

6 Pillars of Stellar Leadership



The definition of leadership is evolving at a rapid pace as change drives every aspect of business. Evolution in technology, consumer behaviour, employee expectations, and stakeholder management all force leaders to modify the way they lead others around them. Therefore, the need to upgrade leadership skills is increasingly becoming not only a necessity but also a requirement in every organisation to sustain successful outcomes. With that context in mind, consider these six key areas in which today's leaders must absolutely become masters.

1) Self-knowledge. Leaders without a full comprehension of their own capabilities and limits are bound to fade into oblivion. If one does not even know how to learn about one's self, how can one even preach to others to achieve positive outcomes? It is common sense. The more self-aware and empowered leaders feel, the more they can develop significantly better individual performance, as well as organisational results. Without leaders' self-knowledge, corporations will continue to waste and miss opportunities for the foreseeable future. That self-knowledge, in turn, works downward through all

employee levels to encourage and support the self-knowledge efforts of their individual employees. Self-aware leaders, hand-in-hand with self-aware employees, form the optimal partnership to drive the organisation toward long-term sustainable success.

2) Compassion. Stellar leaders care about people; weak leaders drain people. A leader who does not care about others cannot coach, develop, and provide opportunities to others – and, therefore, cannot be a stellar leader.

Without compassion, actions undertaken by leadership to optimise individual output may simply fall short and fail to achieve their intended goal. Intelligent employees are adept at determining whether an employer's efforts to guide them are shallow and short-term, without honest regard for their future development. Leaders without compassion operate solely as machines, without the heart that could transform the organisation. Finally, that compassion that stellar leaders show toward employees should also extend to leaders themselves. How can one care about others without first caring about oneself?



3) Clarity. Stellar leaders are clear about where they want to go and with whom they can get there. They will not take people to places where they are not supposed to be. This effort demands a clear mission and well-defined steps to reach the organisation's objectives.

However, accompanying that precise roadmap, true leaders acknowledge the skill level of each individual, recognising that not all employees are capable of reaching the organisation's objectives. All employees, encouraged by a stellar leader, strive to do their best within the honest limitations of their capabilities. The best leaders help individuals find the right position within the organisation – or, if there is no best spot, to ease them into a better fit elsewhere.

4) Transparency. Stellar leaders always aim at making objective decisions based on facts and data – not emotions (although intuition, based on valid experience, may also come into play). Therefore, transparency is the foundation of their decision-making process, as they seek the best results, excluding any bias driven by self-interest.

Thought leaders do not hide behind a title, pronouncing judgment just because of their status within the organisation. When reaching a decision, stellar leaders listen to knowledgeable experts within (and external, if appropriate) the organisation, gather all pertinent facts, consider alternatives and options, and explain the rationale behind their decision through transparent actions. They do not proclaim “this is so,” but rather “this is so and here’s why.”

5) Credibility. Stellar leaders are only interested in building “trusted networks” – not just any “network” for the sake of creating one. Therefore, building long-term relationships based on mutually beneficial outcomes is at the core of their credibility, thereby offering value for both parties.

Honest and transparent efforts to develop sustainable relationships at the top encourage the same kind of action through all levels of the workforce. For example, management may encourage the development of partnership between departments that may not have

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ever cooperated before but are now necessary to join hands to drive the company forward.

In addition, stellar leaders do not merely create these networks and walk away, leaving employees to go forward without support. They lead by practical example and action. Their efforts are not hollow and, instead, ring true.

6) Curiosity. Stellar leaders encourage creativity and embrace open-mindedness to boost innovation and inclusiveness to leverage potential across the organisation. Their supportive actions target all employees, not just the few top talents. Individual employees reveal different interests and abilities – all of which should be harnessed to achieve a positive outcome for their own personal development, as well as to support the organisation’s mission. After all, as the best idea can emerge from anyone in the organisation, stellar leaders recognise and encourage active participation in all areas of operation. True leadership acknowledges not only the value of all individuals but also their need to be able to voice their ideas and opinions without fear of ridicule.

Building on the 6 Pillars

With a solid foundation in place – incorporating self-knowledge, compassion, clarity, transparency, credibility, and curiosity – stellar leaders can lead by example. Their efforts can transform a mediocre, just-surviving organisation into a state-of-the-art industry leader that optimises the talents of every individual. True leaders do not concern themselves with simply being “boss” but rather with a clear understanding of what it means to “lead.” A boss does not engender loyalty and top effort; a true leader does.

About the Author: Ali Kursun is a Managing Partner at sparkChief & Co., a consulting firm that helps clients develop competitive talent management strategies, career development programs, and rewards solutions.

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sparkChief & Co.

25 Route de Lullier
1254 Jussy, GE, Switzerland

Tel +41 22 346 24 05
inquire@sparkchief.com
www.sparkchief.com

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