

Abraham Lincoln Offers Executives Lessons in Leadership

New "Leadership Through History" Service
Delivers Dramatic Lessons for Winning the
Business War

After earning advanced business degrees and participating in myriad executive training and professional development programs, where can today's corporate executives go for fresh insights and thoughtful direction? Possibly to Abraham Lincoln.

Crystal Lake, Illinois-based Executive KnowledgeWorks (EKW), a leading authority in executive education, has teamed with Fort Wayne, Indiana-based Lincoln Museum, the world's largest museum dedicated to the life and legacy of Abraham Lincoln, to offer a new service called "Leadership Through History." The partnership grew out of "The Gettysburg Experience," a highly successful program developed by EKW for their client, Lincoln Financial Group, in 1998.

"Leadership Through History" uses historical figures, events, accounts and locales to deliver dramatic lessons in leadership. "The Gettysburg Experience" examined how communication, courage, commitment and boldness led to victory at the pivotal Civil War battle, then related these examples to emerging business challenges facing Lincoln Financial Group.

"Business has always used war as a metaphor. We've all been told to 'run a tight ship,' 'run it up a flagpole,' to 'hunker down.' "Leadership Through History" takes the analogy a step further, letting executives actually relive important events to better understand the factors that lead to success," said Dr. Anthony Fresina, founder and CEO of Executive KnowledgeWorks. "To go to Gettysburg and

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stand in the place where Lincoln stood and hear his words spoken adds immeasurable impact.”

“We are happy to be partners in this creative revisiting of the past. History can be a broadening experience that touches individuals on every level. The history of how our nation gained independence and the battlefields where we fought to keep it are living laboratories for today,” said Joan Flinspach, President and CEO, The Lincoln Museum.

While there has been a recent trend of business leaders visiting war sites, “Leadership Through History” goes far beyond anything done to date. Thanks to EKW’s customized approach, sessions will delve deeper into the business goals, issues and challenges facing participating companies. In addition to visiting battlefields like Gettysburg, “Leadership Through History” may use sites like Thomas Edison’s laboratory to explore invention, or Ellis Island to discuss diversity.

Executive KnowledgeWorks is a 16-year-old, Chicago-based company on the cutting-edge of executive education. EKW conceptualizes, designs and implements custom programs that use action learning and fact-based case studies from history, business and non-traditional sources to address tough business issues.

In addition to “Leadership Through History,” EKW develops other innovative approaches for corporate problem-solving. For instance, they have taken managers from The Gap to Sundance Ranch for real-time analyses of Sundance’s business strategies; and have conducted sessions at Johnson Space Center between leaders from NASA and Knight-Ridder, helping both grapple with key organizational issues.