

Performance Power: Enhancing Your Leadership Capacities

Electric cooperative executives routinely encounter complex challenges that offer no simple solutions, says Margaret Seidler, consultant and master trainer, Seidler & Associates, LLC.



Often, these challenges rise from opposing needs or forces which seem to support positions that appear at cross purposes, Seidler said.

Seidler, who will lead a post-conference leadership training session following the [2010 CEO Close-Up](#) conference in January, said great leaders not only manage these sorts of dilemmas, but also can turn natural tension that come with these situations into both personal and professional strengths.

A common catch-22, Seidler explained, is CEOs feel pressure to grow revenue while at the same time must support conservation and energy efficiency strategies to meet consumer expectations or regulatory requirements.

“These interdependent opposites are sometimes called dilemmas or paradoxes. We call them polarities. We all have a degree of ability in managing polarities because they are such a central part of our daily lives. We have an implicit understanding that there are many opposites in tension in our lives.” Seidler said.

The problem, she said, is leaders do not have an explicit model that enables them to see all the way through an issue.

Her training session will offer such a model and methodology, based on her nine years of experience working at an IOU and her research reflected in her acclaimed book, *Power Surge: A Conduit for Enlightened Leadership*.

Traditional problem-solving, Seidler said, can come up with independent solutions that can work in the short term.

“But in the energy business, there are complex, chronic problems that may require multiple perspectives with multiple solutions simultaneously that

may seem like they are in direct contradiction when in fact that are interconnected and necessary. How do we balance the ongoing conflict between selling more to meet our revenue budget and telling people to conserve?”

In Seidler’s approach, executives would map out the contradictions all the way to extreme positives and negatives. Between the extremes, she said, co-op leaders would discover an early warning system that would tell them when they are focusing too much on one side of a dilemma to the neglect of another.

By using case studies and interaction between meeting participants, Seidler said CEOs can use the process to discover not only pitfalls, but strengths within their co-ops and themselves.

“Energy is the most important issues facing our country. It impacts so much – our national security and economic recovery. When I look at the utility business, I think that if there was ever a time we need great leaders, it is now.”