

For Agency Builders: 7 Secrets To Increase Your Leadership Impact

A major concern for senior executives is “bench strength”—that is, the quantity and quality of up-and-coming, potential leaders who are in the pipeline. The problem is that too often these would-be leaders “hold back, shrink and play small.”

One CEO recently said, “The potential leaders in our pipeline need to show up, step up, and increase their leadership impact.”

True. An organization is only as strong as its leadership.

In today’s climate of unprecedented change, intense competition and more demanding customers, leaders can’t hold back or shrink. Team members need leadership to model the way because all they see in this modern-day complexity is uncertainty and that leads to anxiety. Team members are looking to leadership for certainty, definitive guidance, vision and a solid commitment. This is an opportunity for leadership impact.

Here Are 7 Secrets to Increase Your Leadership Impact:

1. Shift the Energy of Your Team

With composure, increase and elevate your communications. Share your higher perspective and calm the anxiety with your increased presence and obvious commitment. Neutralize the teardown effect of uncertainty and anxiety. Shift the energy of your team toward purpose. You can’t just remove the deconstructive nature of negativity without replacing it with something. Use purpose to drive the conversation. Strategically use each day to keep your organizational purpose in front of your team members. Talk about your mission. Get them excited about growing and serving your clients, customers and stakeholders. Share the growth you see and the future you envision. When your team has a growth mindset it’s only natural that your organization will grow.

There will always be uncertainty but when you demonstrate resolute certainty in your commitment to your team, anxiety drops, morale increases; team members take note and follow your lead.

2. Collaborate

Bigger results come from bigger efforts. Instill collaboration within divisions and across programs. Use your leadership presence to convert dissonance to connectedness, silos into solidarity, problems into innovations, risk into reward and daily efforts into a dramatically improved future. Set the behavioral norm by becoming known as the leader interested in organizational success over individual success. When you execute on a higher and larger perspective, you instantly increase leadership impact.

3. Cultivate Creativity

Open the floodgates of creativity by asking more questions. The days of one leader with all the answers are past. In all likelihood your team is bursting with new ideas. You don't have to be Michelangelo, just ask powerful questions and be patient.—the innovation will come pouring out in the discussions. Team members are intimately familiar with problems. They simply need you to provide them the space to contemplate how today's problems can become tomorrow's innovations.

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4. Use Influence Not Power

No one likes a pompous leader. Rather than relying on the shortsighted and limiting power of position, reap the long-term benefits that come from building trust and influence. If you use power, good people will leave you and other people will get you.

When you rely on the external power of your leadership position you not only expose weakness in yourself, you build weakness in others by forcing them to acquiesce, stifling their growth and the potential for their unique contribution. Ultimately, the entire relationship is weakened. Defensiveness ensues, low trust follows and potential for cooperation is lost—smothered by negative emotion. Fight the imprudent impulse to command, and direct and invest in the higher, more refined skills of finesse, influence and persuasion.

Patience, finesse, influence and persuasion are the building blocks of increased impact.

5. Promote Daily Progress

Leaders are only deemed successful if they get results and they get those results through working with people. The only way people do great things is by focusing on their strengths and possibilities. Leaders set the stage for this focus.

On any given day your team's efforts will be influenced by a mix of perceptions, emotions, and motivations that can either pull them to higher performance or drag them down. Setbacks can send team spirit spiraling downward to the point where frustration and disgust take over.

Leaders have tremendous influence in promoting daily progress by ensuring team members have the environment they need to make steady progress and maintain

momentum. Avoid the toxicity of high pressure, punitive and judgmental measures that constrain momentum.

Rather, set clear goals for meaningful work. Provide autonomy and promote ownership of the outcomes. Nourish your team's efforts through affiliation, showing respect, words of encouragement and minimizing daily hassles.

6. Build a Body of Behavior

Be more of a model than a critic. Eschew the all-too-common "Killer Cs" that will keep you in the weakness of victim mode. Negativity will rob you of energy, initiative and impact.

Avoid These Killer Cs

Criticizing
Complaining
Competing
Comparing
Colluding
Contending

Don't criticize. Talk about what went well. Show your team what is possible. Add energy to the context. Be consistent. Your team is faced with being productive in spite of problems and hassles. When they know that they can consistently count on you for support and direction, momentum skyrockets.

7. Focus on What is Right, Not Who is Right

Team members rely on leaders to create an environment that is impartial, where everyone has the same opportunities that are based on merit. Don't take sides. Use conflict to demonstrate your commitment to organizational success. Model a higher perspective that lifts others from their petty preoccupations and carries them above the fray. Be a stronghold trailblazer that guides the upward purpose of your team.

The unique and distinct actions of a leader create ripples that increase and spread delivering ever-increasing impact that can be felt within and among teams. The greatest impact however, is felt industry-wide as a unique and distinct competitive advantage that is difficult, if not impossible for others to duplicate. When you employ these seven secrets and increase your leadership impact, you set up your entire team for success.

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