

## The Preferred Leader

**By Quinn Sanders and  
Dr. Travis Bradberry**

"It will solidify your bond with your customers to encompass a greater sense of trust, integrity and partnership."

~ Michael Dell, CEO of Dell Computer

Dell's statement is underscored by the fact that he led the company to a 97.3% compound average annual return throughout the last decade. In other words, if you put \$1,000 into Dell stock to start off 1993, you would be staring at \$96,124 in your account this Christmas. Michael Dell knows how to lead a company to success, but what do employees prefer in a leader?

Ken Blanchard knows effective leadership. Few have impacted the day-to-day management of employees and companies as he has during the last quarter century. During his travels helping businesses employ the strategies from his 17 best selling books, Blanchard discovered something fundamental about what employees want in a leader: They want to wholeheartedly follow someone who earns their trust, partners with them and takes the time to affirm their worth.

But how do you teach someone these qualities? A PowerPoint® presentation or "Rah! Rah!" leadership retreat are unlikely to create a lasting change in these fundamental qualities.

Ken's answer to the challenge comes in the *Preferred Leader™ Assessment*. He chose to work with TalentSmart® to develop a learning tool that measures a leader's skill in these fundamental qualities and then helps her to move forward with guided development exercises. The assessment, coauthored with Drs. Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves of TalentSmart®, shows leaders where they stand today and provides an abundance of online learning tools to help them make a lasting change.

Research on the leadership behaviors measured by the assessment reveals a strong link to job performance. A large study conducted in a cross section of industries found that Integrity, Partnership and Affirmation collectively explain more than 40% of a leader's performance. Another study found that improving integrity scores by just a tenth of a point led to an increase of \$250,000 in a leader's productivity.

Putting people first is more than a theoretical method for getting results. It works. But how do you teach leaders to do this?

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By now, most of us have been introduced to e-learning in one form or another. Many applications have poor graphics, bland displays and an interface that treats the learner like a pre-schooler participating in an organization-wide “learn to tie your shoes” initiative. Is this how a learning department adds value to the organization through employee development?

Fortunately, the TalentSmart® learning platform is trying to change all that by linking engaging e-learning to the back end of a valid assessment of the learner’s current behavior. *The Preferred Leader™ Assessment*, in particular, is leading the way by putting the teachings of Ken Blanchard into action.

Many assessments give you a score and expect you to know what to do with it. The Preferred Leader™ Assessment is unique because it uses a self-directed learning methodology to aid in a leader’s development. In other words, the assessment doesn’t exclude you from an activity based on your score. It recommends a development area, and then lets the learner decide how long he will spend with each activity.



According to Carl Rogers, the father of self psychology, “The only learning which significantly influences behavior is self-discovered, self-appropriated learning.” Self-directed learning is accommodates varying learning styles and objectives.

Today, a leader’s time is more valuable than ever, so the assessment blends clips of Ken Blanchard keynotes, Blanchard® and TalentSmart® training videos and historical events into each leader’s assessment results. These e-learning activities are also supported by a complete goal tracking system which helps ensure lasting change from the assessment effort.

### ABOUT

#### THE AUTHORS:

##### QUINN SANDERS

Quinn Sanders is the Product Development Manager at TalentSmart®. Quinn's work in both the public and private sector has given him a well rounded perspective on leadership and organizational development. His knowledge of both technology and organizational behavior provides clients with a unique perspective in developing employee skills.

Quinn has conducted large scale e-learning and culture analysis initiatives at companies from a cross-section of industries. He also participated in a study of customer aggression at AT&T that was recently published in the Journal of Organizational Behavior.

Quinn has his B.A in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from Penn State University and will earn his M.S. in Applied Psychology from San Diego State University in December.

##### DR. TRAVIS BRADBERRY

Dr. Bradberry is the President and co-founder of TalentSmart®, and is a leading expert on emotional intelligence and leadership assessment. He speaks in corporate and public settings domestically and internationally and has conducted numerous large-scale studies examining the relationship between leadership skills and job performance.

His work has been featured by the media in Sales and Marketing Management Magazine, HR Learning and Innovations, HR.com, Executive Book Summaries, Business Line, *Training Magazine*, and *Business Outlook*.

Dr. Bradberry is the coauthor of the bestselling *Emotional Intelligence Appraisal™* assessment and the *Emotional Intelligence QuickBook*, to be released by Simon and Schuster in June of 2005. Travis holds a Dual Ph.D. in clinical and industrial-organizational psychology.