



Follow the Leaders

For as long as I can remember I've heard the expression, "***the best leaders are followers***". ISA must also think that there is some truth to the old adage because this year's Spring Leadership Meeting featured a leadership panel session for future Division and Section Leaders. The panel consisted of Paul Gruhn, Jerry Clemmons, Cyrus Taft, and yours truly—all of whom have demonstrated success in past or present division and/or section leadership roles. And as expected, the panelists had plenty of advice for future ISA ***leaders to follow***.

Paul Gruhn began the meeting with a challenge to Division and Section leaders to make sure that the division (section) mission and goals are not just clearly understood, but are committed to (in writing) and are communicated to ISA, the Division/Section Board, and the membership. Speaking of ***Boards***, all of the panelists stressed the importance of making sure that there is a team of leaders working together to accomplish goals. Paul noted that choosing the right people, making sure that they are properly equipped/trained, and selecting a successor are all strategic factors for division (section) success.

Of equal importance: understanding ***your*** role and responsibilities as a division/section leader. Jerry Clemmons told attendees to visit ISA's website to review leadership resources and responsibilities. It is so important for the new ISA leader to fully understand requirements, expectations, and metrics. You can't hope to be successful if you don't know what is expected and how success is measured.

Cyrus Taft highlighted how ***following*** the successful examples set by other divisions (sections) can facilitate the process. He cited successful symposia and newsletters that have been developed by other divisions. Networking with peer divisions/sections can open up a well-spring of resources to help you (and your division) achieve success.

And of course there was my two cents! I started with a question: "***What does it mean to be a successful leader?***" Not just within ISA, but in any arena. Here's my take on it: A good (ISA) leader must demonstrate a ***positive attitude, team work, good judgment, good interpersonal skills***, the highest of ***professional standards***, and ***commitment*** to ISA's shared objectives while ***nurturing*** and ***supporting*** his/her individual division (section) and department goals.

If you buy into this definition, then ask: "***What does it mean to lead in that context?***" My answer: ***Leverage, Engage, Advance, & Delegate***.

- **Leverage** – The division/section leader should ***leverage*** the shared resources of ISA, the division, and the department to achieve the division (section) mission and goals
- **Engage** – The division/section leader should cultivate an atmosphere of complete ***engagement*** with ISA Staff, with department management, with members of the

Board, current and future membership and experts in the field of automation expertise. **Communication** is a key initiative in this process.

- **Advance** – The division/section leader should do everything possible, utilizing all the resources and innovative ideas available to **advance** the division/section in terms of value/benefit to its membership, to ISA, and the automation community at large. This effort includes knowledge sharing via social media as well as more traditional methods; e.g. Symposia, contributions to technical publications, website content, newsletters, Lyris groups, social interaction (UCC), etc.
- **Delegate** – The division/section leader should understand that the successful division/section is NOT a team of one. S/he must invest in relationship building with others on the Board, ISA and the membership to **delegate** so that as a team division goals are successfully achieved.

That's a pretty tall order, but believe it or not, knowing when (and being willing) to **follow** can make it so much easier to **lead**.

Okay, so here's the real question: **What's in it for you?** Each of the panelists shared a different story about initial engagement with ISA -- why s/he got involved, why s/he stayed involved, and how ISA has been an enabler of both professional and personal growth and advancement. As for me, my involvement in ISA has been extensive. It all began some 15 years ago when I was a process control manager leading the migration from an older Foxboro 1A process control system to a newer Bailey Controls INFI90 control system for a textile manufacturing firm. I was asked to speak at the ISA EXPO Technical Conference in Anaheim. I talked about the relationship that was formed via our company's Strategic Alliance with Bailey and the benefits of the synergies that were created via the partnership.

After the presentation, Jan Jekielek, then Director of the Management Division, approached me about joining ISA. I joined the Management Division, became Associate Director of Membership, and over the next 15 years participated in ISA as a Session Developer, paper reviewer, published author (papers in **Intech**, **ISA Transactions**, and the **Transactions of the IEEE** magazines) and speaker at both local and national ISA and IEEE events. I have also held leadership roles as Director-Elect and Director of ISA Textile Division and Director-Elect and Director, ISA Management Division. And I have recently been selected as the DVP-Elect, ISA Industries & Sciences. I am also a member of the Honors & Awards Committee.

ISA leadership has its benefits! For each of us those benefits are different. ISA leadership has allowed me to grow & learn both personally and professionally-- to be a part of a network of recognized process control and management professionals in the automation industry, to stay current on new and evolving automation concepts & technologies, to expand my sphere of influence by sharing my knowledge with others, and to be able to utilize all of the above to benefit the companies for which I have worked. So, if you're already an ISA leader (or have ISA leadership aspirations), **follow** this advice: **LEAD!**

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