**Leadership by listening**

To be a successful leader, you need the traits and characteristics of a leader and you have to emphasize skills that make leadership possible, says O.M. Scotts' Gerry Sweda.

Managing through leadership requires five character traits:

1. the ability to visualize—a clear idea of what you want to do;
2. the ability to communicate “the vision;”
3. the ability to make decisions and give directions;
4. the ability to do the right thing in the right way in the right amount of time;
5. and the ability to reward and recognize subordinates.

"Are they not all in the realm of possibility for all of us?,” Sweda asks.

In order to attain these traits, the leader must first master four skills:

1. the skill of communicating;
2. the skill of interviewing (questioning your following);
3. the skill of listening; ("The most important and hardest to perform day in and day out,” Sweda notes. "You must manage by wandering around and listening with your eyes.");
4. and the skill of negotiating (attaining a win-win situation for two parties).