

Becoming a more effective leader

By Rosalind Jackson

Effective leaders understand that the profit in the profit and loss does not produce itself. The people produce the profit.

Effective leaders know how to engage their people, therefore they understand their strengths. They give them the right tools, leverage their strengths, unleash them on the identified market and sustainable profitability will be the result.

Setting the context for leadership development:

A) Define leadership – What really is leadership? Gallop defines leadership as “the act of getting all your team members aligned and moving in the same direction towards desired outcomes.”

B) Define clear outcomes, know and leverage your strengths and those of each team member – Having clear expectations of yourself as leader and having these well-articulated in your role and properly communicated to your team is vital to sustainable success.

When you as a leader lack clarity around your own role and expected outcomes, it will create a lack of trust among your “followers”. You will then come off as incompetent and find it hard to get genuine “buy-in” from your team.

C) Clarity around values – Knowing and articulating what is valued in your organisation is foundational. Excellent leaders work with their teams to carve out a few core values and then work to describe and publicise the few critical expected behaviours and those that are unacceptable, if you and your team want to outshine any competition. They need to become central to “how we behave around here.”

D) Management versus leadership – Management and leadership are not mutually exclusive. Managers have some leadership in their role and leaders have a little management in their role. They both need very good people interaction skills.

Leaders are primarily responsible for helping set direction through the development and communication of the organisation’s strategy. Ideally, they should be a little removed from the front line. Managers are more about getting the work done through and with their team.

With the context properly set for effective leadership we can now, in practical ways, look at how both leaders and managers can focus on five practices which, if worked on purposefully and intentionally, can help them “achieve through their people” making them exemplary leaders.

As a certified facilitator of the world renowned The Leadership Challenge three-day workshop since 2011, I and the entire team at Caribbean Catalyst Inc. (CCI) are committed to promoting leadership excellence.

This workshop is patterned on extensive research done for over three decades by James Kouzes and Barry Posner. It is also infused with the tenets of neuroscience in leadership, as is all our work at CCI.

Some of the basic principles of the five practices of exemplary leaders are summarised below:



Achieving exemplary leadership requires five practices. (GP) Inset, Caribbean Catalyst Inc managing director, Rosalind Jackson (FP)

1. Model the way

This is the old adage of leading by example. My favourite quote from the authors is “Exemplary leaders know that if they want to gain commitment and achieve the highest standards, they must be models of the behaviours they expect of others.” If we stop to think about it, we will agree that it is much easier to persuade someone to follow you if you are doing the right thing, than if you are merely telling them what to do.

2. Inspire a shared vision

As a leader you need to have a compelling vision of the future for your organisation/ department about which you are passionate and which serves a common good. Excellent leaders are forward looking and have a “gut sense” of future opportunities. Our people also want to fulfil their own hopes and future aspirations. We must involve our people in articulating a shared vision of the future. It requires us to learn to really listen to our people and encourage brainstorming to get a collective view of a viable future.

3. Challenge the process

If COVID-19 has not taught us that we have to be always on the lookout for better, more effective ways to do business in a constantly changing world, then we may never learn this critical practice.

This requires us to develop a culture of innovation. We can only encourage innovation if we have a healthy tolerance for mistakes made in the pursuit of excellence and zero tolerance for the same mistakes being made time and time again. We and our teams need to develop a real passion for proactivity if we are to become and then remain cutting edge/competitive.

4. Enable Others to Act

This practice speaks directly to NOT micromanaging your people but setting clear objectives and doing what coaching you need to do to help them achieve those objectives.

This practice is what the CCI tagline is all

about – “achieving through people”.

We must focus on developing all of our people both in the classroom and on the job where the real learning takes place.

5. Encourage the Heart

Do not be fooled by the name of this practice and think that it is about rewarding mediocrity. This is about encouraging excellence and significant improvement.

In conclusion, as leaders we must keep honing our own leadership skills especially if we expect to hire bright young people who want to truly progress. They will not stick around to stagnate. Real talent is always in demand!!

Rosalind Jackson is managing director of Caribbean Catalyst Inc.



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