

Some Traits of Effective Leaders

Are leaders born or made? Can you learn superior leadership skills? No one is sure, but experts have noticed seven specific actions that successful leaders carry out, regardless of the organization or cause they lead.

Effective leaders...

...Make others feel important. If your goals and decisions are self-centered, followers will lose their enthusiasm quickly. Emphasize their strengths and contributions, not your own.

...Follow the Golden Rule. Treat your followers the way you enjoy being treated. An abusive leader attracts very few loyal followers.

...Admit mistakes. If people suspect that you're covering up your own errors, they will hide their mistakes, too, and you'll lack valuable information for making decisions.

...Criticize others only in private. Public praise encourages others to excel, but public criticism only embarrasses and alienates everyone.

...Stay close to the action. You need to be visible to the members of your organization. Talk to people, visit other offices and work sites, ask questions, and observe how business is being handled. You will often gain new

AS THE LEAVES TURN, SHOULDN'T WE?

Autumn is a time of reflection as we pass from summer to winter. It is a symbolic time for reconsidering our business' mission, its objectives, and its activities. The changes to EMBA's web site reflect our new direction.

Our President, Elliott Black, was recently named Honorary Illinois State Chairman to the National Republican Congressional Committee's Business Advisory Council.

Elliott has also taken on the responsibility as marketing chairperson for the Institute of Management Consultants 2003 National Conference. The Conference will be held in May at Indian Lakes Country Club in Bloomington, IL. He continues to serve on the Board of Symphony II, The Josselyn Center for Mental Health, and the North Suburban YMCA.

Autumn is our favorite season as it shows nature's true beauty and, although it cuts into our golfing activities, the beginning of the football and basketball seasons make it all worthwhile.

If you know of someone who might benefit from receiving our newsletter, please let us know and we will gladly add them to our mailing list.

insights into your work and find new opportunities for motivating your followers.

...Make a game of competition. The competitive drive can be a valuable tool if you use it correctly. Set team goals, and reward members who meet or exceed them. Examine your failures, and celebrate your group's successes.

The only way to amuse some people is to slip and fall on an icy pavement!



Top 7 Ways to Save Time on The Internet

1. If you spend a lot of time on the Internet, consider upgrading your modem to a digital subscriber line (DSL) or cable connection.

2. Set your browser's default home page to a blank page — this will save you download time when you first log on. Or, if there is a page you always visit, make that your default page. This will save you a surfing step.

3. Skip the search and guess at what may be an obvious URL. *gasp!* You can do that?! Yes. For example, if you are looking for the Web site for JCPenney, you might reasonably assume it would be something like "www.jcpenny.com." Many Webmasters anticipate users' misspellings, typos and presumptions, and automatically redirect you to the correct site. Typing www.jcpenny.co, will bring you to the correct address (www.jcpenny.com/jcp/default.asp).

4. Have a purpose! Unless you have a few hours to kill and don't mind surfing aimlessly, make sure you know why you are logging on. Write down your goals (i.e., "research ink jet printers") and stick to them. If you see an interesting link that has nothing to do with your goals, save it to your hard drive for later reading, or bookmark it to visit later.

5. Do you really NEED graphics, sound, and animation options? If not, turn them off. You will save browse time.

6. Adjust your cache settings if you have space to spare on your hard disk. Whenever you download a Web page, your browser saves a copy of it in the cache folder on your hard disk. You can increase the amount of space allocated to your cache. This will enable you to surf the files on your hard drive rather than downloading the files each time you visit them. (Fewer downloads = less time.) In Internet Explorer, go to Tools, Internet Options, General, Temporary Internet Files Settings. Move the scale slider to the right to increase the amount of hard disk space used for your cache. (This principle works in reverse if you feel your cache is taking up too much space on your hard disk.)

7. Download during off-peak times to avoid high traffic periods.

LISTENING: How to Do It When You Least Feel Like It



Being a good listener is the most important tool anyone can have. Especially those who work on the phone. However, many times listening is a challenge. We daydream. We get distracted by others, or feel preoccupied with things in our personal lives. We feel pressure to complete additional tasks related to our jobs. Meaningful listening takes concentration. However, when customers feel someone is really listening to their issues, they feel valued and impressed. They are even willing to pay more for the service you are providing. The following are suggestions for improving your listening skills when you least feel like it.

1. Post pictures of your loved ones and others in your cubicle. When you are talking on the phone, imagine that you are talking to one of your pictures. Pretend that the caller is your mother, your grandmother or a close friend. We pay more attention when the caller is no longer a faceless entity.

2. Instead of thinking about how you will respond, force yourself to listen all the way to the end of a sentence. It will help you glean information that otherwise might not have been heard. It will also help you to better understand the other person's point of view. While this seems simplistic, it is not easy to do. Our tendency is to listen to the first three or four words only, especially when we are busy or preoccupied.

3. Take notes. Do not try to write everything down, but concentrate on key ideas. Your notes will help you to recap information without asking the customer to repeat his/her statements.

4. If you are distracted by others in your work area, reposition your work station so that your back is to the aisle. The more you can eliminate distracting behavior or noise, the better you will be able to concentrate and the more your customer will feel that he is your primary concern.

5. Periodically, get up and walk

around. A quick bathroom break or a walk to the drinking fountain can work wonders. Do some stretches or shoulder rolls at your desk. Take off your shoes and roll a tennis ball under your foot. It will massage your muscles and reenergize you.

6. Be sure to drink lots of water, not caffeinated beverages. If you drink a lot of water and go for high protein foods or snacks, you will be able to think clearly and feel like working.

7. Do not interrupt your customer. Customers want you to listen to their problem from start to finish. When you interrupt, you open a can of worms. Callers start to feel you are rushing them. They frequently get annoyed and often start repeating. Interrupting may actually keep you on the phone longer.

8. Make sure you let the customer know you are listening by acknowledging or commenting on what they are saying. Simple statements such as, "Oh, really," or "I see," let the customer know you are with them. The more specific the acknowledgment, the more you will force yourself to pay attention.

9. Ask questions. They demonstrate that you are listening and allow you to direct the discussion and/or focus on meaningful elements. Be sure to pay attention to the answers your customers give. People notice when you repeat the same questions. Also, be careful of interrogating your customers with too many questions.

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*If opportunity doesn't knock,
build a door.*

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From the Editor's Desk

What a beautiful time of year, and what a perfect time to take stock of your business and see what you can do to assure growth. If you're serious about growing your business, give us a call and we will give you a free consultation.

We have helped many companies, and we can help yours. As an outside resource we can see things that may be too close for you to notice. Check us out! You'll be glad you did!

MAXINE, Newsletter Editor