

What Do Leaders Do?



Whether the job is a small patio or a huge port area, all projects require leaders to guide and motivate crews.

Get over it! People who work for you are not you. They don't think like you and they work different than you. And just because you pay them a good salary doesn't mean they're going to work their fanny off the same way you do. To get them to follow your vision and achieve big goals, you've got to give them a reason to want to follow. People are motivated for their reasons, not yours. It is the leader's job to discover what makes each person tick to do their best and produce outstanding results.

Think of your children. You tell them what you want them to do, but they don't always do it. Then you try to bribe them. "\$100 for an 'A'" and they say, "Not enough!" Frustrated, you scream, "If you're not home by 10 p.m., I'm gonna kill you!" Well, you don't. You let them off the hook. So they continue to stretch the envelope, as there's no accountability, no responsibility and no consequences. It seems like nothing works with your kids, just like with employees.

Do They Want To Do It?

Leadership is really about influencing others to want to do what you want them to do. The key words are "to want to do." They've got to want to do it. You tell and they decide if they'll do it. When you tell your kids to clean up their room, they decide if they'll do it based on their needs, the consequences, accountabilities and responsibilities which might affect them.

Ask yourself: "What makes people want to follow me?" You know what doesn't work (with your children and employees) — confusion, lack of trust, no integrity, no accountability and no consequences. A lot of managers say, "My people won't do what I want them to do. I should get rid of them,

but I can't afford for them to leave, so I don't fire them." What kind of accountability is this? If they don't have to do what you want them to do, why should they do more than the minimum to keep their job? You've got to make them want to do it.

What People Need

People need two things — money and happiness. Money includes fair pay at a secure company with competitive benefits. Happiness is the same as being motivated. Leaders motivate people to want to do what they want them to do. This is accomplished with exciting leadership, motivation, vision and direction, holding people accountable and giving them responsibility. The leader is responsible to encourage and motivate others to put out more energy and effort, with more enthusiasm so they'll go beyond where you want them to go. There are four action steps leaders take to achieve bottom-line results through people.

1. Provide Clear Expectations.

People need to know exactly what you want them to achieve—the expected specific results. Weak leaders assume people understand what's required, don't take the time to spell out what they want and don't make people accountable for results. The norm is to tell people to work real hard and try their best. But this doesn't let people know exactly what's expected. They must be told exactly what results you want: "By Friday I expect you to have this installed and 100% complete. By the 30th of the month all invoices must be out." Be specific with clear targets and exact results clearly defined. Make sure people understand what the target is, what's acceptable and what's not, when

they hit or miss it, the consequences for not achieving results and the rewards for a good job.

2. Recognition & Praise

Leaders provide ongoing recognition and praise to people who do the work. Weak leaders, who don't take time to thank people for a job well done, get weak results. In a survey on why people left their company, over 90% said they'd never been recognized or praised by their boss for anything. People want and need feedback and positive reinforcement for their contributions and efforts. Leaders give praises at least every week to everyone in their sphere of influence. Use words like, "I appreciate you" and "Thanks for a great job."

3. Understand The Big Picture

Employees need a clear understanding of the big picture and how they fit in. Leaders share where the company is going – its vision, future, positive and negatives, and changes required to be successful. People need to know, otherwise they tend to think the worst. Several times a month I present seminars to managers who come up with great ideas to build and improve their businesses. When they go back to their offices the next day, their people are often afraid they've been scheming how to squeeze them to work harder. That's not reality, but without information, people fear the worse. Leaders constantly tell the real deal – business is good or bad, sales are up or down, productivity is acceptable or not, whether people are doing a good job or not, and the profit picture.

4. Show You Care

Leaders let their people know they care about them as individuals. People need to know you appreciate them; you care about their goals, their future, their kids and their families. People must know they're important and their needs and wants will be considered as they contribute to the entire organization's success.

Use these four leadership action steps to get the results you want. Leadership is simple. The hard part of leadership is to do what you know you should do every day. So, go do it!

George Hedley owns Hedley Construction and Hardhat Presentations. He is the author of "Everything Contractors Know About Making A Profit" and is scheduled to speak at the Hardscape North America national trade show on March 9 and 10, 2007 in Nashville, Tennessee. For more information on this event visit www.hardscapenorthamerica.com. Mr. Hedley's presentations in Nashville are "How to Build a Construction Company that Always Makes a Profit," "Leading, and Managing People for Results" and "Set Yourself Apart from Your Competition." He regularly conducts 'Profit-Builder Circles' for construction company owners. To receive a free copy of his book, sign up for his free management e-newsletter, visit

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The May 2006 magazine issue announced that the ICPI Board of Directors approved higher levels of certification. Details will be announced to all ICPI Certified Concrete Paver Installers as courses are developed. The next level of certification will include hourly requirements for continuing education credits and this column continues to offer a one hour credit to those who successfully complete the questions below. Earned credits can be applied to hourly requirements for higher certification levels when the new programs are announced. A key component of advanced certification levels now under development is the ICPI Concrete Paver Business Professional program. This level will be for business owners or owner's representatives.

To complete the questions below, visit www.icpi.org and follow the home page Contractors link to Certification then to Online Training. This test is labeled Exam 8 and is offered at no charge. Answers entered online will generate a certificate immediately upon successful completion and ICPI will maintain an automatic record of your continuing education credit. Please do not send faxed exams as they will not be accepted. If you'd like to earn more hourly credits, see the other continuing education programs offered for \$20 each (ICPI member price). Good luck on your exam!

1. Providing clear expectations means:

- a. Telling your personnel to work real hard and try their best
- b. Assigning clearly defined tasks without accountability
- c. Giving clear targets and expected results with an understanding of the consequences and/or rewards
- d. Speaking in a clear, audible voice to your employees at all times

2. Leadership is really about:

- a. Being your employees best friend
- b. Firing people who don't do what you ask
- c. Doing tasks with your employees
- d. Getting employees to want to follow you

3. Employees need to know that individual needs are not as important as the company goals:

- a. True
- b. False

4. A good leader will share with their employees, which of the following:

- a. The company vision
- b. The company future

- c. Positive and negative results
 - d. Changes that are required
 - e. All of the above
5. *In a survey of employees that have left their jobs, over 90 % responded that the reason they left is because:*
- a. They weren't getting paid enough
 - b. They weren't being recognized or praised by their boss
 - c. They weren't working long enough hours
 - d. They were working too many hours
6. *Which of the following traits are attributable to poor leaders:*
- a. Lack of consequences and accountability
 - b. Lack of integrity and trust
 - c. A confused vision
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above
7. *Four action steps that leaders can take to achieve bottom line results through people are:*
- a. Provide accurate forecasts, good tools, accurate estimates and good pay
 - b. Smiling and joking with employees, taking coffee breaks with your employees, going out for dinner with employees and providing additional holidays
- c. Provide clear expectations, provide recognition, provide an understanding of the big picture and show that you care
- d. None of the above
8. *It is a leaders job to:*
- a. Be able to do every job function in the company
 - b. Do the training for the employees
 - c. Provide safety goggles for employees
 - d. Understand what makes each person tick to do their best and produce outstanding results
9. *People are motivated for your reasons and not theirs:*
- a. True
 - b. False
10. *George Hedley will be speaking on March 9-10, 2007 at:*
- a. ICPI headquarters in Washington, DC
 - b. the ICPI Canadian office in Burlington, Ontario
 - c. an undisclosed secret location
 - d. the national hardscape tradeshow for contractors, Hardscape North America in Nashville, Tennessee
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