

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

Courtesy of Profiles International

Whether you have worked your way up the corporate ladder or started your own business, the path to leadership isn't an easy one. There will be good times, stressful times, and terrible times, but a great leader is always able to lead a team to success, regardless of the situation at hand.

Leadership is one of the hottest topics in the business world, with millions of publications on the subject. We gathered some of the leadership qualities that we believe are possessed by many of the world's greatest leaders and formed the list below.

Honesty. The foundation of any relationship is honesty. People want to work for a leader they can trust—a leader that has morals, values, and integrity. Your workers want to feel good about their jobs; it's important

to establish core values for both the business and yourself as a leader.

Communication. Without clear communication, your employees won't understand your mission, goals, and vision. Communication should also be consistent in establishing work expectations, in giving constructive feedback, and in training new employees. With great communication, your employees will know exactly what they are working for, will rely on you, and will give their best effort.

Confidence. When things go wrong, employees look to you for the answers and judge the situation based upon your reaction. If you aren't confident with the organization in a situation, then be confident in your own leadership skills.

Inspiration. Whether you're starting a new business or you're leading a team in a business that's already been established, it's important to get employees invested in the vision and future of the company. You must be inspired by and invested in the company in order to inspire others like Larry Page and Sergey Brin, the founders of Google.

The product of their own inspiration has inspired millions of others and has significantly impacted the world we live in today. Though inspiration often looks forward to the future, it's also important for the present; it gives employees a reason to work, to succeed, and to do their best in everything they do. Make them feel invested in the company through inspiration and they'll be loyal, hard-working employees.

Positivity. You are setting the tone for the workday, and your attitude directly affects those under your leadership. Bringing snacks, giving compliments, and even showing an appropriate interest in an employee's personal life can have a significant impact on their work day.

Delegation. If there is a highly important project, it can be difficult to trust employees without micromanaging. When it comes to delegation, the idea is to decide what strengths each employee possesses and to assign them tasks that best fit those strengths. Using an assessment such as our ProfileXT can help you better understand strengths and challenges when it comes to delegating specific projects to each individual contributor. The ability to delegate successfully will lead to higher quality work and productivity.

Commitment. Nothing shows commitment like going through your own development plan with your team. If you have considered going through a peer review program such as our Checkpoint 360 development tool in the past, keep in mind that this is a fantastic way to aid you in your development and show your people the level of commitment you display as a leader. You are in the spotlight, but your people keep you accountable when it comes to success as a team! Set the tone of commitment by going through the Checkpoint 360 feedback process or something similar, and others will follow suit.

Humor. Although not a requirement, a sense of humor goes a long way in leadership. It helps create a positive work environment and enhances the feeling of camaraderie. Your unique personality and sense of humor shows your employees that you are more than a leader; you are a positive contributor whom they can turn to when challenges arise.

Creativity. Some decisions have to be made quickly. In times like these, it's up to you to think outside the box to find a solution. Your team will

be looking to you in these situations for guidance, so a quick decision must also be a good decision. Henry Ford faced a situation like this when demand for his vehicles was so high he couldn't possibly keep up. Instead of making the obvious decision to hire more people, he thought with creativity and developed the assembly line. You may even brainstorm with your team to build upon some of your ideas. When your employees are involved in a decision or idea, they often feel more invested, respected, and important.

Tips to Win Your Customers' Hearts!

Step one is the only step, straight-forward and simple. If you want to make your customers love you, make it ridiculously easy to contact you or your organization. Facebook, Twitter, Live Chat, LinkedIn, websites, blogs, instant messenger tools...need I go on? With so many social platforms, there is no excuse to not make your organization easily accessible to your clients, customers, and colleagues.

A year or so ago, I participated in a webinar with the great folks at Hubspot. I had to hop off mid-webinar to take a call, but I desperately wanted the recording and slides. Instead of having to call, check the website, etc., I simply clicked on the hashtag for the event and found my answer. To make my life even easier, the webinar presenter, who saw a tweet I sent out, even messaged me to say that I could contact him if I had further questions. This is a perfect example of great communication and customer service.

You may have the best sales pitch out there. That's wonderful for you, but don't assume that your prospects need exactly what you're selling. Make them love you by helping solve their issues. Find out their goals and help them get there. Train your staff, your frontline staff especially, to listen to customers and clients.

Do you ever wonder how Apple maintains such astronomical sales? The answer isn't just their outstanding product range and Steve Job's vision but their unique selling system. Everyone hired to work at an Apple store must complete an intense 14-day training program and exercise lessons learned daily on the sales floor.

Consumers are smarter than ever, and the market is more competitive than ever. Make sure that your "moment of truth," the moment your company first makes contact with a customer, is meaningful and unforgettable.

Build actual relationships. Don't just tell your customers and clients that you value them—show them! Keeping this perspective will show your customers that you care about them as more than just another number in this quarter's profits. If they have an issue that you can't solve, send them to a colleague. The customer will remember that you helped them solve their problem. This will also help you gain a wider perspective on customer satisfaction and needs.

I have used hundreds of different tools in the past few years, from marketing and PR tools to social media platforms and organizational solutions. Sometimes this is a check-in phone call, a personal email, an email blast, or even a link to a blog reminding me about the reason I began using the tool in the first place.

In today's society, we are all subject to information overload and in a hurry to try out the latest and greatest app or tool on the market. We stay consistent and loyal to those who are more than efficient; they provide us with excellent customer service.

Finally, be passionate about what you do, and believe in yourself and your organization. If you don't, you may be in the wrong position. Take care of your customers, and your products/services will sell themselves. Hiring successful customer service reps can be tricky. Call a company like our own Profiles International to discover how to benchmark your best and hire based on the natural behaviors of your successful CSRs.

Intuition. Sometimes we are presented with situations that aren't in the textbooks and for which you might not be prepared as a leader. The first decision isn't always the best one, and taking your time to come up with a unique solution can be in the best interest of your workers and organization. Sometimes, leaders have to draw upon their instincts in these complicated situations.

A great leader leads from the top down! **N**

Email us your comments at Mcaspole@AssessmentSpecialists.com.