EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP
THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE
BY SAMANTHA CAMPBELL
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Communications: A 101 Guide for New Managers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building a Team</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 Team Leader Skills Every Manager Should Have</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming a Manager: 18 Signs Your Employee is Ready</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do Your Seasonal Employees Qualify for Unemployment?</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Management</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Manage Your Time Effectively as a Workplace Leader</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Philosophies</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ultimate Guide to the Servant Leadership Model</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Go Hand-in-Hand</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

Communications
Think your employees are engaged at work?

You’re probably wrong.

A recent Gallup poll showed that nearly 70% of employees were anything but engaged at their workplace. Much of this problem has to do with how you approach internal communications.

So how do you get that 70% engaged? How do you get them to listen, to respond, and to care?

*Know where internal communications problems lurk.*

First, you need to know where the communication ogres live.

*Email everywhere.* There’s the guy who uses reply all for everything, and the woman who forwards chain emails. There are inboxes bulging at the seams with emails for lunch orders, spam, lost and found notifications, important memos, client requests — all dumped in the same pile. Email use and abuse is a problem.

*Struggles with document versions.* Are documents a big part of your employees’ work? We all shudder to think of email chains in which a version of a document is emailed back and forth and 50 emails later, no one is sure which is the most recent. Google Docs, Evernote, or Dropbox make document-centered communication and versioning much better.

*No measurement is taking place.* If you’re sending out internal surveys, are you tracking how many reply? Do your emails seem to go into a black hole with no response? Do your memos die a lonely death in the breakroom? Track what works and what doesn’t.
Communicate visually, including with video.

Not everyone is a visual learner, but since most communication tends to happen verbally, visual learners get the short end of the stick. Videos and graphics can help.

- **Training and how-to videos.** Show employees how to do various tasks.
- **Scenario videos.** Show employees how to respond in different situations, including customer service, ethics, or culture.
- **Company updates.** Instead of a boring monthly newsletter or memo from on high, try using a video to show employees what’s happening in the business and in other departments.
- **Personal growth.** Use video to teach employees concepts on self-growth, workplace empowerment, or stress management.
- **Highlight employees.** Interview or feature different employees so your team gets to know each other and employees have a chance to share what’s important to them.

Videos, particularly if they aren’t heavily verbal or are done in a way that could be understood simply by watching, are an excellent choice if you have employees where English is a second language.

Use internal and collaborative chat systems, but do so wisely.

The McKinsey Global Institute found that employees who are connected are **20-25% more productive.**

Internal chat systems, like Slack, HipChat, or Google Hangouts make it easy for your employees to communicate back and forth effortlessly without the boondoggle of email chains.

Granted, sometimes internal chat can go off the rails. Some employees might be tempted to spend their day sending GIFs and LOL cats to each other. Some might make secretive rooms where the discussion is inappropriate for work. It’s up to you
to set the ground rules and tones for how internal chat systems are used, and monitor it accordingly.

Set some goals for what you want internal chat to accomplish. It might be to reduce time spent in email by 25%. It might be to help everyone get to inbox zero. It might be to keep employees connected via mobile devices. It might be to simulate an office environment even for employees who telecommute.

*All employee meetings are effective meetings.*

Meetings are to get things done, not waste time. How do you do that?

- **Have an agenda and a goal.** Know what the conclusion should look like or it never ends. Have questions that need answers that take you to the end goal.
- **Avoid meetings that cover too much.** Businesses with average performance tend to pack 40% more information in their communications. High-performance? They keep it short and sweet.
- **Reduce the people involved.** More people, more talking. Meetings should only involve those who absolutely need to be there.
- **Don’t get too comfortable.** Recliners and coffee are no way to run a short meeting. Consider walking or standing, especially if the meeting is to check in on a project or someone’s progress.

*Have policies for legal reasons.*

In a digital world, it’s easy for private or proprietary information to slip out. For this reason, you’ll want to have internal communication policies that have enforceable consequences. This might include:

- **Archiving.** Depending on your industry, you may need to archive certain forms of internal communication for legal reasons.
- **Employee issues.** You will want to document and save internal communications that might lead to employee reprimands, firing, or other
legal issues. If communication was verbal, that policy will need to include noting the time and date, as well as summation, of conversations.

- **Restricted use.** You probably don’t want employees forwarding emails to each other that are offensive or not work-related, so have a policy that defines what is acceptable use on your communication systems.

- **Privacy.** You will want to have a policy regarding communication about customers, other employees, or internal issues that aren’t for public consumption (e.g. no screenshots, no forwarding internal emails outside of the company).

Don’t be a dictator about it, but do protect your employees, clients, customers, and company.

*Use plain language, no matter what media format you use.*

Only 21% of communicators in the business world say they use plain language. That should make you cry a little.

Whatever form of communication you’re using, speak in plain language. Skip acronyms. Avoid jargon. Flee from cliche. Plain language is language that is more concerned that the audience understands the information, and doesn’t worry about impressing people with big words.

Admit it: some leaders actually like to use language to make audiences feel less intelligent, too embarrassed to admit they don’t understand. Your goal is to communicate, not impress.

*Think circular, and have an open door.*

Communication isn’t a one-way street. It’s a roundabout. That means that you communicate to your employees, and they do the same back to you.

How do you accomplish this back and forth communication?
• **Get rid of the management-centric “SOS”** *(Send Out Stuff)*

**approach.** Does your management simply broadcast information to employees, but never listen in return? The SOS approach ends up being lots of memos and meetings where employee responses are neither expected nor desired. Expect employees who aren’t engaged at all if management won’t listen or let them communicate back.

• **Make it safe for employees to communicate.** Open communication sometimes needs to be anonymous or protected. Use internal surveys (avoiding 50-question behemoths), suggestion boxes, or whatever it takes to get your employees to respond. You need to know what employees have to say, even the quiet or hesitant ones who are easily over-powered by more talkative employees.

• **Exclusive meetings aren’t advertised.** No doubt you have times when communication is need-to-know only, and employees are excluded, but there’s no need to be ostentatious about it, advertising to employees that they are being kept out of the loop. If you can’t be subtle about these meetings, at least let your employees know some basic information afterwards (“no, we aren’t firing anyone” or “the business isn’t closing down”). Secretive internal communication instills fear, distrust, and speculation. Employees shouldn’t find out about big internal news from external sources.

The trick to high-functioning internal communication isn’t gadgets and policies, though they may be a part of it. Instead, it is simply cutting past any ulterior motive and getting down to the most basic traits: clarity, sincerity, and efficiency.

Those three are your gold standards.

All internal communication action should be based on asking yourself if it gets you closer to or further from those three characteristics.
CHAPTER 2

Building a Team
31 Team Leader Skills Every Manager Should Have

Leadership and management are more than a mere title. Without the right skills, you’ll be a leader in name only. To be an effective team leader, you need skills—a recipe of sorts—that will combine organizational, attitude, business, and psychology into the mix.

For the most ambitious team members, here are 31 important skills every team leader should aim to have:

1. Confidence

People follow as they’re led. Fake it until you make it.

Confident leaders create confident teams. Workers don’t willingly follow an unconfident leader. For these reasons, you must show confidence (which is not the same as cockiness) when making decisions, and in all other interactions. If you don’t feel confident, fake it. Acting confident can create the real thing.

2. Organization

Disorganization is no joke. It actually costs you money, even if it’s hidden in other data like lost sales, late projects, or retention problems. Being able to stay organized will keep you on track, on budget, and make sure team projects aren’t derailed.

* Organized people have systems. They have actually made decisions on how to handle things. For example, they have a system for keeping email
organized, or digital (or paper) files organized. They have a to-do list system. They don’t leave things to default or chance.

- **Organized people are mindful about time use.** Time flies, especially if you’re not aware of how you’re using it. Your schedule isn’t just for meetings with other people. Organized people schedule their own time to make sure what needs to get done, does.

- **Organized people are flexible.** Organization isn’t always rigid. Every day unfolds differently than planned. Being able to adjust your schedule or plans without collapsing in chaos is part of staying organized.

- **Organized people cut what’s unnecessary.** Clutter has no place in the organized life, whether it’s actual physical clutter that keeps you from finding things, or emotional clutter that keeps you from being clear-headed.

Not only do you need to stay organized yourself, but you will need to create systems which help your team stay organized. It won’t come naturally to all members.

But organization definitely needs to start with you, first. You must model the behavior, and also make being organized a habit so that you don’t have to think about it when you’re trying to get your team organized.

### 3. Facilitator

As a facilitator, you make a project or task easier for your team. Facilitators need to be good listeners, and flexible to shift midstream. A facilitator should:

- Speak less than they listen.
- Ask questions that make their team think (i.e. ask open-ended questions, not yes-or-no questions)
- Manage time well to stay on track.
- Able to stay neutral when there is disagreement.
Remember, you’re there to make things easier for others to get their work done, whatever that looks like.

4. Respectful

Be respectful to your team, and they will be the same towards you.

Everyone wants their personhood, their life, their efforts, and their interests to be respected and treated with dignity. Disrespect sows resentment, fear, and anger.

5. Decisive

Whether you decide or not, you’re making a decision.

Leaders need to make the tough decisions in a timely manner. Indecisive leaders allows circumstances to decide things by default.

Being decisive means:

- **You triage decisions.** You understand what has to be decided now and what can wait for more information. You don’t procrastinate the important decisions.
- **You understand the options.** You aren’t making decisions based on guesses, but all the information you have at the time.
- **You have confidence in your decision.** Even if you aren’t completely sure, you need to exude confidence so that your team isn’t fearful or second-guessing your decision.
- **You communicate the reasons clearly.** Having the ability to explain why you made the decision you did will help in some situations where your team wants or needs to understand.
Making tough decisions won’t make you popular immediately, but in the long run your team will appreciate the lack of confusion that comes from a leader who has the guts to simply decide.

6. Fair

Being fair means you follow your own rules and guidelines to the same degree for everyone, no matter if they’re friends or difficult team members.

Being fair means:

• You establish the rules and guidelines, and make sure your team knows and understands them.
• You constantly confront and question personal bias you might have in each situation.
• You walk the talk yourself. You abide by the same rules you ask of your team.
• You don’t choose favorites, not in people, not in approaches, and not in ideas.

7. Tech Savvy

It’s tough to lead your team when they are more technologically skilled than you are. You need to keep your tech skills sharp.

Whether you get outside training at conferences or classes, or you have someone come in and teach you and the team, you need to be at least as technically skilled as your team in general terms. No, you don’t have to be able to code like your developers. But you should be able to use the communication and customer support software, for example, and any other hardware.
When you lack the skills your team has, it is difficult for you to understand why they might be struggling with a project you are pushing them to finish. You also run the risk of creating skill silos; team members who are the only ones who know how to do something can use that as an unfair bargaining chip.

8. Negotiator

You will find yourself, whether officially or unofficially, as a negotiator during conflicts, or even in otherwise innocuous brainstorming sessions. Negotiators have to analyze problems, listen, and work towards a solution that works for everyone all while keeping their cool.

As a negotiator in your team, you:

- Negotiate with individual people, not organizations or problems.
- Must have a grip on reality, but also understand that perception is reality for the people you are dealing with in negotiation.
- Are looking out for the health of your team. You don’t win if one party feels extremely slighted or angry. You’re looking for win-win, here.

9. Curiosity

Being curious is a good quality in a leader, as long as you can direct it meaningfully and not get distracted by every shiny new thing.

Curiosity inspires creative thinking, and it also tends to make you ask questions (and give your team a chance to share their opinion) that you genuinely want to know more about. As Walt Disney said, curiosity leads you down new paths. It’ll keep you from growing stagnant.
10. Integrity

Being ethical and honest in all things is crucial to a team leader. Having integrity means:

- It doesn’t matter if anyone is watching. Whether your team is looking or not, be a leader of integrity.
- You don’t engage in behavior that is seen, in your workplace culture, as being wrong or unacceptable.
- You don’t try out slippery slopes, and you’re aware of precedents.

When you lack integrity, you lose your identity as a leader in the eyes of your team.

11. Influential

Wielding influence is less about power and more about psychology. You can influence your team in a positive way by:

- Remember their name, and use it!
- Showing genuine interest in them and their work.
- Listen in a way that when you have future interaction, what you learned from previous listening sessions can be referred to.

Basically, you are finding ways to come alongside them instead of over them, getting them to see you are approachable, knowledgeable, and open. They will be willing to take your suggestions and advice.

Anyone can influence by brute force, it takes someone who understands human psychology to get your team to do what you want them to do with them thinking it was their idea.
12. Delegation

You need to be able to give tasks to your team, and not be a micromanager. You can’t do everything, and you shouldn’t.

Delegation requires the skill of first knowing the skills and true abilities of your team members. Then, you must understand the components of the work and how it can be broken down into chunks. You must also understand the order that those chunks have to be completed in. With this in hand, you can delegate manageable work to your team members who are capable of doing it well, without overloading one or two members with a general “hey, do this big project for me, thanks.”

13. Communicator

You need to be able to share ideas or instructions with your team clearly in different media formats so that all personalities are able to understand is no small feat.

Good communication always starts with listening. It avoids jargon or sloppy language that unintentionally (or sometimes intentionally) confuses the listener. It understands the limit of the medium (e.g. written communication lacks body language, so the words will be different than what you might speak in person).

14. Goal-setter

You must be able to set goals for yourself as well as for your team’s projects. That means you are able to create goals that:

• Are about achieving actual progress, and not the appearance of progress.
• Have consequences, i.e. there’s a reason you want to meet the goal for more than the mere checking of a box.
• Aren’t too numerous. You don’t need a million goals and objectives. You should focus on a few high-priority goals to keep the team on track without losing sight of what completion looks like.
• Are well-thought-out. Your team shouldn’t waste time researching the validity of the goal.

15. Reward achievements

Some leaders fixate on problems and forget to reward their team’s achievements. Learn to notice successes in your team, even small ones. Each team member is at a different place in their career, so not all successes will appear the same for each person.

Avoid using rewards so heavily that they turn into bribes, however. Bribes cease working the moment they go away. Bribes are not the way to spur on productivity.

16. Big picture view

Can you step back and see what really matters? Or do you get lost in details that won’t matter in the long run? Instead of being a micromanager, you need to be a macromanager. You manage big issues, not small ones. Entrust those to your team.

17. Trusting

There is some information your team doesn’t need to know, but too often managers withhold information (i.e. silo it) because they don’t trust their team, or because they use information as a form of power.

Be willing to share information with your team to build trust and so they can make better informed decisions.
18. Selfless

Your first responsibility is to look out for your team, and not yourself. When good happens, spread it to your team. When bad happens, take one for the team. Selflessness is not weakness by any means. It is how we make it possible for our team to succeed through our service to them.

19. Sense of humor

A sense of humor will go a long way for your team. As long as you aren’t making jokes at the expense of others, humor can alleviate stressful situations and make awkward moments be less painful.

Here’s a thought: Humility and humor go hand in hand. If you can laugh at yourself and your mistakes without groveling, you can be both humble and lighten the mood.

20. Problem solver

There is a difference between being a decision-maker and being a problem-solver. You may be better at one than the other.

Problem solving skills (or the ability to recognize them in your team) involve triage; when one problem is solved, another soon pops up.

21. Cool, level-headed

Lead with a cool head and a warm heart—that’s the saying. Maintaining your composure when things get difficult is a practiced skill that involves controlling emotion, body language, and your mental attitude. As a leader,
you control the temperature of the room. Your response is a model for how your employees respond, as well as how they feel about a negative situation. If a customer comes in and is combative, stepping in with a cool head both shows your team how to handle it in the future as well as helps them feel less stress inside.

22. Positive attitude

There are three basic reasons why having a positive attitude is important:

1. Your attitude has an impact on the energy you bring to your team. It takes practice to find the positive in what can be negative.
2. Your positive attitude encourages productivity. It is easier to work in a positive environment instead of a negative one.
3. You will attract team members who also have positive attitudes.

23. Inspirational

Leaders can inspire or coerce to get the job done, but inspiring will keep your team from turning on you over time.

Inspiration leaders are positive, let their team know they’re grateful for them, are good listeners, and have a vision for the future that they communicate clearly. They have a way of helping the team rethink what has happened. They are great storytellers, able to use narratives to help their team see something new in a situation, inspiring them in their work.

24. Arbitration

Conflict resolution is part of leading a team, and being able to arbitrate will be crucial to holding them together after the conflict is over. Being a good arbitrator requires compassion and empathy.
25. Humility

Do you lead your team by making them feel less than you? A humble leader:

- Listens to the opinions of others and admits mistakes.
- Isn’t apologetic for being a leader, but you aren’t lording over your team.
- Understands there are times of ambiguity, when things aren’t perfectly controlled or understood at the time, and helps the team work through it all while acknowledging lack of answers.
- Is mindful and takes time to reflect on their own actions.

There’s this idea that leadership that’s confident is a sort of excessive outgoing or domineering person. That kind of leader can almost be frightening; your team wants a realistic, humble leader.

26. Creativity

Business moves faster now than ever before. To lead a team that stays on top of and ahead of it all, you must be creative. A creative leader:

- Goes to battle for the team. They aren’t afraid to approach higher management to defend a team’s unique idea.
- Isn’t afraid of listening to his gut. It’s not the only input, but it is definitely a form of input.
- Isn’t afraid to take action, even on a “crazy” idea.
- Gets input from lots of sources, stays educated, and is curious. These all bring in new ideas from seemingly unrelated sources.

Thinking and problem solving must be creative, not predictable. The problems change, and so do the solutions.
27. Maestro

You’ll be like a maestro, directing an orchestra of many instruments that can make a horrible racket or beautiful music. The maestro gets and holds the attention. She raises the baton and then lowers it when the time is right to start. She has the trust of everyone whose eyes are on her.

All your team needs is someone to get their focus, channel their skills, and direct them so they work together.

28. Unpopular

Strange as it sounds, it takes skill to not be afraid to be unpopular.

If you’re going to be ethical, fair, and honest, you’re going to be unpopular to someone sooner or later. A poor team leader is someone who is afraid to be unliked, someone who wants everyone to be her friend.

29. Teacher

Being a teacher is more than listing step-by-step instructions. It brings a concept or a task to life in a way that someone fully understands how to do it, why it’s done that way, and leaves a little leeway for them to figure out new methods on their own.

A great teacher teaches with the hope the student surpasses. A poor teacher teaches vaguely hoping the student always feels less and in need of the teacher.

30. Trend Spotting

You must be able to spot trends and patterns.
Whether in data or in behavior, trends and patterns are those subtle things that establish themselves before problems are easily seen. If you can spot the pattern, you can get ahead of the problem before it is rooted and established.

Trends and patterns are value neutral; they can be positive or negative.

31. Critic

A true critic provides valuable input in the form of critique. Critique is not the same as criticism.

A critique highlights both positive and negative behavior or work, from which advice for change or holding course can be given. Criticism, however, generally focuses on the negative and is limited in producing good change or results.

—

It might be easy to confuse being a manager with being a team leader, but they are not the same. One is all about managing moving parts, while the other is leading those moving parts in the same direction. To truly lead, you must possess the skills to take a group of people with conflicting personalities, ideas, and motivations, and move together towards a common goal. Now that’s a leader.
When it comes to choosing the right manager, businesses get it wrong 82% of the time.


Hiring managers from within your own ranks is generally a good idea, but it’s easy to confuse length of employment as the leading qualification and miss seeing other key traits that are more important.

If you’re willing to not default to first-hired-first-promoted management practices, there are some key traits to look for in an employee you’re considering for management.

1. They are already a de facto manager.

There are some people who seem to be natural leaders. If you notice someone that other employees tend to go to for help or answers, those employees have unconsciously signaled that they trust their leadership and problem-solving skills.

2. They get along with people.

Consider that half of all employees leave a job to get away from their manager, i.e. a person they don’t want to be around for whatever reason.

It’s no small thing to find an employee that gets along with others. This doesn’t mean they are some kind of doormat or yes-man (not a good managerial quality by
any means), but that they have a gift for working with others instead of against them.

3. They are self-motivated.

A self-motivated employee is one that doesn’t constantly need to be told what to do. They have a big-picture view of the job. They see how the moving parts fit together, and they naturally tackle the work it takes to make sure everything works together well.

The alternative? The employee that says “that’s not my job” and won’t do anything unless specifically told to.

4. They have the right attitude.

An employee who merely clocks in at the job to get the paycheck is not manager quality. For them, the job is a means to an end (money), and not an enjoyable challenge that they want to succeed at.

Any employee might swear up and down that, for a bigger manager’s salary, they’ll do the job, but the reality is there’s an attitude that needs to be present at the get-go. Their attitude in the small things will be the same as their attitude in the big things.

5. They are engaged at work.

Only about 33% of employees say that they are engaged at work. That’s a problem.
Unengaged employees lack enthusiasm and attention to detail, and their apathy tends to lead to quitting. You need a manager to model engaged behavior, and who can also entice others to stay engaged (i.e. to care). Any employee that isn’t engaged now isn’t going to suddenly care once they become a manager.

6. They like to learn.

A manager is always learning, whether it’s new technology, trends, or trade secrets. Employees that have a thirst to learn at every chance they get have a natural inclination in the right direction.

7. They volunteer for the tough jobs.

Being a great manager means sometimes ending up with the job no one wants to do. After all, you lead by example. Employees that volunteer for or don’t shirk from tough jobs that others don’t want to do understand the value of hard work.

8. They lean towards the team rather than themselves.

Employees who aren’t management material fight for themselves. They are most concerned about the “mines”: my hours, my vacation, my rights, my benefit.

An employee who starts to see things from a manager’s viewpoint, however, sees in terms of the team. Listen to how they talk in group discussions and meetings. Listen for the use of language that indicates more concern for the team and the business than self.

9. They are good communicators.

Employees whose managers have regular meetings with them are three times more likely to be highly engaged at work.
If the employee is good at communicating (which includes the ability to listen) in all situations—high stress, casual, tense, light—they are ready to manage. Much of management hinges not on the ability to make up rules and crunch data, but to communicate what employees need to do based on that.

10. They dwell on solutions.

It’s easy to obsess about problems. Too many employees are happy to gather around and gripe about all that’s wrong. An employee who chooses to find solutions is a rare breed.

11. They seek out expert input.

A manager knows that all of the smarts aren’t in their possession, and that their team is a valuable resource for knowledge. Look for an employee who knows when to ask, what to ask, and whom to ask, who doesn’t let pride get in the way of a needed solution.

12. They set goals for themselves.

Managers who help employees set goals have employees that are 17% more engaged. If you have an employee who can disseminate a situation and determine what personal goals are needed to accomplish what’s needed, they can help others do the same.

13. They don’t micromanage.

The micromanaging approach to life comes out whether a person is an actual manager or not. You don’t want to promote an employee who already has a tendency to muck about in the work or business of others because they think they can do it better. Micromanagers only get worse the more power they have.
This one is tricky. Sometimes employees have a difficult time transitioning into a hands-off manager position if they are used to doing the work that they now manage, so be sure to select someone who doesn’t show these tendencies at the outset.

14. They take responsibility.

We all do stupid things. Look for an employee who doesn’t make excuses or point fingers and owns up to their failures and mistakes. They admit what they’ve done and are able to handle the reprimand. Even better, they learn from it and make changes.

15. They have empathy.

Empathy is the ability to understand the feelings of others. True empathy is rare. It is often mistaken for pity that creates action out of guilt. Even more rare is the person who can make smart management decisions because of (or in spite of) empathy.

16. They run towards leadership.

When you offer an employee a chance to lead, do they eagerly accept it or are they hesitant and try to explain why they aren’t ready? And even more important, how do they do in the actual role?

This is a stepped approach: when you think you have an employee who’s ready to step into a manager role, give them a chance to lead in small ways so they get a chance to try on leadership.
17. They are professional.

What does it mean to be professional? They show up on time, wear the uniform, treat both customers and co-workers with respect, and are productive. They work for the business, and move in the direction of its success, instead of dragging their feet and begrudgingly doing the job with an eye on payday.

18. They have integrity.

Integrity. This is the final item, and it’s the capstone.

Remember: your employees follow as they are led. A dishonest manager leads to dishonest employees (or honest employees who quit). Dishonesty will cost you in tangible ways (theft, lost sales) and intangible ways (damaged reputation, fudged work hours).

If you can’t trust your employee, none of the other 17 items on this list will matter. You must be able to trust the employee to run the business when you aren’t around.

—

Hiring from within the ranks is logical, but can be tricky. There is a natural assumption that employees who have worked for you the longest should be the first to be promoted. That probably explains the 82% failure rate mentioned at the start of this article.

With that in mind, you can either choose to not rock the boat by following that path, or you can look at your employees with an eye towards manager quality (using this list) and make the choice that’s best for your company.
Do Your Seasonal Employees Qualify for Unemployment?

As CNN recently pointed out, “Federal law gives each state the option to decide whether or not to allow seasonal workers to take benefits. Now strapped for funds, many states are stripping some workers of their eligibility.” In fact, 15 states already have legislation on the books that eliminates or at least restricts the amount of benefits that seasonal workers are allowed to access.

For example, New Jersey recently passed a law that requires specific classification for certain seasonal jobs in order to qualify for seasonal unemployment. That means that if the job type isn’t classified within those limited categories, that employees won’t be able to collect unemployment benefits—even if they’re laid off for extended periods of time between seasons. Needless to say, that action incited quite a bit of reaction from workers and worker’s rights organizations.

The main complaints against such regulations are that they will unnecessarily hurt seasonal employees and may even discourage people from applying for these seasonal jobs in the first place.

Whether or not your seasonal employees are covered under unemployment benefits is a matter decided by your individual state. Therefore, it’s essential that you contact your states department of labor in order to correctly understand your obligations as an employer and the benefits your current and future employee will be entitled to.

You can find a list of all 50 state departments of labor (with phone numbers and web URLs) on the U.S. Department of Labor’s website.
What You Can Do to Keep Your Employees

So, with the noose tightening around seasonal unemployment across the United States, what can you do to help your seasonal employees cope with a potential loss of income during their downtime?

*Keep Them On Part-Time*

While most seasonal employment opportunities dry up once the season comes to a close, some seasonal businesses still operate at reduced capacity. If your business is one of these and you want to keep your seasonal employees coming back from year to year, consider offering them part-time opportunities during the off-season.

State regulations dictate how much unemployment an individual can collect and for how long. Usually, this amount is a small fraction of what the individual was making while fully employed. However, this can be a good thing, as most long-term seasonal employees have already adjusted to the “feast or famine” fluctuations in their yearly income.

Offering a part-time opportunity that pays a similar or even smaller amount may be enough to help your seasonal employees keep their heads above water during the leaner months.

*Help Them Find Off-Season Work*

If your business simply can’t keep employees on throughout the year in any capacity, helping these same individuals line up off-season work will go a long way toward keeping them happy and coming back next year. The extent to which you engage in this activity is completely up to you but could span the gap between simply offering a great letter of recommendation to actively tracking down openings you think your workers would be well-suited for.

If you choose to help your employees find work during the off-season, it may be a good idea to begin your search for complimentary businesses as soon as possible.
By having a list at the ready, long before it comes time to close down your operations, you can help ease your employee’s transition between seasons.

**Offer More Than Competitive Wages**

Another option is to help your excellent employees pad their off-season nest eggs. By offering more-than-competitive compensation to individuals that you value highly and that provide an excellent service to you and your business during the working season, you can ensure that these employees have something to fall back on between seasons. It’s a good idea as well to educate these select employees about this additional benefit and suggest they take the time to plan financially for the immediate future.

**Provide Financial Training**

Your employees may or may not currently have adequate financial skills to help them cope with the loss of income for several months out of the year. Chances are, even your “seasoned” seasonal workers can benefit from a little education on how to set aside funds for the leaner months and how to make that money stretch as far as possible.

That’s why it may be a good idea to hire a financial trainer/advisor or even just host a seminar once or twice a season in order to educate your employees about the risks and benefits of seasonal employment. If your organization isn’t large enough to warrant hosting such a session yourself, you may be able to find such educational services through local CPAs or even community college outreach programs.

**Offer Housing Benefits**

Some seasonal businesses (such as restaurants and hoteliers) may already offer seasonal employees housing either at no cost or a low cost as a condition of their work agreement. However, as an added perk, you can consider offering this same benefit to seasonal employees during the off-season as well.
Of course, you won’t want to offer housing for free during the months you’re not getting anything in return. But by adjusting rental rates according to the season, you may find that you can keep employees much longer and avoid having to hire a new crop every year.

*Create an Excellent Work Experience*

By offering your employees an excellent work experience throughout the season, you can ensure that they’ll come back next year—no matter what they endure during the off-season. Employees will develop a sense of loyalty to employers who treat them well, offer chances for advancement, encourage personal growth, and offer competitive compensation and responsive scheduling. This loyalty will carry through the off months, as employees know that they’re not likely to find a better job anywhere else.

*Value Your Employees Above (Pretty Much) All Else*

Your employees really are the backbone of your business. They are, in effect, its public face, its inner workings, and its profit engine. Putting your employees’ needs ahead of pretty much anything else (except for your bottom line and your customer satisfaction) is a good way to cultivate a crew of hardworking, reliable, and resourceful employees that will keep your seasonal business up and running year after year.
CHAPTER 3

Time Management
How to Manage Your Time Effectively as a Workplace Leader

Cringe when you hear the words “work-life balance?” For many workplace leaders, the relationship between life and work is anything but. Half of all full-time employees work more than the standard 40 hours a week, and 4 out of 10 report working at least 50 hours a week.

There isn’t a way to add more hours to the day. But when it comes to managing your time at work effectively, it’s not about how many hours you have. It’s how you use them. If you’ve been struggling to work through your to-do list or want your weekends back, use the tips below to optimize your productivity and start working smarter—without pulling an 80-hour week.

Delegate, delegate, delegate

You can do anything, but not everything. While it may be possible to reply to an email, answer a phone call, put together next week’s employee schedule, and take a look at your budget all at the same time, dividing your attention doesn’t equal better time management. Instead, multitasking spreads our limited attention out even further across competing demands—leading to poor overall efficiency and performance.

Being a leader doesn’t mean doing everything yourself. It means knowing which responsibilities can be delegated to other employees so that you can give your full attention to high priority tasks and the things only you can do. Sounds simple, right?
Surprisingly, only one manager out of 10 knows how to delegate effectively. Why? One reason may be because it’s hard to let go of control. After all, your name is on the work. But delegating doesn’t mean changing the quality of the work. It means finding the right employees and empowering them to build their own leadership skills.

Trust is vital for delegation to succeed. If you micromanage after handing off a task, you’re just doubling your workload. Instead, try these communication must-haves to keep assignments moving:

- Know what tasks can and can’t be delegated
- Provide complete instructions for each task
- Define what it means for the task to be “done”
- Decide how to track progress and status
- Choose (and trust) the right people for the job
- Resist the urge to micromanage

The more you practice delegating, the more comfortable you’ll become with sharing tasks. And soon, you may start to see more openings on your calendar.

**Use the Pomodoro Technique**

Sometimes, the hardest part of time management is just getting started. When the work is piling up, it can feel impossible to know where to begin.

Enter the Pomodoro Technique. Created by author Francesco Cirillo, the Pomodoro Technique breaks big projects or to-do lists down into a series of smaller, timed tasks. Each task is set at about 25 minutes, with five-minute breaks in between tasks. After completing four tasks, you take a longer break of 30 minutes before moving onto another hour of work.

The goal of Pomodoro is simply this: get the work done. Instead of being faced with an eight to 10-hour day and nonstop to-do’s, you have 25-minute increments
to complete one task at a time. You finish what you start before moving on to something else or set the timer for another 25-minute interval until it’s done. If you get distracted or interrupted, the interval starts over.

Anyone with a watch or phone can use Pomodoro. Apps like Be Focused also automate the process by allowing users to write out their entire list for the day and adjust their work and break intervals. So when you start to feel like there is too much to do and too little time, don’t panic. Write down every step required, turn on your timer, and get to work.

Schedule everything—even the little things

Everything means everything. Just like with Pomodoro, learning good time management includes getting in the habit of writing things down and scheduling out your workflow. Add breaks, inbox check-ins, meetings, work time, and anything else on your list. If you’re planning to meet up with a client to grab some lunch or send a quick email, add it to your calendar.

Scheduling your entire day allows you to see how much you’re actually trying to accomplish within 24 hours, as well as where you’re over- or underestimating your capacity. The better you understand how long certain tasks take, the more accurately you can plan your day.

You’ll also quickly discover where you get sidelined along the way. As the day progresses, see how closely you stick to your schedule. Does that meeting actually take 30 minutes or run over into an hour? Does an unexpected email throw off your afternoon?

At this point, you have two options: adjust your schedule to better reflect your day, or change your day to match your schedule. Staying on schedule requires staying firm about start and end times and knowing when you can’t take on a new task. If you’re constantly getting derailed by last-minute requests or being pulled into five-minute conversations, then your schedule is not your own.
Sometimes, effective time management means adding new tasks to an open block tomorrow and moving on to everything else you had planned for the afternoon. If there isn’t any room on your schedule, try spreading lower priority tasks throughout your week or scheduling a larger time buffer for each to-do.

**One last tip:** Easily add extra hours to your own schedule by using an employee time clock app. An online time clock eliminates the time it takes to manually calculate hours or chase down employees to get their timesheets from them. Still not convinced? Check out more reasons to get an employee time clock.

Set boundaries

We’re all guilty of checking email outside of business hours. Today’s technology makes it harder than ever to set boundaries on our availability. According to new research, the average worker spends 4.1 hours checking work email each day, totaling 20.5 hours per week. That’s over half the work week just dedicated to your inbox.

While it’s tempting to respond to an email the moment you get a notification or always be available for a quick chat with an employee, being too available can do more harm than good.

Harvard Business Review found that employees who regularly offered to help or take on more work than their peers were at a higher risk of “generosity burnout.” The more time employees spent responding to requests, the more trouble they had focusing and finishing their own tasks—an effect that carried over even into the next workday.

On the other hand, setting boundaries had almost the reverse effect: employees who made the biggest impact at their jobs through taking on additional requests were also the ones who protected their own time. By making sure they had the capacity to work on their personal goals as well, employees were still able to offer their help and take initiative without burning out.
Every business owner wants to stay open to new opportunities. But valuing your own time and saying no when you need to allows you to perform your best and have time to say yes to the things that really matter.

**Take a break (or break a sweat)**

If you’re struggling to do it all, the key may be doing less. Studies have shown that switching focus to some form of distraction once an hour actually results in better productivity. Just having a few seconds to completely “turn off” your brain and relax can increase resilience and combat fatigue.

What doesn’t help? Watching TV or taking an hour to catch up on Netflix. Next time you feel like there’s too much on your plate, try heading outside or to the gym. Physical movement can jumpstart creativity and productivity for up to two hours after working out and help you complete more work in less time.

It may feel counterproductive at first—why are you leaving your desk when there’s so much to do? Putting your work on pause probably feels like a last ditch effort. Consider this instead: the human brain is like a muscle. It requires about 20 percent of all the energy your body produces to function.

The average person can’t run and run forever without breaks (or breaking down). Just like you would rest and recharge after a hard workout, the brain needs time to relax and recharge after periods of continued focus to avoid burnout. Even taking a 10-minute nap can immediately enhance performance.

As a workplace leader, your employees are likely looking to you as an example of good time management. You may be legally required to provide breaks, but it’s also important to make sure that employees feel that breaks are encouraged, and that breaks are valuable for not only their productivity but their well-being.
Managing your time effectively as a manager or business owner is crucial to long-term success. While you may be tempted to do it all, it’s more important to do what you can well.

Looping in your staff and delegating lower priority tasks will help you get the work done and create a team you can depend on. Additionally, getting a time clock app and using time optimization techniques like Pomodoro can transform an endless to-do list into small, achievable tasks even if you just have 30 minutes. Scheduling and setting time limits on email goes a long way in creating fair boundaries and keeping you from being “on” after everyone else has gone home for the day.

Finally, don’t put off breaks in the goal of powering through. Take a few minutes (or just a few seconds) and give your mind the rest it needs to tackle your remaining to-do list. Use your time off to fuel your time on the clock and that elusive work-life balance just might start to feel within reach.
CHAPTER 4

Leadership Philosophies
The Ultimate Guide to the Servant Leadership Model

Leadership, in the eyes of some people, is about wielding power. They are like a carpenter with only a hammer who sees everything as a nail. Whatever problems or challenges arise, this type of leader is confident that brute strength, force, and power will bring about a solution.

The servant leader, on the other hand, prefers to serve.

They lead, but are followed willingly instead of fearfully. They come to work thinking first about their team and what can be done for them instead of what power they can put to use that day.

The servant leadership model, in other words, flips the traditional idea of power and authority on its head. It leads from a point of serving.

What Is Servant Leadership?

A servant leader is someone who serves others first, before anything else. Their thoughts and actions bend towards serving others right out of the gate.

Robert K. Greenleaf is given credit for coining the phrase “servant leadership” back in the 1970s. In an essay he wrote about the concept, Greenleaf noted that a person whose first inclination is towards serving others, and then leading, was quite different from someone who wanted to lead.

“That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions…”
In other words, a servant leader thinks about others first, instead of self. They are more concerned about the benefit and growth of others rather than putting their own desires or goals first.

A servant leader:

- Isn’t concerned about acquiring or holding onto power.
- Isn’t focused on maintaining a certain reputation above all else.
- Isn’t obsessed with staying ahead of everyone else on the ladder.
- Doesn’t fear employees gaining skills and knowledge beyond their own.
- Doesn’t use domination or fear to control people.
- Doesn’t think in terms of controlling people at all, really.
- Places high value on the community.
- Is committed to the growth and improvement of those being led.

As you can see, servant leadership differs from traditional top-down leadership. Traditional leadership tends to be about systems and structures that make repetitive work and authority a foundation. Servant leadership, on the other hand, tends to be about people.

Becoming A Servant Leader

Servant leadership doesn’t come naturally to everyone. It’s much easier to think of leadership in terms of traditional authoritarian terms, particularly for personalities that place value on job titles and the expected respect of titles.

In order to be a good servant leader, you need to develop and practice a few skills, according to Regen University:

1. **Be a good listener.** Leaders need to be good communicators and have decision-making skills, but a servant leader also places a high priority on listening to others. You must be able to listen to individuals as well as the
group and try to determine what their will or desire is. Additionally, you must be able to “listen” to yourself and know what is motivating you.

2. **Practice empathy.** The servant leader can empathize with the group and with individuals. While empathy can be crippling for some (e.g. keeps them from making decisions), the servant leader isn’t at the mercy of empathy but rather uses empathy to not make snap judgments about people. Empathy allows you to get past surface issues to what’s really going on.

3. **Embrace concepts of healing.** Everyone (including you) is in some state of brokenness. There is something not working quite right for everyone. The servant leader recognizes this and instead of ignoring that reality and reverting to punitive punishment when that brokenness becomes inconvenient on the job, he or she looks for ways to make broken people well.

4. **Be aware.** A typical leader is often completely unaware of what people are thinking, feeling, or even doing. A servant leader, on the other hand, makes a point of being aware of the obvious and the subtle, both in their own life and in other’s lives.

5. **Be persuasive.** Servant leadership is about service, not domination. Traditionally, leaders will get people to do what they want them to do through typical dominating means (power, punishment, appeal to authority, etc.). A servant leader takes a different path, using powers of persuasion to help people choose the right path as needed instead of demanding the path.

6. **Be able to conceptualize.** Servant leaders are big-picture thinkers. They inspire their team to think beyond the day-to-day grind, beyond the immediate issues in front of them. Traditional leaders are fixated on short-term or immediate goals. Servant leaders look beyond numbers and goal posts, thinking of what their team needs to do to accomplish everything, not
just the one thing in front of them. They help their team get the training and tools they’ll need not just for today, but for next year and on.

7. **Be a good steward.** A steward is someone who holds onto something and keeps it in good condition for others who need it down the road. Servant leaders are more motivated by thinking of the greater good than thinking of personal achievements or reward. They make decisions and take actions with a steward’s mentality instead of “achieve a goal at whatever cost!” mentality.

8. **Commit to building up people.** Servant leaders understand their most important resource and concern is people. They are committed to the growth and well-being of their team, thinking first of them instead of themselves. This means that training opportunities, promotions, growth—these are given to the team instead of to self. As a servant leader, there is no fear that the people on your team will surpass you. You aren’t trying to protect your own place in the world. You aren’t keeping the best opportunities for yourself.

9. **Love the community.** Servant leaders love the community more than their own individual success. They don’t sell out the community for any immediate or flashy goal. Servant leaders understand that the concept of community has the power to positively shape and influence lives, more than systems or other corporate structures do.

**Why Does Servant Leadership Work?**

Studies have shown that servant leadership, and the empowerment and teamwork that accompanies it, trickles down. Higher level managers who turn from selfish leadership to selfless leadership end up creating lower level managers and other employees who then do the same.
Think of how this plays out for employees and customers. Instead of being motivated by what’s best for them, they are motivated to serve others. As you can imagine, that’s going to have a positive impact on your customer’s experience! The studies show that service ratings, and subsequently customer loyalty, increases when the servant leadership model is in place.

Additionally, the servant leadership model creates people who are knowledgeable about the industry and their team because they are tuned into listening to others and being mindful of what is happening around them. The model also creates trust, ethical conduct, and valuing other people, which benefits not only the team but also the customer’s experience.

The Pros And Cons Of Servant Leadership

As you can see, servant leadership takes work. It doesn’t come naturally, particularly for people attracted to power and position. It also requires dedication to the concept because it takes a fair amount of time to get to a fully working model. You can’t make people trust you overnight. It’s something you build.

In some situations, the servant leadership model may not be the best option.

For companies that need to be turned around quickly for financial or other reasons (such as employee problems), servant leadership may take too much time. In those cases, leadership has to be decisive, clear, and quick. While servant leadership can help with employee retention, it’s a balance between the employees that stick around long enough for the model to actually work versus those that cycle through.

It also might not work well in companies that rely on hierarchy and complex organization in order to function in their industry. Hierarchy and its ensuing organization aren’t necessarily bad in certain situations and cultures.
The servant leadership model has the power to transform your team and, eventually, your customer’s experience. However, it takes dedication to implement, and daily requires a leader to control the impulse to lead by force instead of serving selflessly. While it is not a model for the faint-hearted, the positive impact on your team and your bottom line make it worth the effort.
Why Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Go Hand-in-Hand

What makes a great leader? Some say there’s a perfect formula: combine the right skills with the right ambition and opportunity, and anyone can achieve success. But now research says it’s what you can’t see on a resume that may matter most.

Up to 85% of our financial success is based on “invisible skills”—traits like personality, how well we can communicate, and our ability to empathize, negotiate, and lead. These non-technical skills may not be as obvious on paper like a degree or job experience, but they’re the foundation for something just as important: our emotional intelligence. Also known as “EQ,” this unseen mental quality is found in many of the world’s top leaders, and may just be the deciding factor between a good business leader and a great one.

What is your emotional intelligence?

According to Psychology Today, emotional intelligence is “the ability to identify and manage your own emotions and the emotions of others.” In business (especially sales), this is often referred to as being good with people or having good people skills. But emotional intelligence isn’t just about how well we interact with each other. It’s also about how well we manage and interpret our own emotions.

Think about your day-to-day interactions with employees and your typical workplace routine. Then ask yourself the following questions:

- Can you recognize emotions in yourself and other people and understand the basis for those emotions?
- Are you able to harness your emotions and apply them to tasks like thinking and problem-solving?
• Can you manage emotions, through managing your own emotions and/or those of other people?

If you answered “yes” to all the above, you likely have high emotional intelligence. However, having a high EQ isn’t about manipulating emotions or putting on a front for employees. Emotionally intelligent people tend to be more authentic and transparent, possibly because they are so attuned to their emotions and those of others’. At the same time, they’re also able to keep their feelings in check and make well-informed decisions, are incredibly resilient under pressure, and display higher rates of empathy—all top traits not-so-coincidentally found in many successful leaders today.

How emotional intelligence impacts your leadership skills

Many leaders are where they are for a similar reason: they put in the work. Still, in highly skilled fields—including supervisors and business leaders—all leaders at some point possess a similar level of skill. Once you make it to the top as a high-performer, you remain a high-performer. But to break away from the pack, truly impactful leaders have to possess something more.

In a study of more than 5,000 leaders across multiple industries, researchers discovered that the best leaders were decisive and willing to take risks, but also more self-aware and more thoughtful about how they engaged with family and coworkers. Additional research from Harvard also found that introverts, not extroverts, were more likely to surpass expectations of company leadership.

Why is this such a surprise? In mass media, the typical boardroom CEO is often characterized as egocentric and out of touch with their employees. Others develop a cult of personality. In reality, the ruthless CEO has much to learn from their calm, collected counterparts.
As both studies revealed, the best leaders don’t focus all of their efforts on being universally liked or feared. Instead, they develop a deeper understanding of their employees’ and stakeholders’ points of view. They comprehend the needs and motivations of others, and in turn, calmly engage with them under pressure in order to move decisions forward.

Remember the three-question test for emotionally intelligent people? According to Harvard’s findings, the most successful leaders are:

• Able to empathize and manage the emotions of other people
• Self-aware but not egocentric
• Able to keep their own emotions in check, while quickly thinking and problem-solving around how their ideas will impact others

Three ways EQ can make you more effective at work
It’s one thing to identify leadership qualities at the C-suite level. However, these emotionally intelligent characteristics aren’t just limited to CEOs. The most effective day-to-day managers also rank high on emotional intelligence. Like good CEOs, good managers are consistent and able to self-regulate their emotions, in turn creating less-stressful environments for employees that support autonomy and creative freedom.

As a manager or business owner, your leadership success is directly impacted by how empathetic your employees and customers think you are. Here are three reasons why empathy and other emotional intelligence skills are crucial for strong leadership:

1. **Emotional intelligence makes you a better boss.**
   Think back to the last time you were faced with a hard decision, with only a few minutes or hours to carefully evaluate your options. How did you tackle it? Were you prepared for the unexpected? Did you keep your cool under pressure?
Being an emotionally intelligent leader means identifying the source of your stress, then internally guiding yourself through the necessary steps to make an informed decision. It doesn’t mean you can’t share your frustration. It means you know how to channel it.

**Staying calm and in control are the hallmarks of a great manager.** Keeping your emotions in check minimizes your own stress, but also your employees’. Your mood in the workplace can even impact your team’s physical health. When employees work under managers with poor leadership skills, they’re at higher risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, sleep problems, depression, and weight gain.

Emotional intelligence also goes hand-in-hand with two other highly demanded leadership traits in today’s workforce: authenticity and transparency. A stunning 99% of millennials believe feedback is important, and many wish they had more transparent conversations with their managers. Half prefer “purposeful work” to a higher salary, and 62% want to work for a company that makes a positive impact.

Millennial workers want clarity and transparency when it comes to job performance and company values. And while emotional intelligence layers additional “emotional management” into leadership roles, understanding an employee’s point of view is at the core of strong leadership. As Harvard’s CEO study found, leaders who take the time to build a rapport with their employees and stakeholders experience more long-term success than those solely focused on their own agenda.

2. **Emotional intelligence helps you create and lead better teams.**

We know that emotional intelligence strengthens management skills and has a positive effect on employee well-being. Now imagine an entire workplace—not just leadership—with high emotional intelligence. In 2015, Google took a closer look at what makes a team successful. They
found that the most effective teams within their company could all answer “yes” to the same five questions:

- Can we take risks on this team without feeling insecure or embarrassed?
- Can we count on each other to do high quality work on time?
- Are goals, roles, and execution plans on our team clear?
- Are we working on something that is personally important for each of us?
- Do we fundamentally believe that the work we’re doing matters?

While successful team members all shared similar answers, they also had something else in common: emotional intelligence. When we compare Google’s questions to the three core emotional intelligence skills, we find that both sets require empathy, the ability to gauge and understand emotions of others in order to work together, and the ability to understand individual motivations.

An emotionally intelligent leader can make a big impact, but an emotionally intelligent team can accomplish even more. Since they’re already attuned to the emotions and motivations of others, leaders with a high EQ are perfectly positioned to craft and lead these high-functioning teams. Compared to other coworkers, great managers build workplaces that are “engines of productivity and profitability.”

When you increase the emotional intelligence of your entire team, you drive productivity even higher. In an emotionally intelligent team environment, team members receive regular feedback, are aware of each other’s strengths and weaknesses, and are more willing to collaborate—the perfect recipe for employee engagement, and in turn, increased productivity.

3. Emotional intelligence sets you apart from competitors.
The facts are simple: people would rather do business with people they like. When researchers compared tipping amounts among servers at different restaurants and bars, higher tips weren’t based on the quality of the service, but the likeability of the server. In the sales industry, sales agents who exhibited higher rates of empathy and self-confidence made almost double the sales than agents with weaker emotional intelligence.

Empathy, the foundation of emotional intelligence, is the key to being a great leader, but also your business’s financial success. The top 10 companies in 2015’s Global Empathy Index generated 50% more revenue than the bottom 10. Why? Listening with empathy is the most effective way to comprehend another person’s point of view. In its simplest form, solving customer pain points starts with understanding another person’s needs and recognizing how they impact their day-to-day lives.

Customer service representatives ask for a customer’s name only about 20% of the time. If 70% of the buying experience depends on how a customer feels they’re being treated, it’s crucial to make customers not only feel heard but to make sure they feel understood and valued. If you’re looking to gain an edge on your competitors, emphasizing emotional intelligence and practicing empathic listening with your employees will definitely get your customers’ attention.

We’re all human. No matter how strong your leadership skills are, there will be stressful days at work or situations outside of your control. That’s why emotional intelligence is crucial for effective leadership. By understanding and managing the emotions in yourself and others, you can create a better environment for your employees, a better experience for your customers, and cultivate better leadership habits in your business. Next time anxiety, stress, or frustration appear, harness them and put them to work.