

3 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR LEADERSHIP APTITUDE

BY BILL HOGG

This is the second in a 6 part series that examines the differences between Leaders vs. Managers. The complete series will be available for download when concluded.

As discussed in March, being a leader is not the same as being a manager. And while we looked at qualities a true leader possesses, this month, let's consider how to become a better leader -- especially for those who are not lucky enough to be "born leaders".

Being a leader is a way of life, not a job position. Leaders come from all walks of life, in all shapes and sizes and all levels of the organization. A leader will inspire you and encourage you to become better. A manager or a boss may simply anger you. Regardless of the feelings a leader incites, one thing rings true -- a good leader inspires you to action.

Thankfully, the skills of a leader can be cultivated. Developing these three qualities in your own life and career will help *you* to become a better leader ... guaranteed!

Maintain Your Composure

A good leader acts with tact and reason. While most decisions are made based on emotion, a leader also ensures decisions are based on thoughtful consideration of the circumstances and situation. While emotional decisions may turn out to be good decisions, it's much more important to consider all the consequences of a decision. A good leader does just that, basing decisions on sound reasoning, corporate values, principles and even the company's philosophy.

Be Open to New Ideas

A good leader seeks out and cultivates diversity. A leader is not afraid of living, performing, or thinking "outside of the box". While some ideas may be unconventional, a good leader will encourage and inspire others -- as well as themselves -- to step out on a limb and consider the unexpected and be prepared to do things a bit differently if the situation warrants it. Albert Einstein defined insanity as doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result. Leaders recognize the truth in this wisdom and, when things just don't seem to be working as planned or as hoped for, they're able to set aside pre-conceived ideas and try something completely new and original.

Build Your Courage

Many people are courageous, but true leaders are probably the most courageous people you'll ever encounter. When others cower in fear, wondering "What do we do now?" a leader steps to the front and give directions that can save the sinking ship and all its passengers. Leaders are seldom frantic, nor do they act in panic. They tend to exude a quiet, calm courage and confidence that radiates all around them.

But this confidence doesn't come naturally. It is born of preparation, knowing that they have investigated all the options and are willing to entertain new directions to reach the best solution. That's why a leader is

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able to "stick to their guns", while at the same time understanding when it's time for a change of course. Becoming a true leader isn't rocket science. But it does take the time and willingness to be open to other ideas and the development of skills you may not have considered.

But we can all become better leaders, as we'll continue to discuss in future articles in this series. Our next article will address this issue as we consider "*Powerful Ways to Motivate Your Team*".

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*Bill is recognized as the **Performance Excelerator™** 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.

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