

Leadership Skills
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Leadership. It's been studied, analyzed, taught and talked about ad infinitum. You can check out any bookstore and find shelf after shelf full of leadership books. Here's a short list of my quick tips for effective leadership that has been gleaned from the best books and from my experience.

Have a compelling vision. Which is going to be more effective with your employees? Let's go, status quo! Or, Welcome to the Golden Age of Planning!

Be a change agent. As a City Manager with 2,000 employees, I spoke about a Journey to Excellence, building on our history of achievement and how to take it to the next level.

Include everyone, even those who are opposed to your vision. Put people on the team who can point out flaws and weak points. If you try to smother or ignore dissent, it will eventually undermine you.

Build relationships. Know the people within your organization and outside of it. Stop and talk in the hallways. I made it a point to know every custodian in my four story office building. Every one of them had an interesting story.

Share information. The best leaders communicate often. The most successful organizations are transparent. Employees want to know what is going on in their organization and they want to hear it from the top people.

Follow a strong moral compass. Ethical leaders that act from a set of guiding principles build credibility and loyalty.

Be persuasive, persistent and patient. In general, people are change averse. Reward and recognize those who jump on the bandwagon of your compelling vision. Regularly announce and celebrate progress toward your goals.

Develop tomorrow's leaders. Identify and mentor the stars in your organization. Keep them challenged and they will be the foundation for long term success.

Commit to continuous learning. In our world, change is occurring at an exponential rate. Stay ahead of the curve. Try new things. Read publications outside of your field that stimulate you with new information.

Instill accountability. Acknowledge responsibility for actions in yourself and others. Stop finger pointing and replace it with an ethic that each individual contributes to the organization's success.

Make it fun! Most of us spend the majority of our waking hours at our jobs. Make it a place where people enjoy themselves.