

Are You A Natural Born Leader?

Running a business today requires radically different leadership skills than you would have used as an employer five to ten years ago. The rapidly changing marketplace, increased global competition, and leaner organisational structures require radically different skills and attitudes.

As a workplace leader you are responsible for making things happen. Your leadership style may be classified as a "Transactional" leader - one who gets things done or a "Transformational" leader - one who is a visionary path-maker with a strong ability to motivate and empower others.

No matter which type of leadership style you display there is an important work ethic which you need to apply in your business on a day-to-day basis. This is:

If you are to elicit extraordinary performances from your staff you must recognise, understand and respect the importance of working with ordinary people.

How can you take responsibility for this in your workplace?

Follow these principles:

- Foster an environment that is conducive to learning and self-renewal.
- Create an appetite and agility for continuous change.
- View every organisational member as a source of valuable ideas.
- Share their expertise as well as their mistakes freely with others.
- Demonstrate a high level of patience and tolerance for ambiguity.
- Share power and decision-making with others throughout the organisation.
- Demonstrate a commitment to your own learning.
- Have a strong sense of purpose for yourself and your business.
- Be willing to share important organisational information at all levels.
- Encourage relationships and the building of networks.
- Demonstrate courage and inspire others through their own actions.
- Respond to both spoken and unspoken needs of others in the organisation.
- Have high personal and professional standards.

What should you encourage your staff to do?

1. **Embrace change:** Today's market place is ever changing. Businesses must respond quickly and be innovative to survive, let alone have a competitive advantage. This requires a flexible, adaptable workforce. This translates to a variety of new work arrangements, including changing work assignments, flexible work schedules and frequently re-forming work teams.
2. **Learn to thrive on uncertainty:** Flatter, leaner organisational structures mean that there is less day-to-day direction from the top. Individuals will be expected to form networks within and outside their organisations, master the skills of creative collaboration, respond to frequently changing priorities, and assume personal responsibility for setting their own direction.
3. **Stay abreast of technology:** The Internet is rapidly becoming the hub of the global marketplace, and your business will need to develop and maintain its

proficiency in computer and telecommunications technology in order to be viable. Teleconferencing and virtual learning are two examples of how businesses are orienting their practices in the global economy.

4. **Learn to make the most of network relationships:** Increasingly, businesses are entering into alliances, mergers and joint ventures with former competitors. The ability to manage lateral relationships will be a critical determinant in peoples' ability to achieve results. No longer can businesses afford internal compartmentalisation and the associated redundancy characteristic of traditional management structures. Cross-functional work teams and matrix structures are becoming commonplace, and they require a more demanding set of interpersonal skills.
5. **Make the most of learning opportunities:** Organisations that survive and thrive in the 21st century will be those that are continually renewing and learning. People who work in, or with them will be expected to assume full responsibility for managing their learning in response to changing organisational needs. Learning will be different than that in traditional organisations as well. Rather than prescribed curriculum being handed down from "experts", people will be responsible for creating their own learning opportunities to harness their individual creativity and talents.
6. **Develop a different perspective on career advancement:** Career advancement in the traditional organisational structure consisted of upward promotions throughout one's career. Leaner organisational structures preclude that expectation within 21st century businesses. Instead, career advancement and the ability to add value to the business, will increasingly be evidenced by "career latticing". People will develop a broader base of experience and more extensive networks by making a number of criss-cross career moves.
7. **Add value:** The business can no longer afford the workforce that merely meets expectations. Increasingly, standards are being raised to ensure competitive advantage, and exemplary performance will be the norm. People who thrive in businesses will be those who pursue opportunities to add value. They will see themselves as stakeholders in the enterprise.
8. **Alter expectations about employment:** Contract work, outsourcing, temporary employment, telecommuting, virtual organisations - these are but a few of the changes in the way people are already being "employed" as organisations are downsizing and restructuring to be more competitive. The workforce of the 21st century will not expect to have a lifelong relationship based on dependency with one employer. Instead, people will have a series of short-term relationships throughout their careers in which they contribute their knowledge and expertise in response to particular business needs. They will have to operate more like business owners whose customer is the company.
9. **Embrace new workplace relationships which will replace traditional supervision and mentorship:** Reshaped businesses will have fewer leaders at the top than traditional vertical organisational structures, and, given the rapidity of change, those at the top will be incapable of being the repositories of organisational knowledge and wisdom. In the new era, leadership will emerge throughout the business regardless of job title or status, and individuals will have relationships with "leader coaches" who will sponsor them in their development of new knowledge and achievement of evolution performance.

20 characteristics of a strong leader

Do you have what it takes?

1. **A sense of mission.** They have clarity of vision and mission, which provides the foundation to excite and inspire others in the team and organisation.
2. **Values-based measurable goals.** They have clear understanding of the values of both the organisation and individuals and these form the foundations enabling them to meet clear objectives. At their instigation the concept of ownership of goals unifies members of the team and organisation and continues to provide everyone involved with a clear sense of direction towards a common cause.
3. **Action orientation.** They are entrepreneurial, innovative and forward in their thinking, and they launch quickly. An attitude of "we can do it!" prevails.
4. **Courage.** They are initiators of action and attack; they persistently stay the course, believing that the future belongs to the risk-taker.
5. **Planners and strategists.** They are big picture thinkers, taking the long view, looking at all options and outcomes. Concentrating on personal strengths and weaknesses, always aware of what could be the worst possible outcome, in order to avoid it.
6. **Inspiring and motivational.** They have an ability to draw out additional capacity within others, to arouse enthusiasm with total commitment. High levels of regular encouragement establish trust, confidence and loyalty.
7. **Committed to success.** They are future oriented, never thinking of failure, always learning from mistakes. They display a commitment to excellence and quality performances from products, services and people within the organisation.
8. **Communicators.** They have the ability to delegate with agreed clear responsibilities. Everyone in the team knows what is expected of him/her, consequently instilling meaning and purpose into a task.
9. **Low pressure salespeople.** They possess a sound knowledge of the "relationship" selling process and how to apply it in daily interactions with customers and members of the organisation to make them feel significant. They have excellent presentation and negotiation skills, and are prepared to compromise, always looking for a win/win solution.
10. **Visibility.** Never hiding behind a desk, they are always available to meet and talk with customers and team members. They actively seek responses to improve products, services and leadership style and achieve targets.
11. **Team builder.** They demonstrate clear coaching skills which enables them to determine ineffective team members. Only quality people are hired and continually developed via appropriate training strategies. Tasks are distributed to most suited individuals where they can make a major contribution. Open communication abounds.

12. **Prioritising.** They ensure measurable and prioritised key result areas are known by all.
13. **Love of leadership.** They are self-reliant with a strong desire to be in charge. If asked, they like to make their own decisions and to be in control, however they also recognise that in order to lead, an individual must first be a good follower.
14. **High self-esteem & positive self-image.** They gain self-knowledge via introspection and this provides sensitivity towards the feelings of others in the team and organisation. Strong leaders know their limitations and honestly evaluate themselves.
15. **Self-motivated.** They have a strong vision, which provides them with the ability to continually set higher goals and gain commitment from others.
16. **Ask advice.** They are able to build upon their known strengths. They are prepared to seek advice from others in order to discover and compensate for any weaknesses.
17. **Power through co-operation.** They are always seeking talented people and developing relationships with key people. They understand and appreciate that if others are first helped to achieve their goals, they will in return, assist you towards achieving your goals.
18. **Listening.** They learn to listen without interrupting, understanding that the more people are allowed to discuss an idea the more likely they will be committed towards its implementation.
19. **Integrity.** They understand that trust and credibility are the foundation of strong leadership. They always keep promises and are prepared to stand up for their beliefs, knowing that those beliefs are based upon sound personally-owned values.
20. **Continual personal growth.** They have a strong commitment towards life-learning and ensure their own self-improvement through reading, study and personal development courses.

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