

Leading When You're Not the Boss



As an organizational consultant, the leaders that I find that are most in demand today are those that can motivate and engage employees that are outside of the scope of their functional responsibilities. The same holds true for the non-profit organizations I work with.

What make these leaders effective? Leaders who are effective in leading others -- particularly when they are not in a boss / subordinate relationship -- typically exhibit the following behaviors:

1. **They are ethical in their actions.** They are clear about their values, goals, and expectations. They do what they say they will. They are willing to admit to mistakes.
2. **They are well connected.** They know where to go for information, both inside and outside of their organization, and they are willing to share information.
3. **They are good collaborators.** Rather than tell people what to do, they ask people for their ideas. They offer ideas as part of a broader solution. They model or demonstrate the behaviors they would like to see.
4. **They use personal influence effectively.** They get people to do things for them because they want to, not because they have to. They are not controlling, manipulative or impatient. They relate with people on a personal level and help bring the vision alive for them.
5. **They understand how to manage conflict.** They look beneath the conflict to identify solutions. They know when and how to utilize various approaches when resolving conflict.
6. **They learn from experience.** They continually examine outcomes -- both good and bad. They place a high value on lessons learned and quickly utilize these learnings to make adjustments as appropriate.
7. **They provide feedback.** They coach people both formally and informally and view this as a natural part of any relationship or process.

People exhibiting these behaviors are able to create an environment of trust and an environment where people feel connected to their work. As organizational hierarchies continue to flatten out and as leaders continue to have increased span of control, success in leading others where you do not have direct authority or power over them, will become critical.

John F. Kennedy once said, "It is time for a new generation of leadership to cope with new problems and new opportunities. For there is a new world to be won." Those who exhibit the behaviors outlined above will be well positioned to handle these new problems and opportunities. Those who master them, will be well positioned for success. What are you waiting for?

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Regina Barr is president and founder of Red Ladder, Inc., an organization that helps women develop their leadership skills, and works with companies to help them attract, develop and retain women leaders. Services include consulting, keynotes, workshops, teambuilding, management coaching, and research. Contact Regina at 651-453-1007 or by email at info@redladder.com. www.redladder.com