
IDEABRIDGE



The IdeaBridge White Paper Series:
The Laws of Leadership



THE LAWS OF LEADERSHIP

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Summary

There are certain laws of leadership that determine one's success in leading; violate or ignore them, and you will severely limit your effectiveness as a leader. These laws are the foundation of leadership, yet you will not find them in any MBA curriculum. These principles are best learned from experience. Once you learn the principles, you must consistently practice and apply them to your situation.

Influencing Others To Act

- Leadership is influence – nothing more, nothing less.
- True leadership cannot be awarded, appointed, or assigned. It comes only from influence, and that can't be mandated. It must be earned.
- Leadership is about influencing people to follow, while management focuses on maintaining systems and processes.
- The best way to test whether a person can lead rather than just manage is to ask him to create positive change. Managers can maintain direction, but they can't change it. To move people in a new direction, you need influence.
- Hard work is required to gain influence in any organization and to earn the right to become the leader.
- If you can't influence others, they won't follow you. And if they won't follow, you're not a leader.
- Leadership is complicated. It has many facets: respect, experience, emotional strength, people skills, discipline, vision, momentum, timing – this list goes on.
- Encourage making yourself a lifelong learner of leadership. Read books, listen to tapes regularly, and keep attending seminars. And whenever you come across a golden nugget of truth or a significant quote, file it away for the future.
- Leadership is developed daily, not in a day. Larry Bird became an outstanding free-throw shooter by practicing five hundred shots each morning before he went to school.
- Champions don't become champions in the ring – they are merely recognized there.
- When you prepare well, you convey confidence and trust to your people.
- When the real leader speaks, people do listen.
- You're a leader only if you have followers, and that always requires the development of relationships – the deeper the relationships, the stronger the potential for leadership. Each time you enter a new leadership position, you should immediately start building relationships. Build enough of the right kinds of relationships with the right people, and you can dramatically enhance your leadership effectiveness.



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Trust and Respect

- Trust is the foundation of leadership.
- You don't build trust by talking about it. You build it by achieving results, always with integrity and in a manner that shows real personal regard for the people with whom you work.
- How do leaders earn respect? By making sound decisions, admitting their mistakes, and putting what's best for their followers and the organization ahead of their personal agendas.
- Followers are attracted to people who are better leaders than themselves. That is the Law of Respect.

Developing your 'Leadership Intuition'

- The more leadership ability a person has, the more quickly he recognizes leadership – or its lack – in others.
- Leadership intuition is often the factor that separates the greatest leaders from the merely good ones.
- A leader has to quickly read the situation and know instinctively what play to call.
- Leaders see everything with a leadership bias, and as a result, they instinctively, almost automatically, know what to do.
- This informed intuition causes leadership issues to jump out. The best way to describe this bias is an ability to get a handle on intangible factors, understand them, and work with them to accomplish leadership goals.
- Some people are born with exceptional leadership gifts. They instinctively understand people and know how to move them from point A to point B.
- Take the recent example of Steve Jobs at troubled Apple Computer. Jobs intuitively reviewed the situation and immediately took action. He knew that improvement was impossible without a change in leadership, so he quickly dismissed all but two of the previous board members and installed new ones. Apple's executive leadership also experienced positive change at his hands.
- Once new leaders were in place, Job's looked at the company's focus. He wanted to get back to the basics of what Apple had always done best: use its individuality to create products that made a difference. He reviewed the road map of new products and axed more than 70% of the projects, keeping the 30% that were gems. He also sensed a problem with the company's marketing, so he fired the ad agency and held a competition for the account among three firms. You've seen those "Think Different" ads in all the magazines, billboards and TV commercials. The ads seem to brilliantly capture what we've all come to associate with Apple.



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Connection With Those Whom You Lead

- People are attracted to leaders whose values are similar to their own.
- If you think the people you attract could be better, then it's time for you to improve yourself.
- Effective leaders know that you first have to touch people's hearts before you ask them for a hand. You can't move people to action unless you first move them with emotion. The heart comes before the head.
- The stronger the relationship and connection between individuals, the more likely the follower will want to help the leader.
- You develop credibility with people when you connect with them and show that you genuinely want to help them.
- Leaders who obey the Law of Connection are always initiators. They take the first step with others and then make the effort to continue building relationships.
- It's the leader's job to initiate connection with the people.
- Never underestimate the power of building relationships with people before asking them to follow you.
- When a leader has done the work to connect with his people, you can see it in the way the organization functions. Among employees there is incredible loyalty and a strong work ethic. The vision of the leader becomes the aspiration of the people. The impact is incredible.
- Hire the best staff you can find, develop them as much as you can, and hand off everything you can to them.
- When a leader can't or won't empower others, he creates barriers within the organization that people cannot overcome.
- If you are able to continually empower and help them develop so that they become capable of taking over your job, you will become so valuable to the organization that you become indispensable.
- People cannot give to others what they themselves do not possess. Followers simply cannot develop leaders.
- Every effective leadership mentor makes the development of leaders one of his highest priorities in life. He knows that the potential of the organization depends on the growth of its leadership. The more leaders there are, the greater its chance of success.
- It takes a leader to raise up another leader. Followers can't do it. Neither can institutional programs. It takes one to know one, show one, and grow one. That's the Law of Leadership Reproduction.
- People don't at first follow worthy causes. They follow worthy leaders who promote worthwhile causes. People buy into the leader first, then the leader's vision.



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- Your success is measured by your ability to actually take the people where they need to go. But you can do that only if the people first buy into you as a leader.
- Lincoln never forgot that the nation's victory was his highest priority, ahead of his pride, reputation, and personal comfort. He surrounded himself with the best leaders possible, empowered his generals, and was never afraid to give others the credit for the victories the Union gained.
- Teams succeed only when the players have a unified vision, no matter how much talent or potential there is. A team doesn't win the championship if its players have different agendas. That's true in professional sports. It's true in business.
- Momentum really is a leader's best friend. Sometimes it's the only difference between losing and winning.
- When leaders have momentum on their side, people think they're geniuses. They look past shortcomings. They forget about the mistakes the leaders have made. Momentum changes people's perspective of leaders.

Establishing and Maintaining Priorities

- Your list of priorities must always begin with what is required of you. Anything required that's not necessary for you to do personally should be delegated or eliminated.
- What gives the greatest return? As a leader, you should spend most of your time working in your areas of greatest strength. If something can be done 80 percent as well by someone else in your organization, delegate it. If a responsibility could potentially meet that standard, then develop a person to handle it.
- Every time Norman Schwarzkopf assumed a new command, he didn't just rely on his leadership intuition; he also reexamined the unit's priorities. When Lee Iacocca took over Chrysler, the first thing he did was to reorder its priorities.
- Are you spread out all over the place? Or are you focused on the few things that bring the highest reward? Successful leaders live according to the Law of Priorities. This actually enables them to increase focus while reducing their number of actions.
- When you become a leader, you lose the right to think solely about yourself.
- Leaders who develop followers grow their organization only one person at a time. But leaders who develop leaders multiply their growth, because for every leader they develop, they also receive all of the leader's followers.
- To go to the highest level, you have to develop leaders of leaders. Leaders who develop leaders:
 - Focus on strengths
 - Develop the top 20 percent
 - Give power away
 - Invest time in others
 - Impact people far beyond their own reach