

Build Your Leadership Skills

Are all good leaders born that way?

When you encounter an effective leader—someone who seems to inspire others—you may think they are naturally gifted in leadership. But that's not necessarily the case. Every leader, whether new to or experienced in management, can continually build skills that help inspire team performance.



It usually seems that employees work in service of the leader. But most often it's the other way around.

As a leader in today's fast-moving workplace, where change is a constant, you can support your team by being positive about what's on the horizon. Showing your enthusiasm, with a can-do attitude about challenges, helps get people behind you in pursuing the organization's goals.

Good leaders focus on solutions rather than problems. They make it clear that each member of the team is important. They help employees identify their own strengths. They encourage employees to see the bigger picture, and they're generous with praise whenever a team member has success.

In this issue of *Your Source*, we explore:

- Techniques a new manager can adopt to be a more successful leader
- Ways to help teams adapt to workplace change
- Tips for dealing with stress that can accompany a leadership role

It's important to remember that you have easy access to resources that can help you build your leadership skills and handle a range of management challenges.

Go online today! Log on to access *Effective Leadership* under the Library/ In the Spotlight section.



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Managing Change

Whether it's restructuring, staffing furloughs, or new procedures and technologies to learn—change is a fact of life in today's workplace. As a leader, you play a key role in how changes at your organization affect your team members.

- **Facilitate a supportive environment.** Create opportunities for people to express their fears and worries in non-threatening forums. Be honest with your team, while being positive and upbeat about coming changes.
- **Keep the team updated.** Fear of the unknown can raise staff stress levels. So, provide regular updates about developments.
- **Remember the “what's in it for me?” message for staff.** Remind them how the changes will benefit them, not just the overall organization.
- **Listen well.** Keep close enough to your staff to hear about and counter any rumors.
- **Be inclusive and offer individual support.** Make sure that no one feels left out of communication about changes. Meet individually with those who may be struggling.
- **Provide a path to help.** Recommend the EAP to staff members. Your program provides free, confidential counseling available 24/7.
- **Recognize successes.** Acknowledge and promote positive contributions made by staff.

New in Management?

If you've been recognized for your performance and been promoted into management, it can be a whole new world. Leading a team requires that you expand your perspective, and support your team in everything they do.

Adapting to Your New Role

- Be patient with yourself. No one instantly becomes a great manager. Be open to learning from other leaders. Look to them for ideas on how to motivate teams and handle employee situations. Study effective management techniques used elsewhere.
- Be ready for a new view of old issues. Be aware that some members of your staff may have pre-existing personal and performance issues that will require attention.

Communicating Positively and Often

- Be positive and hopeful despite challenges. Get in the habit of showing your staff that you believe they can successfully reach their objectives.
- Stay in close contact with your staff. In addition to establishing a schedule of regular one-on-one and team meetings, informally check in with each employee occasionally. This helps reduce tension and enhance information flow.
- Get to know each team member well. Spend enough time with your staff to fully learn and understand each person's job role, strengths and weaknesses, career goals, and whatever else is important to them.

Building Your Team's Skills and Futures

- Always encourage growth within the team. Support your staff members in taking on new tasks and devising creative new solutions.
- Demonstrate your interest in people's development within the organization and beyond. Provide ample opportunities for continuing professional education.

Promoting Workplace Wellness

- Make sure that you and your staff take care of your health and wellness through use of stress management techniques.
- Encourage team members to address their work-life issues by using the employee assistance program, available to them at no cost.

Now That's An Idea!

Coping with Manager Stress

Know your limits. No one can manage every situation perfectly. If a problem is beyond your control and cannot be changed, look for alternative solutions. Take a step back and ask others for ideas.

Get it done in pieces. If a large project looms, break it down into parts. Focus on the most important parts first, then move on to secondary priorities.

Talk it out. Talking about your challenges can relieve stress. Speak confidentially with one of your peers or your supervisor. An objective viewpoint can be the feedback you need.

Take care of yourself with healthy habits. Make sure you eat a balanced diet and get enough rest. Also find time to fit in some vigorous exercise; it's one of the best ways to cut daily stress.

Get help when needed. Don't go it alone. Access your program any time for confidential, expert management consultation.

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