

# A Supervisor or a Leader? You Decide.

What makes growth successful in any company are the leaders responsible for it and the strong teams they build. A successful leader puts his/her team first and himself/herself second and constructs self-sustaining, strong teams that can consistently perform, execute flawlessly and attain goals.

**W**hile much has been talked and written about leadership attributes, skills and traits, for me, it boils down to the points listed below. Having seen many good, bad and ugly managers operate across small and large setups, I believe these are the traits that separate the heroes (leaders) from the sidekicks (supervisors). These champs build and effectively manage high-performing teams, retain exceptional players, keep their teams engaged and also continuously keep raising their performance bar.

## 1. Leaders Own Their Team's Individual Growth

It should be your prime responsibility as a leader and you owe this to your team. In addition to the transactional evaluation of how your team is faring on assigned work and tasks, also assess yourself on how you're helping them become better versions of themselves. A

team that sees you investing in their personal growth will surely look up to you and stick with you. This upskilling may not be restricted to your domain-expertise alone but also on behavioural aspects like people management, conflict management, managing stakeholder expectations etc.

## 2. Leaders Accept Mistakes Honestly

Before coming out all guns blazing in case of a missed target or identifying a gross blunder, assess the situation completely first. No one makes errors deliberately (well, most of the times). Handhold them through the problem statement and guide them on how best to solve it. Ensure that the same mistake doesn't happen again. A truly professional individual will learn from their mistakes and most likely not repeat it. We are all mortals and cannot be perfect all the time. Of course, if the performance is on a constant decline, you would have to take a tough call. But ensure that

everyone gets their share of a fair chance.

## 3. Leaders Balance Work and Play

Often in the insatiable hunger of over-achieving, exceeding targets and the race of becoming the best we overlook the prospect of a burnout! The organization (duly represented by the manager) shouldn't be perceived as a selfish, inhuman, blood-sucking parasite that only cares for cashing-in on people's skills. Ensure that there are sufficient platforms for your team to let their hair down. An engaged team will yield you better results by working as a well-connected, synergistic unit that spends quality time together for both, work and play.

## 4. Leaders Have a High Emotional Quotient

'Humans' first, 'resources' second. A high EQ is a hallmark of great leaders. As propounded by Jim Collins, Level 5 Leaders - who

are regarded as the epitome of impactful, efficient leadership - stand tall among the rest with two strikingly distinct personality traits: Personal Humility & Professional Will. While there are umpteen cases of leaders high on the latter but, there are very few who are a perfect blend of both. Empathy is another attribute that is key to become a people manager. It's reassuring to know that people are treated as emotional beings and not machines whose sole existence is servitude to the organization.

## 5. Leaders Accept Being the Fall-guy (or Gal)

When something breaks down (on account of your team), raise your hand and accept the blame! Irrespective of whose fault it is whether it was in your control or not, whether decisions were taken without your knowledge or set protocols were bypassed. YOU are the captain of the ship and you jump-off last! You will not only earn the coveted respect from your team but also be admired outside for standing up for your team. Although, this one's easier said than done but then no one said

it was easy being an exceptional leader.

Also, a successful, healthy and symbiotic professional relationship is not a leader's responsibility alone. His/her trust and commitment needs to be earned as well. He/she will only be selflessly committed to you if you are honest and willing to contribute to the team's overall success & ready to invest in your own professional development.

To conclude, being a leader goes beyond managing a team. The choices you make every day as a leader have an enormous effect on the success of your company—and those who work for the company and those it serves. The real beauty in leadership happens when a leader is able to leave an indelible impression on the minds of the people around him. A leader who is magnanimous and empathetic, invests in its people, nurtures the team to greater heights, I believe can create a compelling vision and meaningful direction not just for himself but for others as well.



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