



Leadership 2017

Some people believe leaders are born, others say they are “called,” and still others contend they are “made” by the times. However they come into being, leadership theorists have found certain conclusive qualities that are shared. Let’s take a look. Which ones do you identify with yourself?

- Envisions goals
- Clarifies values
- Models integrity
- Builds trust
- Communicates expectations
- Shares knowledge
- Fosters growth
- Promotes empowerment
- Energizes others
- Welcomes change

In the next few paragraphs, I will summarize several thoughts from experts for you to consider whether you are currently in a leadership role or aspire to be in one as you move forward in your career during 2017.

- Clarify your values. According to Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, authors of “The Leadership Challenge,” which was selected as one of the top 10 books on leadership in Covert and Sattersten’s “The 100 Best Business Books of All Time,” it is important for leaders to communicate their values to those they lead because those values are the foundation on which everything else is built. Conveying who you are, your vision and what you stand for can have a significant impact on your staff’s performance and attitudes.

- Exhibit high ethical and moral standards. Dr. Sunnie Giles, an organ-

izational scientist, certified executive coach and leadership development consultant, conducted a study on the most important leadership competencies. According to 195 leaders in 15 countries over 30 global organizations, the top competency reported by 67 percent of the respondents is “has high ethical and moral standards.” Dr. Giles points out in the study’s results a leader with high ethical standards conveys a commitment to fairness, instilling confidence both they and their staff will honor the rules of the game.

- Communicate expectations. When a leader clearly communicates expectations, they ensure everyone is on the same page, thus avoiding employees being caught unaware.

- Build consensus. This is another strategy cited by Kouzes and Posner. Employees want leaders who trust the ideas and experiences of those they lead. They want leaders who seek out and respect their input. While staff understand the leader will ultimately make the decision, they also know credible leaders involve employees in charting the course. When a leader does not collaborate with his team, the message most team members receive is their ideas are not important.

- Energize others. Barry Posner reminds us, “You can’t light a fire with a wet match.” Energy and enthusiasm are crucial leadership qualities. Companies need leaders who have energy, who can influence with intensity and conviction, and who express their passion for what the organization is working to accomplish.

- Promote employee growth. Dr. Giles comments when leaders show a commitment to employee growth, the employees are motivated to reciprocate, expressing their gratitude by going the extra mile. To inspire the best from your team, advocate for them, as well as support their training and promotion.

- Be a role model. Lead by example. Kouzes and Posner suggest employees expect their leaders to do more than lead; they expect them to teach and develop leadership within the organization and do this by example. People believe actions over words every time. To be credible, a leader must be a role model. Leaders should not hold others accountable for shared values when they don’t live by those values themselves.

The bottom line is leadership is constantly connecting by continuing to clearly communicate, listen, be compassionate, be truthful about circumstances, follow through with goals and objectives, have a high level of integrity, and — most importantly — show respect and develop trusting relationships.

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