



The Qualities of Leadership

By Connie Zicarrelli

LOOK UP THE WORD “LEADER” IN the dictionary and you’ll find a very bland entry: “The person who leads or commands a group, organization or country” and “a person followed by others.” These entries are accurate, of course, yet they fail to express the true nature of leadership. And how do we recognize it on our own, in person? The key to making this distinction can be found in people. All organizations are conceived, managed, and led by people, and it is the art of putting the technical definition into action that sets leaders apart.

Great leaders possess four qualities that are part of their leadership DNA. The first is knowledge. Knowledge gives a leader a sense of confidence and empowerment. Knowledge can include book-learned facts, but also gut instincts gleaned from experience. As a leader, you must know both your role and the roles of others in the organization. That will lead to creating an open-door communication pathway with your team. It will keep your team involved and engaged.

The second quality of leadership is accuracy. Leaders have to make countless decisions every day that affect the organization.

It is imperative that leaders receive accurate, real-time information from their team members so that they can make informed, solid decisions. Should a decision be made that may not have been correct, a true leader takes ownership of the misjudgment and adjusts. This behavior creates a sense of accountability and responsibility in the organization. Leaders never let blame take root in the organization.

A third quality of a successful leader is embracing a sense of urgency. Leaders should set a high standard of timeliness for themselves and their team. It is important to use good problem-solving and

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decision-making tools. Successful leaders gather information in a timely manner to make decisions but do not allow the information to become overanalyzed to the point where they are paralyzed.

A fourth leadership quality is the ability to offer multiple solutions to a problem. Leaders communicate the options in a way that allows others the opportunity to grow and stretch their decision-making "wings" in a controlled environment. An effective leader is not "me" centered but "us" centered. Effective leaders allow others to soar, and in the process take themselves and their organizations to new levels.



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Embracing these qualities and adding your personal touch creates a leader that others want to follow. Be the example to your team, believe in yourself, and watch your team believe in your vision. Show them the behaviors and qualities you want repeated. A great leader's legacy is to make more great leaders. ■

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