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Qualifications Of The Leader

It is by no means enough that a leader should be capable in his or her profession. He or she must be that, of course, but also a great deal more. He or she should be as well a gentleman or gentlewoman of liberal education, refined manners, punctilious courtesy, and the nicest sense of personal honor.



A leader should be the soul of tact, patience, justice, firmness, and charity. No meritorious act of a subordinate should escape his or her attention or be left to pass without its reward, even if the reward is only a word of approval. Conversely, he or she should not be blind to a single fault in any subordinate, though, at the same time, he or she should be quick and unflinching to distinguish error from malice, thoughtlessness from incompetence, and well meant shortcoming from heedless or stupid blunder.

— Adapted by Thomas S. Baer of Baer Resources from "Qualifications of the Naval Officer" based on letters of John Paul Jones.

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How To Be A Better Team Contributor

More and more often, employees are expected to contribute to the performance and success of their work teams. While it sounds great on paper, it isn't all that easy to work in a team, since often team members are different in style, attitude, commitment and work ethic. If you are a work team member, supervise, manage or lead a team, take a good look at these tips and hints which will make it easier for team members to contribute more productively to their teams, and decrease friction among team members.



Stop The Blaming Cycle

Often teams get bogged down in blaming members when things go wrong. As a team member you can do two things to stop this wasteful and destructive team behavior. First, eliminate blaming language you may use. Replace blaming and finger-pointing comments or questions with a focus on solving problems, or preventing problems. Second, if other team members get into the blaming cycle, step in and "turn" the conversation back to a constructive approach. For example, here's a good phrase: "Ok, maybe we could save some time here by trying to ensure that the problem doesn't happen again, so what can we do to prevent it next time?"

Focus On The Present And Future

This is related to the blaming cycle. Don't dwell on the past. Use the past (successes and team failures) to help the team determine where they need to go to improve. You can't change the past -- you can only use it to learn from.

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ONE MINUTE IDEAS

Words of Wisdom

"Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you will help them become what they are capable of becoming."

Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

"It is good to dream, but it is better to dream and work. Faith is mighty, but action with faith is mightier."

Thomas Robert Gaines

"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."

Winston Churchill

"Each of us, if we would grow, must be committed to excellence. The championships, the money, the color; all of these things linger only in the memory. It is the spirit, the will to excel, the will to win; these are the things that endure."

Vince Lombardi

Web Site Of The Month

Better Business Bureau – Reliability Program

"73% of purchasers and 82% of non-purchasers cite reliability of business as a major concern when shopping online." Address this concern head-on with the BBBOnLine Reliability Seal.



Check it out at:
www.bbbonline.org

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Stop Back Channel Talk

Talking about a team member in private with another team member usually involves a blaming process. While sometimes it's good to vent frustration about a fellow teammate, you shouldn't be doing it within the team. It's counter productive, and harmful. Stop doing it unless you have a specific, constructive reason for doing so.

Personal Responsibility

Take responsibility for your behavior and the results that your team produces, but NOT the behavior of your teammates. When you take responsibility for another member's actions, you will tend to want to change your teammate, something that often creates dissension.

Finally, focus on YOUR contributions. Don't spend your time thinking about or telling teammates what THEY should be doing for the team. Think about what you can contribute, and how you can contribute more effectively. Then do it. For example, if you have a great suggestion, don't dump it in the group with the expectation that someone else will implement it. You offer to do it...after all it's your suggestion.

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Receive Criticism Successfully

To receive criticism effectively, try these techniques:

- Put your shields up. Immediately picture a protective shield surrounding you before you react. This buys you a few seconds to examine your critic's intentions. Should you explore the criticism further as a possible way to grow professionally? Or should you dismiss it as only a hurtful message?
- Act like a coffee filter. If you explore the criticism further, you need to strain out the emotional grounds — the critic's fear or anger — from the facts.
- Say "You're right." It's a lot easier to say than "I'm wrong." And these few words pour water on the potential blaze of a heated discussion.

Source: Mel Ann Coley, Coley Training and Development, 3830 Burning Tree Lane, Garland, TX 75042.

*John O'Sullivan is the founder of Aberfoyle Associates, a company that brings simple, common sense, practical solutions to organizations, large and small. His company provides Coaching and Consulting Services to companies nationwide and is dedicated to helping his clients simply get things done. In the final analysis, it is **RESULTS** that count; achieve yours now! Call or e-mail for your **FREE** consultation. (info@aberfoyleus.com)*