



# Strictly Classified

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## The Importance of Leadership in the Workplace



An effective leader of a team has a variety of traits and characteristics that encourage team members to follow him or her. Team leaders naturally possess certain qualities, such as compassion and integrity, or learn leadership skills through formal training and experience. Being an effective leader can instill confidence in the team as well as contribute to the growth of the department through improved team productivity. The following examines why leadership is important in the workplace and how employees can develop leadership skills.

### WHAT MAKES LEADERSHIP SKILLS IMPORTANT IN THE WORKPLACE?

- ✦ **Provides focus and drives the team forward.** A leader provides focus to the team by clearly defining goals and explaining objectives so that every member on the team understands the end goal they are working to achieve. They also keep the team on track and moving forward by setting and enforcing deadlines. One way that an effective leader does this is by checking on each team member's progress and helping them resolve any issues before they become big problems.
- ✦ **Empowers team members to work at their full potential.** A good leader knows the skills and capabilities of his/her team members and is able to assign them tasks that take advantage of their strengths. A leader also encourages communication and builds relationships among team members so that they may work successfully and learn from one another. In addition, a leader knows how to motivate and encourage his/her team members to do their best work through acknowledgement and praise.
- ✦ **Takes responsibility for decision-making.** When the team is unable to make a choice between multiple decisions, a leader steps up and makes a decision for the whole team so that work is not delayed. They do this by having a good balance of emotional and logical reasoning, in order to make an impartial choice that benefits the project and the team. At the same time, they take responsibility for the decisions they make and do not shift the blame onto their team members when something goes wrong, but instead work to fix the problem.

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## HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR LEADERSHIP SKILLS?

- ✎ **Volunteer for new tasks.** Volunteer for new tasks when your manager or supervisor asks for additional help. This allows you to learn new skills and you can also practice how to react when facing new challenges. You will learn to remain calm and level headed when faced with unfamiliar work and find out ways to gather more information from available resources to help you complete your task. This is useful practice because leaders are often faced with difficult situations and need to keep their composure in order to make sensible decisions.
- ✎ **Teach and share information with others.** Teaching others helps you to train your patience, think from another person's perspective, and increase your knowledge of the subject matter. When you teach someone else, particularly someone that is a beginner, you examine and organize the information in a different way so that they can understand it more easily. This is the same as being a leader, in order to communicate well with your team members, you may need to re-organize and explain information in a way they can easily comprehend.
- ✎ **Understand your strengths and weaknesses.** Examine your strengths and weaknesses so that you know which strengths you can take advantage of and which weaknesses you need to improve. For example, if your strength is that you're sociable and get along well with others, this can develop into a leadership role where you're able to motivate others to complete a project. On the other hand, your weakness may be that you find it difficult to think conceptually in terms of the "big picture," so you may want to improve by practicing brainstorming sessions on how a decision affects the office half-year, one year, and five years down the line.

Leadership skills can be practiced at any level regardless of the title you have. They are important skills to have because a good leader is able to bring out the best abilities in his/her team members and motivate them to work together in achieving a shared goal. A good leader is also organized and keeps the team on track and focused to avoid delays. You can practice leadership skills by trying some of the suggestions listed above, such as by volunteering for new projects at work and gaining new skills in the process, teaching another person to improve your communication skills, and working on taking advantage of your strengths and improving your weaknesses.

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