

Leadership Fundamentals

How Leaders Get Followers

Key Points:

- Just like there are three primary styles on the leadership continuum, from authoritarian to delegative to democratic, there are different reasons why people follow these leaders, generally relating to this continuum. You need to pick the right leadership approach for the right situation, and the right subordinate.

- The first reason is position. No matter where you are in the organization, everybody reports to somebody above them in the hierarchy. This official position of leadership carries with it a certain level of power, authority, and responsibility.

- You can also lead because of your expertise. Leading through expertise is when you really ARE the smartest person in the room, about this topic, and everyone knows it. Note that leading by expertise is independent of position. It has nothing to do with title. In fact, many times it's a front-line person who best understands the current problem or issue, and has the greatest insight into what to do about it.

- Another way to lead is through information. Leaders have the advantage of a wider perspective. They have access to more information, and that gives them credibility

- The position leaders hold typically gives them control over rewards and punishment.

This is the transactional view of leadership.

- Some leaders become influential because of their connections. What some people disparagingly call "connections," other people call "networking".

Don't Forget:

Having important connections influences followers.

- A final factor for followers is charisma. Some leaders create followers simply through the strength of their personality. People want these leaders to respect them, to like them, to approve of them.

and authority in the eyes of their followers.

When Things Go Wrong:

Done wrong, which means doing any of these TOO MUCH or UNFAIRLY:

- Unwarranted position can result in incompetence.

- Expertise can lead to overconfidence, and becoming a know-it-all.

- Information can lead to hoarding data.

- Rewards and punishment can turn into coercion and intimidation.

- Connection can lead to sucking up, and playing favorites regardless of performance.

- Charisma can lead to management by emotion instead of data.

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Key Points:

Management vs. Leadership

- To lead is to “guide or direct a group.”
- To manage is “to handle, direct, govern, or control in action or use.”
- Leaders have a higher-level focus, while managers have a more tactical focus.
- Managers are concerned with individuals; they have team and department operational goals to achieve.
- Leaders are focused on overall organizational goals and performance. This requires looking at the bigger picture, and encompasses a longer-term horizon than managers look at.
- Managers are responsible for operating in compliance with the policies and procedures of the organization. With leaders, they are more focused on creating a general culture of respect and trust.
- Traditionally, managers give the orders, and employees follow them. Leaders are building an overall engaged workforce. Instead of commanding workers, leaders enable them.

Don't Forget:

- Leaders are worried about what goes wrong and why.
- Leaders use the facts they've gathered to truly understand the situation. They're going for the elimination of mistakes and the improvement of performance.
- Think about the leaders you've had. How do they match up to the characteristics mentioned here?
- What made the good leaders so good? And what made the bad ones so poor?
- How would you rate yourself? How do you match up to the good leaders you've had?

My Notes:

Leadership Fundamentals

Traits of Successful Leaders

Key Points:

- What are the traits that successful leaders have in common? There are a lot of different lists out there, but here are some common themes that run through these.
- Leaders inspire a shared vision. They give their followers something worthwhile to aspire to.
- Leaders inspire confidence in others. They need to project that they know where everyone's going.
- Leaders need to inspire a positive attitude in others. They let everyone know that there are always opportunities—for improvement, for new products and markets, for new challenges, and for growth.
- Successful leaders inspire trust. Their employees trust their leaders to do what's right, make good on their promises, and work for the benefit of all.
- Leaders inspire respect. When it's clear that leaders are competent, that their vision is valid, and that their motives are pure, then respect follows.

Don't Forget:

- Let's talk about competency. Competent leaders are aware, decisive, and responsible. They analyze when required, and take action when necessary.
- Great leaders hold themselves accountable, and expect the same from others. They give credit where it's due, and accept the blame for what happens under their watch. They know how to manage setbacks and failures.
- Leaders inspire a connection with others. They are good listeners and communicators.
- The best leaders are humble and display a strong sense of responsibility.
- The question for you is, "What do you want to inspire in your followers?"

My Notes:
