systems.

About Gagen MacDonald

gagenmacdonald.com

Gagen MacDonald is a firm founded on a big idea: We want to make the world a better place, transforming one company at a time.

Since 51 of the world’s 100 largest economies are corporations (not countries, as one might expect), it’s a worthy pursuit. We help clients find ways to bring their employees’ passions, talents and sense of purpose to bear on the business strategy. Working collaboratively from the corporate office to the front line, we use an organization’s brand, culture, vision and history to motivate and align employees behind accomplishing meaningful and sustainable results.

Want to learn more about how Gagen MacDonald can help develop and align your leadership team to inspire exceptional performance?



Our team has extensive and proven experience helping companies develop leaders, engage employees and build high-performance cultures that support the business strategy. Contact Meg Wheaton for more information on how Gagen MacDonald can help you.

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