

5 ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS THAT DIFFERENTIATE LEADERS FROM MANAGERS

BY BILL HOGG

Beginning this issue, every second month I will be publishing a continuing series of articles that investigates the differences between Leaders vs. Managers. When the series is complete, it will be available as a complete white paper.

Often people use the terms *leaders* and *managers* interchangeably. But nothing could be further from the truth!

Anyone can become a manager, merely by awarding the title. Anyone can be given the responsibility for the oversight of a team, or a company function. That makes them a manager -- but that is simply a name.

A leader, on the other hand, must be earned and recognized by one's peers. A leader inspires, encourages, builds up their team—and everyone else around them—and makes them better, simply by association.

There are numerous characteristics that differentiate leaders from managers. While some of the differences are subtle, others are distinct and easily recognized. And while there is no training manual or instruction book that accurately depicts the steps to becoming a leader, here are five characteristics that every good leader possesses.

Leads by Example

One of the factors that set a leader apart from a manager is that a leader guides by example. Often, managers simply enforce rules and follow procedures as part of their job function. They manage the checklist of tasks that need to be completed. They may even feel, because of their position, they aren't even subject to the same rules.

A leader, on the other hand, lives by the set of rules he expects others to follow, never stating, even by action, "Do as I say, not as I do". Leaders behave the way they expect others to behave and demonstrate by their behaviour what their expectations are for the team.

Objective

A leader is a person of honesty and integrity. She doesn't choose sides based on popularity or politics. She is objective in all situations. A true leader isn't afraid to offer, or to seek, creative solutions to problems. And she's willing to make honest, unbiased decisions -- even when those decisions are unpopular. A leader bases decisions on the big picture, the good of the whole, as opposed to offering a quick fix, or one that may appease some people for awhile, but that may cause more damage in the end.

Firm, Yet Fair

A true leader doesn't operate on the pretence "Because I said so". A leader may be firm and unmoving in his treatment of others, but if so, he is firm and consistent in his treatment of *everyone*, not simply those he likes or dislikes. Leaders refrain from showing favouritism, which isn't always an easy task. But fairness is an innate quality in a leader's personality, causing him to treat every situation and every person he comes in contact with, equally, based solely on individual circumstances.

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Celebrates Successes

Good leaders look for opportunities to recognize and praise a job well done and do not feel threatened by another's success. True leaders recognize that success of the team is success of *all*. Leaders spread the credit and you'll often hear them say "we", and seldom "I". Such behaviour inspires loyalty, trust and respect among employees, colleagues, friends and family. A leader is an inspiration to everyone around them -- never just a "boss".

Is Candid

While leaders are fair, act with integrity, and recognize the success of others, they are also bold enough to call a "spade a spade", and never sugar-coat an error or a bad situation. Even bad news can be conveyed with calm and respect, and a true leader knows that. A leader is capable of offering constructive direction in a manner that inspires others to improve. And he's able to offer discipline in a respectful way that lets a person know what they *did* may have been wrong, but that doesn't mean *they* are.

These are only five of the many aspects that make a person a leader rather than simply a manager. Our May newsletter will again address this issue as we consider "*3 Ways to Improve Your Leadership Aptitude*."

Performance Excelsior™ | Leadership Expert | Professional Speaker

*Bill is recognized as the **Performance Excelsior™** because of his uncanny ability to create profound change and deliver extraordinary results with the most demanding organizations. He works with senior leaders to inspire and develop high-performance teams that deliver exceptional customer service, higher productivity and improve profits.*

Bill is passionate about results and works only with clients who share that passion -- ready to take steps to achieve immediate, significant and continuous improvement. Whether working with boards or operations teams and employees, his no-excuse approach breaks down the silos and gains consensus and clarity throughout the organization.

Bill Hogg provides dynamic keynote presentations, transformative workshops, and world class executive consulting.

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