

LOCOMOTION

LEADER'S DISCUSSION GUIDE

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LOCOMOTION

LOCOMOTION is a clever computer-animated video presentation with a light, humorous touch. It is an effective meeting or session-starter that leaves viewers with solid opinions about leadership, problem solving, teamwork and motivation. Because **LOCOMOTION** is non-narrated, it is particularly valuable for stimulating interest and discussion in groups with diverse back-grounds.

SYNOPSIS

Engine No. 9 and its caboose are happily hauling their load of logs when suddenly they come to a break in the track on a trestle over a deep ravine. The caboose looks over the side at the treacherous gorge below, panics, and attempts to convince the locomotive to back up. Engine No. 9 dreads not making their destination on time; being branded unreliable conjures up thoughts of forced retirement, even the scrap heap. Determined to avoid that unworthy fate, the locomotive decides to forge ahead, in spite of stubborn resistance from the caboose. Marshalling its full strength and energy, Engine No. 9 overcomes the obstacle in its path by deftly maneuvering cargo and caboose to safety. The presentation concludes as the locomotive receives the coveted "On Time" sign at its destination.

USING THE VIDEO

Viewers easily identify with the spunky locomotive and cheer its triumph over nearly impossible odds. **LOCOMOTION** can be shown, without extensive introduction, as a prelude to seminars, meetings and workshops covering topics such as leadership, motivation, goal-setting, communication, problem solving skills, and many other useful topics. Because it is a completely visual presentation, the program encourages viewers to discuss their own personal interpretation of the values and issues raised by the story line.

AFTER SHOWING THE VIDEO PRESENTATION

You may wish to begin the session by asking your audience or group the following questions about **LOCOMOTION**:

- Why do you think we started this session with a video about a locomotive, a caboose and a break in the tracks?
- What is the moral or lesson learned from viewing the presentation?
- How can this story be translated into management principles?

ROLE-PLAY EXERCISE

Add dialog to the program. Have one member of the discussion group speak for the engine and another take the part of the caboose.

OTHER DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

You may also ask questions that seek parallels between the lessons learned in **LOCOMOTION**, and experiences within your own group or organization. The following are some examples of questions that will stimulate discussion. The possible responses/interpretations contained in this guide are by no means meant to be “answers” in the traditional sense of the word. When it comes to leadership, motivation, teamwork, or problem solving there are rarely absolutes.

LEADERSHIP

1. What are some of the important leadership qualities you see in Engine No. 9?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- A high level of self-esteem
- Willingness to take a risk under adversity
- Confidence in one's own leadership abilities
- Willingness to make an unpopular decision
- Ability to overcome resistance to a decision by others
- Refusal to be discouraged by seemingly insurmountable odds
- Others

2. What are some circumstances that would require leaders to make decisions not necessarily supported by their subordinates?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- Having information to which subordinates are not privy
- When a leader feels strongly that the best interests of the organization will benefit from the decision
- Legal issues Organizational policies
- Others

3. How do successful leaders handle resistance to their decisions?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- By explaining the reason(s) behind the decision
- By making subordinates aware of the consequences of resisting the decision
- By making subordinates aware that their input was considered and evaluated before the final decision was made
- Others

4. How can subordinates influence leaders' decisions?

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- By being credible in their job performance
- By sharing past experiences relating to the decision
- By providing an objective attitude
- By presenting alternative solutions
- Others