



guide to...

leadership

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Goldsmiths
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Institute of
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'Leadership is about 'us', and for all of us

It's easy to imagine that leadership is the province of great individuals who have the personality, vision and drive to change the world. But Professor Alex Haslam (University of Queensland) says: 'Leadership isn't something that only happens in restricted spheres – it is at the heart of all group activity. When groups succeed it is because everyone shares a sense of "us", and the group becomes *leaderfull*.'

In Professor Haslam's approach, leadership is all about the process of creating and advancing a sense of group membership that is shared with followers. 'It involves what we call the 3Rs of leadership: *reflecting* on what the group one leads is all about, *representing* its interests, and then *realising* collective aspirations. In sum, far from being the preserve of "the great 'I'", leadership is always all about "us".'

Tip: 'Reflect, Represent and Realise' and you'll find you're a better leader of any groups in your life. [See also 'Leicester's lesson in leadership', *The Psychologist*, June 2016, via www.thepsychologist.org.uk]

2

Be an example for employee wellbeing

Leaders need to see themselves as role models for healthy behaviour. Professor Gail Kinman (University of Bedfordshire) says: 'If you expect staff to go home on time but you often work late, they will follow your lead. If you send emails during evenings and weekends you're sending a signal you expect them to be read and replied to – even if this isn't your intention.' While working long hours may have short-term benefits there are long-term costs for employees' work-life balance, health and job performance, Professor Kinman warns.

Tip: Maintain healthy boundaries between your own work and personal life, otherwise attempts to manage the wellbeing of others will be ineffective.



3

Good meetings demonstrate good leadership

Dr Roxane Gervais, Chair of the British Psychological Society's Division of Occupational Psychology, says one of the key components of leadership is awareness of the self and others; one way to illustrate this awareness is in the way one holds meetings. 'Meetings should be productive and for a specific purpose. Be aware of which members wish to speak and allow them to do so. As a leader your team relies

on you for guidance, support and commitment, and this can be shown in how you manage your time and ultimately, theirs.' For more on meetings, see <http://tinyurl.com/bettermeet>



Tip: Respect your team's time and only hold meetings for a specific purpose.

4

Develop your leadership potential away from the workplace

According to Professor Kevin Kniffin and collaborators from Cornell University, people who play competitive youth sports tend to show more leadership, self-respect, and self-confidence when surveyed decades after their playing days. 'Potential job candidates were viewed more favourably with respect to those same organisationally-beneficial traits when compared with people who participated in other non-athletic extra curricular activities.'

Tip: Think more broadly about what it takes to lead people, and appreciate others who demonstrate these qualities outside their work.

5

Don't underestimate the impact of emotional intelligence

The understanding, regulation, and use of emotions by leaders can have substantial impact on their ability to lead. Alan Lyons, a business psychologist says: 'This connection is supported by research showing that emotional skills are critical to the successful performance of individuals at the executive level. Further, the more someone progresses through the organisational hierarchy, the more important emotional skills become in their success.'

Tip: Value, measure and develop emotional intelligence in order to improve leader effectiveness.



6

Beware the glass cliff

Professor Michelle Ryan (University of Exeter, UK and University of Groningen The Netherlands) says that although women still remain under-represented in the senior ranks of organisations, they are more likely to occupy leadership roles in times of increased organisational crisis – a phenomenon called the ‘glass cliff’. She said: ‘While our stereotypes of women may make them seem particularly suited to crisis management, these glass cliff positions, with their increased chance of failure, may inadvertently be more risky and precarious and thus may represent a poisoned chalice for women. If women do fail at greater rates than men this may reinforce our stereotypes that women are not cut out for leadership roles.’

Tip: Equal Opportunity is not just about the quantity of women and men in leadership positions: consider the quality of any opportunities you are offered.

A woman with dark hair, wearing a white t-shirt, is sitting at a table and listening intently to a man. The man is wearing a striped shirt and is gesturing with his hands as he speaks. They are in a bright room with large windows in the background, looking out onto a cityscape. A blue square with the number 7 is overlaid on the left side of the image.

7

Know your worth and don't be afraid to negotiate

'Negotiation skills are essential for anyone in a leadership position,' according to organisational psychologist and business consultant Clare Mulligan. 'You need to sell ideas and influence others towards your way of thinking.' She adds that women in the workplace tend to negotiate less than their male counterparts: not only over salary but also in opportunities for travel, involvement in influential projects, and openings for senior roles.

Tip: Know your worth, what you want and why, be prepared to compromise but don't miss opportunities to influence.

A woman with dark hair, wearing a white t-shirt, is sitting at a table and listening intently to a man. The man is wearing a striped shirt and is gesturing with his hands as he speaks. They are in a bright room with large windows in the background, looking out onto a cityscape. A blue square with the number 8 is overlaid on the left side of the image.

8

Embrace a new era of management styles

Professor Sir Cary Cooper, president of the CIPD (and Manchester Business School, University of Manchester) says that in the wake of the recession many workplaces have seen massive downsizings, job insecurity, a longer-hours culture and a more punitive and robust management style as leaders strive for more output with less resources. He adds: 'As the economy is beginning to pick up, but slowly, we need a change of management style in workplaces, whether in the private or public sector. We need more socially and interpersonally skilled leaders, from shop floor to top floor, in an effort to prevent employee burnout and ill health, to retain good people and to get greater productivity from the fewer people in the workforce.'

Tip: Giving your crew more autonomy and control over what they do, and allowing them to work more flexibly, may help you navigate your ship through choppy waters.

9

Clear your mind of mental chatter

A breakthrough moment in a leader's mindfulness practice is the realisation that we are not our thoughts, says Dr Henry Ford, Executive Mindfulness Coach and leader of the RSA Mindfulness Network. He adds: 'Creating that distance between "you" and annoying, thrilling and boring thoughts strengthens your ability to focus your attention, builds self-awareness of your reaction to stressful situations and fosters acceptance of the way things truly are. Leaders need this clarity and focus to deal with the uncertainties and complexity they face.'

Tip: Develop your AAA-rated mind skills: Attention, Awareness and Acceptance.

10



Be aware of your own power

John Amaechi OBE (Research Fellow at the University of East London) believes that a powerful transformation occurs when leaders realise that they are made giants, by title alone. 'Giants have magnified impact. I'm 6'9" and I see this daily. Our every word, action, even a stern glance – incidental or otherwise – has greater consequence. Giant's whispers are shouts, their outbursts are explosions. Being a leader means never forgetting this.'

Treat the world around you like it's made of tissue paper, and Amaechi says you'll be less likely to rip it. 'Avoid accidental damage and you'll be more successful in your ultimate goals.' [See also tinyurl.com/jamaechi]

Tip: Behave with the mindful vigilance of a benevolent giant. It ensures that the same power that allows you to lift the people onto your shoulders, treads none underfoot.

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