

The four main areas that people want from their leaders at work are

Consistency: doing what you say you will do over time.

This includes doing what you say you will for the team as well as for management. In order to gain respect for someone, it is much easier if their actions are consistent with their words – we inherently find them much more believable as people and as a result of this, we tend to trust those whose actions and words tie up, more than we would trust those whose don't.

Competence: demonstrating relevant knowledge and expertise that are useful to the team, and there when they require them.

The skills that probably got you the job are likely to be the technical competence of your previous role. As a result of this, it is useful for your team to realise and understand that you do not see yourself above the day to day tasks that they are expected to undertake – in fact in some cases, you can still guide them in the technical aspects of their job – therefore providing valuable leadership and support for them in their specific role

Concern: genuinely demonstrating understanding of the thoughts, feelings and experiences of others.

As a team member, we all need to be appreciated by those that we work with. Work is not normally about simply doing the task in hand – we are all expected to interact with other people at certain times during our working week, and as such, these interactions should, wherever possible, be meaningful. Not only must you have a genuine concern for individuals within the team, but you are also expected to display the importance of the individual to each team member

Commitment: persevering despite obstacles

As a supervisor, you are the link to the management team. As such, you are the person who is most likely to have an understanding of what the future holds for the business. If you do not hold an inspirational view of the future, you will be unlikely to be able to inspire anyone else that there is hope for them. Likewise, if you let the smallest obstacle hold you back, it is not providing a strategic view of the “grander scale of things” which will bring your leadership abilities into question



These four areas are useful to know when embarking upon any form of leadership, however what is *more* useful to know is how to make a conscious decision to display each of them.

The following is intended to be a rough guide to help you display behaviours and language which are consistent with each other, and that will instill a sense of confidence in you and your abilities as perceived by the team.

Consistency Tactics

Tactic	Implementation
Set Communication Goals	Outline the key things that must be communicated to your team. Set these out clearly both for yourself and for the team
Offer status reports and forecasts	Provide your team with up to date information on the strategy and progress of the business. Make sure that messages about strategy, mission, vision and goals are consistently deployed. Ensure that the team know how <i>their</i> contribution helps the business meet its aims
Explain changes to plans	In the absence of information, people draw their own conclusions. Set the record straight. Tell people what you know and what you don't know, as well as what you are and are not able to tell them.
Respect confidentiality	Clear any information with individuals before you share it with others
Close the loop	Never assume that you have closed the loop until you confirm this with everyone – making sure that in your dissemination of information, nobody has been missed out
Make realistic commitments	Check your calendar or diary to make sure that you have appropriate time and resources before you commit. Prior to committing to anything, always be sure that you know the scope of your promise



Competence Tactics

Tactic	Implementation
Engage employees in decisions	Involve employees in important decisions of the company
Promote self – directed learning	Be a role-model. Identify what you want to learn, and how you want to learn it. If others see you working on your own learning, they are more likely to follow suit
Stay up to date	Keep up to date on trends within the industry. Create a bulletin board on which you or your team can post industry news and articles, personal stories or media clips
Encourage communities of practice	Encourage communication of shared learning throughout the team. Create channels or mechanisms for people in similar job roles to communicate.
Use staff's diverse skills	Give employees opportunities to use their skills in different ways, therefore valuing and embracing diversity within the team – creating a common bond and understanding of the attributes that each individual brings to the team



Concern Tactics

Tactic	Implementation
Give staff permission to speak frankly	Provide a context for frank and open discussion where there is no fear of retribution. This allows individuals to feel as if they have a voice that will be listened to, and will promote clear communication within the team
Promote connection	Keep an “open door” policy. Whilst most supervisors will not have a separate office, they should treat their working area as if it had an open door. Check in with staff at regular intervals, perhaps with a pre determined list of questions to allow you to gauge what staff are doing, spot potential problems, obstacles ideas and achievements etc
Recognise the individual	Find out about their life outside of work – not in an intrusive manner though. One example of how to do this is to have a team lunch and forbid “work” as being a topic of conversation
Think like they do	What do you want from your ideal supervisor? What attributes would make the perfect supervisor for you? Is this the same as your own staff would expect?
Set triggers for yourself	Look at your own time management. You need to keep on top of your actions, following up when and where required, in order to meet the needs of those that you have made promises to
Close the loop	When you have resolved an issue or have taken the action that you promised you would, close the loop and let the people involved know that this has been done



Commitment Tactics

Tactic	Implementation
Share relevant news when appropriate	Tell employees the truth about organisational challenges and successes whenever they arise
Develop focused drive	Maintain focus when disruptions distract attention from key issues and objectives
Reaffirm your beliefs and values	Help others in times of change by reaffirming the key goals and values
Demonstrate optimism	In difficult situations, deliberately seek out and express positive interpretations and make sure that others see and hear your optimism

These **four attributes** of a supervisor should be evident whenever the supervisor undertakes any of the **three main responsibilities** in their role.

Business management Guru John Adair described the three main responsibilities or operational areas of a supervisor in his “Action Centred Leadership Model” as described on the next instalment.

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