

THE FUTURE OF LEADERSHIP HAS ARRIVED

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What are you intentionally doing to show your people that you value them? I mean, really value and appreciate their contributions. I don't mean through the words you use, but by the actions you take. Words can come off as hollow when they're not supported by your actions.

Like me, you've probably come across more than your share of people who like to read book jackets and "talk" leadership, but who do not follow through to demonstrate their devotion. I describe these types of leaders as "grocery carts and greeting cards" types. They fill their leadership cart with what they enjoy doing and offer plenty of platitudes, but never dig deep to explore their own journey as a leader.

Permit me to unknot the threads of leadership and offer some ideas to catapult you in your journey to continuous improvement. You'll find that there are no finish lines, but many starting lines.

Decide what you're seeking - compliance or commitment

Effective leaders strike a healthy balance between securing compliance and enlisting commitment from team members in their collective efforts to build a high-performing organization and a stronger community. These types of leaders are successful, in large part, because of their ability to recognize that they enlist followers through trust.

Invest more time wandering and wondering

Your open-door policy means you leave your office and "wander" around the workplace, having impromptu conversations with employees and remembering you're not the audience for your message. Credibility is gained in small steps through physical presence. Today's leaders realize that by serving as one of their organization's teachers, continuously placing themselves in the position of listening, and facilitating important discussions with employees, they have the unique opportunity to unify their team members and focus them on success.

Adjust the thermostat

Organizations lose their relevance when the rate of external change outpaces internal change. Successful leaders enable their team's progress by being fluent in effective change-management techniques and understanding it's a process, not an event. They are catalysts for change and use people and processes to counter trends, maintain focus, and keep team members emotionally invested in the journey.

Overcome bureaucratic gravity

Successful leaders ensure that roles are properly aligned with the organization's mission, vision, and values and ultimately, fulfill the value proposition that talented and capable employees need to thrive. This means giving employees the ability to complete their responsibilities in an environment that's free of archaic and ineffective processes. Empowerment isn't a program; it's a principle.

Take your vitamins and eat your vegetables

Successful leaders apply their role as educator-in-chief and serve as the fitness trainer for their organization's most valuable resource - people's brains, which require a steady diet of nourishment to stretch and adapt to shifting circumstances. Even in the darkest of budget hours, leaders are committed to finding the resources needed so their workforce can visit the "brain gym" and pursue their potential.

Hunt the future

Leaders use a magnifying glass to examine the present and binoculars to peer into the future and translate those trends into what it might mean for their organization and community. They are vigilant to disrupt the model of "we've always done it that way" and replace it with a progressive approach to continuous improvement. During these times of change, leaders at all levels of government must improve their ability to manage a perplexing paradox - how to stay focused on today's organization while building tomorrow's. ★