

Leadership Development: Traits of A Great Leader



How to Become A Great Leader

What are the characteristics of a true leader? Are they excellent communication skills? Are they developing understanding relationships with team members? Or are they building trust, humility and integrity? A true leader is flexible with change and understands that self-awareness is the key to effective leadership. Persuading others to follow is the most difficult job for a leader, for which they need to exude commitment and passion. Moreover, coming up with creative and innovative solutions to complex problems, having decision making capabilities, delegating duties to their team members and empowering them, are few of the many qualities, that a leader should possess.



Topics to be Covered:

1

**Identifying
&
Overcoming
Obstacles**

2

**Learning to
Enjoy Your
Leadership
Role**

Identifying & Overcoming Obstacles

There are many obstacles due to which managers fail. One of the foremost reasons is derailment of message. This happens due to inconsistencies between messages and actions. Also, when an employer neither understands the reason why an employee has joined the organization nor what they actually want from their job, the employees tend to perform less productively. Moreover, managers should never stop learning as it is the only path to grow consistently.

A. Why Do Managers Fail?

Despite today's corporate environment changing at a very rapid pace, planning is still one of the most important functions in the workplace. For a company to fulfil its strategic goals, a framework is required that can guide employees to achieve objectives, and senior management to allocate resources. In the present scenario, effective planning is flexible as compared to that in the past. The real differentiation is how it is viewed and executed. The reason for the failure of the majority of the leaders is that they tend to neglect this very important planning function. There are few reasons that are associated with it. First and foremost is that they discourage constraints of any kind. They do not keep doors open for creativity and innovation. Sometimes, it so happens that dearth of sensible contracts creates confusion due to which managers aren't sure of the strategic direction of the company. Also, most of the times, a manager isn't able to do justice with their duties as the scope of their responsibilities increase. This frustrates them as a result of which, their organizational productivity decreases. Failure in crisis management due to insufficient planning is another factor that demotivates managers. Moreover, managers' often fail because they haven't invested enough on themselves in learning how to make and execute a plan. For making a good plan, various tools such as SWOT analysis, mission and vision statements are the necessary things.

According to The Center for Creative Leadership,



40%

of New Management
Hires Fail Within 18
Months

82%

of The Time,
The Reason;

"A Failure to Build Good Relationships"

a. Bad management begins from favouritism. Most managers try to avoid it but they often practice it unknowingly. The reasons for this are not assigning adequate amount of time to listen and understand both the sides. Impartiality comes from practice that requires patience.

b. Another factor that contributes to bad management is that managers, often fail to chart a definitive plan for their subordinates.

c. Managers often tend to misuse the powers and authorities conferred to them by the company. Employees often feel left out when their concerns are unheard by their manager. They feel ignored and uninspired and set out on their journey to find new opportunities.

According to Gallup,



Worldwide, only

13%

of Employees Working
for An Organization
Are Engaged

B. Importance of Continuous learning & Growth

In the present corporate scenario, there are countless technological developments, innovations and change in goalposts that happen every day. It is virtually impossible to maintain the status quo. A company is driven by ambitious employees who always look out to develop their skills and break their limits. This can only be realized by life-long learning and education. Managers should always keep in mind that only when the company values the needs and wants of its employees, the employees reciprocate the same. And when both of them work in tandem with each other, the business explores new avenues and grows exponentially without any leaps and bounds.



Middlesex University for Work
Based Learning Found That
from A

4,300

Workers Sample



74%

Felt That They Weren't Achieving
Their Full Potential At Work Due
to Lack of Development
Opportunities



A 24X7 Learning Survey Revealed That Only

12%

of Learners Say They Apply The Skills From
The Training They Receive To Their Job



CB Insights, A Firm Tracking Venture
Investments Found That Almost

\$ 1 bn

Was Focused on Learning & Education
In The Corporate World



The U.S. Bureau of Labor
Statistics Found That Companies
With Fewer Than

100

Employees
Gave Only 12 Minutes of
Manager Training Every
Six Months

Organizations With

100-500

Employees Provided Just
6 Minutes

Below are 2 points that clearly elucidate what a manager can do to perpetuate a continuous learning environment for their employees.

a. Fill the skill void more effectively: As business grow exponentially and explore uncharted territories, employers often face a challenge which is referred to as 'skill void'. Often businesses try to adopt traditional means to solve this issue. They tend to hire new employees who already possess the abilities to solve these issues. Rather, progressive businesses foster a continuous learning culture that trains their employees in the required skills as and when they arise across the organization.

b. Renders Marketplace skills and builds a much more effective resource for the company: A continuous learning environment sets the stage for better corporate performance as it empowers employees to generate more value across the business. It leads to faster response to customer needs, and improves the ability to meet future demands before the deadlines. Businesses should think of nurturing leaders, which is why, they should train their employees across hot domains like digital marketing, project management, and financial analysis etc. Apart from increasing an employee's individual performance, it also lets those working in different departments within the same company understand each other's role. This develops a tighter bond between the employees and together, they are a much more effective resource for the company.

Continuous
Training Gives
50%
Higher Net Sales
Per Employee

In summary, a good learning culture increases productivity, profit, efficiency and employee satisfaction. Learning programmes boost employee morale and inculcates within them, a sense of accountability and ownership. Moreover, studies have shown that when employees learn a new scale, they cascade their experience to their peers and colleagues. This not only multiplies the efficiency of the company as a whole. But also creates a culture of knowledge enquiry and sharing.

Learning to Enjoy Your Leadership Role

The difference between an efficient and not-so efficient leader is that the former understand their weaknesses and strengths, discover blind spots and work upon them. Also, true leaders know their preferences, constantly change from being people-oriented to task-oriented and vice-versa as per the situation, adopt different leadership styles for different work environments, and most importantly lead from the front.

A. Kinds of Leadership Styles

The popular adage "One size never fits all" is apt for the business world as well. Different corporate environments demand different kinds of leadership styles. Independent researches have shown that the most appropriate style depends upon variables like the situation, the leader and the followers. Let's sail through these styles, one by one.

1. Autocratic Leadership: In this kind of leadership, the leader takes charge of each and everything, without consulting their fellow team members. The instructions are given by the leader and their subordinates are expected to execute them without any change. This is a rigid style of leadership where the policies, procedures, and guidelines are all natural additions of an autocratic leader.

2. Transformational leadership: When the team leader charts out the future growth plan of an organization; its mission, vision and where it is heading towards, it's called Transformational leadership. This gives a purpose to the team members to achieve more than what was initially intended. This kind of leadership empowers team members to build trusting cooperative leaderships and work in tandem with each other.

3. Transactional leadership: This kind of leadership style believes in maintaining the status quo and involves an exchange process. It believes in awarding the team members with tangible rewards for carrying out the leader's direction, often instantly. The employees are clarified what is expected from them and how to achieve their targets in the specified amount of time, even before beginning the operations.

Various Leadership Styles

Idealized Influence

Great Leaders Are Looked Upon & Act As Role-Models for Others

Inspirational Motivation

Great Leaders Inspire Their Subordinates to Achieve Challenging Tasks.

Individualized Consideration

Great Leaders Often Execute People-Oriented Methodology to Build Strong Relationships Between Individuals.

Intellectual Stimulation

Great Leaders Believe in Creativity & Strive to Build An Innovative Environment.

4. Laissez-faire leadership: Laissez-faire in French means “let it be”. In this kind of leadership style, the leader assigns tasks to their subordinates, but refrains from providing a deadline. This is also known as “hands-off approach”, since the leader neither judges the performance nor communicates expectations effectively. This can at times lead to reduced performance levels and poor results.

5. Situational leadership: This is a blend of different management styles based upon the operating environment, developed by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard in 1969. The major factors that play important role in this strategy are; democratic leadership while engaged in economic policies with the senior executives, and switching to a bureaucratic strategy while imparting new factory protocols to workers.

B. Personality Traits of A Great Leader

A true leader has an aura of importance around him. He exudes significance, not only by his words, but by his body language. He knows when to be an introvert and an extrovert according to the conditions and the people around him. He manages his time effectively and motivates people to achieve feats they never imagined they could. Let's discuss them in detail.

Personality Traits: Following are some of the personality traits of a good leader.

a. Good leaders are those who are able to maintain their calm, and function properly under intense pressure. They must understand varying perspectives as it inculcates the ability to react to things very differently. This ability is sometimes called ‘perspective-taking’, where a person tries to visualize the situation from someone else’s perspective. It helps to explore a situation that happened in the past, or it can help in taking decisions for the future.

b. A true leader thinks logically, executes pragmatically, and treats those working under them, empathetically. They are energetic, expressive, active, and assertive in their thinking style, as well as their attitude while dealing with others. Also, they are high on emotional stamina and are very responsive to others. Moreover, they have an inward desire to excel at whatever they take in their hands and are very self-disciplined. Furthermore, they are risk-takers and are socially aggressive.

Introvert	Identifier	Extrovert
Subtle	Body Language	Strong
Infrequent	Gestures	Frequent
Less Inflection	Voice Intonation	More Inflection
Indirect	Eye Contact	Sustained
Reserved	Expresses Opinion	Openly / Readily
Qualified / Well-Structured	Statements	Emphatic / Generalized
More	Patience	Less
Will Wait	Introductions	More Likely
Co-Operative	Team Attitude	Competitive
Infrequent but Profound	Team Contributions	Frequent

c. A true leader is one who understands what type of management style to opt - task oriented or people oriented. Task oriented management style includes easy to follow work schedules with specific deadlines for targets to be met. Good leaders use this kind of management style when they need to maintain high standards along with optimal efficiency. On the contrary, when a leader needs to energize employees and make them feel appreciated, they use people-oriented management style. This helps strengthen employee relationships and make them feel part of a company's success.

Goal / Task	Identifier	Social / People
Formal / Proper	Demeanor	Relaxed / Warm
Keeps Private	Feelings	Shows Freely
Avoids / Minimizes	Physical Contact	Initiates / Accepts
Hard	Getting to Know	Easy
Formal	Body Language	Friendly
Limited Range	Facial Expressions	Animated
In Specifics	Speaks	Emphasizes Main Ideas
Suggested Program	In Meetings Goes With	The Flow
Stays on Subject	Conversation	May Wander

Conclusion: In the above two sections we saw the traits of a great leader, who knows how to identify obstacles and overcome them. And how to motivate their subordinates. Developing leadership qualities is no child’s play. It requires years of hard work, and curiosity to learn from mistakes and perspectives of others. A true leader knows how to deal with uncertainties and maintain their calm even under tremendous pressure. They know where, when, and how to deal with people, and how to encourage them to go that extra mile. In short, they know how to lead with vision and respect, and how to empower others to grow and develop together, that ultimately ensures mutual growth and success for everyone.

