

Essential Skills for Leadership



You consider yourself a leader. After all, you've spent most of your career managing employees and overseeing large teams of people. Sure, you've made some bad hires and dealt with difficult situations just like everyone else, but you have a track record of success. Maybe you've always been a leader, or you developed the skills to become one in recent years. Whatever the case may be, the time has come for you to pursue a new leadership opportunity. You've dusted off your resume, started hunting for jobs and even landed a couple of interviews. If you hope to find the opportunity you're looking for however, you'd best be sure some of the skills mentioned below are polished.

Communication

There's been no shortage of articles written about the [importance of communication](#) but that's for good reason. It's a vital skill for any leader. We've all had that boss at some point that is more of a dictator than a leader. You constantly find yourself second-guessing the job you're doing and wondering if your performance is above board or lacking. Working for this kind of superior is no fun and now you make it a point to communicate with those around you in every sense of the word.

It's also important to remember that not all communication is verbal. When you're interviewing for a new job, the hiring manager is going to scour your resume for grammar and word choice. During the interview they will also pay attention to non-verbal communication cues like body language, how you shook their hand and how actively you listen with your eyes as well as your ears.

Vision

In order to be successful, companies are always looking for ways to increase the bottom line, save money and make their processes more efficient. They know you can't do business the same way forever. For this reason, you'd better be armed with some real-life examples of how your vision improved a company's prospects in the past. Did you implement a new marketing campaign because the old one wasn't working? Maybe you re-wrote the policies and procedures manual because the one from 2002 was no longer relevant.

Assertiveness

Anyone in a position of leadership is going to be forced to make decisions at some point. There's no avoiding it. Hiring managers will want to see evidence of this skill too. They will surely ask you about important decisions you made in the past. Not only that, they are going to want to know how you arrived at the decision and what the outcome was. Your ability to highlight your decision-making skills in a favorable light could be the deciding difference in whether you get the job or not.

Ability to Adapt

Even if your resume screams that you're the most qualified candidate for the job, you have to be able to adapt. After all, you're applying for a job at a new company where chances are the culture, values, and ways of doing things aren't what they were in your previous post. If your plan is to come in, clean house, and do things the way you've always done them, chances are you won't get the job. On the other hand, if you can demonstrate that you're eager to learn, listen, implement necessary changes and receive input from all sides, you'll quickly set yourself apart from other candidates.

Influence

When the word influence comes to mind, you probably think about the ability to get others to do what you want. While this is certainly a large part of it, how you go about influencing others is important too. Sure, you can influence people through fear, intimidation and barking orders, but it probably won't last long as

people will quit or fail to respect your authority. Conversely, if you're able to lead by example, portray confidence, keep a level-head and meet your subordinates on their level, your chances of being a successful leader are much greater.

[Effective leadership](#) is more important now than ever in the workplace. Without the right people in place to make decisions, the chances of an organization succeeding are slim to none. That's why hiring managers spare no expense in finding the perfect fit for each and every position of leadership. Even if you consider yourself a seasoned leader and have the track record to back it up, you're going to have to demonstrate all the necessary skills to do the job effectively. Before you step into that next interview, take a moment to give some of the qualities above some serious thought. Doing so will provide honest insight and just might be what puts you over the top.

If you are an experienced leader looking for a job in the [Life Sciences industries in the Bay Area](#), or an employer seeking a high-quality employee to fill a leadership position, contact me Jeff King at (541) 639-3501. I serve the [pharmaceutical, biotech, and medical device fields](#).