

Illawarra Small Business Assistance

HANDY HINT – HOW IMPORTANT IS LEADERSHIP?

It was coincidental that when I sat down to write this “handy hint” I heard a report about the proposed changes at the ANZ bank. After 10 years at the helm John McFarlane is stepping down as CEO and will be replaced by an external successor. The part that really made me listen closely was the remark that not only has McFarlane been an outstanding leader driving growth and success but that he has also been genuinely and widely admired and liked by staff throughout the bank.

Some business proprietors believe that to be fully effective they have to be respected by their staff or that it's more important to be respected than it is to be liked. In the case of John McFarlane, he has proven that it's possible to achieve both – he is admired for his pursuit of excellence as well as for his personal high standards of fairness and his caring and ethical approach to the management of customer and staff relationships.

So, in order to be an effective and successful leader, is it necessary to be liked by your staff?

To address this question we probably need to answer by asking another question – “what makes a successful leader?”

A whole range of intellects, scholars, psychologists and theologians have been debating this subject for 100's of years and many books have been written about it, sometimes with widely differing views and opinions.

However, what seems to be unanimously agreed is that we need more leaders. Some leading proponents of the subject also believe that everyone has the potential to be a leader. At a talk I attended recently a leading international author and business mastermind even suggested that leadership was a “dirty” word because it infers that only a select few are ever truly able to achieve and be recognised as having attained such status. Those who know me would not be surprised to learn that I had to indicate my disagreement with his controversial opinion (perhaps this was what he had planned to achieve) for I hold the more popular view that leadership is an essential component of achieving success in business and is clearly about guiding others towards the achievement of common goals.

What characteristics do you consider important qualities of an effective leader?

In my working life across some quite diverse areas of commerce, some of the most critical ingredients exhibited by those I have respected and liked as leaders have included their ability to grow people through a strong mentoring ability and to make employees feel that they are important. Mostly they have had an ability to easily connect with others, exchanging ideas and values and gaining strong involvement and teamwork. But above all they have combined their

enthusiastic and confident approach with a genuine and caring attitude and with lots of compassion and empathy.

I like to create constructs around topics such as this in order to focus points of relevance and importance. Here is what I adopt for "LEADERSHIP"

In the process of guiding the leader has to draw on an extensive range of knowledge, experience and skills to gain the trust, co-operation and commitment of others

LEADERSHIP

Love

Empathy

Assert

Develop

Evaluate

Reward

Sacrifice and **S**haring

Harmony and **H**appiness

Involve and **I**nspire

Passion for **P**eople, **P**atience and **P**erformance

As alluded to above, one of the ingredients that is not recognised in this format is **TRUST** (and Truth) but it is my view that if you can consistently implement the core ingredients of LEADERSHIP then trust will certainly result as a natural outcome.

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