

The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership

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Leadership is not about personality; it's about behavior—an observable set of skills and abilities.

Model the Way

Leaders establish principles concerning the way people (constituents, peers, colleagues, and customers alike) should be treated and the way they should pursue goals. Leaders create standards of excellence and set an example for others to follow. They put up signposts when people feel unsure of where to go or how to get there. Leaders create opportunities for victory.

Inspire a Shared Vision

Leaders passionately believe they can make a difference. They envision the future and create an ideal and unique image of what the organization can become. Through their magnetism and persuasion, leaders enlist others in their dreams. They breathe life into their visions and get people to see exciting possibilities for the future.

Challenge the Process

Leaders search for opportunities to change the status quo. They look for innovative ways to improve the organization. In doing so, they experiment and take risks. Since complex change threatens to overwhelm people and stifle action, leaders set interim goals so that people can achieve small wins as they work toward larger objectives. Effective leaders unravel bureaucracy when it impedes action. And, because leaders know that taking risks involves mistakes and failures, they accept occasional disappointments as opportunities to learn.

Enable Others to Act

Leaders foster collaboration and build spirited teams. They actively involve others. Leaders understand that mutual respect sustains extraordinary efforts. They strive to create an atmosphere of trust and human dignity. They strengthen others, making each person feel capable and powerful.

Encourage the Heart

Accomplishing extraordinary things in organizations is hard work. To keep hope and determination alive, leaders recognize the contributions that individuals make. In every winning team, the members need to share in the rewards of their efforts, so leaders celebrate accomplishments. They make people feel like heroes.