



15 traits that make a leader

Management team needs vision, energy and focus to succeed

By Dennis Sommer
Special to the Beacon Journal

Published on Monday, Jul 13, 2009

What are the leadership skills and abilities that are valued in business leaders today? If you are looking to build a high-performance team or company to deal with today's tough economic realities, here are 15 leadership traits you and your managers should be focused on to improve personal and business performance:

- **Vision.**

Leaders have the ability to see things as they should become. By defining the organization's direction, the leader defines the organization's future.

- **Communication.**

Leaders are able to get others to share in their vision. They communicate in a clear and powerful way. Whether in a large meeting or in personal discussions, they never miss the opportunity to pass along their message and vision.

- **Flexibility.**

Leaders are willing to learn. They are committed to enhancing their own knowledge as well as making sure others keep up with the demand for a better educated and informed work force.

- **Action oriented.**

When new ways of doing business need to be implemented, leaders motivate and give responsibility to the entire team.

- **Bottom-line thinker.**

Leaders know the financial conditions and limitations of the organization. Once they have the same information as senior executives, it is expected that the team will understand and support the decisions.

- **Can build rapport.**

Leaders let the person or group know they understand their viewpoints, whether they agree or not.

- **Listens.**

Leaders have a mutual interest in the matter under discussion. Letting others speak first and really listening to what they have to say shows they are respected and valued as members of the team.

- **Respect.**

Leaders do not talk at people; they communicate with them. They do not patronize them. Leaders underscore that they have an equal stake in finding an acceptable solution.

- **Focus.**

Leaders focus on the issues that connect them with their followers. They stress values shared by their employees, enlisting them in a mission that gives their work purpose and direction.

- **Innovation.**

A leader thinks on his or her feet and is adept at analyzing situations, offering new solutions and direction to reach objectives.

High expectations.

Leaders know that by setting the worker expectation bar realistically high, better results will be achieved.

- **Passion.**

Leaders have a true passion for their calling and have the ability to infuse it in others.

- **Change.**

Leaders stimulate and relish change. They do not become frightened or paralyzed with fear of failure. They see change as an opportunity, not a threat.

- **Energy.**

Leaders have an enormous amount of energy and the ability to energize and invigorate others.

- **Support.**

Leaders surround themselves with competent, responsible and self-motivated people, giving them the support and freedom to do their jobs to the best of their ability.

Dennis Sommer, an Akron chapter SCORE counselor, is the chief executive of Executive Business Advisers.

Find this article at: <http://www.ohio.com/business/50604087.html>