

Ten Basic Skills of Outstanding Leadership

Peach Notes

Here are 10 skills that we will highlight briefly, not as an all-encompassing lecture on them, but as a set of skills that you should explore, read about, and develop in yourself so that you can help develop these skills in others.

Proverbs 19:2 “Also, that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good; and he that hasteth with his feet sinneth.” An ignorant soul is not a good soul.

Proverbs 16:3 “Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.”

1. Integrity
2. Vision/Strategy
3. Communication
4. Relationships
5. Persuasion/Influence
6. Adaptability/Flexibility
7. Teamwork
8. Coaching and Development
9. Decision Making
10. Planning

These are not in any particular order, but if I were to rank them in importance Integrity and Communication would be at the top of my list. But, here’s the thing, you can’t really be a good, well-rounded leader by focusing on just one or two of these items.

1. Integrity

Honesty, and so much more. **Strong internal guiding principles that you won’t compromise.** Treating others as you would want to be treated (Matthew 7:12).

Integrity promotes trust. You can't accomplish much as a leader without trust.

Integrity is a skill in that you see in action, but it is based on guiding beliefs and values.

People can't directly see your integrity, but they can judge it pretty accurately by your actions and words.

2. Vision/Strategy

You must have a clear idea of where you are going in the long term. You may need to be reminded frequently of your ministry's goals and vision. And then you need to be able to communicate that to others.

Vision is the goal. Strategy is how you will get there.

Example: Losing weight is the goal. Exercise and only eat ice-cream 3 nights a week is the strategy. You need both.

Example: Pastor in Newport (who I knew as a strong leader (not dictator)) that I went to college with would not support us back in 2002 because, he said, "you don't know what kind of car you will drive or even where you will live when you get to the field." He was wrong, of course, in thinking that a missionary would know those details before he had been to the field to live, but that was the way he knew how to express to me, "you have no real vision or plan. Why would I want to support that?" He was saying he did not see the leadership quality of vision in my ministry at the time.

Don't get so lost in the day-to-day strategy that you forget the vision. Don't be so focused on the vision that you forget you have to implement your strategy to get there.

3. Communication

Chief complaint in almost any organization **is the lack of communication.** I have never worked anywhere that did not cause me to complain about the same thing.

Over **communication is rarely a problem. (Oversharing is).** Lack of communication is so much more prevalent.

But you also need to know how to keep confidential information confidential.

Listen more than you speak. Pastor Cross was brilliant at that.

Be **careful of over-reacting to shocking news**. It causes people to hesitate to share more information with you.

Example: When counseling kids at camp we were told to not act surprised by anything a kid told you in an invitation. The more surprised you are the more they are embarrassed by their sin and probably won't tell you any more. When that happens they cannot get the help that they need from you by showing them the Bible.

4. Relationships

Personal influence over people is increased by building relationships with them. **Personal power (the right kind) is so much more influential than positional power.**

Book: **The Art of Mingling**, Jeanne Martinet. This is for those who struggle knowing how to talk with new people and keep a conversation going. Hint: ask questions about the other person and actually pay attention to their answers.

5. Persuasion/Influence

This is the ability to influence others and cause them to move in a particular direction. Leadership is often defined as the ability to persuade or influence others to do something they might not have done without the leader's persuasion. **Your ability to persuade is directly linked to how much people trust you** (which goes back to integrity).

Don't confuse persuasion with manipulation.

The difference between persuasion and manipulation lies in:

- The intent behind your desire to persuade that person,
- The truthfulness and transparency of the process, and
- The net benefit or impact on that person

“Those convinced against their will are of the same opinion still.” Dale Carnegie

6. Adaptability/Flexibility

This is the idea of not being bound by a strict plan. **Knowing how to adjust plans without wrecking the strategy and vision is a sign of a good leader.** Sometimes people

make, what we call, “knee-jerk reactions.” This is a change, but it often won’t keep you on course.

You need to learn to embrace change and see opportunity without giving up your integrity and vision.

7. Teamwork

No one person can do it all and be ultimately successful. You may do well for a time by yourself, but **your work and ministry will never grow larger than what you can do on your own.**

You need a team of people with different abilities from your own. A good leader will know how to build and nurture a team.

He also knows when he needs to lead and when to step back and become a follower on a project. The best leaders are good followers when that is needed.

8. Coaching and Development

Developing others is an important part of being a leader. You must encourage others to expand their abilities and develop those skills that you see in that team member.

You cannot be a good leader if you feel threatened by the abilities of others. You will not be interested in encouraging and developing them if you don’t **understand that the team (ministry) grows when you help individuals grow. Since you cannot be the best at everything (the reason you need a team) then it only makes sense that you coach others to being the best they can be in a particular area.**

A good leader will work to develop his own replacement. As missionaries, we say that we must work ourselves out of a job. Yet, many times, we feel threatened when one of the church people start to take a leadership role and don’t need us watching over their shoulder all the time.

In this comes the skill of delegation. This isn’t making others work so you don’t have to. It is recognizing that other people can do a job as well as, or better than you can. This frees you up to do those things that only you can do.

9. Decision Making

This is the ability to take in information, comprehend what is relevant, make a well-considered decision and take action on that decision. Making decisions too quickly or too slowly will impede your leadership effectiveness.

Some people get hit with analysis paralysis (seeing too many good options). A good leader will learn **satisficing** (yes, it is a real word) if there is not a single best-possible solution available. That is, **finding a practical solution with an adequate level of acceptability and deciding on that.**

Besides making the decision, you also need to take responsibility for whatever the results of your decisions are.

10. Planning

Planning is making certain assumptions about the future and taking action in the present to influence that future. To plan means to focus more strategically about the vision and strategy of your operation.

Plans are important for guidance and focus, but they can seldom be cast in stone.

A paraphrase of a quote by Helmuth von Moltke is, **“No battle plan survives first contact with the enemy.”** And Dwight Eisenhower said, **“In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable.”**

If you have no plan as a leader then your team has no direction. This involves communication and vision.

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