

Essential Leadership Skills

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Introduction

The role of the leader in organisations is changing. Competition is becoming more intense with more and more entrants to the market. Technology advances are making it easier for businesses to serve markets that were not accessible historically. There is a continued demand to achieve efficiencies, increase profits and to work differently. So what essential skills will leaders need to have to thrive?

Essential Leadership Skills

Change Management

Whether you are a leader in a public body or private sector organisation, some form of change program will happen, sooner or later. Leaders will need to be skilled change agents who can create compelling reasons and get the support of others.

Team Building

Leaders cannot do everything themselves. They need to build teams around them which have the skills, knowledge, experience and personal attributes to deliver the results. The teams that they build need to be highly productive and at the same time create a positive environment so that high performance does not lead to high levels of burn out.

Innovation

Nothing stands still for very long. Leaders in organisations need to be look at the trends in the way the industry and customer preferences are moving and look for new ways of responding to them. Many businesses get themselves to a point where they are regarded as good performers but often cannot sustain this long term.

Relationship Building

Relationships are key in any business and leaders need to be making the time to create and build relationships. If the business operates on a national or international basis, creating relationships with other senior people in the business can be a real challenge. Relationships with suppliers are also taking on greater importance. Many businesses are relying on processing or customer service functions overseas run by external organisations to take care of large chunks of their business. For example, many companies are moving call centres to places like India to reduce costs. A similar trend is happening in areas like financial traction processing and even secretarial services in some cases. Creating and managing relationships is a vital part in the success of these initiatives.

Global Awareness

More and more businesses are becoming international. Different countries have different cultures, ways of doing things and behaving. Leaders need to learn about these differences if they are to succeed.

Decisiveness

While it is important for leaders to have a vision and clarity around the direction the business is going, they need to be ready to be decisive if things are not going to plan. In theory this sounds simple, but in practice it is extremely difficult. Taking the decision could be the best or worse thing the leader did depending how events unfold. Leaders need the courage to make the difficult calls.

Reflection Questions

What are your strengths as a leader?

Where do you struggle as a leader?

What are your development priorities over the next 12 months?

About the Author

Duncan Brodie is Director of Goals and Achievements, a Leadership Development Company that works with individuals, teams and organisations to develop their management and leadership capability.

With 25 years real life business experience, Duncan understands first hand the challenges of managing and leading in the complex business environment.

For more information and to sign up for his free e-course and newsletter, please visit www.goalsandachievements.co.uk