Are you a doer or a leader? 5 telling characteristics

Rosalynn Carter once said that a leader takes people where they want to go and that a *great* leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go, but ought to be.

We are mostly surrounded by doers, and only a minuscule number of us have the right vision and strategy to set the pillars of success. Only a few of us have the heartfelt leadership skills required for climbing the corporate ladder.

Although leadership is one of the most crucial skills in the world of business, many business owners seem to overlook its importance. In his book, The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership, leadership guru John C. Maxwell explains that most entrepreneurs focus their efforts on developing a product, solving issues they encounter along the way and, finally, selling the product.

As somebody with extensive experience in leadership, I can say that leading a group of people requires focusing on the big picture. Instead of spending time managing a large matrix of checklists, processes and closing out "to-dos" for the day, successful leaders should inspire and encourage their employees to find solutions independently.

The road to success is fraught with challenges. There is always a new way to think, a more exciting process and a new strategy to learn and apply.

Scott Berkun, author of Making Things Happen, explains that when people in leadership roles constantly respond to pressure by getting out of the fray, they are not leading — they are hiding.

Showing willingness to take decisive actions and actively participating in projects is what makes the true leader stand out from the group of doers.

So, do you have what it takes to become a leader? Can a great doer become a great leader?

While there is no clear path to leadership success, there are common behaviors, strategies and skills that define true leaders.

1. Trust your team's capabilities

Leaders' most important tasks are to think strategically about the future, present compelling visions and amplify the value of everyone around them.

People who accept their new role as leaders give up control of daily tasks and delegate those tasks to others on the team. This can be a real challenge, especially for those who must keep everything under control.

Rather than focusing on smaller operational issues, leaders should step aside and let their team handle that aspect of the business. Trust is key.

Also, letting your team make important decisions will divorce you from the daily grind and help you find the structure to channel your energy.

2. Be a great communicator

Poor communication leads to problems for many organizations. Mike Myatt at Forbes claims that the best communicators are the ones who have the ability to meet the needs and the expectations of those they are communicating with. He says that great speakers talk about their ideas in a way that also speaks to listeners' emotions and aspirations.

Instead of taking part in corporative communication, leaders should encourage more personal and engaging conversations. This will help build meaningful relationships with employees and let people see how much their viewpoints matter.

3. Teach

One of the greatest entrepreneurs of all time, Steve Jobs, created a culture that has grown into a worldwide community of visionary educators who continue to spread knowledge and bring fresh ideas to young people around the world.

Leading a team does not only mean delegating tasks and controlling the overall success, but also teaching employees something new and giving them the opportunity to progress intellectually in their career.

According to Taso Du Val, a co-founder of Toptal, money is not a big value to a lot of ambitious and smart people who are more interested in growing their intelligence.

4. Listen

Once you develop a plan, you need to leverage every person's ability to show their maximum potential and steer your team onto the path of great success.

You need to show the people that you care about them and that you are interested in their opinions. Hearing yourself speak without letting others share their thoughts and demonstrate their skills won't add any value to your business.

If you feel that people shy away from expressing their viewpoints, you can choose to stay quiet and encourage others to participate. They need to feel that you trust their integrity, confidence and

passion.

Dr. Travis Bradberry, an award-winning co-author of the bestselling book “Emotional Intelligence,” once said that a leader is only as good as what he or she can achieve through other people.

5. Aspire

According to research that involved 400 people across 130 companies, you can change individual behavior by addressing employee feelings.

For example, Noah J. Goldstein reviewed a study of Adam Grant, who noticed that his employees were failing to live up to their maximum potential because they lost track of the meaningfulness and importance of their jobs.

Adam realized that if he could remind his employees of why their jobs are significant, they might become more productive. He carried an experiment where he arranged for the staff to read about the impact their effort could have.

The results were astonishing. People started showing greater enthusiasm, and they actively took part in activities.

As brilliant thinker John Quincy Adams once said: “If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”

Finally, unlike doers, leaders are always passionate about continual learning and dedicated to pursuing new knowledge. For them, those things bring excitement and opportunity.

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