

Traits of a leader



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Leaders do not command excellence, they build excellence. Excellence is “being all you can be” within the bounds of doing what is right for your organization. To reach excellence you must first be a leader of good character. You must do everything you are supposed to do. Organizations will not achieve excellence by figuring out where it wants to go, then having leaders do whatever they have to in order to get the job done, and then hope their leaders acted with good character. This type of thinking is backwards. Pursuing excellence should not be confused with accomplishing a job or task. When you do planning, you do it by backwards planning. But you do not achieve excellence by backwards planning. Excellence starts with leaders of good and strong character who engage in the entire process of leadership. And the first process is being a person of honorable personality.

Character develops over time. Many think that much of a person’s character is formed early in life. However, we do not know exactly how much or how

early character develops. But, it is safe to claim that character does not change quickly. A person's observable behavior is an indication of her character. This behavior can be strong or weak, good or bad. A person with strong character shows drive, energy, determination, self-discipline, willpower, and nerve. She sees what she wants and goes after it. She attracts followers. On the other hand, a person with weak character shows none of these traits. She does not know what she wants. Her traits are disorganized, she vacillates and is inconsistent. She will attract no followers.

A strong person can be good or bad. A gang leader is an example of a strong person with a bad character, while an outstanding community leader is one with both strong and good characteristics. An organization needs leaders with both strong and good characteristics, people who will guide them to the future and show that they can be trusted

To be an effective leader, your followers must have trust in you and they need to be sold on your vision. Korn-Ferry International, an executive search company, performed a survey on what organizations want from their leaders. The respondents said they wanted people who were both ethical and who convey a strong vision of the future. In any organization, a leader's actions set the pace. This behavior wins trust, loyalty, and ensures the organization's continued vitality. One of the ways to build trust is to display a good sense of character composed of beliefs, values, skills, and traits (U. S. Army Handbook, 1973):

Beliefs are what we hold dear to us and are rooted deeply within us. They could be assumptions or convictions that you hold true regarding people,

concepts, or things. They could be the beliefs about life, death, religion, what is good, what is bad, what is human nature, etc.

Values are attitudes about the worth of people, concepts, or things. For example, you might value a good car, home, friendship, personal comfort, or relatives. Values are important as they influence a person's behavior to weigh the importance of alternatives. For example, you might value friends more than privacy, while others might be the opposite.

Skills are the knowledge and abilities that a person gains throughout life. The ability to learn a new skill varies with each individual. Some skills come almost naturally, while others come only by complete devotion to study and practice.

Traits are distinguishing qualities or characteristics of a person, while character is the sum total of these traits. There are hundreds of personality traits, far too many to be discussed here. Instead, we will focus on a few that are crucial for a leader. The more of these you display as a leader, the more your followers will believe and trust in you.

Traits of a Good Leader

Compiled by the Santa Clara University and the Tom Peters Group:

Honest – Display sincerity, integrity, and candor in all your actions.

Deceptive behavior will not inspire trust.

Competent – Base your actions on reason and moral principles. Do not make decisions based on childlike emotional desires or feelings.

Forward-looking – Set goals and have a vision of the future. The vision must be owned throughout the organization. Effective leaders envision what they want and how to get it. They habitually pick priorities stemming from their basic values.

Inspiring – Display confidence in all that you do. By showing endurance in mental, physical, and spiritual stamina, you will inspire others to reach for new heights. Take charge when necessary.

Intelligent – Read, study, and seek challenging assignments.

Fair-minded – Show fair treatment to all people. Prejudice is the enemy of justice. Display empathy by being sensitive to the feelings, values, interests, and well-being of others.

Broad-minded – Seek out diversity.

Courageous – Have the perseverance to accomplish a goal, regardless of the seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Display a confident calmness when under stress.

Straightforward- Use sound judgment to make a good decisions at the right time.

Imaginative – Make timely and appropriate changes in your thinking, plans, and methods. Show creativity by thinking of new and better goals, ideas, and solutions to problems. Be innovative!

Perspectives of Character and Traits

Traits (acronym – JJ did tie buckle)

- Justice
- Judgment
- Dependability
- Initiative
- Decisiveness
- Tact
- Integrity
- Enthusiasm
- Bearing
- Unselfishness
- Courage
- Knowledge
- Loyalty
- Endurance

Are managers leaders? Are leaders managers?

Managers need to be leaders. . . their workers need vision and guidance!

On the other hand, leaders need to be good managers of the resources entrusted to them.

“ A leader is a dealer in hope.” – Napoleon Bonaparte

When leaders are chosen, everyone wants them to live up to their expectations. A lot of hopes are pinned on them to bring about change and reform, for the betterment of the field they belong to. But what exactly goes

into the making of a good leader? There are many things that determine if a leader will be good or not, the most important being his/her characteristics. Some of the characteristics of a good leader are acquired through leadership training, development and experience while the others are in born. Those leaders who have in born traits of good leadership are usually the ones who assert successful leadership. Not much can be done to make a good leader, it is always easier if effective leadership comes naturally to him/her. Since there are so many leadership roles that they are expected to carry out, it is essential for them to display, if not all, at least a few characteristics of good leaders.

Characteristics of a Good Leader

Whether it is team leadership, corporate leadership or global leadership, the basic traits of a good leader remain common. Additional positive characteristics may be required, depending upon their field of work. Here are some of the characteristics of a good leader.

Self Leadership: This is probably the most important characteristic of a good leader. It asserts that only when a leader leads himself towards excellence, will he be able to lead his followers on the same path.

Personal Leadership: This is a that is commonly observed in good leaders. Personal leadership enables them to take charge of their lives and instill the same desire in their followers. It is a motivational leadership trait, that all leaders must have or strive to acquire. HYPERLINK “ [http://www. buzzle. com/articles/leadership-qualities/](http://www.buzzle.com/articles/leadership-qualities/)”

Confidence: Believing in their own abilities is an essential trait of a good leader. Unless and until he has confidence in his abilities he will not be able to lead effectively.

Character: A leader's character plays a vital role in determining the effectiveness of his [HYPERLINK “ http://www. buzzle. com/articles/leadership-qualities/”](http://www.buzzle.com/articles/leadership-qualities/) [HYPERLINK “ http://www. buzzle. com/articles/leadership/”](http://www.buzzle.com/articles/leadership/) leadership. Trustworthiness and honesty are the two important aspects of a leader's character. Even a slight flaw in his character will lead to the followers, not believing in his ways. Therefore, he should follow all the set leadership principles.

Communication: Effective communication is a vital leadership trait of a good leader. He should be able to put across what needs to be done and how. At the same time, he should be willing to accept relevant suggestions from his subordinates. He should have the ability to listen, question, analyze and observe effectively. He should believe that actions speak louder than words.

Knowledge: Being highly knowledgeable about his field of work is an essential characteristic of a good leader. Only when he himself is thorough with his field of work, will he be able to guide, solve problems and queries and train his subordinates appropriately. This is also a quality required for leadership development.

Respect: A good leader does not demand or command respect, he earns it. Respect should not be restricted only from the followers to the leader, it needs to be mutual. All team players should be respected and if the leader

sets an example for this, the team will follow undoubtedly. This could be a vital characteristic of a strong leader.

Vision: Being a good leader requires that the person is able to think, considering the future and giving it equal importance as the present. He should be able to successfully convince his followers and make them understand the need for change, which will ultimately result in the achievement of their common goals.

Attitude: Sporting a positive attitude, even in the worst of situations is a characteristic of a good leader. He should be able to instill the same in his followers, by appropriate motivation and problem solving techniques. The attitude of a leader is an important determinant in the successful overcoming of leadership challenges.

Strategic Leadership: This is an important aspect of andHYPERLINK “
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[http://www. buzzle. com/articles/leadership-skills/](http://www.buzzle.com/articles/leadership-skills/)” leadership skills. This includes planning and organizing of team activities, allotment of tasks and responsibilities, effective time management, etc.

And most importantly, to make a good leader, it is necessary to be passionate towards the work he does. His team should have a zeal towards the achievement of their goals.

The above mentioned traits of a good leader, can be acquired through various leadership books, that talk about various aspects of good leadership like transformational leadership, leadership models, leadership strategies

and different leadership styles. There are also a number of leadership programs and leadership courses, that can help train potential leaders in acquiring some of the characteristics of a good leader.

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Question 2

4 Qualities of Highly Successful People

What if you can be, do or have anything you want, what would you desire in your life?

Now do you believe it can happen? Yes? No? In the words of Henry Ford, “ If you think you can do a thing or think you can’t do a thing, you’re right.”

Well then what actually happens for those people who do seem to get everything they desire?

Let’s take a closer look.

For one, they know what they want. They do not give up when what they want does not happen. They keep moving forward. Everything they do is a success, because they don’t see the results they are getting as failure. They are more educated and know what works and what doesn’t. They press on!

They are focused. If you have ever seen any professional sports players you know what focused people look like. Take a football player for example. I will

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use a line backer for this example. A line backer has to know where the runner is going and he has got to make split decisions as to what he is going to do. He is not thinking about what he is going to eat for dinner, he is not thinking about what his kids are doing, or what his next vacation is going to be. No, he is thinking about reading the runner and getting to the point where the runner is going to be and tackling him.

What are you thinking about throughout the day? What do you think 30 days of focus would do for you in accomplishing your goal? I think it could have a huge impact.

They know how to separate what is and what is not important. We have so many decisions to make everyday. We sometimes lose track of what day it is because of the number of things that we think about everyday. How many times have you started to work on something, and then you get a call from a friend to go out for lunch. You know you need to finish what you are doing. However, you find yourself saying, well, I have not seen my friend in two weeks, but I need to get this done. You then decide to go out to lunch with your friend and end up spending more time at lunch than you wanted. So now you are behind and have to stay back late in office and miss your child's game.

When you are able to separate what is important from what is not, you will find yourself accomplishing your goals a lot faster, and find yourself doing more of what you want to do rather than things you have to do.

They are committed. When it takes more than six months to accomplish a goal, people who are committed will stay the course to the very end. Most

people want their goals accomplished in a week. Yes, there are short term goals; however, I am talking about long term goals. When you have a long term goal it can get a little overwhelming when things don't seem to be moving as fast as you would like. However, taking the time to see the big picture will help you stay focused and keep you motivated.

Whatever goal you are looking to accomplish, take these 4 qualities and incorporate them into your action plan. If you have found yourself starting something and never finishing it, look into getting a coach, or mentor to help you stay on course.