



# Leadership Living

*the MasterPoint™ Series for the ascendant professional*

by Tim Herd

## Visionary achievement



There are quite a number of ways to summit scenic Pike's Peak in Colorado. You can hike to the 14,110-foot crest on the 13-mile Barr Trail winding upward from Manitou Springs. You can white-knuckle a car along the hairpin curves, long steep drop-offs, and no guard rails of the highway to the rocky top, or ride the Cog Railway up 25 percent slopes in style. You could ascend in a hot air balloon or be lifted via helicopter. You could even parachute down to the pinnacle from an overflying airliner. But there's no avoiding its height: To reach the summit, you must climb, one way or the other.

Summits worth mounting, dreams worth fulfilling, projects worth building, and goals worth reaching are worth investing in the energy, effort, and resources required. Partners must be enlisted, ways and means determined, and obstacles overcome. But there's nowhere to go without a vision.

It seemed a good idea ever since 1534 when the king of Spain dreamed it up: cut a canal through the isthmus of Panama, and save a bundle in transportation. But constructing the route became one of the largest, most difficult, and most costly engineering projects ever.

But it wasn't so much the technical challenges as it was the natural impediments that created most of the hazards: landslides (Gravity: it's not just a good idea—it's the law!), and the bane of the canal, the lowly mosquito—able-bodied carrier of deadly malaria and yellow fever. By the time the 48-mile waterway opened in 1914, an estimated 27,500 workers had died in its construction.

Yet thanks to its visionary leaders, the Panama Canal is today one of the world's most valued and busy enterprises. It cuts travel distance from New York to San Francisco to just 42 percent of the long way around Cape Horn—with passage through the canal itself in just 8-10 hours. Its current capacity carries almost quadruple the tonnage first projected as its maximum.

In 1961, when President Kennedy laid out the challenge to the American people to land a man on the moon and return him safely within the decade, the country's space program barely existed, and was

completely incapable of delivering such an outlandish concept. But America bought that vision. In just eight short years, NASA engineers invented everything from the shape of the rocket and the maneuverability of the spacecraft to how to land men safely on a moving target 240,000 miles away. The final cost of Project Apollo and its Saturn rockets was \$25.4 billion in 1969 Dollars. A huge commitment—but the out-of-this-world goal was attained.

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While just 12 men have ever walked on the moon, the entire world is filled with tangible benefits of that costly endeavor. Independent research reports corroborated that a mere one percent of the estimated 25,000 to 30,000 space program spin-offs generated \$21.6 billion in U.S. sales and benefits; \$355 million in federal corporate income taxes, and created 352,000 jobs—in just one eight year period!

Most worthy destinations are not easy to attain. The investments in human, physical, financial, and technical resources are often substantial, as may be the challenges, risks—and the eventual rewards. Fulfillment follows from the leader's vision, the commitment of the team and resources, purposeful action based on strategic planning, and persistence toward the goal.

### **MasterPoint 60**

*The seven steps of visionary achievement:  
1. Articulate the vision. 2. Assemble the team.  
3. Commit the resources. 4. Calculate the risks. 5. Mitigate the dangers.  
6. Plan the route. 7. Persist in action.*

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*Leadership trainer Tim Herd is a career executive with extensive service in both private and public sector enterprises. He was the founder and CEO of America's first fully mobile environmental education center, and has been nationally recognized for his "commitment and exceptional contributions to the stewardship of America's natural and cultural resources." As an international speaking professional, Tim brings his observations, humor, and insights from nature, culture, business, and everyday living to help maximize our personal and productive best.*

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