

Leading Through Inspiration, Not Intimidation



Many people associate leadership with aggressive actions and exerting power and influence over others. Can you get results through fear? Absolutely! Fear motivates. There is no question that people will comply if they are afraid of the consequences. Think about the most effective leader you have ever had. Did he/she lead through trust or fear? How did it make you feel? What impact did it have on your performance?

There are, unfortunately, many people in many organizations that operate this way every day. They may get results but at what cost? They tend to 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 achieves compliance but empowerment and respect earns commitment.

Dwight Eisenhower is famously quoted as saying “leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it.” What does this statement tell us about effective leaders? Effective leaders:

- Get results by inspiring and empowering others.
- Create passionate buy-in to a well-defined mission.
- Ensure others clearly understand the benefits and consequences of actions in support of organizational goals.

So how can you become an effective leader? By making earning trust and effective communications – the two most important factors for developing other leaders – a top priority.

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. It may be a spouse, partner, close friend or 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: we trust those whom we truly believe have our best interests at heart and want what is best for us. We may not always like what they have to say or how they say it, but we always believe that their motives and intentions are honorable.

Effective 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 being an effective leader. Effective communications includes being a great listener. It means having the ability to help people self-discover. It means demonstrating sincerity and supporting empowerment. If you

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find yourself doing all of the talking and rarely sharing the spotlight, you are likely NOT a very effective communicator.

Measuring Up: What's Your Leadership Philosophy?

Your answers to the below questions will help you better understand your approach to leadership development. Place a check mark next to items that accurately describe your personal view:

- 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.
- 4) If I don't push people in the right direction they may never get there.
- 5) I believe the job of a leader is not to overcome problems but to resolve them.
- 6) I try to stay open minded and optimistic no matter how difficult the other person is.
- 7) I believe that being in charge is a tough job and it's not for everyone.
- 8) When I'm charged with a business objective, I do whatever it takes to get results.
- 9) Only the strong survive.
- 10) 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.

Your organization can appoint you manager of your department, but it cannot make you its leader. Leaders are elected because people trust and respect them. If you can gain the trust of your people – if they truly believe that you have their best interests at heart – then you will be their leader.

The even numbers best describe the philosophy of the most effective leaders who are not lost in their egos. They prioritize the needs of the organization and the people who comprise it, are they emphasize the balance of productivity and morale, since one without the other will not achieve robust results.



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