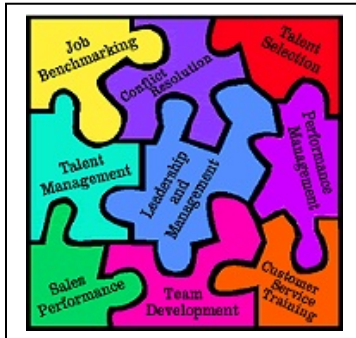




# Leadership Style for HR Professionals



As an HR Professional, it's your responsibility to get the most out of your employees. Your leadership style will have a significant impact on their motivation to produce. Leading by example is one way to accomplish this, and it means more than simply walking the talk. It also includes such ideas as integrity, taking action, and following through. If, for example, you introduce a new set of workplace rules, not only do you need to follow them yourself, but also ensure that they are enforced. If not, you send a very clear message that you're not worth listening to.

Of course, you don't need to create a set of rigid rules to be an effective leader. In fact, the fewer you have, the more weight they will carry, and the more likely your employees will remember them. However, any type of rule, whether explicit or implied, can demonstrate your executive leadership style. Even a minor infraction on your part can lead your employees to seeking guidance elsewhere. In other words, as a leader, you need to be the best you can be at all times. When you do make a mistake, admit it rather than make excuses, and you will gain the trust and respect of your team.

Leadership involves much more than laying down the law and expecting people to follow. While this approach may have worked in the past, it is not the way of today's workforce, and should you choose this route, you will likely lose good people. How then, do you lead effectively and by example?

As a HR Profession prospective I recommendation following is a list of guidelines from which to pick and chose Leadership style

## **Like, Enjoy and Appreciate Employees**

An employer and employee have an interpersonal relationship. The attitude toward employees the employer brings to the relationship can have a great impact. Employees easily sense the extent, to which their employer likes, enjoys and appreciates them. An employer with a poor attitude toward employees needs to examine the attitudes impact on his or her reputation as a place to work. Negative attitudes can be changed over time. Both the employer and employees will benefit.

A few bad experiences with just one or two employees can sour ones attitude. Step back and put the bad experiences in the context of all employees over the last few months and years. Think about the two or three employees you value most and the contributions they are making to the business. Work hard to prevent a single employee or a few employee incidents from poisoning your attitude.

## **Use Written Job Descriptions**

Employees like to know what they have been hired to do. As responsibilities change, they like to have an explicit understanding with their supervisor. Employees also appreciate knowing what managers do and what their coworkers do.

Job descriptions provide an excellent foundation for performance evaluations and discussion of training needs.

### **Provide Training**

Provide training for employees so that they can do well what they have been hired to do. Few people enjoy doing what they cannot do well. Mediocre performance because of lack of training and a supervisor criticism for the mediocre performance frustrate even the most enthusiastic employee. Training is an investment in people. An employers willingness to make this investment in employees helps build a positive image among employees, customers and others in the community.

### **Show Trust**

Show trust in employees by delegating authority and responsibility to them. The delegation helps satisfy employees esteem needs. It also improves their sense of being part of a team. A bonus from showing trust is the gain in time the manager has for working on his or her most important tasks.

### **Catch People Doing Things Right**

Catch people doing things right and say thank you. Performance appraisals that emphasize the positive help build the reputation of the employer. Focusing on the negative by catching people doing things wrong and then correcting them cause's employees to fear or at least dread performance appraisals. Emphasizing the negative creates an air of assumed guilt rather than the desired air of competence and confidence.

### **Develop Pride**

Building widespread pride in the organization is a long-term effort. Recognition of the organizations successes by visitors and feature stories in the local media can help. Employee recognition outside the organization and public show of appreciation also helps. Attractive hats with the farm name and jackets with employee names worn proudly in the community send a message that employees are glad to be part of the farm team.

### **Celebrate Successes**

Celebrate the farm's successes. Teams are expected to work together to accomplish the farms goals. They should also celebrate together when the goals are accomplished. Celebrations express the employer appreciation.

### **Communicate Clearly and Often**

Communicate clearly and often with employees. Staff meetings, a daily break period including supervisors and employees, a message board, two-way radios, clear instructions, opportunities to ask questions, regular performance appraisals and planning together for the coming year are just a few examples of how employers can facilitate communication. An employee complaint of too much communication is rare. A complaint of not enough communication is common.

### **Compensate Fairly**

Fairness of compensation matters more than level of compensation in building a positive reputation as an employer. The fairness of compensation depends on both external equity and internal equity. Farm employers and their employees measure external equity by comparing on farm pay with what employees could be earning elsewhere in the community given their abilities and experience. The comparisons should include other farm jobs plus jobs outside agriculture.

Internal equity measures how one employee compensation compares to that of others within the farm who are doing work with similar value to the organization. Paying only on the basis of how long a person has worked on the farm can cause the most valuable employees to earn less than a long-term average worker.

### **Provide Exceptional Monetary Benefits**

Total compensation includes both cash wages and monetary benefits such as health insurance, paid vacation, paid sick leave, retirement programs, housing and utilities, uniforms, overtime pay and pay differentials, e.g., holidays, third shift and weekends. A farm's reputation as a place to work can be considerably enhanced by offering benefits current and potential employees consider exceptional. A cafeteria of benefits allows employees to make choices based on their needs and preferences. Offering choice need not increase the employers cost for benefits.

### **Provide Extraordinary Informal Benefits**

Farm employers can also boost their reputations as employers by offering creative informal benefits and rewards. Informal rewards have either no out-of-pocket dollar cost or are low cost in terms of the employees total compensation.

Some examples are: birthday cards sent to employees' children; employer attending all weddings, baptisms and birthday parties to which invited by an employee; taking a course in the language spoken by your non-English speaking employees; hiring a photographer to take pictures of employees' families; personally greeting each employee each day; seeking out an employee just to say thank you; offering an employee of the year award with the recipient chosen by other employees; asking employees to explain to farm visitors what they do and why it is important; and giving an especially deserving employee tickets to a sold out major sporting event or concert. Only the employer creativity limits the potential.

### **Promote from Within**

Promoting from within recognizes an employees past contribution and shows the employers confidence in the employee. It also sends a signal to other employees that they have career advancement opportunities without changing employers.

### **Make the Business Family-friendly**

Both parents employed, single parents employed, child rearing responsibilities, finding reliable childcare and emergencies caused by illness are examples of family factors causing farm employee frustrations. These same factors can cause tardiness and

absenteeism. The farm's best employee does not necessarily escape family influences on performance and reliability.

Making the business family-friendly means anticipating this family caused frustrations and pressures. More important, it means helping employees deal with their family responsibilities.

Some ideas to consider: providing child care on the farm, offering emergency child care, providing a list of child care providers in the community, allowing flexible hours, job sharing, health insurance with family coverage, gifts for a newborn, preschool scholarships and scholarships for high school graduates who have been employed on the farm. Family-friendly measures increase the cost of labor. They also help attract and keep qualified employees.

### **Be Proud of Advancing Employees**

Be proud when outstanding employees advance their careers by changing employers. Losing an outstanding employee is often disappointing. Turning the loss to an advantage is a challenge. Work to have the employee leave with a positive attitude and a commitment to say good things about the place of employment where he or she got a start and an opportunity to learn. Causing departing employees to feel guilty or disloyal detracts from an employer reputation as a place to work.

Finally, approach your leadership style with a bit of common sense. Be courteous to everyone you encounter and in all situations, including those where you find yourself having to reprimand or discipline employees. It's only natural that your staff will want to work hard for you if they respect you, but you have to give them good reason. One way this can be accomplished is leading by example.

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### About the Author

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