

Family Business: Effective Leadership Habits

By Ronald P. Smyser

Client question: What are the key habits and practices of the best leaders?

The common sense, effective leadership habits and practices listed below—which are straightforward to implement but seem to get lost in the hectic workday—can enhance your personal leadership effectiveness and the success of your business.

Check the box for each habit or practice that is already a natural part of your personal leadership behavior *and the culture of your business*. Be honest and candid—this one is for you.

- Live, preserve and promote integrity.
- Lead by example.
- Develop, live, and communicate your Vision and Core Values.
- Listen ... listen ... listen, reflect, plan, and communicate, versus “do”.
- Delegate effectively, promote, and teach effective delegation.
- Identify, prioritize, and live professional passions.
- Raise the bar ... first for yourself.
- Be accountable and foster accountability.
- Be patient but persistent to accomplish Vision-based priorities.
- Stay focused on core competencies and priorities.
- Commit and continuously strive to be the “Best of the Best”.
- Be passionate about, anticipate, and meet customer needs.
- Develop, live, and communicate a written business plan.
- Praise in public ... chastise in private.
- Give credit ... take blame.
- Ask for help, with “Can you help me?” then implement what’s been offered.
- Admit faults and mistakes ... immediately.
- Ask ... ask ... ask ... versus direct.
- Communicate your expectations early, clearly and consistently.
- Ask what, by when, by whom ... versus why.
- Encourage versus criticize; motivate versus control.
- Develop and promote teamwork versus competitive factions.
- Challenge, incentivize, and recognize others.
- Lead with humility, not arrogance.
- Respect others, no matter what their capabilities or corporate status.

- Say “Please”, versus “I need you to ...”
- Say “Thank you”... frequently.
- Accept sincere, informative apologies graciously.
- Do not use or accept apologies that serve only to preserve bad habits.
- Watch what you do ... actions speak louder than words.
- Ready, aim, fire ... not fire, ready, aim.
- Discuss performance issues immediately ... in private.
- Take notes ... stop to summarize ...refine ... communicate.
- Practice positive, supportive body language.
- Do not use “fashionable” meaningless comments, such as “Hey”, “Like”, “I mean”, “I need you to”. Stop and listen to yourself, to figure this one out.

Congratulate yourself for your successful checks in the boxes.

And start now to add the unchecked practices to your natural habits and business culture, to help make you and your business as effective and successful as possible.

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