

## Are you ready for a leadership role?

In today's organizational cultures, no matter what your position, leadership is relevant and applies to you (either as an employee or as an individual contributor moving into roles with greater authority or autonomy). If we take the perspective that individuals are not born with characteristics that make them an **effective leader** and, instead, adopt the attitude that effective leaders are a product of external and internal professional development activities - it is logical to think that some people demonstrate the personality to take the lead more naturally, but anyone can learn and develop the traits necessary for leadership...it just might take some work! Here are a few traits and attributes that can get you heading in the right direction.

### 1. Self-confidence

First and foremost a leader needs to have confidence in their ability to do what they need to do. Without self-confidence you will have trouble gaining respect, and will struggle to inspire action in others. A confident leader instills confidence in a group, and provides the catalyst for motivation and inspiration. If this is something you struggle with, developing confidence and self-esteem is an immediate priority.

### 2. Passion and enthusiasm

A leader is someone who inspires and guides others when things aren't going well. This involves having passion for what you do, and a drive and self-motivation to go the extra mile and exemplify a zest and excitement about your work. Being a leader is a difficult job for this reason, but being able to keep your energy level high and maintain passion for your position will make all the difference in your own and others effectiveness.

### 3. Sense of humor

A wonderful way to build relationships and raise morale is with humor. Humor and laughter can help release tension and stress, and really bring people closer together. Work toward providing a fun playful environment and people will be more creative, open-minded, and resilient. Take note that your humor is appropriate and fitting to the situation, but overall I opt to have a fun-loving nature.

### 4. Cognitive skills and knowledge

It's difficult to take the lead if your unfamiliar with the business or industry they're in. Always striving to learn and expand your knowledge is a wonderful trait to have as a leader. Continue to develop the competence with the skills you'll need, as well as awareness of any trends and current state of affairs that your industry is going through. Learn to plan and prepare for the future through developing problem solving and critical thinking skills.

### 5. Authenticity

A leader needs to be authentic to really connect and influence others. Showing a sincere interest in people and really caring about others can provide an immediate bond that turns into a loyal relationship. Having enthusiasm and believing in the purpose and mission of an organization is crucial for this reason. The leader is the one who imparts this powerful message to others through speaking and behavior. Don't be afraid to open-up and be vulnerable at times. Be a human being and share your story with others. A truly charismatic leader is authentic and relatable.

## 6. Trustworthy

If a leader isn't trusted there's not much chance constituents will offer genuine support. Trust comes from building rapport and being consistent and honest with others. They know what to expect and have faith you will come through. Have integrity by following through with expectations and sticking to your word. This will contribute immensely to greater cooperation and team spirit.

## 7. Assertiveness

Being direct and respectful when giving demands and sharing feelings is a crucial part of working to get the best out of others. A leader needs to learn how to communicate and take charge without disrespecting others. This involves maintaining order and direction while still showing positive regard. Assertiveness is different from aggressive communication where one yells, belittles, and demands compliance, as well as being distinct from passivity and letting others take advantage of your kindness and consideration.

## 8. Emotional stability

A leader must have the ability to be calm and collected during times of crisis and uncertainty. Emotional stability relates to having a balanced and consistent attitude, as well as a positive emotional outlook. An optimistic and positive attitude is a big factor in maintaining healthy morale and motivating others. Emotional stability shows strong character and is comforting when others turn to you for answers and direction. A leader must know how to manage emotions and recognize emotions in other.

## 9. Social intelligence

A leader needs to be aware of group dynamics and be able to navigate complex relationships. Do you know how different personalities get along? How can we motivate others and manage conflict? We are social creatures so recognizing the value of relationships for productivity and work satisfaction is incredibly valuable to getting the most effective and efficient results from individuals and teams.

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Whether you feel like you're ready to take on a leadership role or not, becoming a leader is just a matter of personal and professional development. Take the time to consider what you feel your natural talents and abilities are and develop these strengths. Also, be willing to learn and grow in areas where you may need to continue developing yourself.

Leadership is a prerequisite to reaching the next level, so start developing the necessary skills and knowledge by finding a mentor and educating yourself about what it takes. Next time the opportunity arises, take hold and be willing to accept this important chance to expand your leadership potential!