

**“A must-read for leaders!” – Marshall Goldsmith**  
the million-selling author of *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*



**Would  
YOU  
Want to  
Work for  
YOU™?**

**UPDATED  
&  
EXPANDED**

**How to build  
an executive leadership brand  
that inspires loyalty and  
drives employee performance**

**Brenda Bence**

**GLOBAL C-SUITE EXECUTIVE COACH & LEADERSHIP ADVISOR**

## If you wouldn't want to work for you, why should anyone else?

If you are a senior leader who wants career advancement but find yourself stuck at the same level, here's a reality check: your business achievements and functional skills alone aren't enough. What's likely missing is a skill that the world's best corporate leaders have developed—mastery of the *people* side of the equation. You must become a leader others want to work for. How do you do that? It's vital to start by looking inward.

### Grab a mirror and dial into “YOU™”—The Trademarked You

Through discovering your unique leadership qualities, preferences, and yes, shortcomings, you can create a winning Executive Leadership Brand—YOU™. If anyone knows how to help you do that, it's author Brenda Bence, who has two decades of experience coaching senior executives at the upper levels of major corporations worldwide.

In *Would YOU Want to Work for YOU™?*, she reveals the 16 most damaging people-leadership behaviors that she regularly sees in the workplace and provides you with dozens of proven tips, tools, and techniques that you can apply immediately to correct them. Packed with real-life case studies from around the globe, this book will help you:

- Discover where the world's best business leaders focus their energy
- Get crystal clear about the experience of working with and for you as a leader
- Uncover the #1 reason for unwanted employee turnover and what to do about it
- Motivate even your most challenging and underperforming team members

**This updated and expanded edition includes a brand-new bonus chapter on leading in today's hybrid work world, offering fresh insights for our modern workplace challenges.**

“Brenda Bence reveals how you can affect the way your people perceive, think, and feel about you so that you can become the boss you really want to be. Read this book—it's about YOU.”

—KEN BLANCHARD, coauthor of *The One Minute Manager*® and *Trust Works!*



**Brenda Bence** knows what it takes to lead at the very top. After earning her MBA from Harvard, she built billion-dollar brands across four continents as a senior executive in Fortune 100 multinationals. Now a globally recognized C-Suite Executive Coach, Leadership Advisor, and Professional Speaker Hall of Fame inductee, she has guided hundreds of leaders from more than 70 industries and 60 nationalities. Named a “Coaching Legend” by Thinkers50 and BetterUp—and consistently ranked among the world's top coaches by Global Gurus—Bence is trusted by the world's most influential companies to drive transformational success.



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# 1

## What Are the Best-Kept Secrets of Successful Leaders?

*“Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.”*

— LEO TOLSTOY, RUSSIAN NOVELIST

It was a hot August night in Cincinnati, Ohio, the home of the world headquarters of Procter & Gamble. I had just flown in the day before from China, where I was living and working for P&G as an expat, to attend a global meeting for the company’s marketing leaders. Once the all-day event was over, I holed myself up in a corner of the darkened 9<sup>th</sup> floor—my old stomping grounds when I worked there—in order to catch up on emails.

When I realized it was almost 9:30 p.m., I packed up my things to head back to my hotel. Making my way through a half-lit hallway, I reached the elevator bank and pushed the “down” button. As I glanced up, I realized the elevator was descending from the 11<sup>th</sup> floor.

Back then, the 11<sup>th</sup> floor of P&G's world headquarters was called "Mahogany Row" due to the beautiful mahogany desks that graced the space. Those desks belonged to the highest-level leaders in the multibillion-dollar corporation—P&G's C-Suite Executives: the CEO, the COO, the CFO, the CMO, the CIO, the C-I-E-I-O (you get my drift).

As I stood there watching the elevator numbers counting down from 11 ... to 10 ... to 9, a thought flashed through my mind. "I wonder if anybody from the 11th floor will be riding down with me?"

As if on cue, the elevator doors opened and, sure enough, there stood John Pepper, P&G's then-Chairman and CEO. As I stepped inside, it suddenly hit me: I was going to have nine floors—count 'em, *nine*—of one-on-one time with the company's #1 executive.

Because I had presented to John before, I knew he was aware that I was managing key company brands in Greater China, an important strategic location for P&G. I also knew that after 30 hours on a long-haul flight and attending an all-day meeting, the pistons of my brain-engine weren't exactly hitting on all cylinders. That's when I heard the wise voice of one of my favorite mentors inside my head, saying, "Brenda, always be prepared with a question for top management in case you run into them. Because if you don't ask *them* a question, they will ask *you* one."

So, to avoid being posed a brain-challenging question in my exhausted state, I turned and said, "Good evening, John. It's nice to see you. Do you mind if I ask you a question?"

"Not at all," he answered. "Feel free."

"There's something I've been wondering about," I said. "I understand what it takes to progress from Assistant Brand Manager

to Brand Manager. And I'm clear about what's required to move from Brand Manager to Associate Marketing Manager and from there to Marketing Manager. I'm even clear on what it takes to advance from Marketing Manager to Marketing Director and from Marketing Director to Vice President. But above that level, what does it take to get promoted from, say, Executive Vice President to *Senior* Executive Vice President? In other words, at that level, why do some leaders keep moving up the ladder and others don't?"

I've never forgotten what Mr. Pepper shared with me late that August evening. "Those who don't make it to the highest levels of the organization are the executives who stop being '*coachable*.' They believe they no longer need to accept feedback. They don't try to keep learning or growing, and they don't believe they need to stretch themselves anymore. They sit back, earn the big paycheck, and take in all the perks that come with a grand title. They believe they've 'made it.' Those are the leaders who don't last long because being coachable—along with *being* a good coach on the job—are fundamental to leadership success."

Mr. Pepper's powerful advice has influenced me ever since. Besides initiating a daily habit of asking myself, "How coachable am I today?" his words of wisdom factored into my decision to become an executive leadership coach once I left the corporate world a few years later. As a result of that encounter, my work has centered on helping C-Suite leaders and senior executives of global multinational corporations make positive change in both their professional and personal lives. This allows them to advance in their careers through being more coachable and adapting their mindsets and their behaviors—all while becoming great at-work coaches to others.





## **The Weakest (Yet Most Often Cited) Excuse for Not Focusing on Building People**

Leaders often tell me, “Brenda, I *know* I should focus more on developing my team. But the reality is, I just don’t have the time. I’m already putting in 13-hour days building the business. There isn’t an extra minute to spend on developing people.”

I consider this the single weakest excuse for not focusing on building your team’s skills. Why? Because growing your employees’ capabilities shouldn’t be a separate job nor a time-consuming activity.

Part of my role as an executive leadership coach involves “shadow-ing”—following and observing—senior leaders in action as they lead teams or run meetings. That gives me the privilege of witnessing firsthand what works well and where there’s room for improvement.

Throughout these experiences, one thing has become perfectly clear: The best leaders demonstrate that building business and building people are fully integrated processes. Developing people is not a *task* to be added to a to-do list; it is a *mindset*.

Remember that as a leader, not only is it important for you to remain coachable, but you must also be a great on-the-job coach yourself. In fact, I encourage you to go through your day with this thought in mind: *Every moment is a coaching moment*. If you think of building people in that way, it becomes less of a daunting task.

- When a direct report does something well, let them know right away. When you praise team members, it becomes clear what you consider good work, and they will continue to produce the same or better results.

- Likewise, if a direct report does something “not so well,” it’s your job to let that person know right away and coach them to consider how to do it better next time.

As you can see, both situations offer coaching opportunities that are integrated into your day-to-day work life.

The best leaders make people development a seamless part of their work, and they recognize coaching moments on a regular basis. First, they give their direct reports the right projects and responsibilities to help them grow; second, they interact with those direct reports in ways that challenge them and strengthen their leadership capabilities. Again, the best leaders do this constantly and naturally as they go about building business. Coaching team members to improve isn’t a separate activity that takes extra time—it is a frame of mind that can be learned.

Developing the people you lead gives you more time in the long run because you can delegate more effectively. You allow your direct reports to take on more responsibilities so that they are constantly learning. Indeed, I’ve seen this essential shift in mindset and behavior help leaders reduce their stressed-out, 14- to 16-hour workdays to a calm and confident 8 to 10 hours per day.

## **Leadership Threshold™ Ratios**

The following exercise involves using a simple circle to help you assess how you spend your time. This is the first of many such circles you’ll use throughout this book to represent how you allocate your time as a leader. You can use this exercise to understand if you are focusing your time effectively and, if not, where you need to make adjustments.

Try it for yourself, with this first ratio exercise—Building Business vs. Building People.

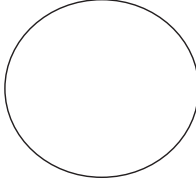
## Ratio: Building Business vs. Building People

Draw a circle, and let it serve as a pie graph that represents 100 percent of your time. Your first task is to divide that graph into two pieces—one portion that reflects how much time you currently spend building *business* and the other that reflects how much time you spend building *people*. How is your graph split as you think about how you allocate your time right now? What ratio reflects your current reality? For example, do you spend 80 percent of your time building business and 20 percent building people, or is it closer to, say, 50:50?

In doing this exercise with executives around the world, I've found that most leaders spend about 75 to 90 percent of their time building business and only 10 to 25 percent building people. How about you?

Next, underneath that same circle, draw a line, a colon, and another line that looks like this: \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_

**Building Business /  
Building People**

Current: 

Optimal: \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_

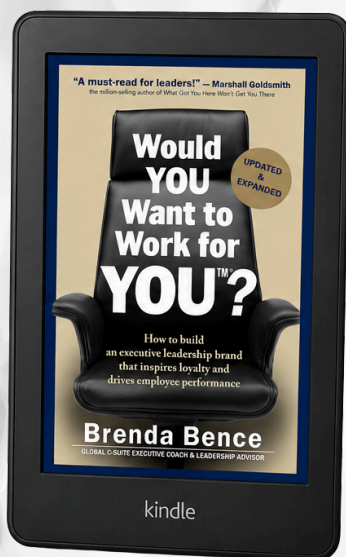
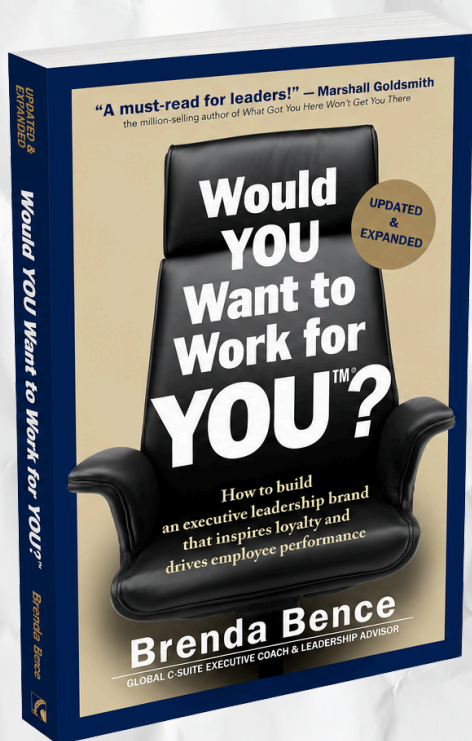
Let this represent the *optimal* time ratio for these two aspects of leadership—how you could ideally split your time between building business and building people.

Is it 30:70, 70:30, 50:50, or something else? You decide and write it on the ratio line. Most leaders I've worked with say their optimal ratio is somewhere around 30 percent spent on building business and 70 percent on building people—a dramatic shift from their current reality.

Now, compare your own current, actual pie graph with the desired ratio that you noted. How big is the difference between the two? How much work do you have to do to shift your existing ratio to the optimal one?

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