



5 Learnable Behaviours of **High-Performing** **Corporate Leaders**



**"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."
– John Quincy Adams**

While some people may appear to be born leaders, the personality traits and behaviours demonstrated by good leaders, like most things, can be learned and practised.

Whether these things 'come naturally' or you have to think about them as you go, it's clear that when a leader regularly and

consistently acts in particular ways he or she sets an example that others readily follow.

Your workplace culture is lived by all team members, but it is set by you and your fellow leaders doing things that are valued and admired by others, behaviours they aspire to emulate.

How do you become a good leader?

A leader's skills are developed through a combination of experience and training. Good leaders learn to communicate, solve problems, organise, motivate, elevate quality, and make myriad good small and large decisions under pressure day after day.

By bringing everything they've learned formally and through their life and career experience to bear on their daily behaviours, these become habits that influence and permeate through their teams.

Good leaders recognise and welcome complex challenges as exciting opportunities to learn, to teach, and to create solutions. They're prepared for common management problems and anticipate emerging obstacles.

Importantly, they motivate and raise the performance of those around them. They build cohesive, strong, fully engaged teams of high performers.

Here are 5 things you can learn, practise, and focus on as you develop into an inspirational and motivational leader:

- 1. Communicate Clearly**
- 2. Demonstrate Decisiveness**
- 3. Inspire Input**
- 4. Promote Positivity**
- 5. Set Standards**



**"Great leaders communicate and great communicators lead."
– Simon Sinek**

1. Communicate Clearly

Any professional endeavour can be improved through clearer communication. Conversely, anything we do can be adversely impacted if communication between collaborators is poor.

Communication has to be comprehensive to be clear. Anything you don't cover leaves a gap for someone to either completely miss or fill in with an inaccurate assumption. Gaps in communication are, therefore, a recipe for misunderstandings and mistakes.

However clearly and thoroughly you articulate any message, remember that communication is not a one-way process, but rather a loop. Good leaders understand that communicating clearly and thoroughly involves a two-way interaction. As a result, they encourage questions, confirm understanding of both the initial message and any subsequent clarification or exposition, and make it clear that feedback is important.

Knowledge is power

When discussing expectations, leaders always explain the connections between the company's expectations for the employee and the company's core mission and vision. This is a real case of 'knowledge is power'. By giving your team members the relevant information and context, you are empowering them to apply the content and intent of your message as effectively as they are able.

To that end, it's important that leaders share strategic plans and talk through the implementation of any road map.

This is how all staff members are inspired and motivated to be part of the big-picture journey.

By giving employees a clear grasp of what the company is striving to accomplish and how each of them fits into that big picture, you are encouraging their buy in. If someone understands that their contribution is integral to the broader team achieving a goal, they are far more likely to take ownership and go above and beyond expectations to contribute to the success of their immediate team and the business.



The best way to give feedback is to offer a way forward, rather than simply pointing out a shortfall or misstep.

Be alert for learning opportunities

While some communication is planned and carefully considered, even 'massaged' extensively before being initially disseminated, many of your interactions will be more ad-hoc. That is, you will be reacting to what's actually happening on a day-to-day basis in the workplace, most often face to face.

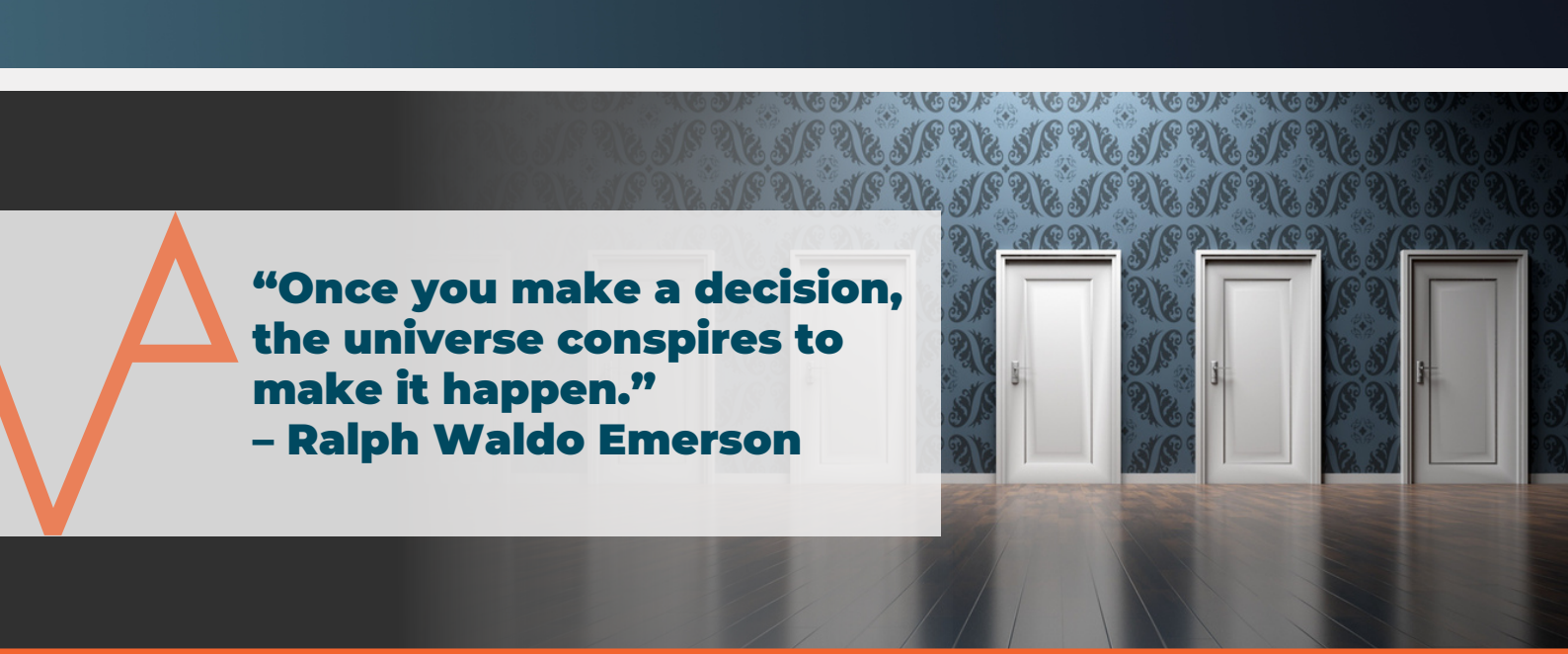
A good leader is able to maintain control of his or her in-person messaging so that it remains consistent with more considered and crafted messaging via emails, staff memos, formal meetings, and the like.

How you provide feedback to your team is crucial. If someone feels that they are being criticised, or that they or their work are unappreciated, they will immediately put their guard up and be far less likely to absorb the feedback you are giving them. At the same time, if you are perceived as only ever providing negative feedback, your messages will be less effective.

As a result, good leaders are those who give regular positive feedback and praise and see any situation that isn't going as well as expected as a learning opportunity for them and the rest of the team, rather than singling out any individual.

The best way to give feedback is to offer a way forward, rather than simply pointing out a shortfall or misstep. If you lay out a clear plan to achievable improvement goals and a timeline for reaching milestones along that path, your team will not only be more receptive to the feedback but feel as if you are helping them improve.

Never criticise someone in front of others. Instead, take corrective discussions to a private location. Good leaders always save their criticisms for one-on-one discussions while using public opportunities to "catch people doing something right", to quote a timeless business training cliché.



**“Once you make a decision,
the universe conspires to
make it happen.”
– Ralph Waldo Emerson**

2. Demonstrate Decisiveness

Nothing inspires confidence more than confidence. If you look and sound like you know what you want and know what you’re doing, your team is likely to believe that to be the case. On the other hand, if you are known to procrastinate, regularly change your mind, or leave the toughest decisions to others, your troops won’t follow you into battle (or, if they do, it will be with trepidation).

Of course, not all decisions are created equal. There will be some major decisions that will need some time, discussion, input from others, and gathering more relevant information before they can be made. However, there are numerous less weighty decisions that need to be made daily in any business. The more timely, clear, and effective you are in making those decisions, the better for your team and the business.

Assessing the magnitude of the decision

The first step to making a strong decision is itself a decision: how big is this in the scheme of things? A good leader can assess the magnitude of a problem or issue immediately and, if it is relatively minor and easily managed, make a call that lets everyone just get on with the job.

If a more significant decision is required and therefore it’s prudent to take some

time and seek collaborative input, making the call that that’s what’s needed is, in itself, a decisive step forward.

Knowing that your leader can tell the difference between magnitudes of problems and can be counted on to make quick and seamless determinations whenever possible instills a great level of confidence in all of his or her decisions.

Decision making is learned

A good leader's decision-making skills are generally as impressive as they are efficient. They make it look so easy that it may seem like a natural power inherent to the individual.

However, leadership decision making is a learned skill. Good decision making comes through the execution of a combination of formally learned skills and the application of learning from various relevant experiences.

In effect, the more often you make decisions, the better you get at it.

Even the way a leader engages others to collaborate on problem solving in larger challenges is learned. A good leader knows how to encourage and receive input from others without imposing their own point of view and potentially quashing valuable contributions to the process.

Nurturing talent through the process

A great benefit of engaging team members in the decision-making process wherever possible is that those people also learn more about decision making and get better at it. Over time, the leader won't even need to be involved in many of the more routine, day-to-day decisions as their team will have the confidence to make those calls.

By demonstrating their own decision-making capabilities, both in those instances where they can make a quick call and the ones that need to go through a collaborative process, leaders are showing others how it's done.

The organisation can only get stronger by having more capable people at every level and in every role, and this sort of continuous development allows the business to provide a true career path for employees and gives it the opportunity to promote from within.

Good leaders assign projects that challenge talented employees to learn and grow, including empowering them to make more decisions more autonomously.





**"It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit."
– Harry Truman**

3. Inspire Input

One of the most important traits a leader can have is being approachable. If you encourage members of your team to offer their thoughts, ideas, insights, and input, they will be more engaged and feel genuinely appreciated. Regular formal and informal interactions with individuals and the group will help your team feel comfortable putting in their 10-cents' worth whenever they feel they have something to contribute.

A good leader is supportive, creating a positive environment that is empowering and rewarding. Everyone wants to feel that their contribution is valuable and

valued, and that their own career goals are just as important as the broader goals of the team and the business.

Knowing the background, experience, strengths, and even personal interests of your team members will help you understand how to get the best from them, both individually and as a group. Everyone has a different personality and is likely to respond to a different approach. Being challenged brings out the best in some people, while others respond better to being assigned more structured tasks and focusing on process.

There are no bad ideas

Good leaders regularly canvas opinions from their entire team. They realise that the richest pool of ideas is one in which there is a diversity of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. They also understand that the most dynamic and productive collaborations are most likely to occur within such groups.

Further, discovering the creative strengths of the team, helps a leader to harness the innovative potential of the team and its individual members to generate effective solutions, either together or independently.



Building a team-first culture means that each employee understands that his or her contribution is equally important. This is more likely to encourage everyone to speak up when they have an idea, as opposed to feeling like it's not their place to do so.

Always focus on the best outcome

A good leader ensures that their team remains focused on the company's mission, be that to help customers or produce more things. By doing this, you are reinforcing that any concerns should be voiced, as any potential issue will impact on achieving your collective mission.

Any concerns that are raised should be viewed as opportunities to identify and solve problems.

This is where being approachable is crucial. If your demeanour makes it easy for an employee to speak up about their concerns and empowers them to assert their opinions,

you're more likely to have everyone looking for ways to achieve the best outcomes, including being alert to any potential issues.

Less well-developed managers may create an atmosphere of uncertainty by displaying inconsistent and daunting moods, or they may generally discourage workers from communicating directly with them at all.

All for one

Just as a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, the strength of a team comes through each member knowing that he or she is playing an important role and is valued by the rest of the team. Some people need more encouragement than others, and a good leader is able to recognise that and provide that positive reinforcement.

Good leaders are also acutely aware of the need to provide their workers with the

appropriate support so that they can do well in their roles, develop their skills and potential, and stay fully engaged with the company and with their work.

We all want to feel a sense of satisfaction with our own output, be recognised for our achievements, and fit in as part of the group.





**“Believe you can and you're halfway there.”
– Theodore Roosevelt**

4 Promote Positivity

The best workplace cultures are those that are grounded in the proverbial can-do attitude. It follows that successful teams embrace a similar ethos: let's get things done.

Good leaders are able to promote and sustain an air of positivity in the workplace, regardless of challenges or obstacles. They help their team look

forward and focus on the opportunities to do well and improve.

In many cases, the more tight knit the team, the easier it is to keep everyone energised and pulling in the same direction. This also helps when someone has a work or personal issue and knows that they will be shown genuine care and be given the support they need by their colleagues.

Bring the team together

There is certainly a place for structured team bonding exercises, but it's a lot easier to bring your team together regularly as a matter of course. A good leader will ensure that his or her team stays connected as people as well as colleagues and collaborators.

Depending on the nature of your team's work, it may not be necessary to huddle daily or even weekly to check in and regroup, but it is necessary for the whole team to communicate routinely,

to provide status checks and updates on changes in the tactical plan. It helps make sure that everyone is staying on the same page and is moving in the same direction in the most coordinated way possible.

Coming together, if only via Zoom or over a morning tea or coffee break for 15 minutes weekly can serve as a constant that helps a team stay bonded, confirm group engagement, and ground a team in a greater sense of reliable order.

Be a colleague, not a boss

A good leader is one who brings the team along with him or her, rather than saying “follow me” or cracking a whip from behind. You can instruct without commanding, you can guide rather than dictate, and you should encourage both independence and accountability. You should always lead by example.

Savvy leaders know that making themselves accountable to their employees as well as having

employees accountable to them fosters a culture of two-way trust and commitment to habits of honouring promises.

Leaders who make known that their understood arrangement is one of mutual accountability with their team members exceed many employees’ expectations for job satisfaction. They instil a sense of mutual respect and a strong desire in employees to be a part of a company in which people keep their word and support one another as part of a well-bonded team.





“The three most important ways to lead people are: by example... by example... by example.” – Albert Schweitzer

5. Set Standards

Leaders are followed because they embody the behaviours that others admire, respect, and aspire to.

Effective leaders serve as role models for their organisations' values. Good leaders set the pace and lead by example, consistently demonstrating a strong work ethic, commitment to quality, and professionalism in the workplace.

In fact, the single most influential thing a leader can do every day is to set an example of what it is to live by core principles that are conducive to success. This goes a long way to creating a workplace of choice.

Behaving with integrity, treating others with respect and dignity, and exhibiting a sense of urgency in the work ethic are contagious ways of acting. People intuitively want to be a part of an honourable company of positive, motivated people with inspiring leadership. They want to belong to something that is worth devoting their working life to helping succeed.

Being a leader who appeals to these normal human sensibilities is a major aspect of managing a positive, motivated, consistently high performing team.

Be consistent

If a leader consistently displays certain behaviours, their team will come to accept those as the standard. By acting with self-awareness – including the mutual accountability mentioned previously – and discipline, you will not only engender trust and belief from your team but also influence them to display the same traits.

Even simply being consistent is an important standard to set. You demonstrate that some things are non-negotiable and you don't make exceptions, even for yourself.

At the same time, remaining flexible rather than always doing things 'by the book', while sometimes being a fine line to tread, can make all the difference in certain situations, particular where unusual circumstances are involved.

Meanwhile, it's vital that you keep in mind that you're dealing with real people with real feelings and real lives, so if you are seen as being caring and compassionate, those characteristics are likely to be reflected in your staff and help in forming a close-knit team.

Encourage improvement

All workers want to enjoy long and satisfying careers. This often leads to those who feel that they have plateaued in their current role with their current employer looking for greener pastures, where they can feel more motivated and find greater opportunities for advancement.


As a result, an attractive workplace is one with a culture that encourages and facilitates opportunities to learn more, undergo relevant further training, and generally work on self-improvement. This is often referred to as career development, and it should be available to all.

This is an area in which leaders can readily serve as an example to others – in fact, it makes sense for leaders to be more committed to ongoing training and self-improvement than anyone else.

The best business leaders are people who always seek self-improvement and learning. They take notes, read, study, ask questions and seek others' consultation frequently. They're eager to absorb new knowledge. They're courageous in leading the team to experiment. They like to challenge themselves and enjoy mastering new skills.

They welcome new and better ways of doing things, whenever those arise. They embrace new methods and tools that serve to advance the company's mission by improving efficiency, increasing customer and employee satisfaction, and preserving resources.

Most employees will think "if our leaders are doing that, then we probably should be too".



“People naturally follow leaders stronger than themselves.”
– John C. Maxwell

The impact of good leadership is clear

Ultimately, daily habits for successful organisational leaders come to characterise the entire team’s attitudes and behaviours.

As the best leaders build their ideal teams, they inspire top talent to thrive and grow within the company and minimise losses from under-utilisation and

underperformance. The team comes to reflect the mindset and performance standards of the leader, for better or worse.

In other words, where there’s a good leader, there’s normally a good team.

If you want to develop a stronger team, Elevate Corporate Training offers several team training options. Find out more at :

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