

ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS (LII312)

6. TRAITS, ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS OF LEADERS

6.2. Traits of Effective Leaders

Are leaders born or made? Can you learn superior leadership skills? No one is sure, but experts have noticed seven specific actions that successful leaders carry out, regardless of the organization or cause they lead. Effective leaders;

1. **Make others feel important.** If your goals and decisions are self-centered, followers will lose their enthusiasm quickly. Emphasize their strengths and contributions, not your own.
2. **Promote a vision.** Followers need a clear idea of where you're leading them, and they need to understand why that goal is valuable to them. Your job as a leader is to provide that vision.
3. **Follow the golden rule.** Treat your followers the way you enjoy being treated. An abusive leader attracts few loyal followers.
4. **Admit mistakes.** If people suspect that you're covering up your own errors, they'll hide their mistakes, too, and you'll lack valuable information for making decisions.
5. **Criticize others only in private.** Public praise encourages others to excel, but public criticism only embarrasses and alienates everyone
6. **Stay close to the action.** You need to be visible to the members of your organization. Talk to people, visit other offices and work sites, ask questions, and observe how business is being handled.
7. **Make a game of competition.** The competitive drive can be a valuable tool if you use it correctly. Set team goals, and reward members who meet or exceed them. Examine your failures, and celebrate your group's success.

6.2.1. Domain

A domain can be defined simply as an area or group of items or concepts. Regarding administration, another way to view leadership is in terms of the different *domains* leadership encompasses. Most approaches to leadership have

been leader-centered. However, one should distinguish between the leader, follower, and relationship domains of leadership to grasp a complete understanding of the concept.

6.2.2. Great Energy

Leadership is how you interact with everyone, including yourself. Leaders are quite visible within small and large businesses. We tend to think of them as business owners, CEO's and managers at all levels. Traditionally, leadership also extends into politics and other global affairs. But also consider that parents, business owners, sports coaches, consultants, mentors, partners in relationship, teachers, authors, and others who interact with people on a regular basis are all leaders. Everyone is a leader either by choice or default. The concept of energy leadership is the process that develops a personally effective style of leadership that positively influences and changes not only yourself, but also those with whom you work and interact, as well as your organization as a whole.

6.2.3. Self-Confidence

Being perceived as a leader acts as a prerequisite for being able to go beyond a formal role in influencing others. Thus, perceptual processes on the part of followers play a crucial role in the leadership process as well as in researching leadership. Four personal characteristics of leadership contribute to charismatic leadership; dominance, self-confidence, need for influence, and a strong conviction of the integrity of one's own beliefs. Charismatic leaders represent their values and beliefs through role modeling. To create a favorable perception with followers they can engage in image building and express ideological goals (a mission). They communicate high expectations of followers and show confidence in followers' ability to live up to those expectations. Additionally, charismatic leaders are more likely than non-charismatic leaders to arouse motives (e.g., need for achievement) in followers that are relevant to attaining the mission.

6.2.4. Fate Control

Are we in control of our destinies? As the environment around you changes, you can either attribute success and failure to things you have control over, or to forces

outside your influence. Which orientation you choose has a bearing on your long-term success. This orientation is known as your "locus of control." Locus of control describes the degree to which individuals perceive that outcomes result from their own behaviors, or from forces that are external to themselves. This produces a continuum with external control at one end and internal control at the other (refer to power point). People who develop an internal locus of control believe that they are responsible for their own success. Those with an external locus of control believe that external forces, like luck, determine their outcomes.

6.2.5. Stability

When reviewing leadership traits, stability (often measured as neuroticism) deserves a better label, however, it does capture a significant aspect of personality. To put a positive spin on it, the most successful leaders are emotionally stable. When leaders are stable; team members feel more relaxed and confident about the future, changes or new initiatives are sensible and the team is guided through the process, and there will be a more defined and realistic vision for the group.

Emotionally stable leaders;

- Have a reasonable degree of self esteem
- Create teams who feel psychologically safe to take calculated risks
- Behave predictably

However, neurotic leaders:

- React unpredictably
- Throw tantrums
- Shut down innovation and close off important but negative information because people are afraid to approach them

Also important to note, is that emotionally stable leaders use anger and disappointment strategically to jog people out of complacency. They understand that occasional and well-timed expressions of strong emotion have a galvanizing effect on performance.

6.2.6. Integrity

Integrity can be misunderstood. We think of integrity as a positive attribute. We say he or she “has integrity” as a compliment, meaning honesty and strong character. It’s used as a virtue term. Actually, integrity comes from the same Latin root as integer. You remember integers from math, they are whole numbers. Integrity truly means whole, or complete. Leading with integrity is one of the great challenges of leadership. We often hear those phrases like “walk the talk” and “lead by example.” Unfortunately, you can’t just lead by cliché. You really have to “put your money where your mouth is,” as the saying goes. So, let’s begin with defining our terms, starting with leadership. Here are my favorite definitions. Leadership is the process by which a person influences others or directs an organization. Or how about this: Leadership is the ability to facilitate action and guide change. There is also another definition of leaders inspiring others to know, to do, or to be. Isn’t that what we want to do as a leader? We want to inspire others to know, to do, or to be. Consider leading with integrity as the proper combination of the two words: leading completely. It’s a concept that we need to really ponder to understand. Perhaps a deeper consideration of leadership is in order.

While we can define the source of leadership, and even break it down into multiple areas as I’ve done, there is one more thing to consider. I call it the “gut check.” Designating leaders is not as simple as looking at someone’s values and beliefs, ethics and character, knowledge and skills, and their authority. We all have this sixth sense, this personal intuition that we listen to when selecting leaders. When all is said and done, we trust our gut. We choose our leaders based on the obvious rational factors, but we supplement that with our gut feelings. This is why integrity is so important. We seek leaders who are whole and complete, like integers. It’s that integrity that grabs us. If there are two potential leaders with equal qualities in all other areas, we will choose to follow the leader with the most integrity. We make that decision in our gut. When developing integrity as a leader here is a three step formula that can be used to improve integrity as a leader:

- **Step One:** Seek the best for others. Leaders with integrity ignore self-interest and personal gain, and reach out to do the best for those they lead.
- **Step Two:** Practice good stewardship. Leaders with integrity work to guard the resources of the group. That means spending funds wisely, using volunteers fairly, and properly utilizing and developing followers.

- **Step Three:** Never forget your constituents. Leaders with integrity always keep their followers in mind. They are constantly looking for ways to lead, to take responsibility, and to do a better job as a leader.

Strive to be the best leader you can and it means leading with integrity.

6.2.7. Intelligence

Intelligence is the ability of the mind to comprehend, use thought and reasoning for problem solving—the ability to acquire knowledge and use it practically. Intelligence is important, but as a stand-alone tool for leadership, it lacks penetrating substance. For instance, someone can be intelligent, but awkward with relationships, thus, lacking social intelligence. Someone can be intelligent, but lack self-mastery or character intelligence, and someone can possess superior intellectual capacity. You can have a high I.Q., yet be inept in practical matters. Intelligence is important, we should all strive to sharpen our minds and acquire more acumen. There is more to intelligence than getting a high score in an aptitude test or solving enigmas others are unable to solve. Intelligence comes in many forms; it's just not limited to mental capacity.

6.2.8. Flexibility

Good leaders are a healthy blend of principle and flexibility. There is power in being principled having a clear symmetry of structure, consistency and unwavering values. There is also power in being flexible, open, adaptable and resilient. The paradox is that you need both to create true, sustainable power. If a leader is only principled, then he or she lacks the flexibility to flow with changing conditions and becomes rigid, unbending and unable to adapt. If a leader is only flexible, then he or she lacks the consistency to hold true to core values and mission and can't stand firm when it is needed. Good leadership is a dynamic blend of both structure and adaptability.

6.2.9. Sensitivity to Others

Author Yammarino states (1990), “While a leader’s charisma may attract subordinates to a vision or mission, the leader’s use of individualized consideration also significantly contributes to a subordinate achieving his/her fullest potential.”

Individual consideration is in part coaching and mentoring, it provides for continuous feedback and links the individual's current needs to the organization's mission. Individualized consideration builds on two aspects of behavior, i.e., individualization and development of followers, whereas earlier scales measuring consideration were primarily concerned with whether a leader was seen a 'good guy or gal' or not. The last dimension of transformational leadership is called intellectual stimulation. An intellectually stimulating leader provides subordinates with a flow of challenging new ideas to stimulate rethinking of old ways of doing things. It arouses an awareness of problems, of subordinates' own thoughts and imagination, and a recognition of their beliefs and values. Intellectual stimulation is evidenced by subordinates' conceptualization, comprehension, and analysis of the problems they face and the solutions generated.

6.3. Positive and Negative Attitudes

How's your attitude?" Show me a leader with a bad attitude and I'll show you a poor leader. While this sounds simple enough at face value, studies usually find that one of the most often overlooked leadership attributes is having a consistently positive attitude. As a leader, how can one expect to inspire, motivate, engender confidence, and to lead with a lousy attitude? The simple answer is that you can't, it just won't work. Remember that positivity sets the tone for an entire organization and has produced incredible results. Don't underestimate the power of a positive attitude. Clearly the topic of "attitude" has been addressed plenty of times in many a self-help piece, but this doesn't mean that it is not worthy of topical consideration for chief executives. Leaders are not perfect and they have their fair share of bad days.

However, why do so many CEOs appear to have a bad attitude? While there are certainly a variety of reasons (ego, arrogance, pride, etc.) for why a CEO can display a bad attitude, in many instances it's because they have fallen prey to a bad habit. Yes, attitudes are formed, and a bad attitude is nothing more than an ingrained habit. The good news is that habits can be broken. So, this begs the question how does a CEO know when they have a bad attitude? Perceptions matter and it's not just how others perceive you, it's how you perceive the situations you face. This constitutes your attitude, and attitude is a powerful tool for effective leadership. Additionally, attitude is one of the most critical attributes for success. A positive attitude in leaders produces results in more ways than one. "Your attitude determines your altitude," as the saying goes. A negative attitude can significantly weaken your efforts and set back your leadership potential.

Negative attitudes tend to produce the kinds of people that others don't want to do business with. They tend to hinder your results. As an example, think about how it becomes impossible to make a sale when you really need it. Or how when you're trying really hard to persuade someone, they just won't listen. People have a keen sense for desperation and it tends to drive them running in the other direction. The same thing happens when you have a negative attitude. You exude negativity and it causes people to avoid you. A negative attitude will cause a person to focus only on the obstacles rather than the opportunities and solutions. The negative mind gets caught up in problems and tends to feel very stressed. Stress hinders creativity, which means a negative attitude often stands in the way of progress, productivity and leadership. In contrast, a positive attitude allows you to deal with the inevitable challenges to creativity and resourcefulness. A positive person is creative and makes the best of every situation in their path to leadership success. The takeaway here is that attitude plays a critical role in determining success or failure.

6.4. Behavioral Modeling

There are two basic viewpoints of behavioral modeling. The traditional view of leadership presents three forms of behavioral modeling; autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire. Autocratic leadership features high productivity, hostility, aggression, and blaming. Democratic leaders have fairly high productivity featuring camaraderie, creativity, and consideration. Laissez-faire leaders have low productivity with demanding and argumentative behavioral tendencies. More recent theorists offer three different leadership behavioral models; production oriented, utilitarian and employee orientation. Leaders with a production orientation typically emphasize the technical aspects of work. Utilitarian managers view workers as merely tools that are needed to complete work. Finally, employee oriented leaders emphasize the personal aspects of work environments and view workers as unique while attending to their personal needs.

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