

Methods to Get Your Team to Follow Your Lead



At some point in your career you've either managed or been part of a team where there was a noticeable disconnect between the person at the top and everyone else. Sure, objectives and responsibilities were explicit, but when it came to getting things done and maximizing productivity, it was a constant struggle. Any number of factors can cause a team to not function at its best, but employee engagement is almost always part of the problem. So, if you're struggling to get the results you want from your team or feel like you're struggling to get everyone on the same page, read on.

It Starts with You

If you want to get the most out of everyone on your team, you need to show them that you're 100% invested. Sure, you've got your own set of responsibilities, but you have to demonstrate that you're not afraid to get your hands dirty too. Whether that means carving out time every week to help with the more menial activities or just checking in with folks on an individual basis, the people you manage need to see you as one of them.

Never Lose Sight of the Bigger Picture

When work becomes repetitive and the members of your team focus are just getting through the day, you're headed for trouble. Before you know it, productivity begins to slide along with the quality of work being done. All of sudden, doing the bare minimum becomes arduous and it's all you can do to meet

deadlines and basic operating goals.

This is why it's important that everyone on your team feels like they are working for something bigger than themselves. When you're able to connect day-to-day tasks with a grander plan, your team members take pride in their work and become more productive as a result. Even though it might not happen overnight, there are plenty of ways to motivate your employees to get behind your mission. Bonuses, paid time off and team bonding activities are just a few.

Make Collaborative Decisions

You have the final say when it comes to making big decisions. But if you want to get the most out of your team, their input needs to be considered before you make a final call. When people feel like they're empowered to share their thoughts and ideas, they automatically become more invested in the process. While your meetings with managers and higher-ups aren't going anywhere, regularly scheduling all hands-on deck meetings with your team fosters an environment of inclusion. And the best part is you'll often find that some of the best and brightest ideas come from the folks that are in the trenches on a daily basis.

Recognize Strengths and Delegate

No one wants to work for a boss that feels like they have to do everything themselves in order to get things done right. That's why recognizing people's strengths and delegating responsibilities accordingly is so powerful. Do you have an entry-level employee whose attention to details is impeccable? Great, charge them with reviewing documents or procedures and follow up communication with those involved. Not only will you have more time to focus your attention in other areas, you'll make that team member feel valued as well.

Make Your Strategy Visual

Everyone has different learning styles. Some people need to learn by doing while others just want a set of directions. There's no underestimating the power of seeing something in action, however. That's why video has become so prevalent in the workplace. When people are able to see what success looks like with their own eyes, it becomes cemented in their minds. Seeing is believing and when

you're able to make your words come to life, your ability to lead and influence grows exponentially.

In order for your team to reach its full potential, it's paramount that they follow your lead. If you're the type of leader that spends all day in his office shouting orders and circulating company memos, you don't stand on a chance. On the flip side, if you make a conscious effort to lead by example, give people the freedom to utilize their strengths and involve them in the decision-making process, your team can become an unstoppable force capable of achieving the kinds of results you've only dreamed of.

How Public Speaking Can Help Your Career



It's something even the brightest minds in business fear. Something you avoid at all costs. Even those that do it for a living never get truly comfortable with it. We're talking about [public speaking](#). And you're going to have to do it at some point in your career. Whether it's giving a presentation to your team or delivering a speech in front of the entire company at the Christmas party, developing the skill of public speaking is a must. Sure, it's not your favorite thing in the world but believe it or not, developing this difficult skill can be a great benefit both personally and professionally.

It Makes You Memorable

When you speak in front of any number of people, their focus is on you. For however long the stage is yours, you have everyone's undivided attention. Great public speakers know this and instead of fearing the opportunity in front of them, they see it as a chance to have influence and make a lasting impression. When you have a chance to speak in front of a group, they are going to look to you as their leader.

There's Scarce Competition

Most people avoid public speaking at all costs. Whether it's giving a best man speech at a wedding or delivering a sermon at church, there aren't many people in the audience that have the courage to share their thoughts and wisdom in front of a crowd. If you're able to become even an average public speaker, people will look to you with respect because you possess a skill most of them don't.

You Connect with People

If you think about some of the most memorable speeches ever given, names like Martin Luther King Jr., John F. Kennedy and Winston Churchill come to mind. So, what made all these names great public speakers? Their ability to show empathy and connect with people. If you're able to speak in a way that conveys passion, vulnerability and inspiration, your audience can't help but be drawn to you. In short, you will be their champion.

You Can Be a Catalyst for Change

Think about the last time you received that email that was circulated to everyone in the organization announcing a new direction or change in policy. You read it and talked about it with your colleagues but probably didn't give much more thought. Now think about the last time someone at the top gave a speech in front of everyone. Even if it was last year, it still sticks out in your mind.

The fact remains that listening to someone speak always has a greater impact than a voiceless note sent electronically. If you want to enact change in your life

or your organization, do it by speaking to people, not through a form letter or email.

Leaders Get Promoted

Have you ever found yourself stuck in a rut? You want to advance in your career, but you keep bumping into that glass ceiling. You know that people with leadership qualities get promoted but you just can't figure out how to break through. Developing the skill of public speaking is a great place to start. If you're able to speak in front of people, you have the power to change their minds. It's no secret that leaders have the ability to influence others and there might not be any greater way to have influence than the spoken word.

You Become More Confident

Everyone is afraid of something. Maybe it's heights, needles or tight spaces. One fear that is shared by more people than any other however, is public speaking. Getting over this fear takes some practice but if you're able make it an asset, you'll feel empowered both personally and professionally. Even more, when you're able to connect with people, it's a great reminder of your value and worth to everyone around you.

What if You Mess Up?

No one is going to deny that there are more enjoyable things than public speaking. Being the center of attention makes you nervous and what will people think if you screw up? Believe it or not, the best public speakers in the world will tell you that they make mistakes all the time. The best part is most of the time, nobody notices. And when mistakes do happen, it brings about a moment of levity that reminds the audience that whoever they're listening to is a human just like them.

Most people aren't born as great public speakers. Fortunately, it's a skill that can be learned and a fear that can be overcome. If you're willing to step outside your comfort zone and put in the work, you'll be setting yourself apart both personally and professionally. Not only will you have developed a skill that makes you more valuable to your organization, your confidence and sense of self-worth will grow

in other areas of your life as well. It can even help you improve your everyday communication skills as well. Challenge yourself and give it a try.

If you work in the [Life Sciences industries in the Bay Area](#), I am a recruiter that can help you advance in your career. Contact me, Jeff King, at jking@rqfocus.com or (541) 639-3501.

How-To Create More Efficient Meetings



Meetings - we have to have them but they can be giant time consumers in our work day. For many companies, meetings are prolonged from chit chat and ramble. Others are poorly organized. This can be frustrating for employees that have piles of work.

As a Specialty Quality and Regulatory Recruiter, I have seen the processes of many different types of companies. Some works. Others ends in disaster. Meetings can be crucial to organize your team and make sure you are on the same page.

I have outlined tips that can create more efficient meetings. Start implementing these tips to save valuable time at work.

Review Attendee List

It's frustrating for employees who are sitting at meetings that they know that they don't have to attend. A meeting could add an extra hour onto their work day. Before you ask for a meeting, consider who really needs to attend.

The employees that should be at meetings will contribute to the project. Unnecessary attendees will only waste valuable time at the company's expense.

Distribute Written Agenda in Advance

Be prepared before the meeting. Create a written agenda and email it to your attendees. That way, they will be prepared with the information that they need to bring. Your employees will not be pulling up information spontaneously on their lap top. You have already prepared them for what you need to discuss.

Manage the Meeting by the Clock

It's easy to waste time chatting about weekend plans, family, or sporting event. However, meetings are not the time to have these discussions. Create a timeline to keep the meeting moving.

For example, 10 minutes for project status. 30 minutes for planning.

Determine the timeline that works best for the productivity of your team.

Take Notes

We can't remember everything. As a business leader, it is essential to take notes. Record project status, updates, and plans. Type out your ideas and send the record to attendees after the meeting. This will prevent your team from forgetting details. You will not have to repeat information at the next meeting.

Start On-Time

Along with following a time schedule is starting on-time. Tell your employees in advance the meeting will begin promptly at the arranged time. Start the meeting

even if some of your attendees are absent.

Punctuality is professional and necessary in the workplace.

Tardiness is embarrassing for most professionals. Starting your meetings on time can help influence your team to arrive promptly.

The Importance of Asking Questions at Work



Asking questions can be the simplest and most effective ways of learning. Innovators, brilliant minds, and curious thinkers ask questions. If you are not asking questions, you could be missing out on opportunities.

As a business leader, information is imperative. You need to understand what your employees and clients need, as well as where your organization can improve.

Not convinced? Learn why asking questions can be imperative in the workplace:

Questions Encourage Creative Thinking

An innovative company is always coming up with new ideas. Brainstorming sessions are a productive method to inspiring new ideas. Questions can create the creative thinking that you need for a great brainstorming session. Open-ended questions are some of the most efficient, such as;

- I wonder if/why...
- What would happen if...
- In what ways can we...

Questions Create Reflection

There are periods where we all just focus on getting the job done. However, if those periods turn into years, we can lose the spark that makes us creative leaders. Constantly ask yourself questions, such as;

- Why are you in business?
- What is your favorite part of your job?
- How did you create change this year?

Questions Start Change

It's easy to get stuck in a rut. During those periods, we know that we need to make changes but we can't find where to make it work. Your questions could open a new way of thinking that keeps your company innovative.

Now that you know why to ask questions, it's important to recognize how to ask. You don't want your important question to go unnoticed.

- Watch your tone by keeping it casual.
 - Use follow-up questions by focusing on listening.
 - If you are looking for information, start with the tough questions. If you want to build relationships, start with the easy questions.
 - Keep the questions open-ended.
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How-To Get Your Boss To Support Your Ideas



Business owners want their companies to grow and eager employees move the company forward. If you want to advance your career, it is important that you promote new ideas for business development.

If you have a new idea for your employer - great! However, any great idea can be dismissed if it's not presented well. Do your homework. Your boss will take your idea more seriously if you are prepared.

Align the Values of the Company

The most imperative step is to ensure your idea aligns with the company's core values. For example, Patagonia clothing company is committed to using environmentally friendly methods to create their products. An accepted pitch probably aligns with sustainability. Before pursuing your project, make sure that it withholds the values of your company.

Examples of Core Values

- A commitment to sustainability and acting in an environmentally friendly way
- A commitment to innovation and excellence
- A commitment to helping people less fortunate
- A commitment to building a strong community
- A commitment to immediate customer service

Get the Support of Your Co-Workers

Enlist the support of your co-workers. This could be staff that would also work on the project and benefits from the results. To achieve your co-worker's support, try testing the concept on reliable team members.

Your boss could also be impressed with your ability to lead team members. Communication, management, and passion are necessary in leadership positions that could be a career goal.

Have an Idea of Why the Project Will Benefit the Company

Every project requires company resources. The project might cost the company money, employee hours, or new software. You should be able to answer why your project is worth company resources. If you cannot answer this question, then it is almost certain that your idea will be dismissed.

Pursuing an efficiency solution or new source of revenue, could send you on the fast track to advancing your career.

How the Project Will Benefit the Company

- Increase revenue
- Reduce expenses
- Improve efficiency
- Solution to problem that the manager has been trying to achieve
- Help your team become more successful

Be Flexible with Feedback

Your boss will have questions and feedback to your idea. That is a good thing! If they did not like your idea than it would have been dismissed. Be prepared to make modifications to the project and take shared ownership.

Risks Great Business Leaders Must Take in Order to Succeed



Good leaders are often reliable and hard workers. However, what makes a good leader become great is their ability to take risks.

Risks can be a scary word to many of us. When we take a risk, we could lose something valuable. Great leaders see opportunity in failure and potential from the learning experience. If you want to be a great business leader, you will have to take risks at some point.

Learn some of the most common risks every great business leader faces:

Risk Failing

We all risk failing when we try something new, but failing is not always a bad thing. Your efforts are the key to success. Successful business leaders can view failure as learning process.

Failure accomplishes two very important objectives:

1. We are willing to embrace risking failure by doing something risky. You can't be successful unless you try!
2. We discover the proper expectation mentally. Plan for the best but prepare for the worst. This allows the opportunity for recovery and another attempt.

Risk Admitting that You Don't Know

We are conditioned to have quick and confident answers. Unfortunately, if we are always providing an answer, we will never have the opportunity to learn from other perspectives.

For business leaders, the risk of saying "I don't know" can be the opportunity to engage a team. Use the opportunity to gather new ideas with group discussions and brain storming sessions.

Risk Losing Everything

Whether you have been in business for forty years or one, every company makes financial risks to get ahead. Sometimes, the choice can be a plunge. However, a successful business leader continues to take smart risks from the knowledge of previous learning experiences.

Risk of Stepping into Unfamiliar Territory

Stepping into unfamiliar territory starts from day one of opening a business. You will continue to expand your boundaries as your business expands.

Stepping into unfamiliar territory could include providing a new product or service, opening a branch office, or hiring a team. We must make changes or our company will remain stagnant.

Risking Being Misunderstood

Thinking outside of the box can cause people to question your sanity! As a business leader, your character will be questioned at some point. After all, your decisions are possibly affecting the future of the company. Nevertheless, stick to what you think is right. You did not become a leader by being just like everyone else.

How-To Keep Employees Engaged With Their Work



Every empowered team has one thing in common - they are engaged with their work. Achieving engaged employees may seem simple. Unfortunately, only 32 percent of workers are engaged in their jobs. As a business owner, this is a frightening statistic! We want employees that are passionate about their careers.

As a recruiter, I seek candidates that enjoy their career field. However, after I find the employee, it's up to the business leader to keep them happy. Learn six tricks to keeping your employees happy at work.

Be Transparent

Transparency should be core in a company's values. It develops trust and productivity within the organization.

To be transparent, make important information available. This does not mean that you should broadcast your company's finances. Instead, create charts on the progress of meeting company goals.

You can also trust employees to make decisions. This may seem scary at first. After all, you are loosening the reins when an employee starts making decisions. However, they will become more invested in company operations and will learn to take ownership of their projects.

Take Responsibility for Mistakes

Nobody wants to take blame for something that was not their fault. It will be very difficult for you to maintain the respect of others if you do not take responsibility for your actions.

Apologize when you know that your decision was not best for the company. Your employees will appreciate your honesty and you will gain their respect.

Make Training Available

Employees who are enthusiastic to learn are some of the best additions to your team. Make sure training is available to help their skills develop. This could be webinars, online courses, mentoring, or job shadowing. These passionate employees can potentially be your managers and directors. By providing training and learning options you increase the chance they will want to stay on your team.

Allow Individuality in Dress Code

Suit and tie attire are a thing of the past for most jobs. Allow your employees individuality in their clothing -within reason. You can provide guidelines for what is appropriate such as no t-shirts, jeans or sandals. However, small changes that allow self-expression can make employees feel more engaged in their job position.

Thank Employees for Good Work

Everyone likes to know that they are appreciated. Acknowledge your employees hard work. For large projects, you may choose to reward an employee with a gift certificate, bonus, or extra vacation time.

See [20 Techniques for Acknowledging Your Employee's Good Work](#) for ideas on thanking employees for their good work.

Provide Flexibility on Hours

Different employees are more productive different hours of the day. If your office allows the flexibility, provide your employees with a two-hour window for coming

to work. For example, your employees must start work between 7:00 AM - 9:00 AM. They can leave from 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM. This flexibility works for employees that workout in the morning or drop their kids off at school. It can also attract potential employees that have a long commute or have to deal with a lot of traffic that might not otherwise consider your company for employment.

Take the time to build a company with engaged employees. You may find that you have a decreased turnover rate, increased productivity, and you have a team that is easier to manage. Not to mention, you will build a healthier, happier working environment.

6 Tips to Keep Your Clients Happy



We can focus so much on getting new clients that we forget to keep our current clients happy. This is the quickest way to lose internal and external clients, and get a bad reputation for yourself.

Additionally, Forrester Research claims getting a new client costs five times more than retaining current customers. Don't forget to keep your clients happy if you want to have a profitable business.

Not sure how to keep your customers happy? Start learning with these six tips:

Own Your Mistakes

We all make mistakes. Admit yours. Clients will be happier with a meaningful apology and honesty rather than trying to cover up your mistake. Usually your client is able to see your fault. They might not mention it but they could lose trust in your abilities if you try to just cover it up as an external influence or another person's decision.

Go Above and Beyond

Everyone wants to feel special - including your clients! Do more than what your client asked for to make them feel appreciated. Offer specific tips, suggestions, and ideas. You will be seen as what the company genuinely needs in order to succeed.

Return Calls Promptly

Time is money. Your unanswered questions could be preventing your clients from completing an urgent task. Return emails and calls within 24 hours or one hour if possible.

Do Not Overpromise

Overpromising and underdelivering can kill your business. Don't do it! Be realistic when you make contracts with customers. That way, you know you can meet their expectations with the opportunity to go above and beyond.

Add a Personal Touch

Allow your clients to get to know you. This does not mean that you have to invite them to your wedding or child's piano recital. Instead, send them a handwritten Christmas card to show that you care.

Create a Valuable Product

If you produce a poor product then eventually you will lose all of your clients. Invest in creating a reliable, high-quality product.

Retain your clients and you will not always have to be searching for new business! Eventually, your reputation will speak for itself.

How-To Build Strong Leadership Skills



Strong leadership is a learned skill. Depending on the type and size of business, there are always methods to improve. Whether you are a business owner, executive, or manager, it is important that you are always analyzing your team's response to your management.

The following methods could help you improve your leadership. Doing so can lead to happier and more productive employees.

Be a Positive Role Model

Do not expect your employees to work any harder than yourself. Employees often use management as criteria for their own work ethic. When you are working, think about how you would like your employees to act. If you are on Facebook

every hour then you cannot get frustrated with employees who are constantly checking their social media notifications.

Find a Mentor

Nobody knows it all. Find a mentor who has also served as a business leader. You can seek tips and guidance from their experience.

Encourage Creativity

If employees are given the flexibility to use creative thinking, you may be surprised by the insight that they can bring to the table. Creative thinking can be intimidating for many employees. However, new ideas could be what makes your company unique among competition.

How to Influence Creative Thinking in the Workplace

- Use an “idea first, measurement second” mindset. Eventually your company must be data-driven but allow flexibility for new ideas.
- Use innovation teams to come up with new ideas.
- Reward employee with bonuses if their idea is used.
- Create a positive work environment so employees feel comfortable expressing their ideas without criticism.

Study Past Leaders

Most business leaders spend their time looking forward. Unfortunately, some of your most valuable lessons can be learned from the past. Study past leader’s successes and failures. After all, history repeats itself.

Great Modern Entrepreneurs to Learn From

1. Elon Musk
2. Steve Jobs
3. Oprah Winfrey
4. Walt Disney

Be Humble

Great leaders admit their mistakes and share credit for successes. If you play the blame game, eventually your employees will look for employment elsewhere. People want to feel respected.

Communicate Effectively

As a leader, you probably get very busy. Nevertheless, you cannot build a great team without maintaining time to communicate with your team.

Occasionally, ask your employees how they are doing. Your employees should feel comfortable confronting you with questions and concerns.

Strong leaders can build great companies. If you are in a leadership position, focus on improving your skills to help lead your company to success.

Effective Leadership Techniques to Build a Great Working Team



The foundation of almost every productive team is a strong leader. As a business owner or manager, it is important to establish effective leadership techniques to

operate your team well. Your employees will be looking up to you to create boundaries and unify the group.

If you are not acting as a strong leader then it is time that you start! Here are a few leadership techniques to build a great working team.

Stay Consistent

Consistency is key. A consistent leader is more trustworthy and creates clearer expectations for the team to make decisions. To be consistent, you must reward the same behaviors, discourage other behaviors, and treat every team member equally.

Use Thoughtful, Concise, and Accurate Communication

Communication can dictate the success of almost any type of relationship. Make sure that you are using thoughtful, concise, and accurate communication when you relay any type of message with your team. This includes emails, phone calls, and in-person discussions.

Publicly Reward Hard Work

Public acknowledgement reassures employees that their hard work is being noticed. Reward your employee with a bonus, PTO, or gift when they perform superior work. See our article on employee rewards for more ideas.

Be a Good Example

Live by example! I am sure that is a phrase you have heard before. If you want your team to arrive on-time than you must arrive on-time. As a leader or manager, the team is looking at you to set the expectations for the company.

Encourage All Opinions and Ideas

Do not discourage employees from expressing their ideas, concerns, or opinions. Different perspectives can create new ideas that benefit the company.

Establish the Goal of Working as a Team

Setting goals is imperative to evaluate the performance of your team. Your goals should be according to your organization's needs, such as cut costs, drive skills, or increase revenue. Defining goals can help your team work together toward a common objective.

Use the SMART framework to create achievable goals:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time-Bound

Create Ground Rules for the Team

When multiple people spend 40+ hours together, there needs to be ground rules. Your ground rules help create unison and clear expectations for your employees.

Examples of Ground Rules at the Office

- Be on time
- Every team member has the right to make a suggestion
- Dress code

Remain as Transparent as Possible

Your employees want a leader that they can trust. If you withhold information or lie you will jeopardize the relationship with your team.

Show You Care

To be viewed as someone who is a leader they want to follow and be loyal to you need to show that you care about them as well. Spend a little time to get to know the people on your team and what drives them. Once they know you care about them, they will care more about helping you achieve your goals as well.

Leadership habits can determine the success of their team. If you are a manager or business owner, evaluate whether you are practicing strong leadership techniques. A few changes may improve the cohesiveness of your team, therefore helping you reach your company goals.