

Leadership in 2015: 7 Most Needed Skills



Recently, I had the opportunity to be a part of the 2015 goal setting and forecasting for an information technology company. While observing the room full of highly intelligent executives, I could not stop thinking what skill set this organization will need within the leadership and management team to move in the right direction.

In order to implement the goals and objectives according to the newly adopted plan, it was clear to everyone in the room that a new process, strategy, and execution plan would be needed. Before the long meeting was over, the white board outline reflected the most essential ways to drive the results, in addition to a new proposed strategic approach.

Later in a day, during our conversation in more informal settings outside of the conference room, I was asked to share my opinion on the top leadership skills needed in order to accomplish these objectives in 2015.

After reflecting for a moment, I was able to identify the top seven skills as follows:

1. Analyze Complex Issues – Find the time to work with your designated team on analyzing the issue! Do not set up your team for mission impossible – no supporting data or backup information. Set aside appropriate lengths of time to foster effective issue resolution sessions. It is essential to be, especially in person, because it will dramatically impact team effectiveness. Don't hesitate to use a white board.

2. Communicate Clearly – It is a huge productivity boost when team members are clear on what is expected from them and what they need to do. In addition, it is highly important to integrate other aspects of concise, concrete, correct, coherent, complete, and courteous communication. These types of communications are must haves in order to insure the successful day-to-day communication across an organization, especially when implementing a change or a new program or project.

"The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn't said." ~ Peter Drucker

3. Demonstrate High Integrity and Honesty – Do we need to say more?

Unfortunately, yes! Demonstrating consistent professionalism, high integrity, and honesty will help, not only to build trust and respect around you, but it will assist you to do the right thing, despite the consequences. Further, by demonstrating consistency and full responsibility of your actions it will set the stage for the others to follow.

"Real integrity is doing the right thing, knowing that nobody's going to know whether you did it or not." ~ Oprah Winfrey

4. Drive Results – By creating the wow effect to reach the end goal or objective! How? By identifying the specific goals that are challenging but attainable and measurable. This would be impossible to accomplish without employees involvement, a goal setting process, and a very focused, supportive, and rewarding team working environment.

"Effective leadership is not about making speeches or being liked; leadership is defined by results not attributes." ~ Peter Drucker

5. Inspire Others – Through value-based behavior! That can be accomplished by powerful, purposeful, passionate, and meaningful communication. It is also essential to demonstrate excellent listening skills. Knowing the big picture in addition to the vision and mission of an organization are key drivers to keep inspiring employees and teams. However, this is impossible to do without employee inclusion and trust in you as a leader.

"Leadership is based on a spiritual quality; the power to inspire, the power to inspire others to follow." ~ Vince Lombardi

6. Motivate Others – It is possible without super powers! The magic of listening, encouraging, and asking the simple question "How I can help?" can motivate so much more than you may think. Everyone on your team is motivated by *something*, although probably not a coffee mug, key chain, or tee shirt with the company's logo. The more you know what that "*something*" is, it will lead you to the best incentives program to recognize your team and employees. In the end, the more motivated your team gets, the faster they will reach a goal and overall objective.

"Individual commitment to a group effort – that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work." ~ Vince Lombardi

7. Remove Obstacles and Solve Problems – If you are in charge, then act that way! Remove the obstacles that are preventing your employees and team members from moving forward to solve a problem. How is it discovered? How can it be prevented in the future? Clearly sharing and understanding the problem will allow for it to be solved in the best possible way. Narrowing down two to three options will assist you to arrive to the best solution based on your resource needs, budget, time, etc.

You might want to consider building additional skills that Jack Zengler and Joseph Folkman disclosed in the Harvard Business Review article: The skills Leaders Need at Every Level based on 332,860 people dataset.

