



EXPERTS TONY GATTARI

10 TIPS TO BE A LEADER OF YOUR BUSINESS

“A business is a reflection of its owner. As the owner gets better, so does the business.”

In my experience of working with over 140 businesses around the world over many years, I have been amazed at how often we are called in because the business owner has problems with staff, customers, suppliers or the market.

Invariably, our first meeting with an owner is dominated by them telling us all their problems and how everyone is against them. This ‘victim mentality’ typically expresses itself through blame, denial and excuses. After hearing what they have to say, we will usually confront them with a simple, bold statement: “Your problems have little to do with anyone else; they are ultimately a reflection of your own behaviour.”

The essence of this statement is an important insight — a business is a reflection of its owner. As the owner gets better, so does the business.

So before you set to work on other aspects of your business, let’s start by working on you: the owner.

Listed below are 10 things you can do to become a better leader. Pick one. Do it today. Pick another one for tomorrow. In two weeks you will be a better leader.

1. Select the best people

As a leader, you’re only as good as the people on your team. Give yourself a better chance to succeed by picking the best people from the start. They could even be better than you.

2. Be a motivator

As human beings, we do things because we want to. Sometimes that’s because the consequences of not wanting to do something are unpleasant. However, most of the time we want to do things because of what we get out of it.

It’s no different at work, people do good work for the pay, or the prestige, or the recognition. They do bad work because they want to take it easy and still get paid. They work really hard because they want to impress someone. To motivate your people better, figure out what they want and how you can give it to them for doing what you want them to do.

3. Build your team

It is not enough that people are motivated to succeed at work. They have to work together as a team to accomplish the group’s objective. After all, if you just want them all to ‘do their own thing’, they don’t need you as a leader to mould them into a team, do they?

4. Be a leader, not just a manager

You have built the best team from the best employees available. You’ve motivated them to peak performance. What

is missing? Motivating a team is worthless unless you provide direction; unless you turn that motivation towards a goal and lead the team to it. It is the ability to lead others that truly sets a manager apart from their peers. Remember that leaders are found at all levels of the organisation, so be one.

5. Improve as a communicator

Communication may be the single most important skill of a leader. After all, you can’t be a leader if you can’t communicate your vision. You can’t motivate people if they can’t understand what you want. Communication skills can be improved through practice.

6. Improve your money management skills

To stay in business, a company has to make money. That means bringing money in the door and it means spending less than you bring in. Depending on your function in the organisation, you may have more influence on one area or the other, but you need to understand both. You can help your company, your employees, and yourself by getting better at managing the company’s money.

Remember, don’t be put off by the numbers, or by the fact that ‘it’s maths’.

7. Improve your time management skills

The one thing you will probably have less of at work than money is time. The better you get at managing time — yours and others’ — the more effective you will be as a leader.

8. Improve yourself

Don’t focus so hard on your people that you forget about yourself. Identify the areas in which you are weak and improve them. The fact that you are reading this article shows you understand the concept; you need to put this into practice.

9. Practice ethical management

Enron-like scandals have really driven home the point about how important ethics are in business.

10. Take a break

You are less effective as a leader if you are over-stressed. You are less tolerant and no-one wants to be anywhere near you. Take a break, give yourself a chance to relax and recharge your batteries. Your increased productivity when you return will more than make up for the time you take off. **mb**

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