

15 Ways to Be the Kind of Leader People Line Up to Follow

By Eric Holtzclaw of Inc.

I have had the privilege to work with some [amazing leaders](#) and help them and their companies on the way to [success](#). I am always impressed with what they accomplish and have noticed that most of them have many, if not all, of the following characteristics. What's surprising about these traits is that they tend to run counter to the ones pop culture depicts entrepreneurs and leaders having.

1. They Rarely Brag

A true leader is the last to talk about his or her accomplishments. When someone is constantly bragging and trying to one-up people, it's a sign of insecurity and gets in the way of true success.

2. They Show Up on Time

The best leaders are the first to a scheduled meeting. They know if it isn't important to them, it won't be important to everyone else attending. They understand that what they do speaks volumes over what they say.

3. They Efficiently Use Time

While a true leader is the first to a meeting, he or she will be the [first to end it](#) when all of the topics are covered. Top leaders use every available second to stay on top of their game. They respond to emails and catch up on reading and writing in the spare moments in their schedules.

4. They Respect Others' Space

A leader knows that others need their space to get their work done. He or she gives the team time to get through their deliverables, and understands that hovering or [micromanaging](#) won't move a project along any faster.

5. They Are Friendly But Not Your Friend

An important characteristic of top leaders is the ability to walk the fine line of caring about those that work for them while maintaining a healthy level of distance. This approach is necessary for keeping relationships in perspective and allows a leader to make the right decisions for the company.

6. They Don't Gossip

Workplaces are breeding grounds for [gossip](#). Effective leaders stay above the fray. They know that gossip doesn't move the company forward, results in poor company morale, and impacts overall culture.

7. They Never Complain

Even when times get tough, top leaders do not complain. They know they are responsible for setting the tone, and that negativity creates a domino effect across the organization. Instead of complaining, they will seek a way to change the situation to make it positive.

8. They Delegate

Top leaders know they [can't do everything](#)—and don't want to. They surround themselves with smart people and give those individuals the tools and authority to get tasks accomplished. They see their success in the accomplishments of others (see number one).

9. They Are Solution-Oriented

Nothing is accomplished by focusing on what isn't working. To be successful, a top leader and his or her organization must find ways to solve any problems. Top leaders insist their team members bring them possible solutions for whatever needs to be fixed in the organization or a process.

10. They Are Responsive

When an employee, vendor, or contractor is waiting for a [response](#), the delay is costing the company time or money. Effective leaders stay on top of the inquiries they receive. They understand that lack of responsiveness impacts the overall organization.

11. They Are Actively Participate and Encourage Others to Do So

When in a meeting or a work session, leaders actively participate. Their involvement leads the team on to greater levels of effectiveness. They encourage others to contribute ideas, and they consider them as seriously as their own.

12. They Are Confidently Flexible

To lead a company, a leader must be confident in his or her instincts but willing to revise a plan when shown that another approach, direction, or result is more appropriate. The team is looking to the leader for assured, consistent direction, but also an ability to change course when presented with a good case.

13. They Are Quiet

There are many examples of boisterous, outspoken entrepreneurs and business leaders. You see them on television shows and discussed in the media—from Richard Branson to Donald Trump to Mark Cuban. Unlike these pop culture icons of leadership, most top leaders, in my experience, are quiet, unassuming, and serve as the bedrock of their companies.

14. They Are Consistent

Leaders of companies must do what they say they will do and be [consistent](#) in their approach and message. Our society is used to a certain level of inconsistency and will rally behind a consistent leader.

15. They Are Persistent

Leaders have [failed](#) many times. They have persisted through these setbacks to reach their current status. The best success stories have equally interesting backstories of failures and frustrations.

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