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Executive Search & Board Advisory

13 QUALITIES A LEADER HAS



Leadership is what moves family, friends, teams, companies, societies and countries to excel beyond their limitations and expectations. Many are called, but few are chosen, and true leaders are impressive. They have particular qualities that stand the test of time.

1. Values

They have strong and important values that aren't lost under pressure or duress and are not fashionable. They are their foundations.

2. Confidence

They have belief in themselves. Confidence is essential. The inner belief helps them when times become tough, when self-doubt fills the mind, and when critics point out their flaws. As a leader you have to inspire others who may not have the same self-assurance to follow you, and make sure everyone is focused on the bigger end goal. People take cues from the leader, so leaders remain calm with the key objective of moving ahead.

3. Courage

The courage and character to remain firm to your beliefs, to take risks, to show a new path, to stand up to what is wrong takes a special quality, courage. Courage for many is the first among all great qualities of true leaders.

4. Honesty and ethics

Those around you respond to your ethics and honesty. Honesty is critical, you're not only judged by what you say, but how you act and whether you are honest with your words and in action.

5. Communication

You may have the greatest dream, you may know what you want to achieve, but if you cannot communicate your vision or plan, then you cannot expect others to understand and follow you. The ability to clearly and succinctly outline what you want to achieve is imperative. Painting pictures in people's minds, using emotive words, writing clear notes, making the time to articulate your goals either one on one or in front of 100,000 people requires excellent communication.

6. Commitment and resilience

You cannot expect others to follow if you cannot show the way by example. If you expect quality and hard work, then you need to bend your back and get into the trenches. You need to commit to your personal brand, and motivate others to instil and build a high-performance culture. Commitment to work is one thing; commitment to promises is about ensuring that you deliver on your word. Once you do this and commit to the highest level of quality, you will gain respect.

7. Positive attitude

As a leader you will face challenges, and others around you will look to your response. You have to believe in yourself and when things go wrong, as they no doubt will, you have to reinforce to yourself and those around you what your purpose is and that you are positive in achieving it. Obstacles are challenges that are there to test leaders. Treat them as opportunities to show people how good you are as a leader.

8. Delegation

You can't achieve a great deal if you do not delegate. Delegating to others shows you have trust in them and is essential if you are to build their confidence and inspire them to perform. Trusting people, in particular your team, is a sign of strength. Delegating to the right people and divisions is one of the most important skills all great leaders possess. If you wish to achieve your goals and achieve a great deal, you will have to do it through others.

9. Sense of humour

If you face a difficult period, if your business struggles, if your results are worse than anticipated, guiding others without anger, frustration and panic is important. When people become leaders, they expose themselves to failure because they push themselves and others beyond the comfort zone. A sense of humour is very valuable.

10. Creativity and curiosity

Some answers will not be black and white, some decisions not clear cut. You may have to deviate from your plan; you may need to react to an unanticipated outcome. This is when you cannot keep pursuing the same course of action. You will need to be creative, and as a leader, you will need to think of a solution. It may involve taking certain risk, but as a leader, you will have to adapt to the situation. You will need to utilise your assets and your people and make a plan. Leaders tend to have high levels of curiosity; they are keen to examine other ideas and learn from others and as such, are semi-prepared for many events.

11. Intuition

This comes with confidence. When leading friends, a team or nation through uncharted waters, things are uncertain, the risk increases and so too the pressure. This is when your intuition kicks in; this is when your self-belief to follow your intuition comes to the fore. Day to day management is somewhat predictable and the pressure/risk consistent, but when events change people look to their leader. This is when your ability to make not only decisions but tough decisions is on display. Trusting yourself is as important as others trusting you.

12. Inspire

Beginning a journey, whether it is establishing a business, or moving to a new position will require a leader to not only communicate the message, but inspire others to follow and to achieve. When you are in a leadership role, you need to stand back and observe how your team is functioning. They may be deep in their work with levels of interest and energy evaporating and heard it all before. You need to inspire them to keep going to follow your standard and finish the task at hand. Your role is to keep morale, teamwork and comradery up. You need to appreciate others efforts, and you need to thank them for their achievements.

13. Approach and style

As a leader you have to think how to inspire, get the best out of, and help those around you. You have to think of your approach, through your tone of voice, choice of words, body gestures, recognising that everyone is different and as such, unique. Some respond under pressure; others fall apart, some respond to direct talk, others shut down. As a leader you need to adapt your style and approach to each individual and the circumstances at the time. A leader's ability to deliver the message the right way will determine their success in getting the best out of their team or those around them.

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