

Leading at a higher
level is unusual



Leading at a higher level is unusual as it is not simply based on the views of an individual, but on those of a whole team of highly experienced people. For this reason alone, I would say that the book is probably worth reading. Ken Blanchard attempted a paradigm shift as to the term “ leadership”. Leadership has for too long been associated with the accomplishment of results, whereas “ leading at a higher level” is focused on the achievement of worthwhile results while acting with respect, care and fairness for the well-being of all involved. The book is divided into four sections reflecting each of these attributes.

They set their sights on the right target and vision

They treat their customers well

They treat their people well

They have the right kind of leadership

Leadership is the capacity to influence others by unleashing the power and potential of people and organizations for the greater good. Leadership should not be done purely for personal gain or goal accomplishment: It should have a much higher purpose than that. Leadership can be defined as the process of achieving worthwhile results while acting with respect, care and fairness for the well-being of all involved. When that occurs, self-serving leadership is not possible. It's only when you realize that it's not about you that you begin to lead at a higher level.

Being a successful leader is not only about leading your organization, but your customers as well. According to the author, to keep your customers, you can't be content just to satisfy them; you have to create raving fans. As

stated on page 42: Raving fans are customers who are so excited about the way you treat them that they want to tell everyone about you. A good example of how this works is Domo Gas, a full-service gasoline chain in Western Canada, confounded by Sheldon Bowles.

Back in the 1970s, when everybody was going to self-service gasoline stations, Bowles knew that if people had a choice, they would never go to a gas station. But people have to get gas, and they want to get in and out as quickly as possible. The customer service vision that Bowles and his co-founders imagined was an Indianapolis 500 pit stop. They dressed all their attendants in red jumpsuits. When a customer drove into one of Bowles' stations, two or three people ran out of the hut and raced toward the car. As quickly as possible, they looked under the hood, cleaned the windshield and pumped the gas.

A successful leader must also have a workable vision, and be able to clearly communicate and share this vision with his organization. When Louis Gerstner Jr. took the helm of IBM in 1993-- amid turmoil and instability as the company's annual net losses reached a record \$8 billion -- he was quoted as saying, " The last thing IBM needs is a vision." In an article in The New York Times two years later, Gerstner conceded that IBM had lost the war for the desktop operating system, acknowledging that the acquisition of Lotus signified that the company had failed to plan properly for its future. He admitted that he and his management team now " spent a lot of time thinking ahead."

Once Gerstner understood the importance of vision, an incredible turnaround occurred. In 1995, delivering the keynote address at the computer industry <https://assignbuster.com/leading-at-a-higher-level-is-unusual/>

trade show, Gerstner articulated IBM's new vision -- that network computing would drive the next phase of industry growth and would be the company's overarching strategy. That year, IBM began a series of acquisitions that positioned it to become the fastest-growing company in its segment, with growth at more than 20 percent per year. This extraordinary turnaround demonstrated that the most important thing IBM needed was a vision (p. 24-25).

Leaders must also know how to lead their workforce. Giving people too much or too little direction has a negative impact on people's development.

Situational leadership is based on the belief that people can and want to develop, and there is no best leadership style to encourage that development. You should tailor leadership style to the situation. This is pretty much common sense. But leaders should also train their people in self leadership

Leaders must also encourage team work, and be part of the team themselves. Teams provide a sense of worth, connection and meaning to the people involved in them.

When people lead at a higher level, they make the world a better place because their goals are focused on the greater good. Making the world a better place requires a special kind of leader: a servant leader. Robert Greenleaf first coined the term "servant leadership" in 1970 and published widely on the concept. Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela are examples of servant leaders. Servant leaders feel their role is to help people achieve their goals. They try to find out what their people need to be successful. They want to make a difference in the lives of

their people and, in the process, impact the organization as stated on page 249.

Research shows that effective leaders have a clear, teachable leadership point of view and are willing to teach it to others, particularly the people they work with. If you can teach people your leadership point of view, they will not only have the benefit of understanding where you're coming from, but they'll also be clear on what you expect from them and what they can expect from you. They may also begin to solidify their own thinking about leadership so that they can teach others too. Some say that learning, teaching and leading should be inherent parts of everyone's job description.

Enablement is the key to beating your competition day-after day. Allowing your people to pit their brains and allowing them to use their knowledge, experience and motivation is critical. To guide this transition to an enablement culture, leaders must use three keys:

1. Share Information.
2. Declare the Boundaries
3. Replace old Hierarchies with Self-Directed Individuals and Teams.

This requires a special leader: the servant leader. Leadership has two parts: vision and implementation. They need to find out what their people need to be successful and they make a difference in the lives of their people and in the process, their organization. The world needs more leaders who are leading at a higher level. Perhaps the day will come when self-serving leaders are history, and leaders serving others are the rule, not the exception.