

Great Leadership

In every business the issue of great leadership becomes one of the primary elements that determines whether the company will compete effectively and perhaps even achieve greatness. The discovery of a great leader, or perhaps even the nurturing of one, is a complex and confusing challenge, because all too often the ability to recognize greatness requires a degree of greatness in and of itself. The understanding of what constitutes great leadership is understood to go a long way in identifying and developing great leaders.

This article shares the 13 elements of great leadership Tudog has witnessed over its years of working with more than 180 companies. While in no particular order of importance, each of the characteristics or skills contribute to being a great leader and are necessary to some extent. The Tudog leadership traits include:

1. Uses Information on Demand

Leadership is about decision making, but great leadership is about making the right decisions. The foundation of good decision making is information and the ability to process it, digest it, and recall it at the appropriate times. With all the various channels of communication and flows of information coming into the leaders office, this is no easy task. Yet those who master it become masterful leaders.

2. Communicates Well

A great leader needs to be able to share information and formulate and communicate a vision of the company that excites and ignites the other employees to the extent that they willfully and enthusiastically implement the instructions being issued. The ability to communicate well includes know how to say something, when to say it, and what channel of communication to use to get the message across. Those leaders who are able to communicate well turn around and see they have followers.

3. Listens

Great leaders never believe that their way is the only way or that their idea is always the best. Moreover, really great leaders know that the best idea often comes from the least expected people. In order to make certain that the best ideas are found and acted upon, great leaders are also great listeners and they know how to get people talking. By creating an atmosphere where no idea is too silly or outrageous, great leaders make certain they have a steady flow of great ideas to work with.

4. Delegates

Delegating tasks and responsibility does more than just free up the leader to engage in tasks only he/she can do. It also demonstrates trust and confidence in the team and allows employees to feel invested in the company's performance. Great leaders delegate because they select their people carefully and fully understand competencies and capabilities. They also know that presenting someone with a challenge usually leads to their rising to the occasion.

5. Motivates

More than just providing a vision and expressing confidence in his/her team, the great leader motivates on a higher level by making people believe that the future is in their hands and that success is the only possibility. By motivating people, the great leader creates an atmosphere that is safe and exciting and free. By keeping people highly motivated the great leader knows he/she can count on people to sacrifice when necessary and go the extra mile when needed.

6. Shows Commitment

The best leaders let their followers know that the commitment they are demanding is equal only to the commitment they themselves possess. The need to nurture commitment is fundamental to leadership, which by definition is comprised of followers. The only way a follower will comply with an unpleasant request is if he/she knows that the leader would do the same if the roles were reversed.

7. Remains Flexible

A leader that tries to bend the world to his/her demands as opposed to recognizing when the need to bend is upon them cannot reach greatness. Flexibility is a key component to great leadership because it demonstrates the ability to react and respond to feedback and unexpected consequences – and it sends a message to the rest of the organization that responding to the unexpected and overcoming challenges is more important than sticking to a plan no matter what the consequences.

8. Thinks Creatively

The truly great leader knows how to think alternatively, spotting distinctive existing opportunities and creating new ones. The ability to think creatively, while not considered an essential skill for good management, is one of the characteristics that separate management from leadership. By thinking creatively the great leader sets a standard for problem solving, innovation and daily business that others around him/her can respect, admire and emulate.

9. Develops Relationships

Great leaders know that people respond to people and that in order to achieve the other characteristics of great leadership (such as motivation and communication) one needs to be able to develop and maintain good relationships with colleagues and subordinates. The better the relationship the more likely the response will be when the need for a little extra effort comes about. While developing relationships does not mean to imply friendships, it does mean to suggest mutual respect, courtesy, and a sense of joint mission. The leader who can share such relationships in the workplace is indeed a great leader.

10. Shares Success

Great leaders know how to share the glory – and the credit. The leader that openly, willingly, and frequently calls attention to the contribution others have made to the successes for which he/she is credited is a leader with great personal integrity. Such

integrity is generally rewarded with loyalty, meaning that the initial success is repeated and built upon. Moreover, great leaders share success financially, making certain that the compensation of the people contributing to the company's success is reflective of their genuine value. Leaders who share success enjoy greater success.

11. Strives to Improve

The great leader knows that perfection lies elsewhere and is committed to improving both personally and professionally. He/she knows that his/her performance is subject to points of weakness and actively seeks ways to identify where improvement is needed and ways it can be achieved. The great leader knows that by seeking to improve he/she is not only getting better at what he/she already does exceedingly well, but also that an example is being set that shows others in the organization that growth is a never ending process.

12. Acts

A great leader knows how to transform theoretical discourse and strategic planning into a viable and successful plan of action. By being a person of action the great leader demonstrates effectiveness, decisiveness, and dedication to getting the job done. By acting upon his/her business strategies and tactics the great leader propels the company forward and drives others to join a culture of action.

13. Achieves

Perhaps more than anything else, great leaders get the job done. The great leader gears all actions and all policies toward the successful conclusion of the objective, and when goals are ongoing they make certain that the processes and efficiencies required by the goal are in place and executed. By achieving objects great leaders do more than perpetuate their leadership, they maintain their organizations viability, bringing benefit to all involved.

Great leadership is one of the areas of human development that sparks the "nature versus nurture" debate. Whether great leadership is in-born, developed, or a little of each does not detract from the qualities that, collectively, comprise the great leader. By understanding them, those who strive to become great leaders have a better understanding of the skills and character traits needed to reach the heights of greatness.