

LEADERSHIP



A - Z of Leadership

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What is Leadership?

As Napoleon Bonaparte had once expressed, 'a leader is a dealer of hopes'. The essence of leadership is the ability to have great analytical skills. A leader is necessarily is a great visionary. A good leader has the ability to choose the best people to accomplish difficult tasks and he also has the patience to guide his subordinates.

Leadership is a process and not just a designation. It can be difficult at times to get your work done through the right bunch of people. A leader gathers and guides people to support his ideas and policies to obtain better results.

Since ages past, leaders are getting things accomplished by making use of apt and organized work forces. If you have keen interest in leadership and its aspects, you have to understand that a leader can motivate the right type of people to give their best for accomplishing a common goal.



Yes, it is true that leaders may not succeed all the time, but motivating people to achieve a common goal is the heart and soul of leadership. People may disagree with their leader's opinions, or may not want to pay heed to his ideas, but this challenge is the driving force behind establishing a successful leadership strategy.

Leadership has its own share of responsibilities. It is a good idea to get your job done through other people but when you do so the, moral responsibility lies implicitly on you.

If you lead people they can work for you but if you don't lead then, then the task gets established under the guidance of a new leader. In spite of the weighing responsibilities leadership can be quite fun at times.

Leadership is not a gift but it is an art that has to be cultivated. Many people think that leaders are born, but be assured that leadership qualities can also be cultivated. It is all about learning some key skills and implementing them as and when opportunity calls.

It is all about how well you use your grey matter and how much patience you can develop. You may not be able to attain all the required skills, but you can devise your own methodology as you gain experience.

One word of caution to an aspiring leader is to remember that 'boss' is not an alternate word for a leader.

The basic characteristic difference is that the boss is the man (or woman) who pushes people around to get the work done, while a leader is the person who motivates people to get the same work done.

Does the word job connote business or corporate responsibilities alone? The answer is a definite No. A job could be a simple game of football to conducting lectures or seminars. The requirements of leadership sway immensely according to the different jobs that have to be accomplished.

Leadership deals with two fundamental aspects, which are the task that has to be performed and the group of people who are to be used for the accomplishment of the same task. If you are alone on a job scene then you cannot be a leader as you will have no group that will follow you.

Similarly, if you have a group but there is no specific job to be accomplished then in this situation, no one can be a leader.

A leader is responsible for mostly two things, one is to get the task accomplished and the other thing which needs careful attention is to hold the team together. This is a lot easier said than done.

The best possible advice to aspiring leader was given by Robert Half. He said, "Delegating work works, provided the one who is delegating works, too!"

Leadership: Conventional view Vs Contemporary view

If one was to ponder over the question, "Has leadership changed over the years?" The answer is Yes, it certainly has." The conventional strategies and approaches once used to lead a group have changed significantly.

It was once believed that a leader in any organization or field should lead and manage at the same time. But of late this conventional view has seen some transformation and management is no longer directly proportional to leadership.

In olden days, the leaders were in position to execute complete authority but nowadays, leaders are no longer regarded as authority figures, but as agencies who can promote new ideas and directions in any organization. This new concept of leadership helps in a great way to develop proper communication channels so that new avenues can be opened to accomplish certain things.



Strategic choices were always made by leaders but today anyone from a group can promote ideas. Previously the leaders were less participative in group activities, but today leaders are involved in several key processes of certain events.

A leader should be able to approach even those people who are not supposed to report to him directly. Leaders once strived only to motivate others and their sole purpose was to ensure profit. You should remember that leadership has nothing to do with management of people.

Today the meaning of leadership has changed. Conventionally, the idea of leadership confused with the concept of power to dominate a group. The leader was often regarded as a person who could dominate a large mass of people through persuasion or brute force.

In today's world, which is mainly knowledge driven, the word 'power' has got a new meaning altogether. If you have innovative ideas and promotional skills to assess different projects, this serves as the best basis for leadership.

If a person has specialized knowledge about certain business fields, he can certainly alter the business scenario. In such cases, he will be accepted as a natural leader. This kind of leadership is known as 'thought leadership'.

Previously leadership was almost regarded to be perpetual, once a leader always a leader. Now leadership is thought as an occasional act. This is no more a position or role to be carried to the bitter end. This paradigm shift has helped to inculcate creativity in leadership and has banished the monotonic nature of conventional leadership.

The new age leadership is based on the challenges to the status quo. The pragmatic youth are encouraged to find a better solution to the problems at hand.

Unlike business leadership, the modern day thought leadership or bottom-up leadership is inspired by the actions of people like Martin Luther King Jr. The demonstrations staged by him, had tremendous impact on the decisions of US government.

The conventional ideas of leadership have focused on power rather than on ideas and creativity. Being a leader is not about being a boss but it about being a facilitator to achieve goals.

Today leadership involves taking a firm stand for the ideals you believe in. Your aim as a leader should be to make people think and act differently than what they are accustomed to. Only this can make a difference in their lives. It is about kindling a fire that symbolizes the thought, 'together we can and we will make it.'

The Emerging Concept of Leadership



The new age mantra for a successful leadership is best quoted by Harold Geneen, "Leadership is an attitude that is practiced through actions and not so by words".

A leader should have faith in his/her subordinates and should always respect them. He should make them feel important. A good leader has to have clear vision of the day ahead and at the end of the day he should have had gained insight by retrospective, which is important while taking decisions on future plans.

Good communication is necessary for every leader. He should be able to fathom roles of a coach, a teacher, and a supporter.

He should prepare for every situation, because decisions taken on the fly can prove to be disastrous in the long run. He should also give proper attention to the suggestions given by others and try to focus on the merits of these ideas.

No one likes to be criticized in public, a good leader always criticizes the ideas, and not the person, and that too in private. He should strike a balance between profession and ethics, and treat all people alike. To maintain a playful and light atmosphere within group a leader needs to have a good sense of humor.

If you have a plan along with an enthusiastic team to carry it out, this may not necessarily end in successful completion of job. Without proper priorities or guidelines for actions in any plan, things tend to go awry. A successful leader prioritizes actions very carefully.

A leader is always on guard for his shortcomings and works rigorously and patiently on self development. Leadership is no longer a phenomenon associated with winning or losing, but it is about finding a way to create a total win-win situation.

A leader may go wrong sometimes, but he should be able to admit mistakes on his part. A leader today is not thought of as a person who solves all problems; rather he is looked upon as a person who helps others to deal with their problems and issues.

A good leader is the one who minutely evaluates situations and develops better ideas. To do this effectively, one has to keep some points in mind. If someone ends up telling about why a certain idea is bound to fail, think about the merits and demerits of that idea. This will help you analyze whether a certain situation can do without inclusion of that particular concept.

Negative impact can sometimes make us abandon fruitful opportunities. Try to think of the merits of an idea and how it can be used to achieve success.

Sometimes in gust of enthusiasm we tend to overlook the obstacles. This is a grave mistake and is usually the main reason behind the failure. Figure out the potential obstacles and configure a well planned strategy to overcome them.

Best plan is to get all the work done in a distributive style. List all the necessary steps and the assign the task to specific or specialized persons.

Every difficulty presents you a unique opportunity. You can use it to your best advantage. Most aspiring leaders love to take up new challenges. But one should not get carried away by any stray or hovering difficulties. Ignorance or negligence can never help you get rid of prevalent pestering problems.

If you are able to look through the mist of difficulty, people will see it too. Such situations demand visionary leaders. The determination of a leader should not get fogged by difficulties or overwhelming situations.

Once you see your way through the difficulties it is relatively easy to boost the confidence of your teammates. This moral resurgence sometimes works wonders while accomplishing a task.

Are you a Leader?-Traits & Characteristics of Leadership

People generally believe that leaders are not made but are born. This statement is partially true. Some people possess certain characteristics that come naturally to them when they are put in leadership positions.

With deliberate and well planned efforts one can learn the ropes of leadership. Exemplary character is essential for a leader. A leader should be trustworthy enough to lead other people.

Integrity and honesty on the part of a leader are essential for a successful implementation of leadership strategies. Leadership requires authority and it can only be gained through respect that is earned by trust.

You can motivate people for a cause only if you are really enthusiastic about it. People will respond to new ideas if they can feel the same passion as you about the task that has to be done. Inspiration and passion can be very contagious at times. You can't expect people to do certain things if you are not passionate about them in the first place.

It is true that the in terms of responsibilities a leader might seem as a different entity altogether, but a leader should always be seen as a part of the team. Goals can be achieved only through good comradeship. A leader should not be ashamed of doing any work that may look insignificant prima facie.