

# TGIF Taking Great Ideas Forward



Improving Northern Capital - Sustainable Development in the Northern Tier

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author and do not reflect positions of organizations with which he is affiliated.

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**“My hand feels touched as well as it touches; reality says this, and nothing more .”**

**-Paul Valery-**

## MEETINGS and EVENTS:

Links will provide additional information. Dates for recent additions are in **bold**.

<i>What</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Where</i>
<b>B CEDC Board Meetings are now the first Tuesday of each month and will begin at 9:30 AM. Locations will vary but with most meetings at the Washburn Library. The January meeting was last Tuesday, January 6<sup>th</sup>. Check the <a href="#">BCEDC Web site</a> for more information about BCEDC.</b>			
Twin Ports Inventors and Entrepreneurs' Club	Jan. 13 <sup>th</sup>	6:00-8:00 PM	WITC - Superior
<a href="#">Selling On eBay</a>	Jan 16 <sup>th</sup>	8:30AM – 4:30PM	UW-Superior
<a href="#">Engineering Professional Development</a>	Jan. 21 – 22	All Day	Madison
Alternative Transportation Seminar	<b>Jan. 28<sup>th</sup></b>	11:30 – 12:30	Northland College Alvord Theatre
Lake Superior Binational Forum	Jan. 30-31	All Day	Superior, WI
Lake Superior Binational Forum <b>Public Input Session</b>	<b>Jan 30<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>1:00 – 5:00 PM</b>	<b>Barkers Island Inn Superior</b>
<a href="#">Inventors &amp; Entrepreneur's Club</a>	Feb. 5 <sup>th</sup>	6:00 pm	Cassablanca Coffee House – Ashland Hwy 2 & 63
BCEDC Board Meeting	Feb. 3 <sup>rd</sup>	9:30 – noon	Washburn Library
<a href="#">Great Lakes Days</a>	Feb. 23 – 25	All Day	Washington DC
<a href="#">Superior Days</a>	Feb. 24 – 25	All Day	Madison
<a href="#">Conservation Lobby Day</a>	Feb. 25 <sup>th</sup>	All Day	Madison
<a href="#">Business Development Conference</a>	<b>May 2009</b>	Two Days	Cable, Lakewoods Resort and Conference Center

## Goals in Life

The **Bayfield County Economic Development Corporation**(BCEDC) is embarked on goal setting that should lead to a future different from current realities. Success will depend on the

perceived quality embedded in the goal or goals that emerge. The flow of thoughts and language from Vision, Mission, Goal, Objective to activity seems reasoned and logical. However, while I agree that a mission and a vision are important guideposts, the critical language may best be centered on the statement of the goal. I suspect that the Vikings and Packers began the season with an objective of winning each game and advancing to the Super Bowl. Unfortunately, game by game, they did not cross the goal line more often than their opponents, so they get to shovel snow.

Touchdowns, extra points and field goals, not objectives or activities, determine success. The goal line, end zones and goal posts are tangible and the team has to get there before the game ending whistle blows. Goals of the game need to be sharply focused like a home plate, an 18" hoop 10' above the playing surface, a goal net or a finish line. Umpires dust home plate frequently and a net assures that everyone agrees when a ball or puck passes the goal. Painted lines define the game.

Finding a new path forward demands leadership and clarity of direction. Stating goals with the clarity of the end zone and the game clock will foster leadership. Not the leadership of a single charismatic individual but leadership that flows from the organization collectively.

The work of **Claus Otto Scharmer**, a Senior Lecturer at MIT began to drift into my span of attention months ago while reading **Peter Senge**. Scharmer's 2007 book *Theory U* is about management and leadership with a central emphasis on the need for looking into the future. The book's subtitle is "*Leading from the future as it emerges.*" Scharmer identifies our circumstance individually and collectively as part of a social system that comes with a history. That history may very likely be loaded with baggage, tapes or mental models that become operational too easily when new situations arise. Each new situation can be met by running the old tapes or framed from legacy mental models leaving little room for learning and advancing. Scharmer, Senge and their colleagues with the [Society for Organizational Learning](#) make a case that successful organizations must learn and adapt in order to advance.

Attempting to understand an artist – a painter – Scharmer explains, can be done from three perspectives. In one perspective, the body of work produced by the painter is observed, gathered and examined, with special attention to the subjects, techniques, contexts, composition, and interpretations. In a second perspective, the painter is observed in the act of painting, mixing paints and applying paint to canvas with skilled brush strokes as the new image is crafted and emerges. In a third perspective, the painter is observed with a blank canvas with the observer anticipating what will be painted. That third perspective, Scharmer identifies as **Presence**. Presence is, in his view, the frame where a person, organization or society is ready to lead and learn from the future.

Learning and leading from the future demands that the present situation is framed and articulated with clarity to make sense. Relationships are key and need to be constantly clarified. As positions are advocated, questions are raised freely to assure clarity and understanding about meaning, relevance and evidence for assertions. Setting aside assumptions in order to probe for understanding opens not only the mind and emotions but also the desire for a new path forward. The path becomes clear when seen through the lens created by a vision. Leading and learning happen as the vision is created through invention. Dr. **Deborah Ancona**, Seley Distinguished

Professor at the MIT Sloan School of Management, provides an overview of [\*Leadership in an Age of Uncertainty\*](#) that TGIF Readers may appreciate.

Trying to do too much in short meetings leaves precious little time to ask questions and process answers in anything but a fearfully superficial way. The result is often simply reshuffled concepts based on old tapes. Goals demand critical analysis and measurable outcomes. While it is possible to assign objectives and activities to goals, the evaluation or assessment of success in achieving the goal is a composite of full and partial successes with each objective and activity. If success is progress, then measurements in making progress are clouded or fogged by partial progress toward a multitude of objectives and activities. If success is achieving the goal, then it is better, I believe, to state goals in specific and measurable terms that will create a project approach that can be managed and evaluated; a goal that can mark those yard-line increments until the goal is achieved and the champaign party can start.

Project management is a way of looking into the future based on tangible, clearly stated goals. If a bridge or a building is to be built, its champions must seek a charter to do the project. Charters are unlikely without a carefully drawn plan that includes a budget based on a timetable and cash flows for completion of the project. A critical path takes the concept from drawing board to door opening. Critical path planning identifies and analyzes tasks, resource requirements, milestones and dependencies. Setting a target date for completion of the project is the foundation for project management. Critical Path Planning is working backward from the target date to establish when, how and by whom tasks will be completed. Milestones provide checkpoints for measuring progress. Tasks are interdependent and must be completed in a logical order.

BCEDC could foster its mission stated broadly as “Supporting new and emerging businesses” by zeroing in on a single tangible goal; *for example: **BCEDC will locate and recruit a manufacturing business with potential employment of no less than 10 FTE employees that will relocate to Iron River by July 1, 2009.*** The example identifies who owns the goal (BCEDC), what specifically will be accomplished, and when it will be completed. Stipulating the type of “manufacturing business” would add a helpful element of specificity. Let the dialog begin! Knowing what success will look like demands a shared vision. The canvas is blank.

**Art Holst**, the businessman, motivational speaker and NFL referee captured a critical key with a poem that began, “As I paused to think of something that sets some men apart, it seemed to me that goals in life must be the place to start.”

## **LIGHTER SIDE:**

As with most jokes the original author is unknown. Whoever you are; “Thanks!” Names, when added, are intended to tease the innocent.

### **Coding Monkeys**

A tourist walked into a pet shop and was looking at the animals on display. While he was there, another customer walked in and said to the shopkeeper, “I’ll have a C monkey please.” The shopkeeper nodded, went over to a cage at the side of the shop and took out a monkey. He fitted a collar and leash, handed it to the customer, saying, “That’ll be \$5,000.”

The customer paid and walked out with his monkey. Startled, the tourist went over to the shopkeeper and said, “That was a very expensive monkey. Most of them are only a few hundred

dollars. Why did it cost so much?" The shopkeeper answered, "Ah, that monkey can program in C - very fast, tight code, no bugs, well worth the money."

The tourist looked at a monkey in another cage. "Hey, that one's even more expensive! \$10,000! What does it do?"

"Oh, that one's a C++ monkey; it can manage object-oriented programming, Visual C++, even some Java. All the really useful stuff," said the shopkeeper.

The tourist looked around for a little longer and saw a third monkey in a cage of its own. The price tag around its neck read \$50,000. The tourist gasped to the shopkeeper, "That one costs more than all the others put together! What on earth does it do?"

The shopkeeper replied, "Well, I haven't actually seen it do anything, but it says it's a project manager".

Take care and enjoy a great weekend!

*Bruce*

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*Bruce Lindgren is Principal of [B.Lindgren CONSULTING](#). The consulting practice serves small business, local government, school districts and non-profits providing support for research, grant development, technical writing, marketing support and project management. Bruce brings his background in biological sciences, education, small business and media technology to generate and implement ideas contributing solutions to mission critical challenges.*

*In addition Bruce maintains many affiliations including: [Bayfield County Economic Development Corporation](#), (BCEDC) Director, [IDEA Consortium LLC](#), Owner, [Inland Sea Society](#), (ISS) Director, [Lake Superior Binational Forum](#), (LSBF) US Co-Chair, [Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board](#), (WIB) Member, [Raindrop Garden Gallery](#), (RGG) Co-owner*

*The encircled fractal triangle represents an integrated cluster of seven ideas – economics, ecology, equity, ethics, experience, education and energy – that may be considered a core for sustainability studies. Bruce is available to present illustrated lectures and facilitate discussions about role of education in Industrial Ecology, Sustainable Development and the Sustainability Revolution.*