



# Charismatic front man

## How to be the leader people want to follow

No one said it was going to be easy. Managing others is, in fact, a very difficult process, especially when stress levels are high and you have 37 other urgent tasks to complete that day. No matter the scenario, being a great leader means being a great manager and that takes considerable time, forethought and dedication.

Let's also remind ourselves again that our associates are "the most valuable unlisted asset on our balance sheet."

Here are a few little known factoids:

- 71 percent of all workers feel stressed.
- 40 percent of adults get less than seven hours of sleep during the weekdays.
- 34 percent of lunches are eaten on the run.
- The average person receives 156 emails per day.

Despite these statistics, the bottom line is that you can get more than these 37 tasks completed and still lead your team to success if you know how to manage them effectively.

The key is finding the time — and the discipline. Time is something we can never get back and is more important than money itself. Here are 10 steps to becoming the leader your associates want to follow:

### 1. Make the time.

Don't use time as an excuse or a crutch. Prioritize your calendar to be in alignment with your goals and those of your company. Set two hours each week for strategically "managing" your schedule.

### 2. Provide direction.

Clearly articulate, in writing, tangible

deliverables to your team, complete with timelines. Review those tangibles on a regular basis to hold your associates (and yourself) more accountable.

### 3. Run effective staff meetings.

Meetings are the bane of our existence — you can't live with them; you can't live without them. Keep them focused (one hour or less), keep them interactive and keep them content-rich.

### 4. Set stretch objectives.

Set high (yet reasonable) goals. Limit the number of homework assignments you assume during a meeting. Again, delegate to allow you, as the leader, to focus on high-level initiatives. By doing so, you will empower those around you.

### 5. Evaluate your style.

Is it effective? Leaders must create an environment of trust and transparency. And, most importantly, spend more time listening.

### 6. Inspect what you expect.

Never delegate without management control. Challenge your team with tasks, but circle back to ensure they are getting done.

### 7. Promote risk taking.

Nothing stifles creativity and growth more than "the traditional leader." Give your associates permission to push the envelope and to do things differently than you do.

### 8. Get out of your comfort zone.

Surround yourself with people unlike

you. And, with people who have the self-confidence to challenge traditional thinking.

### 9. Step away from your desk.

Limit the number of meetings in your office; make "house calls" and go to your associate's office or even the conference room. It will foster open and positive communication.

### 10. Do what you say you will do.

"Walk the talk" is vital to obtain and retain the trust and respect of your colleagues. You have enormous influence, and it is pivotal to understand this enormous influence you have on people. It all starts with trust and respect.

Managing a team is challenging, but it's profoundly rewarding if done right. When you find the time to focus on your associates, remember:

- Engaged employees are 3½ times more likely to stay with your company.
- Empowered employees are more productive, creative and resourceful.
- The more you trust your team to do great work, the less stress for everyone.
- The higher the morale, the more fun for everyone.

Once you've developed an empowered team you can trust, you will be well on your way to being that leader they will follow. ●

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