



THE SOURCE

Developing Leaders: The 2 "Key Ingredients"

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What is your definition of leadership? Your answer to this question will often determine your approach to leadership development within your organization.

Many people associate leadership with aggressive actions and exerting "power" and influence over others. Fear motivates. There is no question that people will **comply** if they are afraid of the consequences. So can you get results through fear? Absolutely! In fact there are many people in many organizations that operate this way every day. They get results but they also have a devastatingly negative impact on morale, retention, the ability to recruit the best and most importantly the ability to get quality results that are sustainable. Fear gets **compliance** but empowerment gets **commitment**.

One of the best leadership definitions I have heard is:

"Leadership is the ability to get people to do what needs to be done, because they want to do it."

What does this statement tell us about effective leaders?

- They get results by inspiring and empowering others
- They create passionate buy-in to a well-defined mission
- They ensure others clearly understand the benefits and consequences of actions in support of organizational goals
- They prioritize the two most important factors for developing other leaders:

1) The ability to win trust

2) The ability to be an effective, open communicator

Developing leaders depends on selecting people who have the potential to do both of these things effectively. Let's take a closer look at both as well as the alternative leadership approach mentioned above.

Trust

Think for a moment about the person you trust most in your life. Get a clear mental picture of that person in your mind. Many people see their spouse, partner, close friend or close family member. Now ask yourself why you trust that person? There are always several different answers to this question but they all come down to one issue. Most people extend the gift of trust because they really believe that this person has their best interests at heart. First and foremost, they are guided by wanting what is best for that individual. They may not always like what they have to say...or how they

say it. But, they always believe that their motives and intentions are honorable and best interests are at heart.

If you feel this way about the person you report to (your Manager) you will be more likely to elect him or her your Leader. **Leaders are elected. Managers are appointed.** Your organization can appoint you as the Manager of your Department. It cannot make you the Leader. Leaders are elected because people trust and respect them.

Open Communication

Communicating effectively in this context is not about charisma. While being charismatic is a desirable trait, substance and sincerity are vastly more important in an effective leader. Communicating means being a great listener. It means having the ability to help people self-discover. It means demonstrating **sincerity** and supporting **empowerment**. If you find yourself doing all of the talking and rarely sharing the spotlight, you could likely improve your communication effectiveness.

The strongest leaders are not lost in their egos. They prioritize the needs of the organization and the people who comprise it. They emphasize the balance of productivity and morale, since one without the other will not achieve robust results. It's not enough just to be nice. There are those who believe that if everyone is happy everything else will follow. This could not be further from the truth. How many happy but ineffective people have you interacted with?

Effective leadership requires a responsive approach that is simultaneously results oriented. Trust and open communication are the two "key ingredients" to discovering that optimal balance.

Measuring Up: Leadership Philosophy

Check your personal views to determine how closely you agree with the definition of leadership offered in this article.

Place a check mark next to any item that describes your personal view accurately:

1. I believe that most people care more about themselves and getting their own needs met than anything else.
2. I believe that disagreements that arise during any interaction should be welcomed as an opportunity to find out more about a person's needs and views.
3. I believe that I need to take the lead in business interactions. If I don't push people in the right direction they may never get there.
4. I believe the job of a leader is not to overcome problems but to resolve them. I try to stay open minded and optimistic no matter how difficult the other person is.
5. I believe that being in charge is a tough job and it's not for everyone. When I'm charged with a business objective, I do whatever it takes to get results. Only the strong survive.
6. I believe that when a person is headed in the wrong direction, once I have listened to his or her viewpoint, I have an obligation to speak my mind and I'm not

afraid to do so.

Where are your check marks? The even numbers best describe the Leadership philosophy described in this article. Think about the most effective leader you have ever had. Did s/he lead through trust or fear? How did it make you feel? What impact did it have on your performance?

Leadership is the ability to get people to do what needs to be done because they want to...not because they are afraid of the consequences.

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