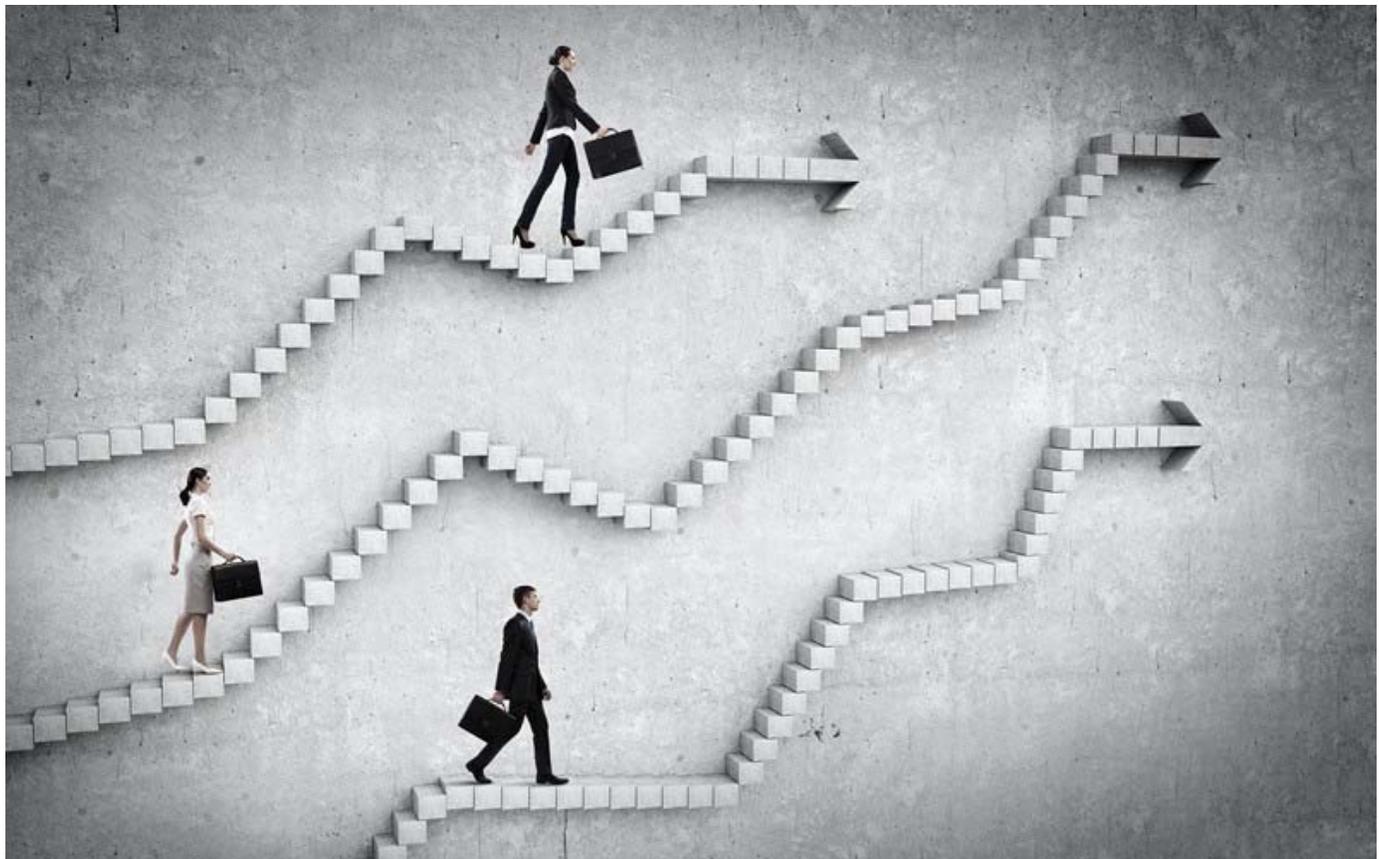


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Take Leadership Skills to the Next Level

By Michael McLin | Sunday, November 25, 2018

Leadership , Workforce Development , HR , Business Development



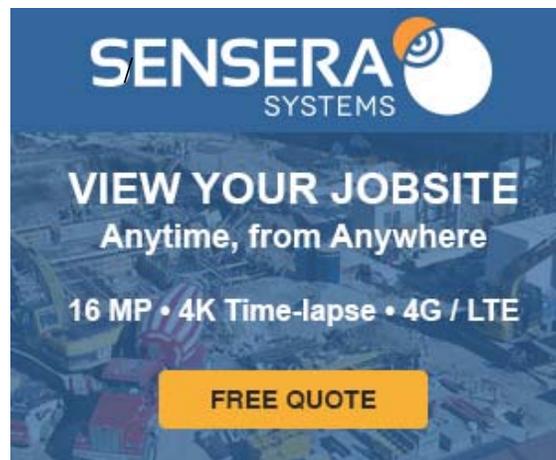
In today's challenging world, organizations are looking for more than technical expertise and in-depth job knowledge. They want individuals who demonstrate a deep understanding of people and can influence others to accomplish an objective. They're looking for risk-takers with an eye for opportunity and the ability to take advantage of innovations, and those who work hard and strive for greatness. In short, they want leaders.

Believe it or not, great leaders aren't born; they create themselves by working on their personal and professional skills. With that being said, how do leaders get to the next level? It's not about reading books or taking a class. Action is required to confront what it takes to close the gap between who a person is now and who they aspire to become. Here are 11 steps to take on the path to next-level leadership.

1. STRIVE FOR CLARITY

Exceptional leaders don't re-communicate the complex; instead, they distill and prioritize their message. Some of the world's most effective politicians have a knack for providing clear answers to remarkably complex questions. It's possible to speak plainly to create clarity.

2. DO YOUR HOMEWORK



Complexity in the workplace means employees are constantly on the brink of information overload. When information grows too complex, people glaze over. Leaders must work through the complexity, search for meaning and come out on the other side with a clear message.

3. SAY IT SUCCINCTLY

Send a message so crystal clear that anyone can understand it. Try to use fewer words. When writing email or reports, refine how it's communicated to maximize the impact.

4. EXPLAIN WHY

People want to understand that what they do has meaning and purpose. They need to know how their task contributes on a strategic level. Striking an authoritative tone or keeping people on a need-to-know basis shows leadership weakness, not strength.

5. INVITE QUESTIONS

Explain objectives and the big picture. Invite questions. Hearing something does not equal someone understanding it. People start at different places. Tune into their various communication styles and then adapt the message to reach people meaningfully.

6. DIRECT PEOPLE

Tell staff what they need to do and keep it simple. Synthesis and understanding mean nothing without the payoff of action. Therefore, make the course of action easy to follow and urgent. The fewer calls to action, the better. Ideally, ask for just one thing.

7. SHOW OPTIMISM

When discussing the state of affairs with employees, try to broadcast the quiet confidence and enthusiasm of a leader. Optimism fuels growth and creativity. When leadership believes in the best outcomes, they unleash unparalleled opportunities to make them happen.

8. PICK TEAM MEMBERS CAREFULLY

Apply big picture, forward thinking to everyday decisions, starting with your team. Pick people who will grow, and plan for resilience. Accept short-term pain, such as investing in the equipment and training, as part of the long-term gain.

9. EXPERIMENT AND INNOVATE

People love innovation that simplifies and improves their lives. Delivering that innovation to customers and employees will win them over. And if something fails to work, so be it, just try something else. Stay nimble and open to new tactics.

10. GET FEEDBACK AND LEARN

Don't just review analytics. Ask for feedback. Actively seek feedback from team members, vendors and, most importantly, customers. Uncover new ways to improve the experience being offered.

11. GO BEYOND BOUNDARIES

Look for inspiration and solutions outside of industry orthodoxy. Consider non-traditional partnerships. Join business groups outside of the comfort zone, and consider whether new tools and technology could transform the organization.



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