



VIEW*S* & VISIONS

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Lead and Let Lead

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Kyle Mork is the chief executive officer of Energy Corporation of America and a director of the company. He began his career with Halliburton Energy Services as a completions engineer before moving to ECA as a drilling engineer in the Houston, Texas, office. Since that time, he has held various positions throughout the organization focused on operations and management.

Mork earned a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from Cornell University and an M.B.A. from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management. He has also taken master's courses in petroleum engineering at the University of Southern California.

He is chairman of the board of directors for the Clay Center for the Arts and Sciences, and also serves on the nonprofit ECA Foundation board of directors, the USC Mork Family Department Advisory Board, the Cornell Engineering College Council and the Cornell Football Association Board. He is also active in the Young Presidents' Organization.

The energy industry is in a challenging position. Technological advancements have transformed how oil and gas is found and extracted; regulatory uncertainty (particularly at a national level) is fueling confusion and discouraging development; and persistently low gas prices have created monumental economic challenges for energy companies across the globe.

Yes, we face challenges, and my company, Energy Corporation of America (ECA), is not immune. But, I am confident that we are prepared to meet these challenges, particularly because of our most valuable assets – our dedicated employees, my talented senior management team and their abilities to take us forward. When it comes to business and life, I believe the key is to *Lead and Let Lead*.

What does it mean to *Lead and Let Lead*? It means surrounding yourself with the right people for the right jobs; trusting their skills, abilities, expertise and motivations; and giving them the freedom and inspiration they need to excel.

Start by Developing Self-Awareness

Before you can successfully lead others, you must first truly know yourself. What are your strengths? Where do you struggle? What motivates you and what do you value? Understanding these truths about yourself can help you effectively motivate and inspire others. To be an effective leader, you must seek out input from those who know you best, conduct 360-degree reviews to discover hidden traits about yourself that you might otherwise overlook, focus on your strengths rather than



obsessing over weaknesses, and surround yourself with others you trust who complement areas where you need support.

Grow by Empowering Others

Empowering leaders has an incredible multiplying effect. It has been shown to increase productivity, inspire greater employee loyalty and produce higher job satisfaction. But, empowering leaders is difficult. It requires letting go and trusting others to perform. It requires counting on others' lead. It requires faith. But, I have found that in business, much as in life, it is leaps of faith that produce the greatest rewards.

Build Trust Through Transparency

At its root, transparency is about being real. It goes beyond being honest, which is imperative, but it also compels a leader to be straightforward and open about strengths, vulnerabilities, proprietary information and successes. It requires a leader to be real.

Much like empowering others, true transparency has its risks; but, you quickly find that genuine caring and transparency elicits greater respect, builds trust and improves relationships with employees. It may seem counterintuitive or uncomfortable to share information that you previously kept close to the vest; but, trust is

a two-way street, and by trusting others through transparency, you inspire others to trust you. Ultimately, aren't all real relationships built on trust?

It means surrounding yourself with the right people for the right jobs; trusting their skills, abilities, expertise and motivations; and giving them the freedom and inspiration they need to excel.

Communicate, Communicate Again and then Communicate Some More

Transparency and communication go hand in hand – what good is transparency without regular and consistent communication?

What is the benefit of being transparent if no one is aware of your transparency?

In leadership, you cannot have too much communication. Countless studies have shown that an individual must be exposed to a message at least three times before they even acknowledge it. It takes many more exposures for the individual to process, retain and, ultimately, act upon that message. Therefore, a combination of communication channels – large group presentations, small team-level discussions, written collateral pieces, online channels and, most importantly, face-to-face conversations – is essential to demonstrating transparency, building trust and resonating with your audience.

An organization is only as strong as its weakest leader. That is why I am passionate

about maximizing and capitalizing on the strengths of our current managers, nurturing the potential in future leaders and mentoring those who possess the drive to lead; because, when you *Lead and Let Lead*, you create an environment that encourages innovation, stimulates ideas and produces amazing results. ▾



Energy Corporation of America's Appalachian headquarters located in Charleston, West Virginia