

COURSE GUIDE

The Technical Leader's Edge

A one-day programme for technical sales professionals who have been promoted into people leadership.

You were the expert. The person everyone called. The one who knew the answer in thirty seconds. Then you got promoted — and the skills that made you exceptional became the biggest obstacle to doing the new job well.

This guide gives you a flavour of what The Technical Leader's Edge covers, how it is structured, and what you will leave with.

Andrew Sykes MCGI

36 Years Solving Seal Problems. And the occasional leadership one.
Founder, Acumen Seals and Pumps Limited

About This Guide

This is not a management theory textbook. There are no academic models borrowed from a business school or generic frameworks invented in a conference room. Every concept in The Technical Leader's Edge has been tested in real field conditions — on live accounts, with real teams, in industries where getting it wrong has a measurable cost.

It is written for people who are good at their technical job and are now expected to lead others who are good at it too. That transition — from expert to leader — is one of the most demanding shifts in any career. Most people are given the title without the tools.

This guide gives you the tools.

Who Is This For?

Field sales managers	Stepping into people leadership for the first time — still carrying their own quota and their own customer visits.
Technical directors	Who are still doing too much of the hands-on work and know it, but haven't found a way out yet.
Engineering professionals	Moving into commercial or team management roles and finding the skills that got them there aren't enough.
Sales managers	In industrial, manufacturing, or engineering environments who lead technically capable people who can't quite close.

How to Use This Guide

This guide gives you a flavour of each module — the problem it solves, what it covers, and what you will leave with. The full programme is six teaching modules plus the delegate workbook, delivered as PDFs to your inbox.

Every module ends with an application exercise. The exercise is the module. Reading the content is the start — applying it to your live team and live pipeline is where the value is.

The Six Modules

Work through each module in order, or jump to the one that addresses your most urgent challenge. Each one builds on the last — but each one also stands alone.

1

Why You Were Promoted Into a Job Nobody Prepared You For

After this module: identify the specific behaviours keeping you in the doer role — and make a deliberate plan to step into the leader role.

Your technical competence got you promoted. It may also be what is holding your team back. This module addresses the identity shift that most technical leaders resist: moving from being the answer to being the person who asks better questions. You will examine the three stages of a technical career — Expert, Manager, Leader — and identify honestly which one your daily behaviour reflects.

2

The Energy Audit

After this module: identify the gap between how you intend to show up and how you actually land — and commit to three specific, observable behavioural changes.

Your team reads your mood before you say a word. Your behaviour on a bad Tuesday sets the tone for the whole floor. This module is not about emotional intelligence in the abstract — it is about the specific situations where your energy costs your team, and the specific commitments that change that. You will complete a four-situation Energy Audit and leave with three behavioural commitments written in a format other people can actually hold you to.

3

Hard Conversations Without Casualties

After this module: prepare and deliver a difficult conversation using the SCAN framework — without avoiding it or turning it into a technical debrief.

Technical leaders either avoid difficult conversations entirely or deliver them like a fault diagnosis — all logic, no humanity. Both approaches fail. This module introduces the SCAN framework: Situation, Cause, Action, Next step. You will apply it to a real, unresolved conversation you have been carrying — and leave with a date to have it.

4

Building a Team That Doesn't Need You To Be in the Room

After this module: map your team's current dependency level and redesign how you support each person — so they develop capability rather than reliance.

If every question comes to you, you have not built a team. You have built a help desk — and you are the only operator. This module shows you how to identify the dependency you have created, why the single question 'what do you think you should do?' changes the dynamic immediately, and how to move each person on your team from dependent to autonomous without abandoning them.

5

Staying Decent When the Numbers Are Bad

After this module: identify your specific pressure reversion behaviours — and write a personal protocol for how you will lead during the next difficult period.

Culture is not built in the good quarters. It is built in the difficult ones. This module examines the five most common reversion patterns — the behaviours technical leaders fall back on under commercial pressure — and asks you to identify which one is costing your team most right now. You will write a personal pressure protocol before you need it, not during it.

6

Your Leadership Legacy Starts Today

After this module: leave with a written 90-day commitment — three specific behaviours, one person, one accountability partner — that you will act on starting tomorrow.

Most leadership training ends with good intentions that evaporate by Wednesday. This module exists to prevent that. You will identify the one person on your team whose experience you are going to change, write three specific behavioural commitments, and sign a 90-day commitment card with an accountability partner before you leave. Not as a gesture — as a contract.

What's Included

Six Full Teaching Modules

Each module contains the core concept, the five most common mistakes in that area, a worked scenario showing the same situation handled two ways, a structured application exercise with a worked example, and a self-check before you move to the next module.

The Delegate Workbook

A full-day working document designed for the live one-day programme — or for working through the modules independently. Includes all exercises with write-on space, the Energy Audit grid, the SCAN framework worksheet, the team dependency map, and a signed 90-day commitment card.

The 90-Day Leadership Framework

Every module builds toward a single output: a specific, written, accountable commitment to change one thing about how you lead — with one person, over 90 days. Not an aspiration. A decision made while you can think clearly, before the pressure arrives.

Real Examples Throughout

Every scenario in this programme is based on a real situation — a real account, a real team member, a real conversation. The names are changed. The costs are not. That is what makes it different from a management textbook.

A Note on Experience

Everything in The Technical Leader's Edge is grounded in 36 years of selling, managing, and leading in the sealing and engineering sector. The examples are real. The mistakes are real. The results are real.

Andrew Sykes holds a Level 7 qualification from the Chartered Management Institute and is the founder of Acumen Seals and Pumps Limited. He has built and led technical sales teams across UK, European, and Asian markets. The frameworks in this programme — including GAP Selling, the SCAN model, and the 4-Level Dependency Map — have been developed and tested over decades of real field work, not invented in a training room.

The measure of your leadership is not what you know. It is what your team can do without you.

The Technical Leader's Edge Complete Programme — Six Modules + The Delegate Workbook

To purchase or enquire: office@acumenseals.co.uk | 07767 842601 | acumenseals.co.uk

All six modules and the delegate workbook are delivered to your inbox within one business day of purchase.