

Leading Like a Libertarian

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Preface

I am by no means a perfect leader. Book stores are full of writings by business leaders and management experts much more credentialed than I. However, I have experience leading teams of engineers from around the world. I have managed some pretty big projects on industrial facilities. I have served as board president on two non-profit organizations that are still surviving. I served as a city council member twice. Therefore, I have some experience and appreciation for managing people and working in organizations.

However, no experience has been like that of being elected chair of the Libertarian Party of Texas in 2004. That year the party faced the possibility of being removed from the ballot. We had no staff, no money, and about 70 candidates that were hoping to be on the ballot. In 2010 we had about a quarter million in revenue, 6 paid staff members, and over 150 candidates on the ballot. I have learned a lot of lessons along the way.

My purpose in this writing is to share some opinions that I have formulated over this time. I do not claim my opinions are perfect; they may be subject to change as I gracefully age. However, I hope that at a minimum my opinions help provoke thought and help formulate your own opinions. When you have it all figured out, you can have my job!

1. Leading Like a Libertarian

Libertarians complain about government bureaucracy. We say that if we get elected we will make government smaller and clean a lot of laws off the books. We claim that a lot of regulation is unnecessary, and even harmful, because the free market automatically regulates bad behavior.

Have you ever considered that we might try governing the Libertarian Party the same way we intend to govern the country? Maybe we should try that first and see how it works?

I mention this because I find many Libertarians that love inventing new rules. If something doesn't go quite right, we are going to pass a law. The bigger our rule book gets, the safer we will be, right?

Not according to Phillip Howard, the author of "The Death of Common Sense; How Law is Suffocating America". Legislation is a poor substitute for common sense.

I am a Libertarian not only because I think it is the best form of government. It is the best way of life. Liberty works, not only in government, but in business, organizations, families, and everywhere else. One of the early financial supporters of the LP, Charles Koch, has adopted Libertarian free market principles to Koch Industries, the second largest private company the US. The concept, called Market Based Management, is one that empowers its workers instead of imposing more bureaucracy. It seems to work for them.

Consider a scenario where a Libertarian volunteer is given money from the state party to run an outreach booth. At the conclusion, the money is wasted with no new contacts generated. There was no literature to hand out. The booth looked dumpy. People passing by the booth just kept on walking. There were not enough volunteers to handle booth traffic if there was any. The volunteers made no effort to engage with people.

There are 2 ways to fix this problem:

- Write a voluminous document full of rules that specify what a booth should look like, how much literature to have, how many volunteers to have, what volunteers should do, and every minute detail to ensure that the next time this volunteer does outreach, the results will be guaranteed to be pleasing.
- Select your volunteer more carefully

I suggest the latter approach is the most effective, efficient, and consistent with Libertarian free market principles.

Presumably we as Libertarians believe that people work best when they have liberty. They work worst when they are slaves. An empowered worker that is trustworthy is much more valuable than a shackled slave.

Rules and policies can be beneficial. They can provide guidelines and preserve institutional knowledge. It is helpful to have consistent practices so that when there is turnover in personnel, the operation can keep humming along without big bumps in the road. Rules can be used to address unacceptable behavior.

However, anytime a rule is considered, it should be easily dismissed if there is no penalty or enforcement mechanism. Take the example of the volunteer leader of the outreach booth. What punishment would there be for violating a rule on outreach booths? Who monitors this volunteer and presents evidence of guilt? If you can't answer this, you have no business making a rule.

Ultimately, it is a choice between micro-managing and empowering. There are some diligent and skilled people that can effectively micro-manage small organizations, but I do not believe they can succeed or grow long term. I do not micro-manage our volunteers, local leaders, candidates, or staff. I empower them but hold them responsible.

The origin of our federal government was a small rule book called the Constitution. Clearly, mountains of legislation have not made Congress work better. I suggest that the LP lead by example and demonstrate that an organization with a simple and concise rule book that empowers people

to use their talents freely and hold them accountable is the best model for success. Let's lead the Libertarian Party like Libertarians!

2. The basket and the tree

Imagine you are going into an orchard to pick apples. You start shaking the trees as hard as you can and lots of apples fall. The problem is that you have a hole in your basket and a lot of good apples fall through, crash on the ground, and rot. Other apples that aren't yet ripe end in your basket and eventually on someone's table. When they bite into your sour apple, they know not to buy from you again.

On the other hand, consider going into the orchard with a mended basket and picking the low lying, ripened fruit. These good apples will not rot on the ground and your customers will continue to buy these good apples from you.

When you go out shaking the bushes for members, candidates, leaders, and donors, does your basket have a hole in it? Do good leaders that want to be county chairs try in vain to reach someone on the phone and fail? Do prospective candidates send emails that never get answered? Does the media end up on websites with outdated information and broken links? These good apples have fallen through your basket and after lying on the ground all that time, they rot. You can no longer use them because they have such a bad impression of your organization.

How about those unripe apples that do end up in your basket? They really don't understand the LP or our principles and don't have much commitment to the organization. They really didn't come on their own; they fell into the basket from vigorous solicitation. You spent all that effort shaking the tree, but when these people are the leaders and candidates representing the party to the public, they may not be appealing and you lose customers.

Making sure that your infrastructure is in place is the first priority before you try to grow.

In 2004, our newly hired Texas executive director tried contacting our county chairs. He found numerous email addresses and phone numbers that were invalid. He found many county organization websites were dead or broken. He found the state party answering machine had gone for months with unanswered inquiries from volunteers, candidates, and the media.

By fixing what is broken, you can catch those good apples that come to the LP on their own. They are the low lying fruit that have already become Libertarian and are ready to help.

Although people are constantly leaving our opponents, discover the LP on their own, and come to us, we do need to shake the tree to grow. We need to make solicitations and market ourselves to attract people. Let's just make sure we have a mended basket first.

3. Responsibility

A leader is not someone that looks for excuses. A leader accepts responsibility for the success or failure of the organization.

I have often encountered people in leadership positions in the LP that will talk your ear off with complaints. They have no end to the number of reasons why they have not succeeded and have no difficulty blaming everyone and everything else. That is not leadership.

A leader actively looks for problems and tries to fix them. A leader will embrace the team concept instead of looking for scapegoats. When mistakes are made, a leader will accept at least part of the responsibility and take action to prevent future mistakes.

4. The presiding officer

If the chair of the party is nothing more, then at least the chair must do an acceptable job presiding over the leadership committee of the party. This means being capable of ensuring the will of the body is reflected in decisions, the rights of the minority are respected, and the party operates within its rules.

There is debate as to whether Robert Rules of Order helps or hurts this effort. Roberts can certainly be abused by those that want to use it as a weapon against those who don't have these rules memorized. Would you rather have a committee of experts on Robert's, or a committee of experts on what are the best decisions for the organization?

However, rules of order that are accepted with the consent of the party are about the only way to resolve disputes during a meeting. The job of the presiding officer is to be the impartial referee. While the chair of the party certainly can offer their opinions and try to persuade, this should not occur when a motion is being debated by the committee unless the committee wishes to hear from the chair.

There are some that think eliminating Robert's Rules will eliminate problems. If everybody gets along with each other, they may be right. If this is not the case, your meetings can become shouting matches or you can have an authoritarian presiding officer that shuts down dissenting opinions. Without some rules of order, there is no peaceful recourse for the dissenters or the minority. If you go on to create your own rules, you will probably end up just rewriting rules that Robert's has already proven to work over the course of time. I believe a rational application of Robert's Rules with reasonable modifications and exceptions adopted in bylaws is the best approach.

The party must be able to trust the presiding officer to let the will of the body be the deciding factor. Trust and respect is lost when the presiding officer is perceived as manipulative, heavy handed, and unfair. By being familiar enough with the rules to ensure compliance and putting ego aside, the chair can command enough respect and trust to effectively preside over the party.

5. CEO and Chairman

In formal organizations, there is a board of directors that sets long term policy and hires someone to manage the daily operations of the organization. The board of directors has a leader that serves as chairman of the board. The person hired to work for the board is the chief executive

officer (CEO). In some organizations the two positions (chair and CEO) are occupied by the same person.

In political parties, generally the chair of the board and the CEO are the same person. In the Libertarian Party, this is the arrangement at the national, state, and local level. Most state and local parties have no paid staff, so the chair is the person that handles the daily responsibilities. When there is staff, the party may hire an executive director that reports to the chair for daily oversight. The party's board of directors, which is often referred to as the leadership committee, sets the policy and makes budgetary decisions, and the chair and staff operate within these parameters.

There is some debate as to whether it is better to have the chair and CEO role split between two people. For organizations with the size and scope of the Libertarian Party this is not a sensible arrangement. When delegates meet to select the leader of the party, it is understood that this individual occupies both of these roles.

The leader needs to understand this dual role. As chair you preside over the leadership committee, but as CEO you accept responsibility for carrying out the policies and objectives given to you by your leadership committee.

6. The entrepreneur

You cannot grow without taking risks. You may feel safer with complacency, but if you want to grow you need to be an entrepreneur.

When I was elected chair of the Texas LP in 2004, I asked our state committee to hire Wes Benedict as our executive director. We did not have money to pay him. I was able to persuade our committee to trust Wes and I and was prepared to take the blame if it didn't work. We struggled at times to bring in enough money to cover what we owed Wes. He took a big risk by agreeing to the position, and at times he had to wait on us when we didn't have the money.

In the end, it worked. Wes did a great job with candidate recruiting and we grew. We were able to grow our revenue base to the point that 4 years

later we could increase his compensation. When he decided to move on and work for the national party, we were able to make attractive offer available for new candidates for the position.

I have taken some risks that have not paid off. I do not regret this. While failures give ammunition to those that don't like you, they also give you the opportunity to strengthen the organization. An athlete does not get stronger by letting muscles atrophy. By working muscles to the point of pain, the muscle grows. An organization does not get stronger through complacency. Taking the entrepreneurial risks, reaping the rewards of success, and enduring the pain of failure, is the only way to grow and become stronger.

7. The oracle

A leader is someone that people, both inside and outside the organization, will look to as an example of what the organization is. You are the oracle.

The term "oracle" refers to standard upon which to measure. For example, if you have a big heavy rock on one side of a pendulum scale, the weight of the object you put on the other side of the scale is being compared to the rock. The rock is the oracle.

It is a practical matter that the leader of an organization will be looked upon as the example of what a Libertarian is. However, you are not in the limelight as often as candidates are. Candidates get more exposure than you do, and rightfully so. They are the product you are selling. However, there are times when there is not a pending election on the minds of voters. There are no candidates to take the limelight.

The leader does not need to seek exposure. There are introverts that can be very effective leaders. However, just keep in mind that a leader is regarded as a role model for the organization. You are the oracle.

8. The head coach

Imagine you are a football coach. You don't tackle or block. The ball is never in your hands. You are not the star of the game and the lights and

cameras are not often focused on you. However, you do prepare your team for the game, you put players on the field, and you give them plays to execute.

You as a leader are the head coach of your team, the party. You recruit candidates to put on the ballot, try to prepare them for being a candidate, and give them a plan for what the party will do to make the most of the election season.

In football, a coach that wants to score immediately can call for a deep pass play. The odds of that working tend to be low. Often times your quarterback ends up getting sacked for a loss. This is very demotivating, especially if it is the only play in your playbook. When you are on your own 5 yard line and have 95 yards to go, running a play like this is a pretty big risk.

On the other hand, if you run the ball 5 yards, then 6 yards, then throw for 8 yards, and keep doing this, the ball starts moving in the direction you want to go. At some point you get into scoring position. It is motivating to see steady progress. You never stop trying to score, but you take what the opponent gives you instead of trying to score on every play.

As the head coach of the party, you have a role in setting expectations and making plans. You want the best players on the field in the position that best uses their skills. You want them prepared for the big game, their campaign. But you also need a game plan that does not rely on a Hail Mary play. Moving the ball downfield, with the goal of scoring, is a winning game plan.

9. Managing expectations

If I asked you for a million dollars to elect a Libertarian to the White House, how likely would you be to donate to the LP after the election? The fact is that the LP has never come close to electing someone to the White House. We have not come close to electing someone to the governor's mansion or US Congress. We have elected a few people to state legislatures, but typical state house candidates get about 5% in a 3 way race. We do elect people at the local level; I know from personal experience.

The challenge for a leader is to manage the expectations such that there is incentive to support the party without over-promising. Unrealistic expectations leave many dissatisfied people that will never support the party again.

People will support growth. They will support achievable goals. Even if these goals are not achieved, support can continue if they can see your vision, believe it is achievable, and support it.

You will have volunteers that come to you with unreasonable expectations. They may be your hardest workers and biggest donors. You may not be able to persuade them to recalibrate their expectations. They may give everything they have until after the election, and then they will be burned out. This is an expectation you as a leader need to manage for yourself.

10. Candidates

I never tell a candidate that they cannot win. However, I do not promise a candidate any outcome.

A political party without candidates has no product. If you are trying to sell liberty, you need Libertarian candidates. Persuading people to put their name on a ballot with the “Libertarian” label next to their name is not easy. Promising them a seat in Congress may be persuasive, but it is not ethical.

Some candidates will be active. They will raise money, knock on doors, respond to the media, and try earn every vote possible. Some of these candidates are motivated by winning. A winning attitude is great, but an expectation that voters will completely change their behavior because you are such a compelling candidate can lead to major disappointment and burn out.

These candidates may also demand the most of the leadership and the party. They may ask the party for money. I do not support this. In Texas in 2010 we had 150 candidates on the ballot. Which ones deserve money? All of them? We could lay off every staff member and cut all expenses and still not have much to give to each of 150 candidates. Considering what it

costs for an effective state or federal campaign, this would not be a wise investment. What if we only gave our donor's money to good, active candidates? Who decides who is good and active? How do you feel as a candidate if you are deemed not good or active? Active candidates have their own fund raising appeals and I as a leader often donate my own money to their campaigns. The funds that donors contribute to the party should be used to promote the party, which benefits all candidates, not a select few. If people want to donate directly to a candidate, they have that option.

I want active candidates. Getting the Libertarian message and the party more exposure is essential to future growth. Often times a Libertarian candidate can be more than the margin of victory in an election. While the spoiler effect can impair a Libertarian candidate, it also puts the party in a negotiating position to influence policy after the election. If an active candidate understands that they can win these battles, then the party can win despite the electoral loss.

Some candidates want to be on the ballot to educate voters. They wouldn't mind winning, but their focus is bringing attention to a particular policy issue or to Libertarian principles. They may not invest a lot of resources into their effort, but it can be effective. The ability to force other candidates to address issues that you bring up is a unique ability that you have as a candidate. It is much harder to get attention to your concerns if you are not on the ballot.

Lastly, there are candidates that simply don't want the Libertarian option to be absent from the ballot. Many of us have gone through a lot of pain and sweat to put our party on the ballot, and to leave vacant spots where the Libertarian candidate could be seems like throwing away all that work. These candidates may not do anything other than put their name on the ballot next to the "Libertarian" label, but they do help. Consider that the ballot is the most effective advertising the Libertarian Party has. You are reaching the people that most care. The person who ignores ads on television, radio, billboards, or newspapers because they don't vote is unlikely to influence the growth of the Libertarian Party. The person who votes and sees lots of Libertarian names forms an impression that the LP is seriously in the game.

There is a concern sometimes expressed by active candidates that paper candidates marginalize the party and consequently their campaigns. How would you like it if you are working your butt off as a Libertarian candidate, only to find that voters ignore you because most of your candidates never show up; they don't respond to the media, they don't return phone calls, they don't appear at candidates debates, etc. The impression a voter can get is that Libertarian candidates, even the active ones, aren't serious and therefore not worthy of support.

However, my observation is that most voters don't behave that way. Many of them don't make a decision until they are in the voting booth. Some of them put more interest in the candidate than in the party, and therefore the influence of other candidates in a party do not deter their support of their preferred candidate.

Our approach in Texas is to fill as much of the ballot as possible. My only criteria for a candidate is:

- They represent Libertarian principles well
- They represent the party well

A candidate that isn't Libertarian or makes the party look bad is not one I want on the ballot. However, I as chair do not make that decision. Delegates at a convention make those nomination choices.

There is always the possibility that a Libertarian Seabiscuit will arrive and surprise everyone with an electoral victory. We all as Libertarians have that as a long term goal. However, my advice is to fill the ballot with as many good active, educational, or paper candidates as possible and let them move the ball toward the goal line.

11. Goals

What is your organization trying to do? Don't tell me that your goal is liberty. All Libertarians want liberty. The question is whether you are making any progress.

I have persuaded our state committee in Texas to adopt annual goals ever since I became chair. The objective is to get our committee to focus on achievement. We adopt goals and issue an annual report at the end of the year with the results. Sometimes we meet goals, sometimes we don't. Either way, we have a way of measuring our progress and giving our supporters an honest appraisal of our efforts.

Goal setting doesn't always work. Sometimes a committee will go through setting goals and then focus all their attention the rest of the year on other interests. Trying to establish a culture of achievement can take a lot of effort and time. I don't know if we have fully succeeded yet in establishing that culture in Libertarian Party of Texas.

I have attached in the Appendix our procedure for adopting goals and an example of one of the proposed goals. This may serve as a useful starting point if you would like to try the same.

I do not mandate that our party adopt goals. I have strongly recommended it, but ultimately our committee members decide whether we through this process at all, and if so how it will be done. I present my ideas on what our goals should be, but our committee can propose their's as well. When we are done, our party has confirmed a commitment to achieve results within 12 months.

If your organization more closely resembles a debate or social club than an achievement oriented business, you might try getting your leadership to commit to setting goals. If they aren't willing to do that, then what are you trying to do?

12. Who owns your words?

When a reporter calls you and asks where you stand on a particular issue, do you:

- A. Say whatever you want to say?
- B. Put them on hold and call a meeting of your leadership committee?
- C. Pretend that there is a bad connection and hang up?

If you are speaking for yourself, the best answer is A. If you are speaking for the organization, the best option may not be as obvious.

First consider that if you have candidates, they are the ones that should be answering these questions. These are the people that your party has vetted and nominated. The voters aren't voting for the chair of the party, they are voting for candidates. Helping a reporter contact candidates so that they can get exposure is a good way to handle this.

For those times when you are on the spot, your platform can be your friend. You as a leader may not have had anything to do with your party platform, but it does reflect the consensus of your party on the issues it addresses. Having familiarity with its content can be helpful in giving a defensible response.

There are times when unforeseen issues arise which aren't addressed in anyone's platform. In those cases, you have several options.

- If the question is a trap, don't answer. It is better to be accused of being non-responsive than to give ammunition to your enemy. As Abraham Lincoln said "Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt."
- If it is an issue that clearly divides the party and will cause dissension, you can explain that there is no party consensus on that issue.
- If you feel strongly, and feel you can defend your statement, go for it.

I like leaders that are bold and will shoot straight. However, a leader needs to understand that when they speak for the organization, they better have an appreciation for the feelings of the membership.

How does this apply to words that were not solicited? When you issue a press release, call into a talk show, or speak to a group, do you need approval from someone else for your choice of words?

You were chosen as the leader of the organization, and part of that responsibility is to act as a spokesman. If there are two people contesting for the leadership of the organization, and they are equal in every other way, the one that people trust the most to speak for the organization should

be chosen. Use your position with the understanding that you have been entrusted to choose your words appropriately.

Does every word you utter come under scrutiny of the organization? No. There are times when you are speaking for yourself. While you cannot remove your label as a leader of the organization, you can state that you are speaking for yourself and not the organization. Just as everyone else has opinions, so do you.

In the end, you are the owner of your own words, and the organization is the owner of the organization's words. As long as you have an appreciation for this concept and make reasonable use of the trust placed in you, you can be confident in speaking without worrying about backlash from your own people.

13. Messaging

You can attract a lot of attention by being radical. You can also scare away people that otherwise might want to support you.

You may have noticed some people in the Libertarian Party are radical. Considering that many people regard the Libertarian Party as inherently radical, for Libertarians to distinguish other Libertarians as radical would seem to require a new term. Rageical? Extremical? Hardcoreical?

There are times when you want to be edgy. Taking on a controversial issue can be a great opportunity to get exposure, especially when your opponents are afraid to touch it. If you can rationally backup what you say, it can be a good tactic.

However, if everything you do appears to be fringe, you can marginalize yourself. Looking like the only rational, reasonable person in the room can go a long way toward attracting the people you want in your organization.

I don't know of an easy, scientific way to choose your messaging. With enough time and funding, you can do professional marketing. The business of political marketing is asking voters what they think. Finding out

what messaging works with a survey or focus group can give better idea of what will work when you roll it out on billboards, t-shirts, and the media.

However, you still have to decide who you are trying to reach. Are you trying to attract independent voters with a pragmatic message, or hard core supporters of particular cause with a non-compromising message? Choosing your audience makes a big difference in your messaging.

For most LP organizations without the resources to invest in such research, you just have to rely on your best judgement. Your candidates should do most of the messaging and not be micro-managed by the party. When the party speaks, it should be a message that benefits all your candidates and helps present an image of an organization that does not settle for stopping short of the goal line while offering the only sensible choice.

14. The treasurer

There is one position in an organization that may arguably be more important than the leader. That is the treasurer.

The treasurer carries significant liability. The treasurer has the checkbook. The treasurer is the gatekeeper for the spending of the organization's money. The treasurer is the authority on the financial condition of the organization.

Considering all the responsibilities of the treasurer, it requires a person that is highly trustworthy. If the organization is uncertain whether the treasurer will write checks for holidays in exotic lands, you are in trouble. The treasurer must be diligent in getting the numbers right to the leadership and any other reporting authorities. As a leader, you should take responsibility for ensuring you have a good candidate to take this position if there is a vacancy. You need to show your appreciation for this person for taking on the responsibility. When you have a good treasurer, it is worth spending a lot of extra effort to retain them.

15. Motivating volunteers

A business leader can hire and fire employees. The reward and punishment system is pretty well understood by both parties.

Volunteers are different. They do not get paid for their efforts. There is no automatic reward or punishment system. It is hard to justify shouting down someone's lack of performance when their efforts are offered without compensation.

Therefore, with volunteers the challenge is to be careful about making assignments and to motivate those who offer their time and talents.

The LP depends on volunteers. No matter how much money you have, you cannot hire all the people you need to replace the work of volunteers. Consider that every candidate is a volunteer. You must have an organization that attracts, retains, and motivates volunteers if you plan to survive.

Some volunteers come to you with their own ideas. That's fine. Empower them to go off and do what they want to do if it is supportive of the organization's goals. Forcing an unwilling volunteer into a centrally controlled, top down command structure does not work. Let people try their own thing and see what works.

It is fine if the volunteer accepts responsibility for their own effort. If they put responsibility on you to provide the logistics and resources, you and the party leadership can say yes or no. Just because someone is convinced of their great idea does not mean the party should invest time and resources from others.

Some volunteers just want to help and need to be helped in order to help. An investment in guidance and training may yield long term results or could be wasted. Trying to match a volunteer's interests and talents into a long term benefit is an important start.

In any case, providing the motivation for volunteers is essential if you want continued support. You cannot invest all your time into a person that demands having their backside kissed. However, making an effort to show appreciation goes a long way. You are a volunteer too, and if people see

you that way it can create a constructive team environment and provide the motivation for people to continue their support.

16. Appointing leaders

Leaders in non-profit and political organizations are typically volunteers. Getting paid to be the boss is the norm in the business world, but not in the LP. That is why there should be appropriate appreciation for leaders in the LP for stepping up and taking responsibility.

Not all volunteers are good volunteers. Some occupy more of your time than they provide in support. That can be especially true of people in leadership positions.

If you appoint someone to lead a sub-committee or local organization, will they cause you more work than they do themselves? Will they suck more energy out of the organization than they provide in results? Are you better off leaving people without an organization or leadership than trying to sustain an unsustainable arrangement?

The point is that when you have the opportunity to choose a leader, take it seriously. Do not just assume that someone who is excited, pleasant, or an expert on Austin economics is a good leader.

In my capacity as chair of the LP in Texas, I have had the opportunity to appoint many county chairs. I will not appoint one unless they have the gumption to call me on the phone. If they can't tear themselves away from a computer to have a live conversation with a real person, I probably don't want them as a leader. I want to know if they are in it for the long haul and will commit to being responsive. I want to know if they are a member of the party; I would like them to have some skin in the game.

There are exceptions. It is always a judgement call. When we are recruiting candidates and need one person in an unorganized county to hold a nominating convention, I will appoint the friend, spouse, or relative to be the temporary county chair so that they can file the paperwork. In the

interest of getting a candidate on the ballot, we have to do what is expedient.

When you find good leaders and put them in positions where they can grow the organization, you are moving the ball closer to the goal line. If you aren't careful, you can hand off the ball to someone that will fumble.

17. Delegation

One reason a leader can become overburdened is they do not trust anyone else and therefore are unwilling to delegate. You either need to take some chances and delegate or reduce your scope and goals. The other alternative is ulcers, stress, and perhaps an unscheduled trip to the hospital.

There are those workaholics that try to do everything themselves. Everything makes sense to them because they made all the decisions. They feel secure in knowing that everything makes sense. When the scope of activity is small and manageable, problems may go unnoticed.

However, the LP is in the growth business. When the micro-manager can't keep up with the increased email traffic, paperwork, and demands of the growing organization, what can be done?

Without delegating responsibility to others, you will have to scale back what you do. Sometimes this is the unfortunate best choice. If you cannot find good leaders that you trust and can delegate to, you need to shed duties. It may be that you stop sending out the newsletter. Maybe you make your website less fancy and put static information that doesn't change, relieving you of frequent updates. Doing a few things well is far better than having too many balls in the air and dropping them all.

If you do find good leaders, there is no guarantee that giving them responsibility will work out. You are taking a chance. No matter how thorough a job you do of interviewing, the only way to know if someone can do a job is to give it to them. You are going to have to take chances if you are going to sustain growth.

In the long term, giving people responsibilities and holding them accountable will build a good leadership team. You may make some mistakes along the way and have to go through multiple volunteers before you find one that works. Don't be afraid to delegate.

18. Staff

Most state and local organizations in the LP have no paid staff. An organization can be effective without paid staff. But to take it to the next level, you cannot rely on volunteers alone.

You need to be responsive. As you grow there will be greater demands on support. Who will be there to capture the opportunity when a major donor wants a meeting? Who will respond to the media in time for the evening news? You need to be ready to capture these opportunities.

As a defender of the free market, I believe you generally get what you pay for. However, you must chose very carefully. Unlike with a volunteer, you are risking the investment of your donors. There are some well known principles and practices of the hiring process that are time proven in the business world, and they should be employed.

Over the course of my tenure in Texas, we have hired quite a few people. We have also let quite a few go. If you are not comfortable having to tell a staff member to their face that they no longer have a job, you probably should not hire anyone to start with. It is a difficult message to deliver, but sometimes it must be done for the betterment of the organization.

For those wondering how to get started with their first staff member, you may consider a contract with a low base pay and a high commission rate on general revenue, such as 20%. Attached in the Appendix is an example of a contract used when the LP of Texas first hired an executive director in 2004. I recommend avoiding complicated formulas in your compensation schemes. That only causes more work for the treasurer and can lead to disputes. It is impossible to trace whether each penny of revenue came from the work of your staff or a volunteer. Use revenue growth as a means

of retaining staff who otherwise may be looking for a better wage elsewhere.

While there are a great many good volunteers and activists in the LP, in my opinion there is not a deep talent pool of people to hire. My participation in searches for executive directors at the state and national level has taught me that a person with the right qualifications to hire full time is very rare. You should be prepared for the possibility that your search will yield no qualified candidate and it is better to leave a position vacant . Being a good Libertarian is an insufficient qualification for a paid staff position. Having the right work ethic, professional demeanor, honesty, and follow through is much more important for this role than having “The Federalist Papers” memorized.

Our focus in Texas has been having a mended basket, so we have always started with the position of executive director (ED) instead of a political director or other tree- shaking position. Other staff members would work under the direction of the ED. Our state committee gives the ED a staffing budget, some goals, and allows the ED to make staffing decisions as necessary. It is in the best interest of the ED to not risk their pay by hiring someone that does not yield a return on investment. An ED that makes too many bad decisions gets removed, but not micro-managed.

Sometimes an organization only wants to hire someone for a specific or short term service. In such cases a time limited contract can be employed to limit the commitment. Also, a full commission contract might be used to eliminate any financial risk to the organization while yielding good opportunity for the staff member. I have tried a few full commission contracts over the years. I have never had one result in good returns, but it is effective at exposing someone who claims to have greater abilities than they possess. These people tend to end up disappearing before you have to remove them.

In conclusion, before you consider investing in staff make very certain you as a leader are willing to make difficult decisions. Include your leadership committee in the vetting and hiring process. Keep disciplinary matters involving personnel confidential, not for public distribution. If you follow

these principles and find that rare jewel that you can trust to serve as a full time staff member, your organization will benefit. We have in Texas.

19. Money

Most state and local organizations in the Libertarian Party have little if any funding. An organization can exist and can grow without money. However, if the Libertarian Party ever hopes to seriously compete with our foes, we need to get our funding to that level.

You need to ask. Mentioning “Gee, sure wish we had some money” doesn’t close the deal. You have to say to a live human “Our organization needs your support. Can I count on your contribution today?”

Not every leader needs to be an expert fund raiser. However, if your organization is going to grow its revenue, you need to lead this effort. You either need to do the asking or find someone who will.

You may chose to land a big whale donor. This is someone that might give you a big check on the spot. These donors typically don’t donate just because they like you. They expect results. You cannot promise things you cannot deliver. If they want socialism, tell them to take their money elsewhere. If they understand that their donation will be put in the hands of a leadership committee of the organization, that is great. But most likely there will need to be some alignment on what achievements will be worthy of this investment.

Small donors generally want to be part an organization because they want to associate. They want to be part of the team. A benefit of attracting a large number of small donors is you have a broad revenue base. You can see growth trends emerge and use this information to tell you something about your performance. You don’t have a large disruption if a small donor suddenly stops donating.

In order to make donations rewarding and measurable, you should establish a membership program. This does not give a member any kind of voting rights or privileges. It is simply recognition and appreciation of their contribution. It is also incentive to donate. If someone wants to increase

their \$25 basic membership to a \$100 silver membership, having this infrastructure in place makes it possible.

As a leader, you should lead by example. What membership level are you? Would you expect someone to join the party if you haven't? Asking people to join you as a member of the Libertarian Party is a good way to solicit support.

I encourage you to get over your fear of asking for money. People will follow your lead. The hardest part is getting started.

20. Diversity

There is no point in having a committee of clones. It is far more efficient to have a dictator, and you will get the same results.

The purpose in having a committee is to form consensus from people with different opinions, backgrounds, skill sets, and interests. You are more likely to have a good answer when a diverse group agrees to it. What you don't want is to be so narrow that the decisions being made have insufficient vetting. Having people test the extreme points can reveal hidden flaws or strengthen the argument.

While a committee of clones would yield pointless yet very short meetings, a diverse committee can yield good decisions but at a high cost. Costs are reduced when there is mutual respect for one another.

If there isn't that respect, diversity can lead to factionalism. You can have factions acting not necessarily for the best interest of the organization, but for empowering the faction. You can't control someone's free association, but you can maintain your ethics and integrity and hope that factions can coexist without destroying the common purpose. If such differences are irreconcilable, those that have dark motives may marginalize themselves.

The type of diversity I have addressed thus far has only been in regard to thoughts, experiences, and skills. I have not mentioned diversity of race, gender, or creed. I would hope we all recognize these are inappropriate means of determining who is fit for a job. I do not feel the Libertarian Party

has enough diversity of this kind, but I would reject quotas or other mandates as a means of addressing this. The best way to address diversity is to grow the organization, which will provide a deeper pool of leaders of all kinds.

You as a leader don't get to choose your committee members. However, you can inform people what your general expectations are for serving on a committee. You can also solicit people that you feel would be good committee members. Ultimately your delegates or leadership committee decides who will represent them. Let's hope they choose people that can constructively coexist with a diverse body of Libertarians.

21. Purity

Are you pure? Are you the love child of Ayn Rand and Ludwig von Mises?

I suggest the notion of a pure Libertarian is rather fictitious. We are all familiar with the Nolan Chart and can get a feel for someone's degree of Libertarianism from it, but it is not intended to be exact. Ultimately, Libertarians decide who are Libertarians.

As a leader, you may be called upon to render a Solomon like verdict between the pure approach and the reasonable approach. The pure approach may be the Hail Mary pass that will instantly score if it works. The reasonable approach may be trying to gain 10 yards. I personally like to run higher percentage plays that motivate the team by moving the ball. That does not mean we don't try a Hail Mary sometimes, and it doesn't mean we settle short of the goal line.

When I first became involved at the local level with the Travis County Libertarian Party, our chair David Eagle made a presentation on purity at one of our meetings. He likened the United States to a ship in the middle of the ocean. Unfortunately, it was sailing away from the United States and the principles of liberty toward Europe and the principles of authoritarianism. We can attack people for trying to slow down the boat. We can attack them for trying to reverse course. We can attack them for not heading back home fast enough. All of this because we have debates about how far away we are from home. Why attack? Let's work together

to get the boat headed in the right direction. Until then, our distance from home is academic. When we get somewhere close to the shore line, then the purity debate matters.

22. Being friends with your foes

How dare you talk to non-Libertarians!

Maybe you have never heard this, but I have. The thought that the chair of the Libertarian Party would talk to a Democrat, a Republican, a Green, the ACLU, the NRA, the Sierra Club, or Right to Life may alarm some Libertarians.

Believe it or not, there may be Libertarians under non Libertarian labels. There may be people that agree with us on one issue and are willing to work with us on a common cause. Being part of a coalition can be an effective way to build bridges and attract new supporters.

A leader doesn't have to abandon their principles or their organization to seek mutually beneficial relationships with others. That might be the fear some Libertarians have. Maybe if we only talk amongst ourselves, we can quarantine ourselves from the infection of the socialism and authoritarianism viruses. If our Libertarian immune system is so susceptible to infection of this kind, we shouldn't be a leader.

I encourage building bridges with those that have a common interest for mutual benefit. If you need a vaccine to boost your immunity, try "Atlas Shrugged".

23. Lobbying

The CATO Institute, Reason Foundation, and a multitude of other libertarian organizations have been quite successful over the years serving to educate the public and influence policy. The Libertarian Party has a difference; we put candidates on the ballot.

There is no point in the LP trying to duplicate the good work of organizations like these. However, by putting Libertarian candidates on the

ballot, we can get exposure to their policy proposals. We can influence where office holders stand on these issues. We can be in a negotiating position when we discuss these issues with legislators.

How can we negotiate? What do we have that they want?

There aren't really any deals you can make as a leader. You cannot promise an office holder that they will get re-elected if they write a bill for you. However, what you can do is grade office holders on their record and let your membership know how they rate. We have done this in Texas following the state legislative session. Believe it or not, I know there are legislators in Texas that pay attention to our ranking.

The standard should be high. I don't believe the Libertarian Party has ever opposed Ron Paul on the general election ballot. That is a decision that delegates, not the chair, makes.

You can use your position on the ballot to influence policy and demonstrate to your membership that you can get the ball moving toward the goal line. Of course, we will score sooner if voters elect Libertarians!

24. Compliance

Should we ignore government regulations that we think are unfair or unjust? Generally, no.

It is a tempting idea to think that we can just ignore roadblocks put in our way by our opponents. After all we have the Constitution on our side, right? Well, I suppose that depends on who the judge and jury is. Do you want to take your chances?

We know that election laws and bureaucratic filing requirements impair a smaller competitor like the LP more than well funded and staffed opponents that create these laws. However, the best policy generally is to learn what is required for compliance and comply.

There are times when lawsuits are the only recourse. When a law gets passed that is impossible to comply with and puts your organization in peril,

give them everything you have. The LP national office may jump in with their legal resources to assist you.

Otherwise, defiance is likely to lead to your demise. The public won't be that sympathetic when you complain how unfair it is while your opponents have the same requirements. If they can do it, why can't you? Just because you are the little puppy getting pushed around by the big dogs doesn't mean you will win in the court of law or public opinion.

Try to keep yourself in the game by complying and try to win the game on the ballot, and if necessary in the court.

25. How many Libertarians does it take to build a website?

How many times have you heard this?

“The Libertarian Party is full of geeks and high tech gurus. We can build the most awesome website for nothing!”

It seems there is no shortage of Libertarians claiming to be “the” expert on web technology. You can get all these people in a room and hours later you may still not have any consensus on what is the best way to build your website.

Sometimes you may find a reliable volunteer that will build a very nice website for free. Where will they be a year later? Can you maintain what they gave you? Is it so full of home grown code that nobody else can figure it out?

A website is important. It is your storefront. People that come to that site get an impression of your organization. If it lacks critical functionality such as handling inquiries, providing contact information, or accepting donations, it can mean lots of lost opportunities.

Perhaps some veteran Libertarians know what the acronym TANSTAAFL stands for; There Ain't No Such Thing As A Free Lunch. If you want a quality job, you might need to pay for it.

Where you need to start is a specification. Whether you do this development in house or pay someone, you need to define your requirements. Important issues to address are:

- How easy will it be for someone to update and maintain?
- Does it have all the functionality we require?
- Do we leave out the latest fancy features that can make it unreliable, unmaintainable, and in perpetual development mode?
- Who owns the work product when development is done?
- How is it hosted?
- What is the development schedule?

That and more needs to be addressed before you take the next step.

26. You can get it all for free!

The TANSTAAFL principle not only applies to websites, but any other effort.

Volunteers are great. Any non-profit or political organization depends on them, and they should be shown appreciation. However, the notion that anything can be done for free just doesn't work.

Consider that you want to do some marketing for your organization. You want to know what the voters really think of you so that you can figure out what your party's radio ads will say. You may have someone in your organization that tells you they know a lot about marketing and can do it themselves. At the same time, there are businesses that provide marketing services and have been in business for a long time. Unlike the volunteer who may not have any track record, a business that has survived by providing good service to many clients has a track record. If the volunteer claims to know more than the marketing firm, why don't they open their own marketing firm? They can make money by providing better service and take clients away from other firms. If you get what you pay for, the free option may give you an inaccurate picture of what voters think and your radio ads will drive people away instead of attract them. Paying for a

professional job may yield the information you need to appeal to listeners and bring inquiries to your door.

Not every business is a good one. The free market allows bad service to exist until competition removes it. You don't want to suffer from bad service when you have other options. Scrutinize every option carefully.

There are times when you find a dependable volunteer that does quality work and saves you a lot of money. For many of us, we don't have the funds in the first place and can only consider pro-bono efforts. Just expect that there will be times when the best long term results will come from a business that is trying to survive in the free market and has their reputation on the line.

27. Recruiting your replacement

Serving as a leader in the Libertarian Party can sometimes feel like a thankless job. But it can also be a great honor. There can be a great deal of fulfillment. I enjoy being the head coach of a team fighting for the cause of liberty. I am inspired by our supporters, volunteers, candidates, and donors.

As much I I enjoy the honor of serving as a leader, I do not plan on a lifelong commitment to this service. I expect the same is true for some of you. For most of us, our service as a leader will terminate before we terminate.

I hope that I am not the best leader in the history of the Libertarian Party. You should hope that you aren't either. We should all hope that our efforts to grow the party will yield better leaders than ourselves that we can hand over the steering wheel and let them drive. Our best legacy as leaders is to recruit better replacements. If we do this, the party will be bigger, better, and more effective

PROCEDURE FOR ADOPTION OF ANNUAL GOALS

There will be 3 categories of goals:

- Political
- Financial
- Organizational

There is a “nomination” period where members may present their goals. The goals must have some metric and a champion associated with it. The goals will have an end date of June 2011.

Once the proposals have been submitted and nominations are closed, each champion will have a minute or 2 to advocate their proposal. This will be followed by 30 minutes of open discussion.

When discussion is concluded we will use approval voting to select which goals are adopted. No more than 5 goals in each category will be formally adopted. Additionally, any goal that does not have 2/3 support by vote of SLECT will be dropped. Therefore, the top vote getters in each category that meet or exceed 2/3 of the SLECT members that respond, not to exceed 5, will be formally adopted.

In a tie, we will allow 5 more minutes of debate and do a runoff of those goals that are in contention for the last spot.

CATEGORY: POLITICAL

GOAL: Achieve record statewide voting percentages in the November 2010 elections

CHAMPION: Pat Dixon

MOTIVATION: In order to demonstrate progress, the results in our statewide races is very important. Additionally we want to get above 5% in 3 way races so that in the future if we do not have 2 way statewide races we still have a good shot at ballot access.

MEASURABILITY: The election results are easily obtainable

FEASIBILITY: Our state committee does not have control of campaigns, nor should it. The effort would be to promote the party in Texas and therefore benefit all candidates, including statewide office. With the marketing effort we are rolling out we are hoping to persuade voters. Much is unknown how voters will respond in November. The champion cannot claim credit or blame for the result, but will lead the effort to help achieve the goal.

EXAMPLE STAFF CONTRACT

Position Sought: Executive Director Libertarian Party of Texas

Summary

Relying on volunteers alone has resulted in websites, databases, financial reports, and party official lists and phone numbers that have been outdated, incomplete, or inaccurate, which has hampered the recruitment of new members, activists, and candidates. Many willing volunteers have been asked to do too much, have been over-worked, frustrated, burnt-out, and have quit.

A paid full-time professional staff, starting with an executive director, can provide many of the basic operational requirements of the party, freeing up volunteers, including state and county party officials, to work at sustainable levels on political outreach and party growth activities.

Goals for the Executive Director

- 1) Growth in LP membership
- 2) Growth in number of candidates run
- 3) Improvement in election percentages

Responsibilities of the Executive Director

- 1) State Party operations administration or oversight: bookkeeping, website, database
- 2) Fundraising
- 3) Membership support: phone and e-mail inquiry response
- 4) County affiliate growth and support
- 5) Candidate recruitment and support
- 6) Internal and external party communications
- 7) Political outreach
- 8) Supporting other missions of the LPTX State Libertarian Executive Committee

Executive Director Compensation Package and Terms

Pay: \$20,000 per year plus 20% of gross state party revenue

Status: Independent contractor; at-will termination of position without cause; as fundraising is a primary responsibility of the Executive Director, lack of available funds to pay the Executive Director for amounts due in the event of termination of the position will result in forgiveness of any amounts due to the Executive Director by the State Party.

Required reporting and communication: directly to and only to the LPTX State Chair

Expenses reimbursed: job-related office supplies, telephone expenses, personal vehicle mileage, other party-related expenditures as approved by the SLEC individually, or according to an approved budget.

Information access requirements provided by the State Party to the Executive Director: unlimited access to all databases, financial details, and reports of the State Party.

Start date: July 1, 2004.

Duration: all terms changeable at anytime by acts of the LPTX SLEC or LPTX State Chair