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6 Marks of a Leader

What do you admire most in your leaders? Maybe it's their imagination or the ability to inspire and motivate you to succeed. At its core, leading effectively in the workplace takes foresight, confidence and hard work. And with some extra effort, we can all learn to lead or lead better.

Here are 6 leadership skills we can all develop in our work:

Stay connected. Communicate by being available and coaching your team — speak clearly, ask questions and listen well. Engage others in building their skills.

Keep learning. Seek new opportunities. Define your vision and provide the direction and tools needed to succeed and grow as a team.

Stay adaptable. Leaders who can quickly learn and identify changing needs are essential to meeting long-term organizational goals, especially in fast-paced work environments.

Display emotional maturity. Lead by example with integrity. Encourage others to seek solutions rather than dwell on objections.

Be respectful. In collaborative workplaces, leaders must be truthful and responsible for their actions.

Be optimistic. People are generally attracted to people who show confidence and belief in what they're doing. And by making the best of any situation, your team will likely stay positive, too.

The Internet of Things at Work

The **Internet of Things** is the term used to describe the physical objects — everything from printers to keychains — that are electronically connected over the Internet. We can look forward to many more electronic tools saving time and improving efficiency for a more functional workplace. For example:



Safety and security. Smart locks, doorbells and surveillance systems sense when someone is trying to enter a building and automatically lock doors or send out notifications of entries via mobile device.

Efficiency. Lights, environmental controls and other energy-consuming devices will turn off automatically when not in use. Office equipment and even the lunchroom coffee pot will automatically adjust depending on demand.



Productivity. Sensors in products could simplify supply chain management and order fulfillment, while a smart printer might order more paper and ink automatically when it's low.

You'll most likely use a connected device at work in the near future, if you aren't already. Forecasts suggest there will be about 50 billion connected devices by 2030.



You Can't Cheat on Sleep

The **National Sleep Foundation** recommends that most adults get seven to nine hours of sleep per night to feel their best, stay safe and perform well at work. Getting less results in **sleep debt**.

As your sleep debt grows, it gets harder to repay. Sleeping late on days off or going to bed early a few nights in a row can help you feel less tired, but can't completely undo the damage sleep debt causes.

Sleep debt has been linked to several health problems, including obesity, high blood pressure, and depression. It also can increase your risk for impaired driving and injury, as well as reduce your work productivity and quality of life.

The best way to counteract sleep debt is to make sleep a priority and avoid sacrificing it to get other things done. However, if you have accrued sleep debt, take these steps:

- 1. If you fell short a few hours of sleep this week**, sleep three or four extra hours on the weekend, and go to bed an hour or two earlier every night for the next week.
- 2. If you're chronically sleep deprived**, take a few days off or plan a week free from all obligations except work. Make sleep a priority and engage in more relaxing activities.
- 3. Avoid future sleep debt.** Turn off your alarm for a few days, and sleep until you wake up on your own. This may identify how many hours are ideal for you. Then follow a routine sleep schedule moving forward.





Checklist: Is Your Desk Conducive to Work?

Use this checklist to create a more productive workspace:

- ☐ **Choose an object you love.** If you are allowed personal items, decorate your desk with a photograph, calendar, child's drawing, or small souvenir that holds good memories and makes you feel positive.
- ☐ **Control cords.** Use cord organizers or simple twist ties to organize computer and peripheral cords and keep them untangled and out of the way.
- ☐ **Keep important items close.** Place the things you use the most within easy reach.
- ☐ **Put unused items away.** Only keep on your desk what you need frequently, such as pens and other office supplies.
- ☐ **Dust and declutter.** At least once a week, dust off your desk, clean your computer keyboard and phone, and remove unnecessary items.
- ☐ **Tame paper.** Read, file, shred or recycle everything that lands on your desk before the end of the day. Avoid printing out or accumulating unnecessary papers.

Do This for a Better Commute

Don't let commuting get the best of you. In 2019, the average American's one-way commute was 27.1 minutes, according to the U.S. Census. Many spend much longer on the road. Hours in a vehicle can translate to less time spent moving, sleeping and socializing. This can lead to an increased risk of obesity, heart disease, depression and other health problems.



To ease the effects of long commutes:

- ◆ **Time your travel.** Leaving just 10 to 20 minutes earlier or later could make a big difference in traffic patterns and travel times.
- ◆ **Use your time comfortably if you're a passenger.** Listen to audio books and podcasts, or fire up your e-reader app. Use commute time to learn a foreign language. Or listen to work-related lectures, conferences, plays or music.
- ◆ **Find the best method.** Explore public transportation and carpooling, cycling or even walking part way. If driving is your only option, occasionally try different routes (if possible) that offer pleasing scenery, even if they take a bit longer. The key to a successful commute is to find ways to beat stress while still reaching your destination.



Managing Workplace Conflicts

With all the different personalities, cultures, ages, habits and viewpoints work brings together, conflicts are inevitable. Common reactions to conflict include ignoring it in the hope it will go away or treating it as a competition with a clear winner and loser. To effectively resolve differences or even prevent them:

- **Articulate.** State the problem clearly and calmly. Describe how it affects your work, but avoid blaming or accusing others. Instead, focus on solving the problem and recognize that it may have two or more sides.
- **Communicate.** Address the issue, without bringing up past incidents or generalizing.
- **Collaborate.** State clearly that you want to work together to solve the problem — that your goal is to satisfy all parties in the conflict, not just your own side.

If you can't reach a resolution, consider bringing in a neutral party. A supervisor, colleague, human resources professional or workplace counselor may offer solutions you've not considered.

“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.” – Theodore Roosevelt

Clean vs. Messy

Studies show that a neat desk may lead to healthier eating and orderly work habits. However, messy desks may sometimes increase creative thought and innovation. Do what works for you; just make sure your space doesn't distract others or disrupt your own productivity.



Note: Due to production lead time, this issue may not reflect the current COVID-19 situation in some or all regions of the U.S. For the most up-to-date information visit coronavirus.gov.

The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **3 Common Fitness Questions**, is at personalbest.com/extras/20V9tools.



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