

Five Keys to Being a Great Leader

There are certain characteristics that all great leaders share. Developing these traits will help you manage and motivate your employees:

1. Be as visible as possible.

Great leaders know you can't drive the bus from the back seat. Get out and about; visit your employees-even the ones out in the field or at different locations-as often as you can; talk to people; shake hands and say hello to as many of your employees as you can every single day. Important: Don't take up your employees' valuable time "pressing flesh" just for the sake of doing it. Make sure your visits with employees are genuine and productive for everyone involved.

2. Turn your team of followers into managers and leaders.

The greatest leaders realize that they can't succeed on their own; they build a team of people around them-great managers and leaders themselves, who can help the leader achieve goals.

3. Establish a vision and preach it.

Every great leader has a clear vision of what he or she wants to achieve-and every great leader is good at preaching the "gospel" of that vision to employees.

4. Be confident of you decisions.

Nobody wants to follow leaders who reverse course all the time. Employees who sense hesitation in their leader tend to hesitate themselves. They don't want to commit to a course if there's a chance the leader will change it. Once you decide on a course of action, stick to it and follow it through to the end.

5. Be flexible.

Sticking to your course of action doesn't mean you go down with the ship when a wrong decision has been made. When this occurs, change course, and explain to your team why it's necessary to do so. Put the bad decision behind you, learn from it, and move on.

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