

Menu

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Credibility

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How Leaders Gain and Lose It, Why People Demand It
San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993, 332 pp., Interlib. loan

I skimmed much of this book, looking for nuggets. There is a lot of writing that appears to relate marginally to the title.

Credibility is the foundation of leadership and of all relationships that work.
Credibility is determined by the constituents. xxii

Leaders are servers and supporters, partners and providers. 7

Loyalty is not something a boss can demand. It is something the people--the constituency--choose to grant to a leader who has earned it. 9

Managers should think about employees as internal customers. 10

The most frequent responses from more than 1500 managers questioned re values, characteristics, and attitudes crucial to leadership were
integrity: truthful, trustworthy, character, convictions
competence: capable, productive, efficient, and
leadership: inspiring, decisive, provide direction 12

or: honest, forward-looking, inspiring, and competent 14

The quality that has changed most is supportiveness. It has moved from 11th to 6th overall since 1987. 19

We will work harder and more effectively for people we like. And we will like them in direct proportion to how they make us feel. 30

A simple prescription for strengthening credibility: DWYSYWD
Do what you say you will do. 47

forgetting the we has derailed many managers. Their actions may have been consistent only with their own wishes, not with those of the people they wanted to lead. When managers resort to the use of power and position, to compliance and command to get things done, they are not leading. They are dictating. 48

Credible leaders keep hope alive. An upbeat attitude is essential. 55

Only about 1 in three people respond favorably to questions about how well their company listens to them. 98

Failure to listen increases cynicism and casts further doubt about leaders' intentions and trustworthiness. 99

Great leaders are great learners and keep their minds open about what people can contribute to an enterprise. 101

Build dissent and controversy into decision making processes so that people will be willing to speak openly and offer contrary ideas. Look for good people from many molds, and then encourage them to speak out, even to disagree. 104-5

When team members actively promote varied ideas, the group becomes more resilient. 105

When thoughtful dissent is encouraged, better decisions are reached. 105

Open and sometimes heated discussion by the group members brought out ideas and perspectives that some had ignored or not even considered in their initial considerations. In articulating their views, members were encouraged to talk about their values and the principles involved in their decisions; the discussion was elevated to higher levels of reasoning as a result. 105

Effective back talk increases a leader's ability to make good decisions. 105

Here's what upsets employees most about their managers: public reprimands, failure to get credit for ideas, unrealistic demands, unclear directions (followed by angry reproof when the job is not done properly), and angry, rude, condescending, or temperamental behavior. p. 117 from Mary Ann Allison, *Managing Up, managing down*.

Accumulate yeses. The key word in agreements is yes. It is a magical word and a powerful tool for bringing people closer. When people say yes to one another, their relationship changes; a potential argument is transformed into the beginning of a reasoned dialogue. To build agreement, be on the lookout for opportunities to say yes as often as possible: "Yes, you have a point there." "Yes, I can understand that." Say yes as often as possible and try to get as many others as possible to do the same. Don't say, "But.." or "yes, but..."; say, "Yes, and..." 150

Empowering. It is not a matter of giving it to them, but of freeing them to use the power and skills they already have. It is a matter of expanding their opportunities to use themselves in service of a common and meaningful purpose. What is often called empowerment is really just taking off the chains and letting people loose. Credible leaders in this sense are liberators. 157

To sustain credibility, leaders must stay in touch with constituents. If they don't, if they remain invisible, they contribute to the credibility gap. 190

Impressive listening skills. A willingness to listen carefully to constituents and, if necessary, to hear the bad news keeps leaders from becoming isolated. 191

Staying in touch means that leaders must remain approachable. 193

Constituents look for leaders who demonstrate an enthusiastic and genuine belief in the capacity of others, who strengthen people's will, who supply the means to achieve, and who express optimism for the future. 218

Leaders must keep hope alive. 218

The principal forces which motivate a leader are an incredibly high need for personal achievement and a different vision of the world. You don't really have to be charismatic, you just have to believe in what you are doing so strongly that it becomes a reality. 223

A fundamental shortcoming in much of business today is that the leadership lacks vision and passion... 223

Sometimes the best answer is laughter. 228

Optimism like hope, does not mean simply waiting for good things to happen; it means acting in ways that create positive futures. 231

The best GOALS are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-oriented, and Time-bounded. 242

Table of most desirable characteristics of leaders. p. 255

Characteristics of the new learning competence are the following:
acknowledging very high levels of uncertainty, and learning to live with the stress of unstable situations
embracing error, and using mistakes as learning opportunities
accepting responsibility for the future, and evaluating the present in light of anticipated futures
developing interpersonal competence so we can learn from others
knowing ourselves
creating support groups for ourselves 272