

Leadership: 5 Key Steps You Can Take to Instantly Bolster Your Value

- Understand steps you can take **instantly** to improve your leadership capabilities
- Understand the key skills you need to grow and get that next promotion
- Know some secrets to changes you can make in your language that will immediately make you a more influential person

Introduction

This report provides 5 steps you can take to improve your leadership skills, bolster your value, and increase your opportunity to advance and influence others. But, before we cover the 5 steps, we need to baseline ourselves with the 8 key skills or characteristics **Great Leaders** have. The steps, which then follow, help further explain the skills as well as provide actionable ways you can develop into a great leader.

The Essential Leadership Skills

There are many skills needed for great leadership. Sometimes, the necessary attributes may seem mysterious or esoteric, but, when it all comes down to it, the skills of **Great Leadership** are well understood. Every great leader possesses them and practices them in their own unique style. Various leadership experts will speak about these skills in different ways and in different groupings, but the essence can be articulated as follows:

1. Integrity – Integrity can be thought of as having 3 elements: Honesty, Accountability and Doing the “Right Thing”. When we speak about “The Golden rule” and “Respect”, these are all parts of the leadership attribute of Integrity.
2. Value-Driven – A leader must be able to determine and articulate the value he/she and their organization are providing to the mission of the business/organization.
3. Vision/Journey – Leadership, at its core, is taking people where they might not otherwise go. A Leader must be able to create a vision of a journey that people want to join him/her on. Without a journey, there is no leadership.

4. Courage – A leader must be able to make decisions and take risks in order to grow themselves and their organization. A leader must be a change agent, challenge the status quo, and must be willing to fail in order to lead. These are all aspects of Courage.

If you think of the first 4 skills above as the foundation of the framework, the next 4 key leadership skills can be grouped together as the “grout” which holds the framework together. These skills truly are what make great leaders into “X Factor Leaders”. These include Passion, Communication, Caring, and Mentoring. Without these skills, a leaders’ value is limited.

5. Passion – To be a great leader, a leader needs to be completely engaged in the work they are doing. Passion includes the elements of Energy, Enthusiasm, Entrepreneurship, and Optimism.
6. Communication – In order to enlist followers, a leader must communicate often and clearly. And, because “relationships” are such a vital part of leadership success, communication is essential to be able to create and foster relationships.
7. Mentoring – Mentoring can take many forms, but a leader’s job is to develop others, and especially develop other leaders. It is not necessary that the mentoring be part of some official “mentoring” program”, but mentoring is based on building the right relationships which can foster learning, growth, and continual improvement.
8. Caring – Caring is absolutely essential in order to lead. The more a leader shows care for people in their organization, their company, and the people they interact with, the more success the leader will have. Caring for others is also one of the key aspects of leadership that makes being a leader enjoyable.

The diagram, below, is a visual way to articulate the key skills.



5 Steps to Instantly Improve Your Leadership

While it is true that there are many skills that make a great leader, there are important steps you can take to increase your value and your influence and place you on the solid path to greater leadership. In this paper, I have specified 5 important steps which, when taken, will change the way you act and will impact the way you are perceived by others.

1) **Modify your language.**

As a leader, there are some words you should do your best to completely eliminate from your vocabulary. They are the words “Try” and “Hope”. This may sound difficult, but the outcome can make an immediate impact.

When you ask someone to do something for you, if their answer is “I will try”, do you have any faith in their accountability for that action? (Hint - The answer is No!)

Instead of using the word “Try”, you can modify your vocabulary to say something like “Yes, I’ll do it” or “I have it”. If you truly are not sure you can make the commitment, alternatively provide a timeframe for which you ARE sure you can commit. For example, if someone says “Can you do this for me this weekend?” then answer “I am not sure I can, but I surely can get it to you Monday” or “If you don’t mind it being abridged, I can get it for you this weekend”. Those responses enable the correct conversation as to what timeframe is acceptable versus leaving the requestor hanging, wondering if their request will be completed.

The word “Hope” is similar. For example, if you make the statement “Hopefully, I will finish this report this week”, the impression this language leaves is that you are not someone who makes solid plans. It will help you excel as a leader to speak more decisively about your actions. “I plan to finish this report this week” provides clarity and the improved perception that you are someone who makes plans and sticks with them. This step of changing your language may sound strange, but once you eliminate these words from your vocabulary, you will surely want to ask the same of the people you develop.

2) Calculate your value

Every leader should be able to calculate the value of the existence of themselves and their team. What I mean by that is – what is the documentable impact of you being there? In my previous position, we calculated the “Return on Investment” of each of our programs. This means that we compared the cost of the organization working on a project to the benefit that the corporation would see from having completed the programs.

But, I believe you need to go a step beyond that and calculate an overall Return on Investment of *all of your work combined* – in essence, mathematically show the value your organization’s existence is providing. Compare the annual cost of your organization (and you) versus the value that you are providing. If it is positive, great, then share that information. If it is negative, rethink the actions you need to take to make your organization more valuable.

With imagination, this should be applicable to just about every leadership position. Here is an example: Let’s say you are the leader of an organization consisting of a group of front-desk employees at a hotel. In that role, you should have goals in terms of your customer service, customer retention, etc. From that, you need to be able to articulate how your excellent customer service is providing more revenue or reduced costs to your hotel.

The better you get at this, the more value you will be perceived as offering, and the more value you probably *will* be offering. You are likely to learn in the process that there are things you should be measuring that you are not, and goals you need to identify that don’t yet exist. This is all part of the benefit of taking this step.

3) Act as an Entrepreneur

If you are reading this, you may already be an entrepreneur, which means you should already have the “entrepreneurial mindset”. But, no matter what your position in a company, if you treat the company as if you are the owner, and it is your money on the line, you will act differently. You will ask yourself different questions about your expenditures, and you will celebrate progress more enthusiastically. You will then be perceived as someone with the right “leadership mindset”.

4) Toot your own Horn

Those who are humble sometimes have a real concern with tooting your own horn as you feel it is boastful. However, not advertising themselves is a mistake many people with aspirations make, and then they wonder why they are being passed over for promotions. You cannot assume that somehow your superiors will just “know what you do”. It is essential to be able to publicly speak about your accomplishments.

As a leader, there is a right and a wrong way to speak about your accomplishments. The stories should be about your organization and not just you alone. You should be using words like “We” and “Our”, not “I” and “My” when you do present your value and accomplishments. But, regardless of how you do it, it is imperative that you “toot your horn”.

5) Be Optimistic

There is nothing that drags an organization down more than a pessimist. The old adage “Is the glass half-full or half-empty?” really applies here. There are nearly always several ways to look at a situation and to respond to an event. You alone determine how you respond, and it is the people who find some way to look for the good and move on who are perceived as good leaders.

Remember, you get what you focus on. If you focus on the negative, you see the negative. If you focus on the positive, you see the positive.

Conclusion

There are many skills needed for great leadership. Sometimes, the necessary attributes may seem mysterious or esoteric. But, when it all comes down to it, the skills of Great Leadership are well understood. With that mystery unraveled, the path to better leadership is via steps to make the right decisions, take the right actions, and develop your unique style.

In this paper, we have discussed 5 steps you can take to improve your leadership capabilities, increase your influence, and excel.

If you make the commitment to take the steps, you will not only help yourself, but you will raise the tenor of your entire organization and the loyalty of the team you have.

This paper contains excerpts from my full-length book.

For questions or comments, please contact susan@anderheggengroup.com, find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/XFactorLeadership>, or via LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/pub/susan-anderheggen/11/862/716/.