

LEADERSHIP SUCCESS

**PROVEN TIPS TO
MASTER THE ROLE**

A large crowd of stylized human figures is depicted in a dark, atmospheric setting. The figures are rendered in a simple, rounded silhouette style. Most are dark blue or black, but one figure in the center of the crowd is glowing with a bright, warm yellow light, creating a strong focal point and a sense of being the leader or the standout individual. The background is dark, and the overall mood is one of inspiration and guidance.

**BUSINESS
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Small Business Solutions & Inspiration

Contents:

4 Ways to Define Leadership.....	2
6 Leadership Weaknesses and How to Fix Them.....	6
How to Be an Ethical Leader.....	11

4 Ways to Define Leadership



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Leadership critical to every company. Workers need someone to look to, learn from and thrive with.

Every leader has their own style and strategy. Further, leadership styles and methods vary because of outside influences and personal challenges.

While leadership is unique to everyone, there are some common ways to define the term. Peter Economy, also known as “The Leadership Guy,” listed the qualities of today’s best leadership in an Inc.com article. According to Economy, leadership embodies:

- Decisiveness
- Awareness
- Focus
- Accountability
- Empathy
- Confidence
- Optimism

- Honesty
- Inspiration

Research published in Harvard Business Review in 2000 and an article on Mind Tools listed some common leadership styles:

- **Coercive:** Leaders demand immediate compliance.
- **Authoritative:** Leaders mobilize people toward a vision.
- **Affiliative:** Leaders create emotional bonds and harmony.
- **Democratic:** Leaders build consensus through participation.
- **Pacesetting:** Leaders expect excellence and self-direction.
- **Coaching:** Leaders develop people for the future.
- **Bureaucratic leadership**, whose leaders focus on following every rule.
- **Charismatic leadership**, in which leaders inspire enthusiasm in their teams and are energetic in motivating others to move forward.
- **Servant leadership**, whose leaders focus on meeting the needs of the team.
- **Transactional leadership**, in which leaders inspire by expecting the best from everyone and themselves.

More specifically, leaders share similar goals and standards to abide by. Here are four ways that good leaders achieve success:

1. Leaders better their environment

Leaders do not exist to order their workers around. While they oversee their team, a true leader takes initiative and trusts their employees to perform efficiently and independently.

“Leaders are coaches with a passion for developing people, not players,” said Randy Stocklin, co-founder and CEO of One Click Ventures. “They get satisfaction from achieving objects through others. Leaders inspire people through a shared vision and create an environment where people feel valued and fulfilled.”

When a company has a positive culture, employees are more motivated and confident in their work. It’s through supportive leaders that a company finds the most success. According to Richard Kissane, executive chairman of Premium Franchise Brands, leaders are responsible for setting the tone for their team and

organization.

“As a leader, it is your responsibility to establish goals, innovate, motivate and trust,” he said. “A passionate and compassionate leader can energize a company.”

2. They know their team and themselves well

Good leaders want their entire company to succeed, including everyone involved. They take the time to understand every worker so they can help them achieve their personal goals in line with the company’s.

“A leader places the people around him or her in a position that sets them up for success,” said Andor Kovacs, CEO and founder of property restoration brand Restoration 1. “This is a difficult task, because a leader must have an in-depth understanding of each individual, such as understanding their career goals and knowing what motivates them. By being committed to helping each person achieve their own personal goals, the leader sets the organization up for greatness.”

This translates to providing tools that workers need to succeed, offering praise when things go right and taking responsibility when things go wrong, said Jordan French, founding CMO of BeeHex, Inc. 3D Food Printing.

3. Leaders maintain a positive attitude

Businesses face ups and downs. Without someone to take the reins and push forward in optimism, the company will likely be unsuccessful.

“A good leader can hold his or her emotions in check, especially in tough situations,” said David Moore, founding partner and regional vice president of Addison Group staffing firm. “For example, maybe you lost your best client, or a deal you’ve been working on falls through. Regardless, it’s important for leaders to guide a team through challenging times, encouraging them and remaining positive along the way. Team morale is heavily contingent upon a leader’s attitude.”

This is done without pride standing in the way. While no one likes to admit defeat, sometimes it’s inevitable. Good leaders recognize that.

According to Darcy Eikenberg, founder of RedCapeRevolution.com, a leader should be confident enough to know when they’re wrong so they can move past a

mistake.

“Leadership is the ability to see a problem and be the solution,” said Andrea Walker-Leidy, owner of Walker Publicity Consulting. “So many people are willing to talk about problems or can even empathize, but not many can see the problem or challenge and rise to it. It takes a leader to truly see a problem as a challenge and want to drive toward it.”

4. They build the next generation of leaders

Leaders can’t, and shouldn’t, stand alone. A company doesn’t need just one influential individual. Leaders should want to develop more leaders from the get-go.

“Great leaders also hire and inspire other great leaders, whom they trust to carry out the company mission and instill a sense of purpose that touches each and every staff member,” added Tom Villante, co-founder, chairman and CEO of payment processing company YapStone.

According to J. Kelly Hoey, author, “Build Your Dream Network” (TarcherPerigree, 2017), a leader builds their employees so they can be as successful as, if not more than, the person in charge. “A leader is someone who builds their team, mentors them and then advocates for them,” she said.

They are not in competition – they are part of a team.

6 Leadership Weaknesses and How to Fix Them



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Being a leader is not easy, and it often requires time and patience to master the role. At the core, all that most workers want is someone to guide them rather than boss them around. If your intentions and motives are in your company and team's best interests, you're unlikely to fail.

But even if you're doing a great job of leading your team, there's always room for improvement. Here are six common leadership weaknesses and how you can fix them.

1. Lack of trust in employees

New leaders often either micromanage their employees or take on more tasks than they can handle, all because they don't trust their teams to perform as well as they do.

"This happens when leaders mistake their role and instead serve as taskmasters or managers in an effort to ensure that things get done," said Keisha A. Rivers, founder and chief outcome facilitator of The KARS Group Ltd. "The best approach

is not to micromanage every detail of what has to be done, but to focus on specific outcomes and trusting your team to follow through. Having periodic checkups is best to insure progress is being made, rather than wanting to be cc'd on every single email or requiring your team to provide daily status reports."

Heather Monahan, founder of career mentoring group Boss in Heels, added that many managers are afraid to trust their employees with company information, failing to share valuable material with them.

"Deciding to share key pieces of information and watching how your team manages the information is a good recipe for building companywide trust," she said.

2. Excessive connectivity

Being connected 24/7 has become a hallmark of the modern mobile workforce. Constant connectivity allows managers to provide feedback on the go and more easily manage workers across time zones, said Nicholas Thorne, CEO of digital badge platform Basno. The problem is that this can lead to an always-connected, omnipresent approach to leadership - and that's bad for managers and team members alike, he said.

Thorne noted that being available at all times can ultimately disempower employees who feel they should always be online because their manager is, or believe they need to get their boss's approval on everything.

"Leaders need to be proactive in empowering team members to work decisively," Thorne told Business News Daily. "Just because project management tools, instant messaging, email, etc. allow a manager to participate in every minute decision that gets made does not mean that that's good for everyone involved. Communicate clearly to set consistent expectations, [and] be quick to tell people, 'I trust your judgment.'"

Monahan added that overcommitted leaders are often inaccessible. You should hold yourself accountable only to reasonable expectations. Stretching yourself too thin will do more damage than good, for you and the entire company.

"Creating boundaries and realizing you can't do it all will allow you to cut back on additional commitments and focus on priorities," Monahan said.

3. Stagnancy

All leaders eventually face the danger of getting stuck in their ways. The current way of doing things may be working, but it's important not to let yourself – or your team – grow stagnant.

“The biggest threat to a successful business is becoming static and losing a desire for innovation,” said Liz Elting, co-CEO of business language services firm TransPerfect.

The best thing you can do for your team as a leader is communicate and instill a clear sense of why you're doing what you do, Elting said. Your company mission will likely lose credibility without continued innovation, and reminding the organization of its purpose will motivate you to collaborate and grow.

To stay adaptive, leaders also need to listen to feedback from anyone who has a stake in the business, including clients.

“Their feedback is the most valuable piece of information to the success of your company,” Elting said. “Make it a top priority to not only solicit feedback from them, but [also] decipher that feedback and act upon it.”

4. Needing to be liked

Leaders are people first, and it's natural that they want to be liked, said David Scarola, chief experience officer of business resource The Alternative Board (TAB). But the need to be in everyone's good favor can sometimes cloud solid business judgment.

“A common mistake with new managers and new business owners is that they make decisions that are popular, which are often not the best decisions for the business,” Scarola said. “[Leaders] need to sometimes make unpopular decisions. That comes with the territory.”

Instead of trying to be well liked among your employees, seek instead to be understood and respected. Learn how to communicate openly and frequently with your team, and always keep staff members in the loop about the reason behind any decisions, popular or not.

“The best leaders have learned that if they make the right decisions for their

business, even if unpopular, and also take the time to explain their reasoning, they will earn the respect of their employees,” Scarola said. “In the long run, this is the best outcome a leader can aspire to.”

When you’re dealing with performance evaluations, Monahan recommends conducting them based on specific metrics rather than being subjective. You can’t stress over being someone’s friend before being their boss.

5. Hypocrisy

A “do what I say, not what I do” mentality is toxic to your work environment. As a leader, you set an example for your team. If you want your employees to respect and listen to you, you must follow your own rules. You can’t hold your staff accountable if you aren’t willing to work just as hard.

“A leader must have the utmost and highest level of integrity and model the way for their team,” said Daniel Freschi, president of leadership development company EDGE. “If you leave early during the workday or speak offhand about a colleague, it will likely be repeated by your direct reports. To avoid this, a leader needs to clarify their values and be hyper-aware of their behavior and hold themselves to the same or higher standards that you would direct reports.”

“Leaders often want to create a certain type of environment but don’t want to actually participate in the culture they are determined to create,” added Monahan. “If you are seeking to create a collaborative environment, ask yourself first if you are collaborating and sharing with others. Putting yourself in everyone else’s shoes will pay dividends.”

You don’t want to isolate yourself from the rest of your team, so don’t be aloof or act like you are better than your employees, Monahan advised. This will only create tension and frustrate employees. It’s better to be open about your flaws with your workers. The more transparent you are, the more authentic your entire team will be.

“By slowly letting others in and sharing failures and challenges, you will begin to appear more real, and employees will begin to believe in you,” she added. “When you make yourself vulnerable, you make yourself relatable.”

6. Failing to set clear expectations

Employees would rather be instructed on what to do than be left with questions and uncertainty. Providing directions and outlining missions will motivate your team and keep them on track.

“When a leader does not set expectations, their direct reports often limp through their day with no clear direction,” said Freschi. “Direct reports want to be productive; they want to know their work has meaning and is contributing to a bigger picture. Without expectations or goals, they are not able to prioritize the workload.”

While it’s important to trust your workers with their tasks, this doesn’t mean you shouldn’t delegate assignments and highlight objectives to get the ball rolling. Leaders should set individual goals for workers and explain how they align with the broader work of the organization, Freschi added.

“As leaders, it’s up to you to provide a clear but succinct picture of the vision and desired outcomes for the team and the organization,” said Rivers. “People connect to a project or task much easier if they know where it’s headed. Don’t keep them in the dark ... Determine what information is important and then provide clear instructions and expectations to set them up for success – not failure.”

How to Be an Ethical Leader



Credit: Patpitchaya/Shutterstock

You don't have to look much further than the news to find stories of corrupt leaders engaged in all sorts of ethical breaches. As the adage goes, "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely." An abuse of power can get people into trouble, destroy careers and even bring down entire industries.

So how do entrepreneurs and business owners rise above the fray and establish themselves as ethical leaders? The consensus of many experts in this area is that it must be done intentionally, by modeling ethical conduct and weaving it organically into every level of their organizations.

"For leaders to be viewed as ethical, they must ensure that everyone - leaders, team members, customers, everyone - is treated with trust, respect and dignity in every interaction," said S. Chris Edmonds, executive consultant and founder of The Purposeful Culture Group. "To accomplish that, leaders must create a culture where values - how people treat each other - are as important as results, every day."

Creating a culture of ethics

To create this sort of ethics-focused company culture, start at the top, says leadership consultant and author Linda Fisher Thornton in her book “7 Lenses: Learning the Principles and Practices of Ethical Leadership” (2013).

“Ethical leaders have a tremendous impact on how people in their organizations behave and what they achieve,” Thornton said. “Effective leaders focus on what’s right and exemplify to their people that they are there to help, and not to exploit the vulnerabilities of others.”

Once a company’s leaders are on board, the next step is to instill this commitment to ethics throughout the organization. This may seem a bit daunting at first, but it is necessary in creating a business environment where ethical lapses are the anomaly and not the norm.

“Employees behave ethically when the required ethical behavior is described to them in unambiguous terms and then modeled consistently at every level of the organization and recognized and rewarded,” said Paul Glover, who provides ethics training and coaching to organizational leaders.

“Ethical leadership means constantly acting in a manner that earns trust from your team, empowers employees to do their best work, and builds an office community that values fairness, encouragement and support as much as it does winning for our clients,” added Christie Marchese, CEO of Picture Motion, a marketing and advocacy firm for issue-driven films.

This consistent commitment to ethics may not be easy, but there are some practical ways leaders can integrate ethical conduct into their organizations and management styles. Thornton outlined several steps to ethical leadership:

1. Model ethical behavior.

Be a leader who adheres to high ethical standards in your own professional life, consistently treating others with respect and authenticity. But be willing to talk honestly about difficult ethical choices. Openly discuss the ethical gray areas and acknowledge the complexity of work life.

2. Adopt transparency in decision-making and communications.

Have an open-door policy and regular one-on-one meetings so employees know their suggestions and insights are welcome and valued. This will allow you to build trust and cultivate a respectful environment in which people can speak up about ethics and share the responsibility for living it.

3. Establish a formal ethics or values statement.

This should be a living, breathing, foundational document that helps center your staff and guide them as they navigate ethical gray areas. The values communicated in this document must be modeled from the highest level of the organization on down, understood by employees at all levels, reinforced through regular training and other company events, and revisited and revised as the company grows or changes.

4. Insist everyone meets ethical expectations.

Allow no excuses. Make sure that no one is exempt from meeting the adopted ethical standards. Maintain the status of ethics as a total, absolute must in the organization. Hold everyone, particularly senior leaders and high-profile managers, accountable.

5. Recognize and reward examples of ethical behavior.

Be a proactive ethical leader, championing high ethical conduct and emphasizing prevention. Managers should talk about what positive ethics looks like in practice as often as they talk about what to avoid. Take time to celebrate positive ethical choices, and consider the radical step of rewarding employees who are brave enough to admit and learn from their mistakes.

6. Talk about ethics as an ongoing learning journey, not a once-a-year training program

Integrate ethics into every action of the organization – everything people do, touch or influence. Talk about ethics as an ongoing learning journey, not something you have or don't have. Recognize that the world changes constantly, and that ethical conduct requires that everyone remain vigilant.

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