

The Five Levels Of Leadership

Becoming an effective leader is a lot like being in the stock market. You don't make your fortune in a day; you make it daily, a little bit at a time. What matters most is what you do day after day, over the long haul. The secret to leadership success is investing in your leadership development, much like letting your assets compound. The final result is "Leadership Growth" over time.

Leaders aren't born; they're made. The process of leadership is long, complicated and has many elements. Respect, dignity, discipline, people skills, vision, emotional strength, opportunity, preparedness and experience are just some of the intangible elements which come into play when talking leadership.

We can, over a period of time, increase our leadership potential if we can understand and accept the five levels of leadership. They are:

Level One - Leadership From Position

This is the basic level of leadership. At this level people follow you because they have to. Your ability to lead people is totally geared to your position and does not exceed beyond the lines of your job description or the authority granted to you by the company and your boss. Your security with the company is based on title and position, not talent.

To be an effective leader at this level know your job, be prepared to accept responsibility, exercise authority with caution, assess the strengths and shortcomings of your people, do more than what is expected and challenge people with interesting and tough assignments.

It is important that we recognize that Positional Level is the doorway to leadership and every successful leader must pass through this doorway.

Level Two - Leadership From Respect

At the respect level of leadership people follow you because they want to. The core of Leadership From Respect is that people want to know that you care, before they care about what you know. People see you as a professional partner, sharing the same goals and the same challenges along the way. Leadership will flourish at the respect level because respect will breed lasting trusted professional relationships and that, in turn, will provide the basis for effective leadership.

To be effective at the respect level, possess a genuine concern for your people. It is important that you see life through their eyes. Deal wisely with difficult people and make employees successful by setting them up for success.

Since leadership from respect is built on professional relationships, it forms the foundation for leadership success.

Level Three - Leadership From Results

People follow you because of what you have done for the company. People admire you for your accomplishments and respect your tenacity. At this point leadership becomes fun. Going to work is fun, work-related challenges are seen to be opportunities for a more stable work environment and all tasks have a purpose in the minds of the employees. Good things happen at the results level. Making profit, low employee turnover, higher employee morale and solving problems with ease are some of the items that become evident at this level.

To be an effective leader at this level be prepared to initiate and accept responsibility for growth by developing a purpose and seeing it through to completion. Develop accountability for results, beginning with yourself and ending with your people. Make the difficult decisions that will result in positive long-term gains while championing change as a change agent and understanding the process of change.

Leadership from results is built on admiration for the leader.

Level Four - Leadership From People Development

People follow you because of what you have done for them. It is a leader's responsibility to develop their people to do the work that is expected to contribute future growth opportunities to the company and the people who serve it. People are loyal to you because they see first-hand personal growth opportunities for them as well as, the company. Leadership success is underscored by a win-win scenario and a high commitment to success.

To be effective at this level place a priority on developing people. Focus your attention on the fact that people are your most valuable asset and your leadership success will depend on your ability to surround yourself with an inner core of competent people who compliment your leadership style and goals.

Leadership from people development is built on loyalty.

Level Five - Leadership From Mentorship

People follow you because they respect you. As a leader you are bigger than life and your success is shown through a life of accomplishments. People seek you out after you have left the company because you have left an indelible mark on the organization and the employees. Although less than five per cent of all leaders will get to this level of leadership (John Mayberry from Dofasco, Darek Nowakowski from Con Agra and Clare Proctor from E.D. Smith come to mind) it is a level worth striving for.

In summary, everyone can become a better leader. It is important to keep in mind that the higher you go up the leadership scale, the longer it takes to accomplish results, the higher the commitment will be and it is imperative that we know what level we are on with our people and the company.

About the Author

With over 40 years experience; [Canadian Mangement Centre](#) has earned the reputation as a trusted partner in worldwide [leadership development](#) and management education that improves the immediate performance and long-term results of over 12,000 Canadians every year.

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