

TANGIBLE VERSUS INTANGIBLE LEADERSHIP SKILLS

David Handel states that *"One has to assume you [(the leader)] have a certain level of content skills, or the tangibles. That is sort of a given. That doesn't mean you have to be a content expert in everything, but it means you have to have a certain level of content expertise. I think the intangible is what you do and how you do it. What kind of a role model do you serve for the people that work with you? To me it is about emphasizing values, integrity, doing the right thing. The intangible is creating an environment, or being part of creating an environment that people are happy in; they feel it is professionally rewarding and challenging; that it is an open environment where people can say what they feel and think; that you really focus on a team environment. I occasionally call healthcare administration a team sport as it (is about) teams coming together. But you need to create, or be part of creating an environment, where people will be comfortable with that. It is really modeling by what you do that you are open to hearing people's opinions. It doesn't matter if they agree with you or not. What is your opinion? Why do you think that? It is also creating an environment where you try to reach consensus. Consensus doesn't mean that if there are 15 people in the room that every one of the 15 say 'Yes, I agree.' But basically there is pretty good unanimity that is the right way to go. Then it is moving forward with it. Deciding something, taking action, and then holding people accountable. To me the intangible is that people look at you and what you do."*

Vince Caponi states that *"We need the content skills that our physicians and nurses and CPAs and IT people have. But just because you are a good basketball player doesn't mean you are a good coach. That's played itself out many times in a lot of professional sports. Just because you weren't a good athlete, doesn't mean you can't be a fabulous coach. It is a different set of skills. If you think about a coach who creates that milieu in order for people to do their best work, they are not hitting the ball, they are not passing the ball, they are not shooting the ball: what they are doing is seeing what your [(the player)] skills and abilities and gifts are. They are almost like the leader of a symphony pulling everyone together in harmony to accomplish whatever strategy or goal we may have. The intangibility is that you [(the leader)] get the big picture. You are able to take something that is very complex and make it as simple as you possibly can. You have to be a good recognizer of talent. Sometime as a leader it is when to put yourself into play, and when not to put yourself into play. It is knowing when to take the lead, and when to get out of the way and let people go ahead and do that. The (effective leader) knows when the difference is: it may be called street sense or intuition. It is some of that reflection time. (As leaders) I don't think we reflect enough. As humans, we have the ability to reflect, and we have the ability to change. You have to seek out everybody's opinion. And then you have to (communicate) back to people and say 'let me tell you what I've heard, and let me tell you how I think that lines up. The leader then has to decide. That is what a leader does."*

Ed Abel talks about David Windley as a great healthcare leader, saying, *"He preferred to give credit to other folks. When we were successful, he would typically push whoever was part of whatever was going on as being responsible. I think that unselfishness has continued to pervade the organization" and is handed down to others who are continuing that same leadership style and legacy.*