

The Effective Leadership Checklist

Do This, ~~Not That~~.

Leadership requires a lot of careful planning and decision making. That's what makes it both challenging and rewarding. But, when it comes to how you lead, you can avoid having to decide in the moment by following the clear, concise guidelines below.

#1 - DO THIS: LEAD BY DOING

Embody the values and behaviors you want to see in your team and give them plenty of opportunities to see you living those values.



#1 - NOT THAT: LEAD BY TELLING

Tell employees how to act and think. Dictate strategies and tactics. Micromanage everything.



#2 - DO THIS: EMBRACE YOUR VALUES

Focus on positive qualities like respect, transparency, honesty, empathy, and compassion.



#2 - NOT THAT: TALK ABOUT VALUES

Put nice words on a plaque on the wall and on your website's About Us page, but don't change anything about yourself or the company.



#3 - DO THIS: BE WITH YOUR TEAM

Be visible, physically or virtually interacting with your team daily if at all possible. Get to know them and let them know you.



#3 - NOT THAT: LEAD FROM BEHIND THE OAK DESK

Stay in your office, keep the door closed, and have your assistant run interference. You're a very busy person.



#4 - DO THIS: ADMIT MISTAKES

Take ownership of your mistakes and encourage the team to do the same. Cultivate an environment where failure is viewed as a learning experience and a natural offshoot of taking calculated risks and innovating.



#4 - NOT THAT: PLAY THE BLAME GAME

When things go awry, figure out a way to blame someone else, claim it wasn't your idea to begin with, or make other excuses.



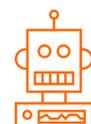
#5 - DO THIS: TREAT HUMANS HUMANELY

View your employees as individual human beings, each with their own strengths, preferences, ideas, and lives outside of work.



#5 - NOT THAT: TREAT HUMANS AS MACHINES

100 percent efficiency is not only possible, it's necessary. Bathroom breaks are for sissies, and free pizza fixes everything. (One slice limit, of course.)



#6 - DO THIS: SHOW EMPATHY AND COMPASSION

Treat your employees as you would want to be treated in the same position. Make room for humans to be human.



#6 - NOT THAT: SHOW "TOUGH LOVE"

It's a mean world out there. Employees should be grateful for you teaching them that no one cares. It builds character.



#7 - DO THIS: REALLY LISTEN

Give your employees every opportunity to share their thoughts, concerns, and suggestions for improvement in a safe environment. Acknowledge what they say and take action accordingly.



#7 - NOT THAT: ABSORB AND DEFLECT

When an employee speaks, you have two choices: 1) nod, smile, and escape as soon as possible; or 2) respond with platitudes and promise to have someone else follow up. You pay consultants to come up with new ideas. You pay employees to work. (See "Treat humans like machines.")



#8 - DO THIS: PROMOTE COLLABORATION OVER COMPETITION

While competition is bound to exist in any working environment, and it can be a tool for growth, the focus should be on enhancing collaboration within and across teams. Guide everyone to work together toward common goals.



#8 - NOT THAT: PROMOTE COMPETITION OVER COLLABORATION

Survival of the fittest is very much alive in your company. If someone isn't the best, they're a loser. Without a doubt, being labeled a loser motivates them to try harder.



#9 - DO THIS: COMMUNICATE CLEARLY AND OFTEN

Embrace transparency and communicate often with your team. Speak in such a way that others love to listen to you. Listen in such a way that others love to speak to you.



#9 - NOT THAT: COMMUNICATE AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE

Someone has to be in charge for a reason. If everyone knows everything, management becomes irrelevant, and that's unacceptable. Besides, communication takes time that would be better spent working.



#10 - DO THIS: SHARE GOALS AND INTENTIONS

Keep your team up to date on company, business unit, and team goals and objectives and how their individual day-to-day activities ladder up to larger strategies.



#10 - NOT THAT: COMPARTMENTALIZE OBJECTIVES

Letting employees in on the larger strategies, goals, and objectives the company is working toward just confuses and frustrates them. The average Joe doesn't care about why they're doing something. They just need to know what to do and they need to do it.



#11 - DO THIS: PROVIDE STATUS UPDATES

Keep the team informed on progress toward the goals and objectives they're working toward. Request status updates from them as well.



#11 - NOT THAT: PROVIDE YEAR-END SUMMARIES ONLY

It's best not to confuse anyone with routine status updates. Just let them know at the end of the year if they met the goals they didn't know about or if they failed. Then, congratulate or punish them accordingly.



#12 - DO THIS: OFFER PLENTY OF PRAISE

Celebrate successes, point out big and small wins. Offer individual praise privately (usually) while focusing publicly on praise for the whole team.



#12 - NOT THAT: OFFER PLENTY OF CORRECTION

Success is our expected state. No one needs to talk about that. But, when someone makes a mistake or fails to perfectly measure up to the standards we probably didn't make them aware of, they need to know about it.



For a deeper understanding of these principles, download our free white paper, "[Effective Leadership Solutions to Common Boss Problems.](#)"

