

Leading Effectively

Leading Change

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Inspirational Quote

“Leaders that fail to manage change will always be managed by change.” ---*anonymous*

Seek

How well does your team do with change? What about you?

Change starts with a vision of future success. As a team leader, it is your job to pass it on with enthusiasm. Empower your team in its role by giving as much detail as needed about what the changes are and why they need to occur. Answer as many questions as your team can ask. Be patient. Set performance standards that support the needed changes. Celebrate the victories when they occur along the way, and accept stumbles as opportunities to improve and get back on course. Remember, it is your job to keep the team on course and remove obstacles.

Are you leading change effectively? Take a look at these three different levels of behaviors:

NEEDS DEVELOPMENT (Behaviors 1-4)

1. Views change as inconvenient. Prefers to maintain the “status quo.”
2. Has difficulty clearly explaining the role of their team in the company’s strategy for change and success.
3. Not effective in lining up the team’s, efforts and activities in support of the company vision.
4. Views outside input as threatening and the people who give it as trouble-makers.

EFFECTIVE LEADER (Behaviors 5-7)

5. Provides the team with a clear and articulate explanation of the company’s vision and strategy.
6. Consistently and frequently communicates the purpose of the change.
7. Selects and embraces performance standards based on specific critical changes that need to occur.

GOING TO FAR (Behaviors 8-10)

8. May leave people behind. Constantly creates changes just to shake things up.
9. Makes complicated that which is simple.
10. Gets impatient with those who “don’t get it.”

Discover

If you mostly identified with the first group (items 1-4), then you are at the “Needs Development” level:

NEEDS DEVELOPMENT (Behaviors 1-4)

- Manages team toward isolation and self-containment.
- Rarely passes on information from company leaders or other departments their team works with.
- Minimizes the amount of team time spent for meeting, discussing and communicating the change vision and ideas.
- Resistant to realigning old team roles and functions with the new realities.

If you identified mostly with the second group (items 5-7), then you are at the “Effective Leader” level:

EFFECTIVE LEADER (Behaviors 5-7)

- Patiently discusses the team’s role in the company change vision and ready to answer all questions.
- Leads the team toward the viewpoint that changes are opportunities.
- Shares communications from company leaders frequently using multiple communication styles.
- Enthusiastically embraces the new company vision of success and change.

If you identified mostly with the third group (items 8-10) then you are at the “Going too Far” level:

GOING TO FAR (Behaviors 8-10)

- Champions multiples changes with no regard to the overall impact on the team.
- Spends too much time analyzing and explaining the company vision and strategy and too little time on action.
- Over manages in order to implement changes quickly.
- Uses change as a discipline tactic or just to keep team members on their toes.

If you identified with several behaviors across all three groups, take a look at those behaviors that were not at the “Effective Leader Level” and read how to become more proficient in those areas.

Become

What actions can you take to improve and perfect your ability to lead change so that you are “Leading Effectively?”

1. Everything you’re now doing is an opportunity to improve and change. Don’t wait for a crises. Look for ways you can increase performance standards. Double check that your system for measuring success matches those things most important to measure. Make sure the work of your team members directly supports the success of the team and line up squarely with the company vision of change. Look for exterior feedback on your team because it is usually objective. Don’t sweep things under the rug.
2. Align the skills of your team to support the changes. People are happy and most effective when they are doing things they like to do and have a talent for. For each task and assignment on your team, communicate goals that are sensible to the head and appealing to the heart. Check to make sure each individual has a clear view of their role and where they fit into the team and company vision and strategy.
3. Help your team understand and own the vision of needed changes. Describe how the changes will lead to future success for both the individuals and the company. Show how a trail of reachable goals leads to the desired change. Focus on the role of the team so that everyone is empowered to make supporting decisions in their daily tasks. Empower everyone to use initiative in light of changing conditions.
4. Share the story clearly and often. Everyone should be able to successfully explain the vision of change within five minutes. Eliminate all jargon and use metaphors, analogies and examples when you communicate. Communicate using multiple forums, using many styles. Use repetition because new ideas sometimes take a while to sink in. Always, remember that two-way communication is more powerful than one-way communication.
5. Remove obstacles so your team can do their part. Pass out responsibility to your team and defend their use of initiative. Double check to make sure your team members have the training needed to do their tasks. Cooperate with team leaders from other teams to align their efforts with those of your team. Insure that your team gets the information it needs to work effectively.
6. Look for victories and celebrate them often. Wins greatly help justify the short-term costs involved. Publicly recognize those team members who work hard to do their part in moving change forward. The performance standards and systems for measuring success should be public and open to all. Always be on the lookout for success. Publish the successes of your team to the company as positive evidence that change is occurring.
7. Turn change into opportunity and make it fun. With every success, look for opportunities to make more changes and take on more challenging projects. Help the individuals on your team realize more personal success. Use change success to build new alliances with other teams.
8. Lead toward the view that change is natural and normal. Continue to talk about how change is good. Look for opportunities to demonstrate how the new methods are better and more effective than the old. If needed, help individuals move on to new opportunities.