

Tips on Leadership

Building Meaningful Work Relationships

1. Write a thank you note or “job well done” memo every day for a week. Be certain your notes are sincere and specific. Make note of how recipients react.
2. Offer at least one sincere compliment a day.
3. Practice common courtesies: apologies, hallway greetings, thank-you cards, get-well messages, sympathy notes, etc.
4. Increase visibility by maintaining a visibility log. Use this log to keep track of the percentage of your workday that you are out of your office and talking to team members.
5. Make a point to ask team members more about themselves, not only about work related interests but also about their outside interests.
6. Make a list of ten questions about work performance that interest you. Then make a point to ask all ten over the course of a two-week period. The point is to engage your team members in personal and meaningful conversation.
7. Identify the team members who you have the most trouble with or who you know the least. Make a point to engage in a friendly one-on-one conversation with each of them.
8. Make a list of the traits that you believe interfere with your management relationships. Work to “correct” each one as you interact with others.
9. Identify team members with whom you have your strongest relationships. Make a list of traits that the relationships have in common. Work to nurture these traits with others.
10. Go a full day listening without interrupting once.

Motivate Others

1. Write an “open letter” in which you extol the achievements of your team. Be certain to use specifics.
2. Establish peer coaching partnerships to help inexperienced or stressed team members.
3. Arrange open forums in which volunteers exchange ideas and encouragement in order to support and motivate one another.
4. Design and administer a team “morale” survey.
5. Initiate a simple rewards program that offers prizes or recognition – even if you just draw names out of a hat. Explain that the process symbolizes how you appreciate their hard work. Note that the prizes can be humorous or donated by team members. It is the symbolism that counts.
6. Go a full work week without using attacking or discouraging language when dealing with your team members.

Strategize for Improvement

1. Work with a small group to create a “stop doing list.” These are procedures, actions, or policies that are outdated, cumbersome, redundant, or annoying.
2. Set a few minutes aside each day to reflect on how things are going professionally. You may want to ask a few team members to reflect with you.
3. Make a point to recognize team members who successfully implemented positive change.
4. Make a list of procedures, functions, and/or policies. With a committee of key players, grade each from A to F. Then talk about improvements.
5. Make a point to talk to numerous team members one-on-one and ask them the following two questions: “What is quality?” and “How do we achieve quality?” Take notes.
6. Review your current process of delegating. Then develop a list of guidelines for the delegation of tasks. Ask yourself how you can do it more effectively.

Coach Others

1. Give selected individuals short but pertinent readings on professional strategies. Ask them later what they thought of the reading.

2. Meet with individuals and identify personal goals. Ask them how you can help them achieve their goals.
3. Form “new hire” focus groups to discuss “workplace excellence.”
4. Form Learning Circles.
5. Conduct open meetings – no agenda, just open talk.
6. Don’t forget the easiest strategy of all – ask team members ... “How are things going?”

Help Drive Positive Work Values

1. Engage team members in casual conversations around the question...”What is a values driven team?”
2. Discuss ethical standards with your team members.
3. Develop a matrix that shows the relationship between your values and your management behavior.
4. Research managerial ethics. Report your findings to the team.
5. Identify and clarify team norms or rules of professional interaction.
6. Link professional behavior to workplace values.
7. Write down the workplace values that define your approach to leadership. Share them with your team members.

Building Trust

1. Work with a small group and identify “trust busters.” Discuss ways to avoid or eliminate trust busters.
2. Identify three team members who you trust the least and list those things that you distrust about them. Are there some common threads in all three? What is it that drives you to react to them cautiously? Over the next few weeks try at least one strategy to build a positive connection with each of the identified team members.
3. Find a short article on trust and give a copy to each of your team members. Ask them to discuss it with you over lunch or before or after work.
4. Establish a feedback group in which you discuss the level of trust on your team. Identify positive things that you can do to build trust.
5. If you made a leadership mistake, admit it and discuss it with your team. Note how the team reacts.
6. Define *authentic behavior* for yourself. Set some standards for authentic behavior and hold yourself accountable to them.
7. Make a short audio tape in which you affirm your commitment to building stronger levels of trust. Listen to this tape periodically for motivation and affirmation.
8. Survey your leadership peers to discover what they do to build trust with their teams.

Conducting Better Meetings

1. Develop a list of things that you can say to let meeting latecomers know that tardiness is unacceptable.
2. Complete the following metaphor: “My style as a meeting facilitator is like _____.”
3. At your next meeting tell the participants that you are working on one or two meeting facilitation skills. After the meeting ask the group how you did with each. Ask for suggestions.
4. Identify three to five adjectives that define your style as a meeting facilitator. Then ask selected team members to identify your strengths and weaknesses as a meeting facilitator. Any Patterns? Similarities? Surprises?
5. At your next meeting stop mid-way and ask the participants how the meeting is going. Ask for suggestions to improve your meeting facilitation.
6. Establish an assessment group and identify ways to keep meetings focused and on track.
7. Make a list of ways to replace meetings with other forms of communication.

Clarify Issues

1. Create a committee clearing house to identify, define, and prioritize team issues.
2. Carry a small notebook to jot down information, opinions, and ideas that you hear from team.
3. Identify a personal mentor or coach who you can meet with regularly to talk openly about leadership issues.
4. Establish a feedback group to get insights into your leadership style and behavior.

5. As you gather opinions and viewpoints on an issue, make sure you get a diversity of ideas from diverse people.
6. Stop on occasion and identify those things that you feel are working well and those things that are causing stress.
7. List the major issues that you have confronted over the last two years. Is there a pattern? Is there a type of issue that keeps emerging?
8. Keep a log of the time it takes you to handle an issue. Determine if you are handling issues in a timely and efficient manner.

Vision

1. Hold informal “round tables” to discuss the future of your team.
2. Keep a professional journal in which you focus on four aspects of visionary thinking: needs, wants, desires, and dreams.
3. Write out the “best case” scenario for what you want your team to become. Give it to your team and ask for responses and additions.

*<http://www.workshopexercises.com>