



What Can You Do to Develop Leadership Skills?

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Leadership?



- Leader
 - a person people follow
- Manager
 - an assigned position in the organization. They plan, organize and coordinate
- Generally, the most effective managers are leaders
- Generally, an organization needs leaders to achieve its potential and grow



Leadership



- Have the vision
 - Self-developed or shared organizational
- Achieve alignment of people with the vision via communication
 - If you do not effectively communicate the vision, you cannot expect others to share it
- Empower people to work towards that vision
- Reinforce alignment over time
- Redirect, as required, as the organization learns through experience



Alignment



- A team of dogs pulling a dog sled are aligned, all pulling in the same direction, following the lead dog.
 - If they were pulling in different directions (not aligned), there would not be nearly as much forward progress.
- Qualities for a good lead dog are intelligence, initiative, common sense, and the ability to find a trail in bad conditions.



Important Leadership Characteristics



- Vision
 - your own, or from others (e.g. organizational vision)
- Effective communication
- Integrity
- Do what you say and say what you do
- Helping employees succeed, removing obstacles
- Self confidence
 - this comes with practice and success



Leaders



- Encourage others to grow and thrive; engage others
- Build trust and confidence in staff
 - If they don't trust you, how can you expect them to follow you?
- Foster a learning environment
- Persevere
- Tolerate personal/corporate failure, but learn from the lessons
- Share success



Engagement



- Emotionally committed to organization and its goals
- Recipe for Engagement
 - Communication
 - Growth and Development
 - Recognition and Appreciation
 - Trust and Confidence



What Can You Do to Improve Your Leadership Skills?



- Look for good examples
 - Try to understand what it is about bad examples that makes them less effective leaders
- Take training opportunities
- Read appropriate books
 - Read biographies of famous people; learn from their experience
- Practice, practice, practice
- Take measured risks; be daring



Improving Leadership Skills

- Communication (both oral and written)
 - Effective communication is necessary to engage others
- Listening
 - Practice listening. Give the other person the floor to express themselves, and make sure you understand what they are saying before responding



Improving Leadership Skills

- Reading
 - Try to read in a manner that enables you to understand the author's point of view, versus overlaying your concept of what you think they are saying
 - You don't need to agree with their point of view; simply understand it
- Speaking
 - Practice speaking; be clear and direct
 - Have a clear idea of what you wish to communicate before starting to speak
 - Seize every available opportunity for public speaking, such as making presentations at work, at technical conferences, or other forums



Improving Leadership Skills

- Meetings
 - Look for examples of people leading meetings who are able to engage the other participants, and keep the meeting on track. Learn from that experience, and take any opportunity to lead meetings.
 - Look and listen to leaders in meetings; practice that skill
 - How does the leader listen and respond?
 - How does the leader guide the team?
 - How does the leader work with obstacles?
 - What would you do?



Improving Leadership Skills

- Clear writing
 - Look for examples of people who communicate clearly
 - Read their material to help absorb their style
 - Ask people who communicate clearly in writing to review your writing
 - Take on tasks involving writing to practice and improve



Improving Leadership Skills

- Effective delegation involves a number of leadership skills, and can be practiced to develop these.
 - A model for effective delegation:
 - Ensure the person can manage the proposed task; increase the degree of difficulty over time.
 - Think about how the person will view what is being delegated. Begin the communication on a positive note.
 - Clearly define the objectives. Do not explain in detail how to do the work; maintain the focus on the end result.



Improving Leadership Skills

– Delegation (cont'd.)

- Clearly define the parameters within which the work is to be performed (e.g., budget, schedule).
- Clearly define the performance standards.
- Ask for a plan of action. Have the person develop a strategy for successfully accomplishing the work.
- When the person returns with a plan, review the plan. Offer helpful suggestions and ideas. Ask them where the obstacles are within the work and how they have planned to overcome them? Brainstorm with the person about how the project can be started.
- Ask them “Can you do it?” Tell them that you have confidence in them.



Improving Leadership Skills

- Delegation (cont'd.)
 - Confirm help is available.
 - Follow up and follow through.
 - Work closely with them to avoid problems.
 - Compliment a job well done.



Leadership Skills



- If leadership is something you wish to take on, the skills to make you a more effective leader can be developed.
- The most effective way for these skills to be developed is for you to take an active role in developing them.
- Don't pass up a chance to lead.

