

## How to Lead Like It Matters

4 ways managers, executives and CEOs can create a positive ripple effect and make a real difference for success

**W**hether you're a manager, executive or CEO, your leadership style matters. If you're running a large global firm, a small project team or an entrepreneurial venture, it's the way you communicate and connect to other people that will make or break your success. Make each and every connection count by developing and leveraging your skills and playing to your strengths.

There are problems, pressures and pain points that plague managers at every level, and most of them are easily solvable. Understand that every leadership choice you make is critical to your success and has some kind of ripple effect

throughout your team and your organization at large. As leaders, we need to know how to ensure that the changes we make have the intended impact, whether it's running meetings, handling conflicts, making confident decisions or instituting changes in the workplace. When leaders approach and execute effective leadership correctly, they often gain greater control of their organization's future, build highly productive teams and institute changes that stick.

Focus on the following four tenets of leadership to ensure that your company experiences the desired ripple effect. These tenets can revolutionize the way you lead and succeed.

### 1. PERSONAL MASTERY

It is imperative to discover exactly who you are as a leader and draw on your strengths to influence others—know and grow the leader within. Personal mastery is discovering who you are as a leader (your purpose, values and vision), how you affect others, your style, preferences, strengths and challenges.

Begin by getting direct feedback from your boss and anonymous feedback from your direct reports, peers and clients about your leadership style and impact. Then you can be certain of how you are perceived in your role and discern what's working for you and what's not. Play to your strengths and work with trusted



colleagues or a business coach to mitigate your blind spots and challenges.

## 2. INTERPERSONAL MASTERY

A powerful leader has excellent communication and management skills that engage, motivate and inspire employees. These leaders know how to listen deeply and communicate effectively with others, how to constructively provide feedback (including to one's boss) and how to manage conflict successfully.

Begin by practicing deep listening. Most of us know how in theory; be mindful and tactically apply it. At the end of every conversation, ask the person talking to you if they felt fully heard and understood by you and what made them feel that way. Practice demonstrating empathy in every conversation, no matter the subject.

heard, believe that they belong and feel that what they have to offer matters to the leader and the other team members. Each team member possesses a skillset that has the potential to benefit the company greatly overall. With an established team, you might put this topic on the agenda as a simple housekeeping line item. Employ whatever positioning works for you and your group. Then, make sure the group maintains accountability to the ground rules for themselves and each other to ensure the effort you make is not in vain.

## 4. CULTURE AND SYSTEMS MASTERY

Take the lead in assessing your organization and make the changes you need to succeed. To understand leadership we must understand the cultures

Begin by walking around the organization and really observing the lay of the land, as if you were in a foreign country. What language are they speaking? How are they dressed? What do their work locations look and feel like? How do different groups interact? Does there seem to be a lack of communication?

Actively listen, delve deeper and ask more questions. Remember, though, never ask questions if you are not prepared to hear the answers in a defensive manner or actually address issues brought to your attention.

When leaders excel at these four attributes of effective leadership, they will reap quantifiable rewards, including increased employee engagement, reduced turnover and enhanced productivity. No matter the decision at hand, whether it's cutting wasteful meetings,

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## 3. TEAM MASTERY

The most successful leaders harness the power of group dynamics to build stronger, more productive teams. No matter why it is formed or who is on the team, there are several steps to avoid when building an effective one. Leaders who want to succeed need their teams to succeed, and teams are made up of individuals. The reality is that people and groups are messy. It takes awareness, attention, time and skill to get the best out of your teams. It's worth every ounce of investment when done well.

Begin by taking the time to establish ground rules for new or existing teams. These are the things that each team member needs to feel safe, be fully

operating around us, because culture affects us as much as the air we breathe, and it is almost as important to our wellbeing. An organization's espoused values may or may not reflect the real operating culture of the organization. You need to know what the culture really is and how it affects your people and overarching business results.

addressing conflict or better aligning decisions with tactical business needs, every choice a leader makes will have a ripple effect. It's the leader's approach, attitude and skills that will determine if the resultant ripple effects of seemingly singular choices will be helpful or a hindrance as each one travels through the system. **CBO**

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