

The Great Leader Within

by
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"Corporate leadership has lost the benefit of the doubt" - Jeffery Imelt, CEO of G.E.

What's happened to business leadership in the past few years? It's lost its credibility. Though yours may still be intact, what has the current climate done to your team's ability to take in and absorb your mission, vision and values? Are you truly in alignment with your key people and are they thinking appropriately for your company?

Think about the best boss you ever had. What is it about their leadership style that impresses you? Are you incorporating that style into your leadership techniques? Now think about the worst boss you've ever had and what was it about their style that didn't work? Are you doing anything that resembles their mistakes?

These questions will help you understand your leadership style and what, if anything, needs to be changed. Finding out what kind of leader you are can be as simple as understanding the difference between being a Motivation leader or a Penalizing leader.

Motivators inspire, help their team members stretch and they empower everyone they lead. Penalizing leaders take power away from their team members and demotivate by burning out people and not giving energy to them.

How are you directing the thinking of your people? A true leader knows that performance starts with the thinking process. By teaching and motivating your team to think about what is best for the company and for the team members, you will help them develop a culture of cohesive workers.

Do your team members give enough Discretionary Effort? Studies show that most people give 70% of their best effort. Those that give the extra 5-10% (which directly impacts your bottom line) do it because of the loyalty and relationship that they have to their bosses.

What are you doing to create superior relationships with your direct reports and team members? What are they doing (or learning) to help inspire their teams? To make stars in your organization, you have to find ways to create relationships with your team that makes them want to perform at a higher level.

The difference between average and star is the ability to blend all of your talents with the job at hand. People will rise to the occasion if they feel (yes, feel) they are doing the right thing, with the right people, for the right reason.

It is the leaders job to see what their team members need to create that blend and direct them to the proper individuals and resources to make it happen. The problem is that some leaders don't want to invest in their team members. They are unwilling

to see that most growth actually comes from making mistakes. Leaders need to learn that their investment in their team members starts with allowing them to make mistakes - as long as those mistakes don't take down the company or other people.

The way to best do this practice is to not take away their problems. Don't give them the answers. Ask the necessary questions to make the team member think about and if necessary research what is needed to find the right answers. This is leadership in its purest form.

Allow your people to connect with you and they will mirror your leadership style. Simply by being in your presence and feeling how you do what you do, team members will take on the necessary abilities to get the job done in a very similar way that you would. To teach them, allow them to shadow you for a day every once in a while (monthly works best). Have a rising star follow you around and just observe. It will create a connection, give them new skills and build their confidence.

If you question the value of this, remember that according to Dr. Relly Nadler of True North Leadership in Santa Barbara, top performers in most complex jobs are 127% more productive than average performers.

Leading from within, and encouraging your team to grow and develop using the techniques outlined above will give your company the edge you need to thrive in the current climate. In addition, your attitude and the attitude of your team will also improve, and that alone will make your life and your business a much more productive (and pleasant) place to be.

AUTHOR'S BIO:

For more than two decades Fortune 500 companies, educational institutions, and government organizations worldwide have relied on Dr. Barton Goldsmith to help them develop creative and balanced leadership. He is a highly sought-after keynote speaker, business consultant and nationally syndicated author. His columns appear in over 150 publications, including the Los Angeles Business Journal. Dr. Goldsmith works regularly with The Young President's Organization (YPO) and The Executive Committee (TEC). Considered an expert on small business, he has spoken worldwide to groups of 10 to 5,000, and is in high demand for Keynotes, Training and Consulting. He may be contacted through his web site BartonGoldsmith.com or at (818) 879-9996.

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