LEADERSHIP GUIDE

Leader

You must have an honest understanding of who you are, what you know, and what you can do. Also, note that it is the followers, not the leader or someone else who determines if the leader is successful. If they do not trust or lack confidence in their leader, then they will be uninspired. To be successful you have to convince your followers, not yourself or your superiors, that you are worthy of being followed.

Followers

Different people require different styles of leadership. For example, a new hire requires more supervision than an experienced employee. A person who lacks motivation requires a different approach than one with a high degree of motivation. You must know your people! The fundamental starting point is having a good understanding of human nature, such as needs, emotions, and motivation. You must come to know your employees' *be, know,* and *do* attributes.

Communication

You lead through two-way communication. Much of it is nonverbal. For instance, when you "set the example," that communicates to your people that you would not ask them to perform anything that you would not be willing to do. What and how you communicate either builds or harms the relationship between you and your employees.

Situation

All situations are different. What you do in one situation will not always work in another. You must use your judgment to decide the best course of action and the leadership style needed for each situation. For example, you may need to confront an employee for inappropriate behavior, but if the confrontation is too late or too early, too harsh or too weak, then the results may prove ineffective.

Also note that the *situation* normally has a greater effect on a leader's action than his or her traits. This is because while traits may have an impressive stability over a period of time, they have little consistency across situations (Mischel, 1968). This is why a number of leadership scholars think the *Process Theory of Leadership* is a more accurate than the *Trait Theory of Leadership*.

Various forces will affect these four factors. Examples of forces are your relationship with your seniors, the skill of your followers, the informal leaders within your organization, and how your organization is organized.

What makes a person want to follow a leader? People want to be guided by those they respect and who have a clear sense of direction. To gain respect, they must be ethical. A sense of direction is achieved by conveying a strong vision of the future.

When a person is deciding if she respects you as a leader, she does not think about your attributes, rather, she observes what you *do* so that she can know who you really *are.* She uses this observation to tell if you are an honorable and trusted leader or a self-serving person who misuses authority to look good and get promoted. Self-serving leaders are not as effective because their employees only obey them, not follow them. They succeed in many areas because they present a good image to their seniors at the expense of their workers.

The Two Most Important Keys to Effective Leadership

According to a study by the Hay Group, a global management consultancy, there are 75 key components of employee satisfaction (Lamb, McKee, 2004). They found that:

- Trust and confidence in top leadership was the single most reliable predictor of employee satisfaction in an organization.
- Effective communication by leadership in three critical areas was the key to winning organizational trust and confidence:

1. Helping employees understand the company's overall business strategy.
2. Helping employees understand how they contribute to achieving key business objectives.
3. Sharing information with employees on both how the company is doing and how an employee's own division is doing — relative to strategic business objectives.

So in a nutshell — you must be **trustworthy** and you have to be able to **communicate a vision** of where the organization needs to go. The next section, *Principles of Leadership*, ties in closely with this key concept.

Principles of Leadership

To help you *be, know,* and *do,* follow these eleven principles of leadership (U.S. Army, 1983). The later chapters in this <u>Leadership guide</u> expand on these principles and provide tools for implementing them:

Know yourself and seek self-improvement - In order to know yourself, you have to understand your *be, know,* and *do,* attributes. Seeking self-improvement means continually strengthening your attributes. This can be accomplished through self-study, formal classes, reflection, and interacting with others.

Be technically proficient - As a leader, you must know your job and have a solid familiarity with your employees' tasks.

Seek responsibility and take responsibility for your actions - Search for ways to guide your organization to new heights. And when things go wrong, they always do sooner or later — do not blame others. Analyze the situation, take corrective action, and move on to the next challenge.

Make sound and timely decisions - Use good problem solving, decision making, and planning tools.

Set the example - Be a good role model for your employees. They must not only hear what they are expected to do, but also see. *We must become the change we want to see* - Mahatma Gandhi

Know your people and look out for their well-being - Know human nature and the importance of sincerely caring for your workers.

Keep your workers informed - Know how to communicate with not only them, but also seniors and other key people.

Develop a sense of responsibility in your workers - Help to develop good character traits that will help them carry out their professional responsibilities.

Ensure that tasks are understood, supervised, and accomplished - Communication is the key to this responsibility.

Train as a team - Although many so called leaders call their organization, department, section, etc. a team; they are not really teams...they are just a group of people doing their jobs.

Use the full capabilities of your organization - By developing a team spirit, you will be able to employ your organization, department, section, etc. to its fullest capabilities.

The Process of Great Leadership

The road to great leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 1987) that is common to successful leaders:

Challenge the process - First, find a process that you believe needs to be improved the most.

Inspire a shared vision - Next, share your vision in words that can be understood by your followers.

Enable others to act - Give them the tools and methods to solve the problem.

Model the way - When the process gets tough, get your hands dirty. A boss tells others what to do, a leader shows that it can be done.

Encourage the heart - Share the glory with your followers' hearts, while keeping the pains within your own.

What is a Team?

A team is a group of people coming together to collaborate. This <u>collaboration</u> is to reach a shared goal or task for which they hold themselves mutually accountable. A group of people is not necessarily a team. A team is a group of people with a high degree of interdependence geared towards the achievement of a common goal or completion of a task rather than just a group for administrative convenience. A group, by definition, is a number of individuals having some unifying relationship.

Team members are deeply committed to each other's personal growth and success. That commitment usually transcends the team. A team outperforms a group and outperforms all reasonable expectations given to its individual members. That is, a team has a synergistic effect—one plus one equals a lot more than two.

From Group To Team—Getting There

Be Enthusiastic—it's Contagious

Become enthusiastic about one aspect at a time. Start by initially looking for a quick problem to be solved. Most teams trace their advancement to key performance oriented events that forged them together. Potential teams can set such events in motion by immediately establishing a few challenging, yet achievable goals.

First, find a problem and start to talk about it with the team; do not delegate it to an individual or small group, make it a project for everybody. Choose a simple, but distracting work-related problem and solicit everybody's views and suggestions. Next, get the problem solved. Demand urgency against a clear target. There is no need to allocate large amounts of resource or time to this, simply raise the problem and make a fuss. When a solution comes, praise it by rewarding the whole team. Also, ensure that the aspects of increased efficiency, productivity, and/or calm are highlighted since this will establish the criteria for success. When the problem has been solved, find another (preferably bigger) one and repeat.

Develop a Sense of Urgency

Team members need to believe the team has an urgent and worthwhile purpose. Establishing a sense of urgency and direction will help them know what their expectations are. The more urgent and meaningful the need to reach a goal, the more likely it is that a real team will start to emerge. The best teams define their performance expectations, but are flexible enough to allow changes to shape their own purpose, goals, and approach.

Set Clear Rules of Behavior

Teams develop rules of conduct to help them achieve their purpose and performance goals. Some rules you might want to consider:

o   attendance - no interruptions to take phone calls

o   discussion - no sacred cows

o   confidentiality - personal revelations must remain among the team

o   analytic approach - facts are friendly

o   constructive confrontation - no finger pointing

o   the most important - everyone does real work

Keep Them Informed

Challenge your team with fresh facts and information. New information causes a potential team to redefine and enrich its understanding of the objectives, thereby helping the team to set clearer goals.

Grow Together

Teams must spend a lot of time together (bonding), especially in the beginning. Yet potential teams often fail to do so. The time spent together must be both scheduled and unscheduled. Creative insights as well as personal bonding require impromptu and casual interactions.

Reinforcement Works Wonders

Exploit the power of positive feedback, recognition, and reward. Positive reinforcement works as well in a team context as elsewhere. For example, by being alert to a shy person's initial efforts to speak up, allows you to encourage continued contributions.

Other methods include:

Focus on both development and performance. Make teamwork the norm for all actions. Model teamwork in the way you conduct business and the way you interact with your colleagues.

Use all your leadership tools, such as coaching, counseling, mentoring, tutoring, and concentrating on improving performance.

Use informal processes, such as the way you communicate, showing respect, and appreciating and celebrating their achievements.

Your feelings must show commitment, loyalty, pride, and trust in your team.

Share the credit.

Create subcommittees for key areas and give them decision making authority.

Take turns having a different member facilitate or lead the meetings.

Talk last in discussions, after you've heard from the others.

Be clear about when you're expressing your own personal opinion, that of the organization, or that of the whole team.

Leadership shows itself in the inspired action of team members. Traditionally, organizations have assessed leaders by their actions and behaviors. But, the best way to assess leadership is by the degree to which people surrounding leaders are inspired. ***It is this inspiration that leads organizations on to excellent performance, rather than mediocre performance.***