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guide to...

leadership

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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 T", 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]

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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 shortterm 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.



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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.

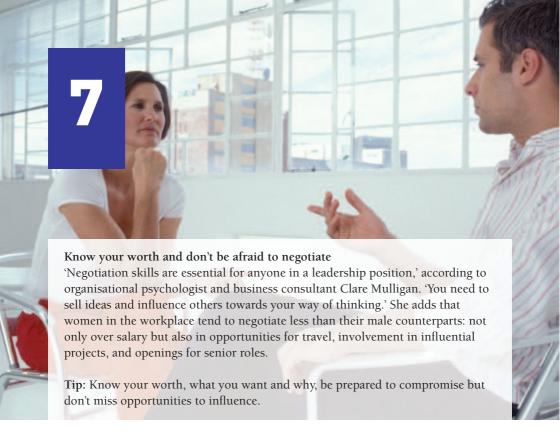
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Develop your leadership potential away from the workplace According to Professor Kevin Kniffin and collaborators from Cornell University, people who play competitive youth sports tend to show more leadership, self-respect, and self-confidence when 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.







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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.'

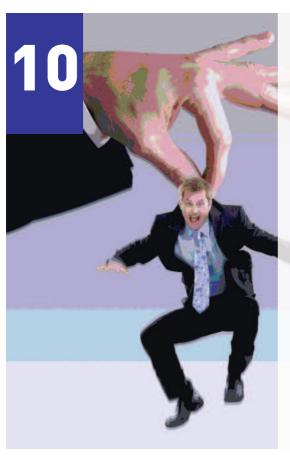
Tip: Giving your crew more autonomy and control over what they do, and allowing them to work more flexibly, may help you navigate your ship through choppy waters.



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.



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

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]

never forgetting this.'

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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