

GIVING

# Strategic leadership: a gift you can share

BY JULIA EAST

President and CEO, Southwest Florida Community Foundation

This article about strategic leadership is the fourth in a five-part series on the gift of leadership.

As you have seen from this series of articles, there are many kinds of leadership. In fact, we could do an article every week (don't worry we won't!) about leadership and still barely scratch the surface on this subject.



**SOUTHWEST FLORIDA  
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What is important to remember is this — regardless of the “type” of leadership, leadership is a wonderful gift to give to your community or organization.

There are various “levels” of leadership. Healthy organizations will have strategic leaders in their top executive positions such as chief executive officer or chief operating officer, top management team comprised of division heads and vice presidents, or their governing body such as a board of trustees/directors/regents/supervisors.

Strategic leaders look at both internal and external factors and understand how they will impact the overall organization. They then develop plans to minimize the negative and increase the positive effects. Strategic leaders also help others in the organization understand the relationship between strategic forces and organizational success.

Strategic leaders constantly seek to acquire new information and experiences within all areas of their organizations, while at the same learning as much as they can about what is happening outside of their organization and industry. These leaders also spend a significant amount of time building and nurturing relationships, creating strong networks, and spearheading coalitions and partnerships with a multitude of people and entities.

All organizations need functional leaders who are focused on what needs to be done today, next week, and next month. But organizations also desperately need strategic leaders who will keep their eye on the

big picture and our ever changing environment.

Strategic leaders provide a wonderful gift to their organizations and causes. They have the ability to look at today, tomorrow, projected trends, and goals and put all of these into the context of a workable plan that will advance the cause of the organization. Organizations that have strategic leaders are better positioned to survive tough economic times such as those we are seeing today.

This is because these leaders were not solely focused on what was happening at a point particular point in time, but were looking down the road and envisioning and planning for the future.

People sometimes become frustrated with strategic leaders because they spend so much of their time in the future. What we often fail to see is that it is these visionaries who will help us to prepare and plan for the good and the bad times to come. What a truly remarkable gift they have for us if we have the wisdom to accept it.

If you work for or are involved with an organization with a strategic leader, thank her for the marvelous gift she has given. If you work for or are involved with an organization that does not have a strategic leader, find one!

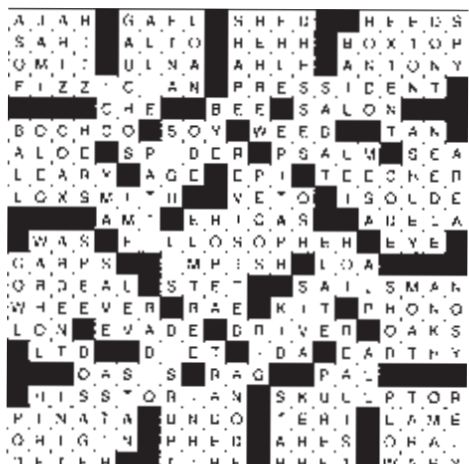
If you are a strategic leader looking for a cause, contact the Southwest Florida Community Foundation and we will be happy to assist you in finding a way to give your gift of strategic leadership. Please ask to speak with our director of programs, Anne Douglas when you call. ■

*The Southwest Florida Community Foundation has been supporting the communities of Lee, Charlotte, Collier, Glades and Hendry through endowed funds for nearly 32 years. With assets of more than \$57 million and over 320 endowed funds, the Community Foundation has provided more than \$30 million in grants and scholarships to the communities it serves.*

*For more information, call (239) 274-5900, or visit their Web site at [www.florida-community.com](http://www.florida-community.com).*

## PUZZLE ANSWERS

2	1	8	5	4	9	3	7	6
7	3	9	2	1	6	5	8	4
5	6	4	8	7	3	2	1	9
9	8	6	4	3	2	7	5	1
1	5	2	7	6	8	4	9	3
4	7	3	1	9	5	6	2	8
6	4	7	9	2	1	8	3	5
3	9	5	6	8	7	1	4	2
8	2	1	3	5	4	9	6	7



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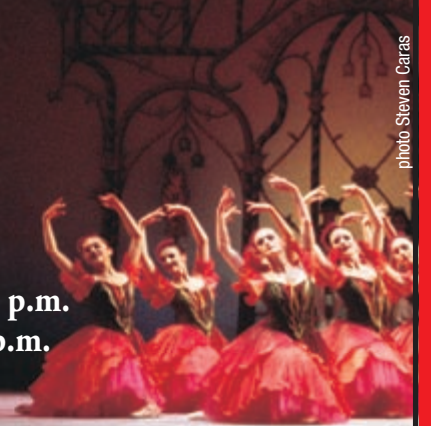
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