You can’t lead if no one wants to follow

Leadership is really all about “followership,” or getting others to want to follow you, writes Roger W. Ferguson, Jr., President & CEO at TIAA-CREF. To put it another way: you can’t be out in front leading the parade unless there are people willing to line up and march behind you. Followership is not conferred by a title, and it cannot be forced. Rather, it’s about inspiring people, adds Ferguson as he enumerated the four characteristics of leaders who do this well.

- Expertise: You must have the right degree of expertise about your organization and the issues it is confronting, or you will never have credibility. You don’t see many amateurs among the ranks of leaders, because people want leaders who base their decisions on more than just gut reactions. That said, there are different kinds of expertise. Whether you are an engineer, teacher, or chef, you need a deep, rock-solid understanding of your discipline. But you should also develop a broader expertise — on the organization in which you’re working and on your industry or sector as a whole. You need that big-picture perspective to earn followership beyond just your functional area.

- Appeal: George Clooney-style charisma is nice, but that’s not what the author is talking about here. He is referring to the kind of appeal that stems from attributes associated with strong leadership, namely, the ability to: Make the big decisions. Effectively communicate those decisions and articulate the thinking behind them. Think both tactically and strategically. See the big picture — the “forest for the trees.”

- Empathy: Effective leaders recognize that people have lives outside of work and sometimes need support and flexibility to balance competing demands and responsibilities. If you have an employee whose 3-year-old has strep throat or whose mother is experiencing dementia, you should take the time to listen and offer support.

Conversations not campaigns, nobody wants to get blasted

With the onset of the internet, email blast— with popular marketing expressions such as batch and blast, hit the database and e-shot — became a popular avenue for marketers to promote their product and services as they could save a lot of money over direct mail and reach their target audience much faster. But according to “Marketo”, leader in marketing software and solutions, marketers soon ran into a serious problem: No one wants to get “blasted.” What seemed like a dream solution for companies became a nightmare for recipients, who were inundated with messages. “Marketo”, adds that email needs to evolve from campaigns to conversations. Just getting your messages to recipients is not enough; you have to give subscribers reasons to engage with those messages. This means abandoning the idea of batch and blast and entering into a relationship-oriented mindset that continuously builds engagement with consumers, one by one and over time. Engaging means that your email marketing content stimulates a dialogue that’s organic and free flowing. Just like a real-world conversation, the dialogue you start should foster a two-way conversation. In other words, an engaging email doesn’t just talk to a recipient; it also gives him a reason and an opportunity to respond, and fits into a broader conversational arc. There’s no doubt that engaging conversation is a great marketing technique, adds “Marketo”.

7 tips for management success

An effective manager pays attention to many facets of management, leadership and learning within organizations. Susan M. Heathfield, Human Resources Expert, enumerated the following tips for management success:

- Builds effective and responsive interpersonal relationships. Reporting staff members, colleagues and executives respect his or her ability to demonstrate caring, collaboration, respect, trust and attentiveness.
- Communicates effectively in person, print and email. Listening and two-way feedback characterize his or her interaction with others.
- Builds the team and enables other staff to collaborate more effectively with each other. People feel they have become more effective, more creative, more productive — in the presence of a team builder.
- Understands the financial aspects of the business and sets goals and measures and documents staff progress and success.
- Knows how to create an environment in which people experience positive morale and recognition and employees are motivated to work hard for the success of the business.
- Leads by example and provides recognition when others do the same.
- Helps people grow and develop their skills and capabilities through education and on-the-job learning.

http://humanresources.about.com/

“The most powerful leadership tool you have is your own personal example.”

--John Wooden

Keeping your best workers

Whenever an employee leaves your organization, you lose money, time, and expertise—all hard to replace. On the website www.managebetter.biz, it says that in retaining and keeping your best employees, companies need to focus on employee development as most employees are looking for a way to build their skills (additional schooling, technical courses, mentoring and so forth). Great workers are more inclined to work for—and stick with—a company that makes investments in its people.

Source: www.managebetter.biz

Getting everyone involve for a productive team meeting

The point of holding a team meeting is to discuss things as a team, so make sure everyone is involved, writes Rhett Power, Co-Founder, Wild Creations. Ask someone who has remained quiet for his or her opinion, and encourage discussion between team members. Meetings that offer everyone a chance to voice their opinions and insight are much more productive than meetings that only have one or two voices in conversation, he adds.

Source: http://www.inc.com

Putting your personality into your communications

When you are presenting your ideas, you don’t have to sublimate your personality, writes John Baldoni, chair of leadership development at N2Growth. Baldoni adds that effective leaders know how to inject their personality into their ideas. He cited three ways: (i) think about what you want to say, and make a well-reasoned argument, (ii) reflect on what your words really mean. Whom do they affect? What are the benefits of your ideas? (iii) add an anecdote from your own life — or lives of people you know — to make your message more memorable and compelling. Effective presenters connect with their audience on two levels: intellect and emotion. As a leader, you need to keep a balance between the two in order reach people’s hearts as well as their minds, adds Baldoni.


Empathy and teamwork are essential

People can go to work every day, zone out at pointless meetings and otherwise not get much done, and this is a problem of focus and empathy, says Stewart Butterfield, CEO of Slack. “One way that empathy manifests itself is courtesy. Respecting people’s time is important. Don’t let your colleagues down; if you say you’re going to do something, do it,” he says.

Source: SmartBrief on Leadership

Restricting internet use

In his article “Nine Idiotic Office Rules that Drive Everyone Insane” Travis Bradberry, President, TalentSmart says that people should be able to kill time on the internet during breaks. When companies unnecesarily restrict people’s internet activity, it does more than demoralise’’ staffs. It could also make it harder to do their job.

Source: http://www.bbc.com

A breathing exercise can help you refocus

In order to get work done and perform well, we need to be able to fully concentrate. Anxiety and stress diminish our ability to focus—and in high-pressure environments or during periods of change, it can be difficult to get these under control. You need to find a way to ignore the stress and get into a calm state so you can achieve your goals. Here’s a simple method for staying calm under stress: every morning before you go to work, carve out time to simply focus on your breath—perhaps a 10- or 20-minute session. Whenever your mind starts to wander (maybe you find yourself thinking, “What am I going to do?” about something), just let that go and refocus on your breath. This sharpens attention and calms the mind. The key is to practice routinely so it gets easier to achieve a state of calm and concentration.


5 tips for running productive team meetings

Team meetings are an important element of any work setting, yet they often take too long to get to the point and thus take time away from your productivity. Here are some top tips for how to run a successful and productive team meeting:

Plan ahead: It might sound simple, but too often team leaders fall into the routine of having a weekly meeting without developing an agenda for the meeting. Take some time to plan your meeting agenda before sending out invites.

Prepare your team: Once you have an agenda, send it out to your team so they know exactly what to expect. Tell them your time frame so they know how much time to block off for the meeting.

Stick to your agenda and schedule: Once your meeting begins, stick to your agenda and schedule. If you devoted only 10 minutes to point A on your agenda, then stop the discussion at 10 minutes and move on to point B. You can always follow up with key people later if you were unable to delve into a point as much as you wanted during the meeting, and if you end up with extra time at the end of the meeting, you can go back to topics that warrant more discussion.

Get everyone involved: The point of holding a team meeting is to discuss things as a team, so make sure everyone is involved. Ask someone who has remained quiet for his or her opinion, and encourage discussion between team members.

Actively listen: Make notes and ask follow-up questions. Your participation as an active listener will set the tone for your team members, who will naturally follow your lead.

See you can’t, you can’t lead if...

to understand his or her needs and support that employee in finding solutions. If you treat people with empathy, they may very well follow you to the ends of the earth; if you don’t, they will never line up behind you in the first place.

Fortitude: Effective leaders are the calm in the storm during the bad times, and they stay grounded in the midst of the good times. They are the shock absorbers of their organizations, tempering both the highs and the lows. Leaders with fortitude also know how to take criticism with a grain of salt. And let’s face it; there’s always criticism. But they won’t let it to keep them from taking action, nor will they allow it to cloud their vision or sour their optimism.

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