

Change Is in the Air

Economists pay close attention to leading and lagging indicators as signals of metamorphoses.

When I step on a bathroom scale, I see a lag metric. Past caloric intake contributes to the number on the scale, which somehow seems to point and laugh.

A pedometer keeps track of how many steps I stepped today. It's a leading indicator of what might be revealed on my next visit to the weight scale. Empty bags of chips, Cheez-Its and Cheerios are also leading indicators of things to come.

We review lag measures to develop better goals and processes. When I review a profit and loss statement (lag), my goal is to understand what worked and didn't work.

Lagging indicators provide vision correction.

Effective leaders monitor the faces of teammates as leading and lagging indicators of workplace wellness. We must take time to see the impact of our conversations and work assignments.

Love leaders observe body language and seek to understand subtle moves of acceptance or rejection of the directive du jour.

Leaders in the workplace know that order barkers rarely receive an open-arm reception.

Command authority compels battlefield warriors to take the hill. In the workplace, tacit rebellion is the lagging indicator of poor leadership. When teams offer on-the-spot buy-in to questions from a leader, the feedback is a leading indicator that progress is probable.

Jesus often referred to leading indicators.

“Now learn a parable of the fig tree: When her branch is yet tender and puts out leaves, you know that summer is near” (Mark 13:28).

While Jesus used the tree as symbolism for things to come, His lesson was also literal. The interpretation of leading indicators is variable.

Experience teaches us to learn from incidents of cause and effect. Indicators cause vibration. Our response impacts the outcome.

The first domino to fall is a leading indicator of what happens next. The lag effect speaks loudly as every domino rests on the table.

When the Holy Spirit calls to us, “Come,” our response is a leading indicator of our kingdom impact.

“They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in the prayers” (Acts 2:42).