

The Most Successful Leaders Do 15 Things Automatically, Every Day

Leadership is learned behavior that becomes unconscious and automatic over time. For example, leaders can make several important decisions about an issue in the time it takes others to understand the question. Many people wonder how leaders know how to make the best decisions, often under immense pressure. The process of making these decisions comes from an accumulation of experiences and encounters with a multitude of difference circumstances, personality types and unforeseen failures. More so, the decision making process is an acute understanding of being familiar with the cause and effect of behavioral and circumstantial patterns; knowing the intelligence and interconnection points of the variables involved in these patterns allows a leader to confidently make decisions and project the probability of their desired outcomes. The most successful leaders are instinctual decision makers. Having done it so many times throughout their careers, they become immune to the pressure associated with decision making and extremely intuitive about the process of making the most strategic and best decisions. This is why most senior executives will tell you they depend strongly upon their “gut-feel” when making difficult decisions at a moment’s notice.[/entity]

Beyond decision making, successful leadership across all areas becomes learned and instinctual over a period of time. Successful leaders have learned the mastery of anticipating business patterns, finding opportunities in pressure situations, serving the people they lead and overcoming hardships. No wonder the best CEOs are paid so much money. In 2011, salaries for the 200 top-paid CEOs rose 5 percent to a median \$14.5 million per year, according to a study by compensation-data company Equilar for The New York Times.

If you are looking to advance your career into a leadership capacity and / or already assume leadership responsibilities – here are 15 things you must do automatically, every day, to be a successful leader in the workplace:

1. Make Others Feel Safe to Speak-Up

Many times leaders intimidate their colleagues with their title and power when they walk into a room. Successful leaders deflect attention away from themselves and encourage others to voice their opinions. They are experts at making others feel safe to speak-up and confidently share their perspectives and points of view. They use their executive presence to create an approachable environment.

2. Make Decisions

Successful leaders are expert decision makers. They either facilitate the dialogue to empower their colleagues to reach a strategic conclusion or they do it themselves. They focus on “making things happen” at all times – decision making activities that sustain progress. Successful leaders have mastered the art of politicking and thus don’t waste their time on issues that disrupt momentum. They know how to make 30 decisions in 30 minutes.

3. Communicate Expectations

Successful leaders are great communicators, and this is especially true when it comes to “performance expectations.” In doing so, they remind their colleagues of the organization’s core values and mission statement – ensuring that their vision is properly translated and actionable objectives are properly executed.

I had a boss that managed the team by reminding us of the expectations that she had of the group. She made it easy for the team to stay focused and on track. The protocol she implemented – by clearly communicating expectations – increased performance and helped to identify those on the team that could not keep up with the standards she expected from us.

4. Challenge People to Think

The most successful leaders understand their colleagues’ mindsets, capabilities and areas for improvement. They use this knowledge/insight to challenge their teams to think and stretch them to reach for more. These types of leaders excel in keeping their people on their toes, never allowing them to get comfortable and enabling them with the tools to grow.

If you are not thinking, you’re not learning new things. If you’re not learning, you’re not growing – and over time becoming irrelevant in your work.

5. Be Accountable to Others

Successful leaders allow their colleagues to manage them. This doesn’t mean they are allowing others to control them – but rather becoming accountable to assure they are being proactive to their colleagues needs.

Beyond just mentoring and sponsoring selected employees, being accountable to others is a sign that your leader is focused more on your success than just their own.

6. Lead by Example

Leading by example sounds easy, but few leaders are consistent with this one. Successful leaders practice what they preach and are mindful of their actions. They know everyone is watching them and therefore are incredibly intuitive about detecting those who are observing their every move, waiting to detect a performance shortfall.

7. Measure & Reward Performance

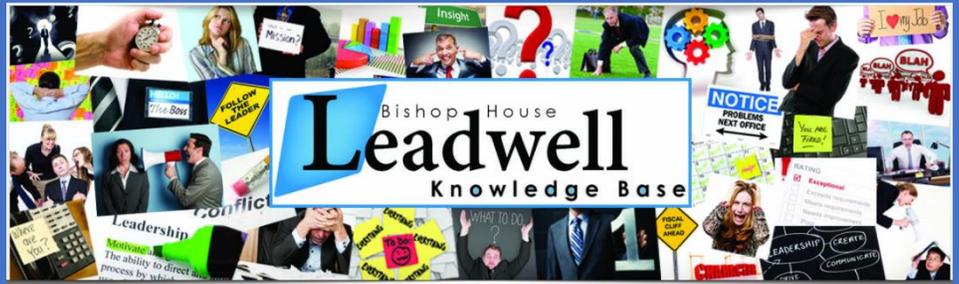
Great leaders always have a strong “pulse” on business performance and those people who are the performance champions. Not only do they review the numbers and measure performance ROI, they are active in acknowledging hard work and efforts (no matter the result). Successful leaders never take consistent performers for granted and are mindful of rewarding them.

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The banner features a collage of business-related images and text. The central text reads "Bishop House Leadwell Knowledge Base". Surrounding this are various icons and snippets of text, including "Mission?", "Inspire", "NOTICE PROBLEMS NEXT OFFICE", "LEADERSHIP", "CONFLICT", "MOTIVATION", "WHAT TO DO?", "CRISIS", "COMMUNICATION", "FOLLOW YOUR LEADER", "NEW CLIFF WALK", "TEAM CLIFF WALK", "LEADERSHIP (CREATED)", "COMMUNICATION", "BLAH", "I Love My Job", "You are there!", "RESPONSIBLE", "PROBLEMS NEXT OFFICE", "LEADERSHIP", "CONFLICT", "MOTIVATION", "WHAT TO DO?", "CRISIS", "COMMUNICATION", "FOLLOW YOUR LEADER", "NEW CLIFF WALK", "TEAM CLIFF WALK", "LEADERSHIP (CREATED)", "COMMUNICATION", "BLAH", "I Love My Job", "You are there!", "RESPONSIBLE", "PROBLEMS NEXT OFFICE".

 New Leader Whether you just got promoted and don't know where to begin, or you have been in a leadership role for a while, these resources will provide you with valuable insight into the fundamentals of leadership.	 Managing Change Managing change can be challenging. Look here for ideas on how you can manage yourself through change and strategies for leading your team through change.	 Effective Communication Effective communication skills are essential to effective leadership. Click here to explore how to better communicate with employees, peers and others.	 Managing Up How to manage up when your boss has you down. Look here for strategies for dealing with your boss.
 Your Development Look here for ideas on how to develop as a leader and to continue to grow in your leadership knowledge.	 Managing Performance Explore content about being a coach to your employees, guiding them to success, managing poor performers, motivating good performers and more.	 Productivity Insights and tips on how to be more productive as a manager. Learn how to effectively and efficiently manage time, emails, meetings and other aspects of your role as a leader.	 Building My Team Resources for learning how to build a cohesive team as well as strategies for where to start when it is anything but.