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## CHARACTERISTICS — of Effective — LEADERSHIP



Anyone can be given a leadership role, but not every leader is effective.



And that's why **57 percent** of employees who leave their jobs do so because they can't get along with their managers.



Great organizations are built on the backs of effective leaders. These are people who **inspire their teams** to reach their full potential—and can even get them excited to show up to the office every day!

If you're looking to take your leadership skills to the next level, here are seven characteristics that effective leaders possess.

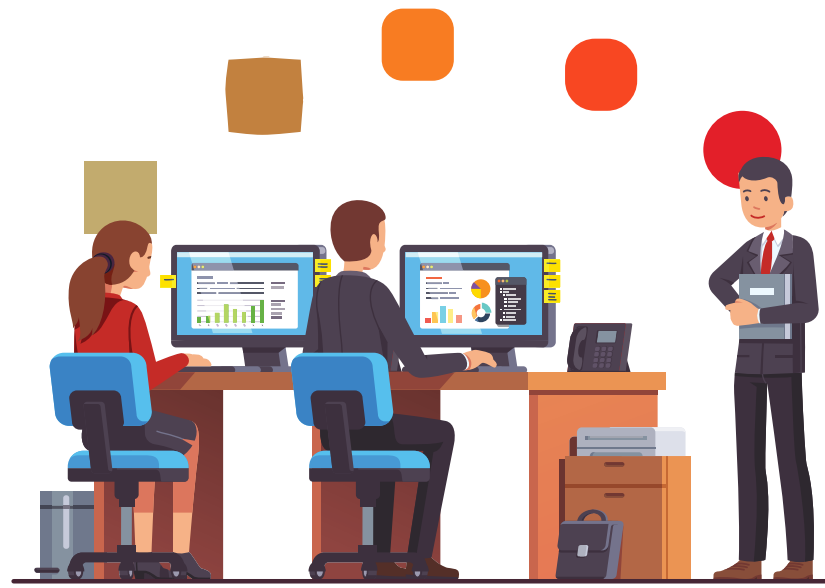
### How do YOU stack up?

1

## Empathy

The best leaders practice **Tactical Empathy™**, or the ability to understand an employee's perspective and demonstrate that understanding during interactions.

By consistently showing their direct reports that they understand what each of them is going through, how every change affects them, and how large their workloads are, effective leaders are able to inspire their teams to buy into the organization's mission and reach their full potential at the office.



#### THE TAKEAWAY:

Effective leadership is built on a foundation of Tactical Empathy. Subordinate yourself to your team, and great things will happen.

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## Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is the precursor to Tactical Empathy.

Because they are self-aware, effective leaders understand how their ego and authority, if left unchecked, can influence their behaviors—and not in a good way.



#### THE TAKEAWAY:

Leadership is a stressful job. By staying curious and being self-aware in each moment, you're far less likely to let fear make you lose your cool and say something you regret.

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## Transparency

Effective leadership is more than delegating tasks and telling people what to do.

It's about being honest and transparent and bringing your authentic self to the office every day.

Work is a significant part of all of our lives. If you know major changes are coming down the pike, share them with your team as soon as you're able to because those changes are going to have a big impact on their lives. If you make a mistake, own it. If you don't know, say so.



#### THE TAKEAWAY:

Transparency shows that you're truthful and that you care.

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## Trust

In theory, bosses hire employees for a very specific purpose: to do this job or that one.

In practice, however, many bosses decide to hire employees only to micromanage the hell out of them.

And that's the worst thing you can do—bring talented folks into your organization only to treat them like children who are incapable of doing the job you hired them to do.

Effective leaders understand the important role trust plays in building strong teams.



#### THE TAKEAWAY:

Trust is a two-way street. Trust your employees to do their jobs well, and they'll trust you when you lay out your vision. Train them, set expectations, and then get out of their way.



#### THE TAKEAWAY:

Effective leaders understand that their roles have changed and are agile enough to adapt to a new position. They don't go back to their comfort zone and operate in the trenches or micromanage their direct reports.

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## Agility

Most leaders get to where they are because they were effective in a previous role.

When many of them finally arrive in leadership positions, they end up reverting back to the tasks they performed in those previous positions instead of guiding their teams through projects and delegating responsibilities. Continuing to engage in tasks from your previous position instead of leading those currently responsible speaks to a lack of confidence and security.

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## Inclusiveness

A recent report on employee engagement found that only **one-quarter of employees** feel valued at work.

Of course, someone who thinks their employer doesn't care about them or appreciate their efforts is unlikely to be thrilled to head to the office every day.

Effective leaders understand this dynamic perfectly, which is why they let their employees do their jobs. Moreover, they let their teams operate with a certain level of responsibility, taking on additional roles and responsibilities as the situation warrants it. If they feel like they don't have a say in the direction and execution of the organization's plan, they may disengage.



#### THE TAKEAWAY:

By prioritizing inclusiveness and making sure everyone on your team understands the unique role they play—and one that they can define for themselves to a certain extent—you'll end up with a happier, more engaged, and more productive team.

7

## Curiosity

Many people who get to the top think they've made it there because they themselves are very capable. To some extent, they're right. But there is a danger in being overconfident—they stop learning, stop trying to improve, and stop being curious.

*Effective leaders, on the other hand, are constantly curious.*

They are committed to continuous improvement because they want to become the best version of themselves. To do this, they are always trying to learn.

By staying curious, these leaders are able to adapt to new trends and pivot quickly when new information is presented.



#### THE TAKEAWAY:

Effective leaders are curious about the world around them and see every situation as a learning opportunity.

## Are your leadership skills as sharp as they could be?

Now that you know seven critical characteristics of effective leadership, it's time to continue your journey to reach your full potential as a leader.

Check out our free guide, *The Black Swan Leadership Guide*, to learn more about the characteristics of effective leadership, signs of leadership failure, the roles an effective leader plays, and what you can do to become a better leader.



Learn More