

LEADERSHIP—ARE YOU READY FOR THE BIG STEP?

By: Pamela H Caudell, RN, CNOR, CSPDS, ACSP

Objectives:

Define what leadership is.

Describe the two most reliable indicators of employee satisfaction as a leader.

Discuss the four factors of leadership.

Your immediate supervisor is leaving. You've been asked to apply for the position. You're not sure you can handle the idea of being boss. What exactly does that mean and how is it going to affect your relationship with your co-workers? And what would be the expectation of the person you would now report to? Let's start by defining leadership which technically you would now be considered a leader. Leadership is defined as a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. A lot of people who assume a leadership role think that as the boss, you can now **make** people do what you want them to. In the strictest sense, that is true. You can tell people what to do and they need to follow your orders. However, a true leader does not use this power to get done what needs to be done. True leadership makes the followers **want** to achieve high goals because they are part of the solution rather than the problem.

As a leader, many people get lost in the idea of do what I

say and not what I do. However, a good leader knows they are being observed at all times. It is vitally important that the staff see you, as a leader, doing all the things on a day by day basis that make you valued and trusted. Your leadership shows in your actions that you value not only the staff's well-being but also the organization's values and objectives. It is imperative that you, as a leader, have a clear sense of direction and are respected by the staff as well as your peers and senior leaders. According to a study by the Hay Group in 2004, the two most important predictors of employee satisfaction in an organization dealt with trust and confidence in top leadership. But, as a new manager/supervisor, how do I get there? Communicate, communicate, communicate. Communication has always been considered a two way street. To your staff, non-verbal speaks louder than words. It has been shown that communication by leadership in the following three key areas was the key to winning organizational trust and confidence.

1. Helping employees understand the company's overall business strategy.
2. Helping employees understand how they contribute to achieving key business objectives.
3. Sharing information with employees on both how the company is doing and how an employee's own division is doing relative to strategic business ob-

jectives.

It is also imperative as a new leader, the process of self-knowledge applies. What does that mean? Do you know who you are? How about your own values? You, as a new leader, must have an honest understanding of who you are, what you know and what you can and can't do. Always be honest with yourself. Understand that it is your staff that determines if you are successful as a leader. If they do not trust or lack confidence in you, the staff will become uninspired. And as a result, it will be much harder to get the staff to be enthusiastic over any new challenge.

So, OK, let's look at some of the steps necessary to learn how to be a good leader.

1. First is know who you are and decide what you need to learn in order to become a better leader and then take the steps to get there.
2. Secondly as a leader, know your job and be very familiar with your staff's work loads. Do you know their job functions enough to know are they doing it well or just enough to get by.
3. Take responsibility for your actions. If you do something and it comes out wrong, say so. Analyze the problem, take corrective action and move on.
4. You are the example. Be a good role model. Set the expectation high, both your own and your staff's.

5. Keep your staff informed.

They need to know what is going on and what their role is in the process.

6. Observe your staff.

Are they team players? If not, how are you going to get them there?

These are just a few of the things that as a good leader you will need to build into your idea of who you are.

Now, think about the type of staff members you have. What is the age range? How about ethnicity? Culture? In order to have an effective team within your unit, all of the above must be taken into consideration. When you think about the age range, look at the generation they fit into. You will be better served if you understand each individual's generational fit. For instance, the baby boomers are working more for the self-satisfaction of doing a job well. They like to be noticed with a pat on the back and a job well done. Generation Xer's, on the other hand, like some compensation such as money or gift card, etc. As a leader, you have to know what motivates your staff and use that to your advantage. Culture is considered to be the deeply rooted nature of the organization that results from long-held formal and informal systems, rules, traditions and customs. These are not necessarily written down anywhere. Culture represents the shared expectations and self-

image of the organization. Climate, on the other hand, is the feel of the organization and represents the short term ideals created by the current leadership. This can change as often as administration does because each new leader will have their own set of values and what they consider to be important or not so much.

There are four primary leadership approaches a new leader needs to be aware of. Many leaders like to use the one they are most comfortable with or have the most experience with. However, each situation may call for something a little different and it is imperative each leader is familiar with each and can use them when necessary.

1. **Authoritarian**—very task oriented and are hard on the staff. There is little or no collaboration or collective thinking. The expectation of the leader is the staff member will do what they are told and when without discussion. We are on a timetable and need to get this done. Don't take kindly to others suggestions.

2. **Team Leader**—leads by positive example and fosters a team environment in which all team members can reach their highest potential, both as team members and as people. These people encourage their team to make suggestions in order to make the project as effective as possible. They work tirelessly to strengthen the bonds between the team members and generally have the highest productivity among all the other teams.

3. **Country Club Leader**—reward power is their game.

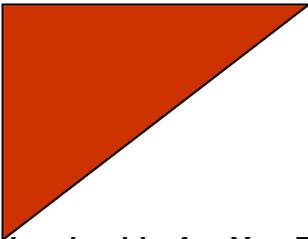
This is their primary methodology in maintaining discipline and uses the reward system to encourage the team to reach the goal. This type of leader is fearful of using punitive measures because of jeopardizing relationships with other team members. They like to be liked first and foremost.

4. **Impoverished Leader**—this is a delegate and disappear type of individual. The team generally is allowed to do what it wants to and are not usually available to assist the team in times of struggle. The team is generally left to sink or swim on its own. Occasionally, a leader has to use some of each in order to get the job done. However, each situation should be examined and explored before using any of the above mentioned in order to get the best results from the team members.

This is only just a bare minimum of information to get you started on your way. Continue to self-examine yourself and learn everything you can about being a leader in order to continue to grow and be the best you can be.

References:

- Blake, Robert R & Mouton, James S (1985) *The Managerial Grid III: The Key to Leadership Excellence*, Houston: Gulf Publishing Co.
 Lamb, L.F., McKee, K.B. (2004) *Applied Public Relations; Cases in Stakeholder Management*. Maheah, New Jersey; Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Routledge



Leadership-Are You Ready?

1. A leader is considered someone who influences others to accomplish an objective.
TRUE FALSE
2. True leadership makes the followers want to achieve high goals.
TRUE FALSE
3. Non-verbal communication speaks louder than does verbal communication.
TRUE FALSE
4. As a leader, it doesn't matter if you know what your staff does.
TRUE FALSE
5. If you can, blame everything on someone else.
TRUE FALSE
6. It doesn't matter if your staff is generationally mixed. Everyone wants the same reward.
TRUE FALSE
7. Authoritarian leadership says do what I say and not what I do.
TRUE FALSE
8. A Country Club Leader likes to use rewards to keep people motivated.
TRUE FALSE
9. It is possible to stick to one type of leadership for all issues.
TRUE FALSE
10. A true leader considers themselves continually learning in order to better themselves and their staff.
TRUE FALSE

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