

## Traits Of A Leader



While there are many people occupying leadership roles, there are not so many who can truly call themselves leaders.

There is a vast difference between being a manager and being able to inspire those you manage.

One of the most obvious traits of a good leader is charisma (which is unfortunately not particularly teachable) but there are many other traits that can prove themselves to be more important in the long run.

One of the most important aspects of being a good leader is listening to your employees and stakeholders.

When implementing a new technique or system, make sure that you remember that they will ultimately be the ones who will be working with it the most. If they have any concerns, then ensure that you listen and take them seriously.

There is not much that is more demoralising than when someone's worries and questions are overlooked, or deemed not valuable enough for discussion.

If your employees' opinions and thoughts are consistently ignored, then they will not feel like they are valued as a worker or as a person, and they will become increasingly reluctant to follow your leadership.

Another important trait is being able to find the right balance between being understanding and being a pushover.

If you criticise an employee for every little mistake they make then, instead of motivating them, you are more likely to drive them into their trade union's loving arms or HR!

But on the other hand, if you never assert your authority then your employees will find it hard to respect you.

The best way to find this balance is to have clear set rules with well-known consequences for any transgressions.

After all, every business is looking for employees who treat the business as if they are owners themselves, and good leaders know how to empower their people to achieve this.

Employees should always know where they stand, but they must also be confident that if they come to you with any concerns then they will be heard.

All in all, 'assertive but fair' is probably the best standard to work towards as a leader.

Being a great leader is about realising that you are not doing it for your own benefit, but that you're doing it for the people who you are leading.

## Hiring Staff? DIY or Recruitment Agency?



Good customer service is one of those things: hard to define, but we all know it when we see it.

This intangible quality makes it hard to ensure that your company delivers.

And that's crucially important, as it can be the difference between a dwindling business and happy regulars who keep coming back for more.

When choosing your staff, high on your list is making sure that you're hiring people with the right temperament to not only be enthusiastic at the beginning, but who will be able to remain energetic and positive for the entire time they work for you.

To do this, it's sometimes easier to go through a specialised recruitment agency rather than go down the sometimes hit-and-miss Gumtree type route.

# What's The Point Of A Mastermind Group?



When it comes to any professional endeavour, one of the worst pitfalls anyone can fall into is to get so caught up with their work that they never reach out for any feedback.

The importance of other people's opinions can never be overestimated - especially if they're like-minded individuals who are also working towards similar goals.

This is the basic premise of a Mastermind group - it's a great way to develop your ideas through brainstorming with other members of the group. It's also an instant support network that's available to you in case any problems arise.

There are many different ways to set up or join a Mastermind group. It could be that the most valuable kind of group to you would be one that's specific to your location, so that you can share issues, problems and ideas with other business owners that may share a common market place.

However, if you're not limited to location then you may be able to find valuable advice online! Google+ Hangouts, Facebook groups, web forums and other websites are a fantastic way to connect with other individuals who are in a similar situation to you.

By talking to people online you'll be able to come into contact with business strategies and practises that you might otherwise have never even heard about!

Not only will there be people who you can ask for advice, but you will also be an integral part of the group that others can lean on.

They say that the best way to learn something is to teach it to someone else, so the more time you spend helping other with their problems the more you'll become an expert in your field!

Not only that, but you might find someone else in the group who you can collaborate with on a new and exciting project.

Mastermind groups are overall a fantastic way to connect with others who are in a similar situation to you and they help facilitate a great working ethic.

Some benefits of being part of such a peer-to-peer group:

- Access to new ideas and alternative perspectives
- Helps with positivity & motivation
- Accountability and Responsibility
- Relief from isolation
- Creates actions for your business
- Better relationship building
- Tried and tested model

## Hiring Staff? DIY or Recruitment Agency?....cont'd

Good recruitment agencies are special task forces that find the right people for businesses every day, so they have a huge range of experience in this area.

It might be a little more expensive for you in the short term, but having the right workers can boost your business exponentially.

If you use a recruitment agency, or decide to go it alone, here are some useful tips to remember to maximise the return on your time and effort:

**Understand your business** – what are the best qualities of your business? Is it efficient? Does it have high quality goods? Is it time-saving?

Once you know what the core quality of your business is, then you can look for people who represent, and can sell, this quality best.

So, if you own a restaurant that prides itself on the quick turnaround of its orders, then you should hire a server who values good time-keeping and efficiency and demonstrates them on their CV.

**Post adverts on several platforms** – this way you will be able to have a good spread of candidates from a wide variety of sources. Do be careful, however, as this could produce an overwhelming amount of applications, which leads onto the final point...

**Invest in an Applicant Tracking System** – you will be able to use the software to filter through CVs and automatically reject any that don't mention key words like 'enthusiastic', 'punctual' or 'hard-working'.

There are many systems out there and the pricing has become good enough that even small businesses can benefit.

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