

# **Leadership in Action: Six Stories of Turning Dysfunction into Success**

November 21, 2025

**SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
EDWARDSVILLE**



# Greetings!



**Chris McSherry | Project Manager,  
Business Insights,  
Bayer Crop Science**

Hi, everyone! Thank you for joining me today. My name is **Chris McSherry**, and I'm a Project Manager with Bayer Crop Science Business Insights.

I've always had the best seat in the house in a 35-year career. I've been privileged to dive into Telecomm, Collaboration Tech, Change Management, Cybersecurity, Data Enablement, Technical Program Management and Project Management.

I'm an incurable storyteller, and I'd like to share a few with you today.

I'm a magnet for "exciting times" when I inherited mission-critical projects and teams that were on the brink of failure. My tale today is about one of them.

But today's stories aren't just mine.

The most compelling come from those who taught me by their examples, some of the best leaders I have had the honor to work with. Here are their stories, in their own words.

I hope you too will gain valuable insights and inspiration to apply in your own professional journey.

\$375 BILLION in the ditch?? *Gulp...*

---



*No problem... Right?*



### What did I learn?

- **Don't hide from the heat:** Be vulnerable enough to admit there is trouble and seek help from your team and your leaders.
- **Break down silos:** Get the players together. Don't entertain the concept that "IT doesn't talk to the Business, Finance lives in their own world and NOBODY talks to Security". ***One Team, shared success.***
- **Ensure each team member sees their fingerprints on the outcome:** Celebrate every win. Get creative with your publicity and keep it meaningful.
- **Inspire people:** Keep it front and center that they are part of something much bigger than themselves, and it is a privilege to be the ones entrusted to deliver it.

# I delivered a \$2.3 Billion ERP... and you rated me a stinkin' 2???

**Chris Gates | SVP, Chief Technology  
Officer, Allstate**



**Chris:** What a typical day at work is *really* like:  
Parrots, puppets, & pina coladas...  
All about your attitude!

**Craig McSherry, Sr. | Former  
CIO, P&G MDVIP**



**Craig:** Coaching a newcomer to arm wrestling so  
his opponent can beat him in the next round

### What did they teach me?



- **Leverage your team:** Don't try to do everything yourself. Help your team learn and grow.
- **Be genuine and authentic:** Provide selfless feedback with no ulterior motives.
- **Focus on developing people:** Measure your success through the success of others.
- **Work-life balance:** Ensure you and your team maintain a healthy balance to avoid burnout.
- **Feedback truly is a gift.**



# Produce 4 Months in 2 Months & Don't Kill Anybody...

## Yeah, We Can Do That



**Amy Sanders |  
Head of Digital  
and Data  
Enablement,  
Bayer Crop  
Science**

*... and the Best  
Mom in Missouri!*

## Amy Sanders | Head of Digital and Data Enablement, Bayer Crop Science



### What has Amy taught me?

- **Build good relationships and credibility:** Establishing trust and credibility is crucial for gaining support and achieving goals.
- **Encourage team collaboration:** Involve the team in brainstorming and decision-making to find creative solutions.
- **Provide necessary resources:** Ensure the team has the resources they need to succeed, including training and funding.
- **Address critical gaps:** Identify and address critical gaps that could impact safety and performance.
- **Celebrate successes:** Recognize and celebrate the team's achievements to boost morale and motivation.



# The Team that After-Parties Together, Stays Together!



**Scott Rismiller | Past NA Business Intelligence Lead,  
Bayer Crop Science (Retired)**



*Famous Scott quote: "No, we  
don't want another dog!"*



## Scott Rismiller | Past NA Business Intelligence Lead, Bayer Crop Science (Retired)



### What did Scott teach me?

- **Redefine roles based on skills and interests:** This helps optimize productivity and ensures each customer group is well-supported.
- **Encourage peer-to-peer knowledge sharing:** This builds a cohesive team and ensures coverage and succession planning.
- **Praise publicly, coach privately:** This approach helps maintain morale and encourages growth.
- **Transparency:** Being open about mistakes and showing vulnerability builds trust.
- **Paint a vision and be a cheerleader:** Clearly explain objectives and celebrate collective achievements.
- **Identify and address incompatibility:** Prioritize team morale by ensuring everyone is in the right role.

# What does a Volleyball & a Helpless Desk have in common?

Cheri Williams | Past Director, Global Program Delivery,  
Lexis Nexis (Retired); Career Coach



*Cheri is a morning person.  
Try not to hold that against her.*



## Cheri Williams | Past Director, Global Program Delivery, Lexis Nexis (Retired); Career Coach

---

### What have I learned from Cheri?

- **Empower your team:** Provide the necessary training, resources, and authority to enable your team to succeed.
- **Build visibility:** Make sure all team members get the credit they deserve and that stakeholders are aware of their contributions.
- **Encourage teamwork and camaraderie:** Activities outside of work can help build strong relationships and a sense of community.
- **Teach management skills:** Ensure that new leaders are equipped with the skills they need to manage and lead effectively.



# Road Captain for Harley Fundraisers! Now that's leadership in STYLE!

**Dave Becker | Past Director, Corporate Analytics & Big Data, Walmart;  
Past Global Enterprise Service Management Practice Lead, Capgemini (Retired)**



*Oh deer...*

**Dave Becker | | Past Director, Corporate Analytics & Big Data, Walmart;  
Past Global Enterprise Service Management Practice Lead, Capgemini (Retired)**

---



**What did I learn from Dave?**

- **Open communication:** Establish a precedent for open communication and ensure everyone feels comfortable asking questions.
- **Collaborative planning:** Involve the team in refining and shaping the vision and plan to ensure their buy-in.
- **Prove you are listening:** Regular one-on-one meetings & follow-up actions show that you are genuinely listening to your team.
- **Honesty and transparency:** Be honest about what needs to be done to achieve goals, even if it's not always good news

# Thank you!

**Thank you for taking the time to hear these stories.** I hope you found experiences relatable to your own, and that you are reminded of your own shining moments along the way. Perhaps you heard a new strategy you can use as your own exciting times arrive!

The valuable lessons I learned are that what matters most is the human side of leadership: Trust, integrity, risk taking, looking out for each other, collaborative spirit, providing guidance. You can be the one to take others through times of adversity. *(Even if you ARE the **shortest one on the team!**)*

I genuinely wish you the best in your future endeavors, and I hope you find inspiration for your own leadership journey!

~ Chris



**Contact:**

[Chris.McSherry@Bayer.com](mailto:Chris.McSherry@Bayer.com)

+1 (513) 331-0942

[Chris McSherry | LinkedIn](#)