

# Leading *by* Example

Rick Chisholm and Tala Chisholm



**INNOVEST SME**  
Accelerating Small Business

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30/192A Kingsgrove Rd  
Kingsgrove, NSW 2208  
Australia

Phone: +61 2 8007 2907

E-mail: [admin@innovestsme.com.au](mailto:admin@innovestsme.com.au)

Website: [www.innovestsme.com.au](http://www.innovestsme.com.au)

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*Leadership is the  
capacity to translate  
vision into reality.*

WARREN BENNIS

# PREFACE

Servant leadership can seem like a contradicting term, but it is becoming a very popular tool in many businesses. Servant leadership is a philosophy that involves focusing on others (i.e. your employees), and focus on their success, and in turn build better professional relationships that can benefit both manager and employee. Servant leadership shows that managers can be great leaders while boosting their employee's confidence and further their success at the same time.

*When you become  
a leader, success is all  
about growing others.*

JACK WELCH



# WHAT IS SERVANT LEADERSHIP?

Servant leadership is a business philosophy that emphasizes the act of the leader, such as a manager or supervisor, focusing on the growth and development of their employees and ensuring their success. In doing so, the leader succeeds when their employees do. In a business team, servant leadership cannot only help employees achieve and grow, but it can also benefit their leaders and the company as a whole.

## A DESIRE TO SERVE

It is a leader's responsibility to guide their followers on the right path. But to become a better leader, it's not enough just to take the wheel and steer – you must also be willing to serve your followers and assist them in their own journey. A servant leader should have a desire to serve their employees, which includes taking the time to identify your employees and how they perform or being beside them as they face challenges. Take the time to assist in their growth and help them work toward achieving their goals. Don't be afraid to give yourself into their processes and become part of their evolution.

## **KNOWING TO SHARE THE POWER**

As a leader, it is a common feeling to absorb the 'power' of the position and have a sense of superiority. A servant leader does not save this power only for themselves because they learn to share it with their team of employees. Employees under a servant leader should feel some of the servant leader's power and pull, which can make them feel more empowered in their place on the team and in their own abilities. Sharing the power allows employees to feel like their contributions matter and that their input is valued.

Share the power by:

- Delegating
- Asking employee opinions
- Working together on challenges or projects
- Taking a census, when possible

## **PUTTING OTHERS FIRST**

One of the main principles of servant leadership is the act of putting other's needs ahead of your own. As a leader, we can sometimes think in the 'ME' mentality and want to focus on our own agenda and needs. But in servant leadership, the leader must focus on his team of employees first before focusing on themselves. The leader should focus on what the employee needs or wants, how they can achieve this and how it will make them successful in the long run. A leader should strive to develop relationships

and even friendships with their employees and deliver feedback when possible. They must be able to set their own ego aside and realize that without their team of employees, no one can be successful.

## **HELPING EMPLOYEES GROW**

Once again, as a leader, we can focus on our own goals, responsibilities and even our own challenges. But as a servant leader, the needs of the employee should come first and the main goal should be to help them succeed and grow in the company. A good leader knows that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, so everyone benefits when every employee is encouraged, mentored and motivated. Sometimes this may mean you'll have to share in successes as well as failures, but every goal set and worked together is another stepping stone for the employee and helps them work toward their ultimate target.

Help employees grow by:

- Encourage goals
- Give feedback when possible
- Listen to their questions and requests
- Offer help but don't complete things for them

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Brandon and Amy are both managers in their department. They recently had a meeting with administration regarding the adaptation of servant

leadership in the departments. *“I’m not sure I know what that means,”* said Amy. Brandon told her it starts with wanting to serve the team, like their employees. *“Meaning we should put their needs first?”* said Amy. *“Something like that,”* Brandon answered. Amy and Brandon discussed ways they would learn to focus on their employees more, such as knowing when to let employees help with decisions and when to step in to help them with a challenge. They both started to realize that servant leadership is about focusing on the employee and helping them succeed – which in turn will help them succeed. Together, Brandon and Amy began to make a plan for each of their departments that would begin to allow employees to make goals and allow leadership to help with them, as well as create guidelines for employees to begin working with their managers on major projects.

*A leader is one who  
knows the way, goes the  
way, and shows the way.*

JOHN C. MAXWELL



# LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

There are many different types of leaders and each one has a different method and approach to handling conflict and success. However, many leaders often blend different style types together in order to find the right mixture for their employees. A leader must be able to recognize their own characteristics and styles, as well as the employee's personality and attributes in order to determine what style of leadership will work best.

### **DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP STYLE**

Democratic leadership is a type of leadership that utilizes the input and opinions of the team as a whole, rather than just the opinions of a select few. Many decisions are often based on some sort of vote or census from the team and then discussed with everyone. Every team member is allowed to have their voice heard and give their thoughts regarding projects, job duties or general work environment. Employees will feel as though their input is valid and will feel more appreciated in their work. While the democratic leadership can be helpful in big groups, it can be difficult to navigate when making quick, immediate decisions or if a decision must be made against the group conformity.

Characteristics of democratic leadership:

- Uses voting practices
- Employees help shape decisions
- Employees feel more valued
- Not optimal for immediate decisions

## **LAISSEZ-FAIRE STYLE**

Loosely translated, laissez-faire is a French term that means 'allow to do'. It has grown into a work style that generally allows employees a lot of freedom to perform as they want in order to reach a goal or complete a task. Leaders can still provide support, advice or input if requested but will typically leave the employee to their own means. Many employees enjoy this type of freedom and work better when they feel as though they are not being watched. However, some employees need motivation or help with time management and may not function well in a laissez-faire environment. Also, employees that do not have the necessary knowledge or skills to complete the job will need more instruction from the manager and will require the leader to regain control of the team and become more active in leadership.

Characteristics of laissez-faire leadership:

- Allows a lot of freedom among employees
- Do not get involved in work flow

- Some employees may lack motivation
- Managers could lose control of the team

## **LEADING BY EXAMPLE**

As a leader, especially a servant leader, it is your responsibility to work to inspire your employees and encourage them to reach and succeed for more. One of the best ways you can do that is to show them the way – leading them by your example. Commonly known as “practice what you preach”, when you lead by example, you demonstrate to your employees that their success is possible; you show them that they can achieve their goals and can strive for what they want. Employees will still need the guidance, motivation and even structure as they grow, so it’s important that leaders still work alongside their employees and be accessible to them when needed.

To lead by example:

- Remember that employees look to you
- Inspire and motivate employees
- Give feedback – both positive and negative

## **PATH-GOAL THEORY**

The path-goal theory is a leadership theory written by Robert House that a leader should change their leadership style based on the situation at hand. It recognizes that not all employee or all problems are the same

and may require different approaches. The path-goal theory not only focuses on how the leader can help lead their employees, but is also based on what the employees need/want, such as more structure, types of feedback or simply time to work on their own. This theory claims that the leader should want to help their employees identify and achieve their goals, assisting them along their growth path, and in the end offer rewards or incentives for their achievements; and in order to do so, the leader must be flexible in their approach and leadership style.

Types of leadership under the path-goal theory:

- Supportive leadership – focuses on building relationships
- Directive leadership – communicate tasks, goals, and expectations
- Participative leadership – work directly alongside your employees
- Achievement-orientated leadership – set goals and tasks for your team to complete

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Kim and Paul are managers of their department. Kim tells Paul that she's had some difficulty lately trying to determine how to lead her employees, stating that some of them need more motivation while others work best independently. Kim told him she had used a democratic style first, but many of the employees did not participate. She said a laissez-faire style was too free-range for her office and many employees did not meet their deadlines. Paul asked her if she had ever heard of the path-goal theory, which might help her determine which style of leadership could work best

for her. He discussed the different style and patterns in the theory and Kim thought about what would be a good basis for her employees. In the end, Kim decided the achievement-oriented leadership style would be a good starting point.

*“This way, the employees know what they need to do and will either work independently to achieve them or seek my help when they need it,”* Kim said.

*To command is to serve;  
nothing more, nothing less.*

ANDRE MALRAUX



# SHARE THE POWER

For some leaders, learning to share the power can be one of the hardest obstacles they face. After all, leaders are supposed to have a sense of power and use it when they can! But a servant leader knows that when they share the power with their employees, learn to be empathetic and share successes with employees, they in turn gain more power in the end and become an even better leader.

## BEING EMPATHETIC

Being empathetic toward employees can seem like an easy concept, but many leaders actually do not practice empathy with their team, which can lead to unhappy employees. Empathy should not be confused with sympathy – empathy allows you to put yourself in someone else’s shoes and see how they feel. By being empathetic, leaders are able to share the power by metaphorically getting on the employee’s levels and understand the problems and challenges they face and how it affects the work they do. It shows the employee that their leader listens to their problems and recognize their efforts, which in turn can actually boost their confidence and create a desire to work harder for their leader.

Be more empathetic:

- Use active listening
- Understand personal challenges or obstacles
- Do not mistake empathy for weakness

## **LEARN TO DELEGATE**

Many leaders have a problem with proper delegation. Many leaders fear delegating tasks because they fear the employee may not complete the task the right way, so the leader develops the old attitude that “if you want something done right, you’ve got to do it yourself”. However, this type of thinking can be harmful to the servant leader and their team of employees. A leader must learn to delegate to not only ensure that they are not doing all of the work themselves, but delegating also instills a sense of trust among the employees when they know that their leader can trust them to do something right.

Tips for delegating:

- Assign the right task to the right person
- Give clear instructions
- Ensure understanding before releasing
- Follow up

## **THEIR SUCCESS IS YOUR SUCCESS**

This element of servant leadership is the easiest to comprehend: a leader knows that when their employees succeed, they succeed as well. There is no 'I' in team. Once again, a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, so if one link breaks, the whole chain falls apart. But if every link is strong and capable, then the chain can withstand almost anything. A leader must work with their employees by coaching them, guiding them, offering advice and help when needed in order to help them meet deadlines, achieve their goals and grow professionally. As employees succeed and become an asset to the company, leaders will feel the success as well because they will have the satisfaction of knowing that the employee reached success with their help and will continue to do great work under their guidance.

## **KNOW WHEN TO STEP IN**

As a servant leader, it is a natural desire to want to serve our employees and to assist them in every challenge that they face. It's natural to want to hold their hand at times until they have finally reached their goal. But a leader must also know when they need to step back from the employee and when is the right time to step in and help. Employees should possess the right knowledge and skills to work a task or complete a project. Of course the employee will face challenges or have trouble in some area, but the employee must first try to work out the problem themselves. Although a leader may observe the employee and see when they are challenged, the leader must know that it is appropriate to stand back

while the employee works through the problem. Only when the employee cannot progress further or is at a point in which they do not have any skills or knowledge of, the leader can step in and offer help or guidance. It can be a hard balance between letting the employee work on their own to learn more and doing everything with them every step of the way, but a servant leader can find an equilibrium somewhere in between and benefit both the employee and the leader.

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Tim is speaking with his co-manager Dorothy about some of the employees on their accounting team. Tim says that he feels as though he is doing a large amount of the case load since one of their employees, Dave, has been out due to a death in his family. Tim is starting to get upset that other employees are not taking on some of the duties. Dorothy reminded him that Dave is usually a good worker, so they must be empathetic to his recent circumstances, which are very saddening to anyone. Dorothy also asked Tim if he had decided to delegate some of his tasks to some of the senior employees. When he said he hadn't, Dorothy suggested he let go of some of the work he had and get assistance from the qualified senior employees so he would have more time to help in other areas. Dorothy reminded Tim that they are there to help the employees, so it's alright to get help from them every once in a while.

*He who has never  
learned to obey cannot  
be a good commander.*

ARISTOTLE



# CHARACTERISTICS OF A SERVANT LEADER

There are many qualities and characteristics that define a servant leader, including good listening skills, empathy, power of persuasion and great communication skills. Although a servant leader may develop or follow different leadership styles, they must all possess some of these main qualities and characteristics in order to become a great servant leader to their employees.

## LISTENING SKILLS

Great listening skills can be an important tool in any position. Leaders must be able to listen to their employees and actually hear what they are saying and what they are needing. Active listening is a common tool used in improving listening skills because it involves listening without distractions and then periodically repeating back what is heard for clarification. Good listening skills also include being able to remove distractions, never interrupting while someone is speaking, and paying attention to non-verbal communication, such as body language, tone and gestures. A servant leader knows that improving their listening skills can improve communication with employees, which in turn can lead to better professional relationships.

Improve your listening skills by:

- Actively listen
- Avoid interruption
- Give your undivided attention
- Notice non-verbal communication

## **PERSUASIVE POWERS**

Some leaders confuse power and authority with the ability of persuasion. But persuasion is a powerful tool that can be used without, well, power. Persuasion is the art of using your knowledge and expertise in order to enlighten and encourage others. It does not use force or backhanded coercion. A servant leader can use persuasion to build unity among the team and conformity when making big decisions. Of course persuasion should always be back by facts and research, so a servant leader should never use persuasion that is based on false information or personal choices. Persuasion builds trust, so leaders must learn to use it effectively.

Help improve your powers of persuasion by:

- Know your facts and do your research
- Aim to educate
- Knowing when to listen to the other side

## **RECOGNIZES OPPORTUNITIES**

Sometimes when a leader recognizes an opportunity for growth and expansion, it is often referred to as foresight. Generally, a servant leader can recognize an employee's potential or certain skill set and can see an opportunity for them to set a goal or complete a task. Sometimes the leader can simply observe how an employee works and find a good fit for them. Communicating with each employee allows the leader to get to know each employee and build a personal relationship with them. Other times, simple work evaluations can be done in which the leader takes notes about the employee and creates an outcome from their findings. Whatever tools the leader uses, it is always important to listen to their intuition as well and always keep their eyes open.

Common tools to identify opportunities:

- Observe the employee
- Keep open communication with employees
- Perform formal and informal evaluations

## **RELATES TO EMPLOYEES**

Being able to relate to an employee is similar to being able to be empathetic, but requires a little more emotional involvement. A leader should be able to relate to an employee by remembering how they got to the position they are in and what leader helped them along the way. Leaders can relate to their employees because they used to be one. When employees

need help, or struggle with a task, their leader should be able to relate to their sense of need, rather than criticize or judge them for it. When it's time to delegate tasks, ensure that you are assigning duties and not barking orders or demands. Allow the employee to work on their own as much as possible and let them work on their own confidence level. In the end, employees will feel closer to your equal and less like just another one of your employees.

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Justin and Mary just left a seminar about becoming a servant leader in the workplace. They began discussing what qualities would make them a good servant leader in their offices. Mary pointed out that in her office, she needed to be more empathetic and relate to her employees since a lot of them seem to face struggles from time to time. Justin admitted that he was not a very good listener to his employees and planned to improve his listening skills in the future. Both Mary and Justin agreed that while they had good communication and persuasion skills, they decided to work harder on building better relationships with their employees and be able to identify more opportunities with them within the company.

*As we look ahead to  
the next century,  
leaders will be those who  
empower others.*

BILL GATES



# BARRIERS TO SERVANT LEADERSHIP

We've covered a lot of qualities and characteristics that make a great servant leader, but it is just as important to recognize what can hinder someone as well. Servant leaders are meant to encourage growth and promote confidence in their employees, but delivering excessive criticism, demanding action from employees and simply refusing to engage with them can create the complete opposite effect.

## EXCESSIVE CRITICISM

Constructive criticism can be a helpful tool in management when it is used correctly. However, simply delivering criticism to employees without any form of evaluation or redemption is damaging to the employee and the confidence they carry at work. Excessive criticism can cause employees to feel as though they cannot perform their job correctly on many levels, which can lead to a lack of confidence and decreased productivity. A servant leader should review any form of criticism before they deliver it to the employee and determine if it will ultimately be helpful to them and what is the best way to deliver the feedback so it is constructive – not destructive.

Think before delivering criticism:

- Is this helpful?
- Can it be worded more effectively?
- How will the employee perceive this?
- Can I offer any positive notes with it?

## **DOING EVERYTHING YOURSELF**

Learning to delegate is an important step in becoming a great servant leader. When a leader delegates tasks (and not demand action), it shows their confidence in their employees that they will complete the job right without much interference from management. But when a leader decides to simply do every task by themselves, it can not only create a very large workload for them to do, but it loses the faith of the employees and can weaken professional relationships. As a servant leader, learn to delegate and assign tasks to avoid the workload 'burn out' and show faith and trust in your employee's abilities and skills.

Remember to delegate:

- Show trust in your employees
- Give clear instructions and expectations
- Give employees a chance to ask questions
- Follow up to ensure the task is completed

## **SITTING ON THE SIDELINES**

A servant leader knows when it is time to step in to help an employee and when it is the right time to step back and observe from a distance. However, if a leader constantly sits on the sidelines, refusing to participate and but still giving orders, they will lose the loyalty of their team and any respect as a leader. A servant leader is involved in their employee's successes and their challenges because they care about their achievements and growth. But a leader who simply sits on the sidelines and does not work alongside their employees shows that they only care about their own agendas and interests. By not participating in the workplace, this leader relays the message that they hold all the power themselves and have no problem telling their employees what to do, but won't actually put in much of their own effort. While employees may work for this type of leader for a short while, they will eventually feel unvalued and under-appreciated, leading them to move on to other areas.

## **DEMANDING FROM EMPLOYEES**

A servant leader knows how to delegate properly and make requests to employees without a sense of demand or threatening. However, many leaders feel that as a leader, they are entitled to demand what they need from their employees and expect them to blindly follow. A demanding leader will not only intimidate their employees to get what they want/need, but they will also demand more from them over time – such as more work to meet a deadline, more duties assigned to them to complete or more time spent at the office for various tasks. But this type of leader is actually

not leading at all, but trying to build a herd of followers. Some employees may follow for the time being, but many employees will not tolerate all of the demands and seek to move on somewhere else.

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Adam and Julie were discussing the recent decline of employee's in Julie's department. Recently, the company has had to hire many new employees but then watch them quit soon after. Adam asked Julie about some of the management practices she was using. Julie started by saying she had a critical feedback system in place, but it only included negative components. She said she would normally tell her employees what to do and then leave them alone, but had to make overtime mandatory to pick up the slack from their low productivity. Lastly, Julie said if her employees couldn't do the task correctly, she would simply take it from them and do it herself – just to make sure it was done right. Adam told Julie that these qualities did not make a good leader and felt that many of the employees were not satisfied under her actions. He told Julie that she would need to attend some leadership classes and work with him to improve some of her management techniques.

*Coming together is a  
beginning. Keeping  
together is progress.  
Working together is success.*

HENRY FORD



# BUILDING A TEAM COMMUNITY

A good leader knows that every member of the team brings a unique talent and aspect to the group. Every employee should work together and complement each other's skills in order to get work done efficiently. But a leader but also be aware of any challenges a team may face, such as clashing personalities, and be prepared to step in and remedy any situation.

## IDENTIFY THE GROUP NEEDS

The servant leader knows the purpose of their team and has most likely started defining goals for the group. However, it is important for the leader to also identify the needs of each group member and the group as a whole. Every member is different and every member needs something different from the leader. Some may need further coaching; some may need more independent work while others will simply need periodic feedback from management.

As a group, the needs may be a little more complex. The group will need to have some sort of goal or charter that defines what they are working toward. The group will need to establish what tools or supplies are needed and what days/hours will need to be worked to accomplish their deadline.

Identifying the group needs can seem like one of the easier aspects of building a team, but if overlooked, it can weaken the foundation of the group and crumble before the project is finished.

## **COMPLEMENT MEMBER SKILLS**

When building a team, it is important to identify every team member and what skills or talents they will bring to the group. Many teams often feature members that are good in various areas, such as bookkeeping, research, public speaking or presentations, so that each member can excel in their area while contributing to the whole team. Rather than have a few members try and handle all aspects of the project, bring on several members that can divide tasks and duties more evenly and will work best as a group. Once the leader has gathered all of the team members for the group; it's important to start building relationships among members, so try using some team building activities or begins a Questions and Answers session.

Common team building exercises:

- Great Egg Drop
- Survival Scenario
- Two Truths and a Lie
- The Great Escape

## **CREATE GROUP GOALS**

Essentially, the group goal should outline why the team was created and what ultimately needs to be done. Once your team or group is assembled, one of the main tasks is to create goals that the whole group can work toward. They can be work oriented, such as setting productivity goals or ultimate deadlines, or can be goals based on group members, such as working together to finish a subproject or goals that aim toward allowing members to get to know each other. The group goal should be created with every member in mind and should include input from each member. Goals that are created together are achieved together.

Tips for created group goals:

- Determine what the ultimate outcome needs to be
- Identify every member's part in the goal
- Take input and opinions from every member
- Create a charter or outline for everyone to see

## **ENCOURAGE COMMUNICATION**

Communication can be a scary thing for newly built teams, or even teams with new members. It is important for a leader to not only encourage communication among team members, but with leaders and management as well. To increase communication among members, encourage employees to get to know one another and build a working relationship.

Employees that are more comfortable with each other will communicate better. For leaders and management, host small meetings or gathering to speak with teammates and allow them to give their ideas and inputs, or just talk about problems they are having. Let employees know how to reach you so they can communicate with you when needed. Encourage communication in any way possible so that employees always know how to reach each other and their leaders.

Tips for encouraging communication:

- Welcome input and opinions from team members
- Encourage team members to build relationships
- Schedule small, regular meetings or gatherings
- Stay in contact – whether by phone, email, text, etc.

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Brad is building a team for an upcoming project in his department. He asked Andrea to help him make sure he hires the right members and established his team on a good start. Andrea first told him to determine the needs of the group, such as how many people he would need and what kind of deadline he wanted. Brad said he already had the plans laid out, and was working to create a group goal for everyone to focus on. Andrea reminded him to select team members that would work well together and could use their skills to help one another. Lastly, Andrea reminded Brad that he should communication for everyone on the team,

including himself. She suggested some ice-breaker games to use at their next meeting or told him to have everyone exchange contact information. Brad wrote down all of Andrea's ideas and thanked her for the input. He felt like he was ready to finally build his team community now.

*Leaders must be close  
enough to relate to others,  
but far enough away to  
motivate them.*

JOHN C. MAXWELL



# BE A MOTIVATOR

Motivation is an important tool to use in the workplace because it keeps employees uplifted and inspired to keep moving forward. But every employee responds to different methods of motivations, so the leader must be able to know what makes their employees tick and what works for them. Employees work best in an environment where they feel their leader is behind them and gives them a good reason to do great work.

### MAKE IT CHALLENGING

It can be difficult for a leader to make the workplace a challenge because they may not be aware of what their employees can handle at one time. But a servant leader should be aware of the term 'grow or go' that is often used in the workplace. 'Grow and go' is a concept that means if a team leader or other management does not challenge the employee or make a stimulating workplace (i.e. 'grow'), the employee may 'go' elsewhere. This could mean they leave the company entirely, or it can refer to their sense of confidence and willingness to work. A servant leader can help keep the workplace interesting by helping the employee grow in their own area, as well as others, by allowing them to expand their job duties or take on additional projects. Never feel threatened by those that want to take on more, but welcome the challenge they seek in new opportunities.

## **PROVIDE RESOURCES**

Sometimes the simplest form of motivation is ensuring the employee has everything they need to succeed. This can refer to physical resources, such as supplies, team members or training materials. Resources can also include personal support, such as encouragement and feedback. After all, employees cannot do their job right if they do not have all the resources that they need. As a leader, let your team know that you are a valuable resource they can use, especially if they need something they cannot acquire on their own.

Common types of resource to provide:

- Physical supplies, such as paper, pen, computers, scanners, etc.
- Additional training materials or class time
- Emotional support and encouragement
- Coworker and other management support teams

## **ASK FOR EMPLOYEE INPUT**

Sometimes a leader can struggle with finding ways to motivate their employees, but the simple solution is to just ask the employees what they want. Seek out the employee's input on various topics, such as how they like to be rewarded, what drives them to do better, or simply ask what their leader can do to make their job easier. Most employees are eager to share what make them happy and will feel valued while giving their thoughts and opinions. Now that the leader knows what makes their

employees happy and productive, they can use the information to find better ways of keeping them motivated.

Methods of gaining employee input:

- Add a suggestion box
- Hold open discussion meetings
- Invite employees for one-on-one sessions

## **OFFER INCENTIVES**

Bonus and incentive programs are a popular motivation tool for many employees. Incentives can come in many forms, such as monetary bonuses, gifts, special titles or even manager recognition. Some employees may not respond to certain types of incentives, so a leader should recognize different forms of incentives and know which ones are best for their team. It is important to know the difference between an incentive and a bribe for good work. Employees want to feel rewarded for the work they have not – not like they are being coerced with a small gift to work harder.

Tips creating incentive ideas:

- Determine what forms of incentives motivate the team
- Gain employee input about existing incentive programs
- Develop clear performance goals for all employees

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Mike was speaking with one of his senior employees, Gladys, about recent motivation in the office. First Mike asked if Gladys and her team had all of the resources and tools needed to do their job, and if there was anything he could do to make the job more challenging. Gladys assured Mike they had every resource they needed, but they lacked some form of motivation for the senior employees. She said many of the incentives went to the new hires or employees that had not been with the company very long, so Gladys asked for incentives aimed at his seasoned employees. Mike made a note to offer more incentives such as paid time off or free-dress days for his employees that were doing well and had worked with him for a long period of time. He thanked Gladys for her input and told her he would work on the incentive programs right away.

*Colleagues are a wonderful  
thing – but mentors, that's  
where the real work is done.*

JUNOT DIAZ



# BE A MENTOR

Being a mentor can sometimes be lost in terms such as ‘manager’ or even ‘coach’, but mentors are a valuable tool to many workplaces. Mentors can be helpful to new employees or to employees who have begun to lose confidence in their work. A good leader must also take on this mentor role and ensure their employees are getting the boost they may need.

### ESTABLISH GOALS

One of the best tools a mentor can give their employee is the ability to establish and set goals for themselves. Start by asking the employee what they want to achieve and how they want to reach it. Individual goals can include work issues, such as increased productivity or decreased distractions, or can be more personal, such as working to decrease personal absences. When working with a team, leaders should ensure each member has their own set of goals, and then establish goals for the team as a whole. This ensures that everyone has a goal to work toward on their own, as well as a goal to work with the rest of the team. Goals help everyone stay focused and can make them feel valued as an individual and as a group.

Tips for helping set goals:

- Ask the employee what they want to achieve
- Outline a path that can help get them there (there may be more than one)
- Determine a reward or incentive for when the goal is reached

## **KNOW WHEN TO PRAISE OR CRITICIZE**

As a leader and a mentor, it can be difficult when to determine an employee should be criticized or reprimanded, or when open praise will be an effective tool. Praise and compliments are a great tool for building confidence in employees, but too much can lose its luster. Employees that are over praised may begin to lose faith in what their mentor is saying and lose the desire to work hard for that well earned praise. On the other hand, employees that are over criticized or chastised may lose self-confidence and pride in their work, causing them to create more errors and low productivity.

Praise and negativity should be based on the individual employee, not the group. If you must criticize, always do so in private and use phrases that are not personal attacks. With every negative point, offer a positive note as well to counterbalance. Let the employee know that you are there to help them, not attack them. Additionally, use praise and kudos when an employee has shown a change in their productivity, such as meeting a goal or over-succeeding on a quota. Do not use praises for everyday

tasks and accomplishments or they will lose their value and will no longer feel like something special.

## **CREATE A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT**

In order to mentor and bring together a team of employees, a leader must be able to create a supportive environment for them to work in. After all, employees do not want to feel like the workplace is a place that should be feared and only generates criticism or humiliation. A servant leader should act as a mentor by creating an environment that is safe and supportive to employees, where they do not fear you or other employees. Visit with employees periodically and build a sense of comfort and trust so that communication is always open. Let employees know you are available if they need you and take the time to speak with them if you are approached. Your employees will appreciate the support and in turn will feel confident that they are not alone in the office.

Benefits of a creating a supportive environment:

- Employees are happier working together
- Employees feel comfortable approaching you with their problems or ideas
- Employees are more receptive to feedback

## **CREATE AN OPEN DOOR POLICY**

Whether you are mentoring a new employee or an entire new group, one of the first things to establish is an open door policy for the office. Let your

employees know they can come to you with any problems or concerns they are having – or even with positive ideas they want to share. Seeing someone as a leader can be intimidating or downright scary, so assure employees that you are there for them and want to support them in their goals and challenges. Give them ways to reach out to you, whether it in your office, by phone or by email, but also establish simple boundaries, such as best times to contact or following a chain of command with management. Your employees will value your time and feel as though you are there for them – not just for the job.

Tips for creating an open door policy:

- Ensure everyone is aware of the policy
- Be open to listen to the employees and their needs.
- Always be approachable – avoid becoming too distant.
- Establish boundaries that allow employees to reach you, but by appropriate means/times

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Andrew is mentoring one of the company's new employees, Jessica, and wants to welcome her to the team. First, Andrew sits down with Jessica and asks what her goals for her job are. Jessica started out by naming goals such as meeting her quotas every day and not having any absences from work. Andrew told Jessica that he has an open door policy, so that if she ever needs help with her goals or has something she wants to share; she can come to him in his office or by phone or email. Andrew told

Jessica that she will be part of periodic performance reviews, but not to fear any form of praise or constructive criticism – everything is meant to be helpful for her to reach her goals. Andrew assured Jessica the office is a supportive place and that she will work well with her coworkers, who are also there to help.

*The final test of a leader is  
that he leaves behind him  
in other men the conviction  
and the will to carry on.*

WALTER LIPPMAN



# TRAINING FUTURE LEADERS

As a servant leader, one of the best qualities you can possess is the ability to instill servant leadership into another leader. Training future leaders takes many processes and cannot be completed overnight. Take the time to teach great values for a leader, such as a desire to serve, the ability to be empathetic, and the knowledge of how to motivate employees.

## OFFER GUIDANCE AND ADVICE

It can be very frightening and intimidating for a leader in training to begin to learn all they need to know to become a great servant leader. The amount of information and training can feel overwhelming and make the trainee question if the decision is right for them. But as their leader and their trainer, it is up to you to help them through these challenges and help them achieve their goal. Offer guidance when needed and give advice on areas they may not be familiar with yet. This can include training materials they can take with them, personal one-on-one time or even personal advice that you found helpful. Share stories of when you were training to be a leader and let them know that you are empathetic to their needs. Sharing personal experience can be a great ice breaker and it lets your trainee know that you've been where they are now.

## **IDENTIFY THEIR SKILL SETS**

When training future leaders, one aspect of their training is to identify their skill sets and what talents they possess. While basic leadership skills, such as organization, strategic thinking, and problem solving skills, are necessary for a leader in training, it is also important to identify other skill sets they may also possess to enhance their leadership. Many candidates possess skills sets such as enhanced sales abilities, great communication skills, extended computer knowledge or good public speaking skills. The training leader should take the time to identify these skills in their trainee, which can be done in several different methods, including formal evaluations, direct observations, or simply speaking with the trainee one-on-one.

## **METHODS OF FEEDBACK**

Feedback is a very important tool during training. Not only will the trainee learn to receive feedback and gain knowledge about how they are doing, but they will learn how to give feedback to others and use when they are a leader on their own. Provide feedback to the trainee as they learn and let them know what areas they are excelling in and which areas need more work. Give praise when appropriate and allow time to set goals and targets. When training on how to deliver feedback, go over several different methods of feedback, such as formal versus informal methods, and tools that can be used in the process, such as surveys or evaluations. Different methods of feedback can be effective on different

types of people, so it is important to know the different ways of delivering feedback so it can have the most effect.

Common types of feedback:

- Formal vs. informal
- Employee evaluation
- Feedback sandwich – using both negative and positive feedback
- The 3x3 method – utilizing three pieces of feedback in one

## **ESTABLISH LONG TERM GOALS**

When leaders are first brought onto a team or training area, one of the first things they do is establish a goal. Typically, these goals are short term, such as a goal to during their training session or a goal to achieve in the next few months after training. But when training future leaders, it is important for them to be able to set goals that are long term and require more time and work to achieve. Together, the trainer and trainee should establish long term goals and outline ways that goal can be reached within a certain amount of time. The goal should be realistic and reachable. Outline milestones and progress points you want to see while they work toward the goal. Of course, let your trainee know that you are there to help them when needed and your door is open to them. Remind them that they are not going to have to go on their path all alone.

Tips for making long term goals:

- Establish what the trainee wants to accomplish
- Set a realistic time frame
- Outline progress points or milestones to reach
- Schedule periodic meetings to check on their status and progress

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Marge is training one of her new leaders, Sonny. When Sonny first arrived to the training center, Marge sat with him and established some long terms goals he wanted to accomplish as a future leader in the company. Sonny wasn't sure what he wanted as of yet, but had ideas for increasing productivity and creating an incentive program in his office. Marge told Sonny that she is here to work with him, both in and out of training, and wanted him to know her door is always open to him. In their next task, Marge wanted to evaluate Sonny's skill sets, so she had him fill out an evaluation that outlined different areas of skills. When he was done, Marge spoke with Sonny about each area and went over his answers. Turns out, he works well with computers and very strong persuasion skills! Before the day was over, Marge set up periodic meetings with Sonny in the near future to check on his progress and see if he needed anything while working on his goals.

*When your values are  
clear to you, making  
decisions becomes easier.*

ROY E. DISNEY



# SELF-REFLECTION

When the day is done and the employees have gone home, where does that leave you – the servant leader? While it is important to take care of your employees and help them grow to succeed, you cannot forget to help yourself grow and pay attention to what you want to gain or achieve. A servant leader has to have a desire to serve not only others, but themselves.

## KEEP A JOURNAL

It may sound elementary, but keeping a journal of your goals, desires, progress and even current projects can not only be therapeutic, but can help you keep track of where you've been, where you are at now, and what you want to reach in the future. It can be a great tool for tracking different ideas, opinions or general feelings during training or working with employees. Don't be afraid to record any problems or frustrations you may be facing because the goal is to obtain honest self-reflection. Make notes of areas you are doing well in and identify areas in which you think need more work. While you may be training and teaching others, don't forget to take the time to note your own challenges and achievements.

Types of journals:

- Handwritten or paper journals
- Web blogs
- Audio journals

## **IDENTIFY YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

You spend all day evaluating your employees and future leaders to determine their strengths and skills and what areas they need more help with. But have you ever stopped to evaluate yourself? As a servant leader, it is important for you to identify your own strengths and weaknesses. Of course you have common leadership traits, but what other strengths do you bring to the table? On the other hand, what are your weaknesses that you need to address? What areas do you need to request help with? A good tool for this exercise is a simple written evaluation of yourself, but you can also use formal job assessments that identify job strengths and weaknesses, and of course a one-on-one conversation with a colleague can be a real eye opener.

The goal of this exercise is to be honest with ourselves. We cannot gain knowledge or seek help if we do not identify that there is a problem. If there is an area we excel in and identify as a strength, don't be afraid to 'hone' those skills and share them with others.

## **IDENTIFY YOUR NEEDS**

A servant leader has the desire to serve their employees and help them in their areas of need. But a leader cannot forget to identify their own needs as well. Sometimes we have to admit when we are in need of something and not be afraid to seek help. You may be a leader, but you are not invincible. Maybe you need more help developing training courses? Maybe you need more help learning computer programs? Or maybe you just need help getting the office organized or in order. Some needs may be more personal, such as a need for personal growth or a need for some time to yourself. Whatever your need turns out to be, it is important to not bury them inside and try to solve them all yourself. Don't be afraid to reach out to others and request help with meeting your own needs.

## **CREATING YOUR OWN GOALS**

As a leader, one of the first exercises you stress to employees is to establish goals for them to work toward. This practice is the same for you. When you begin a new segment at work, whether it is training a group of leaders or creating a new team to work with, you should take the time to create goals of your own to work on. Periodically check in on these goals to see if you are moving on the right path or identify areas you still need to work toward. Don't be afraid to create long term goals as well that may take more time to accomplish. When you finish, determine if you can achieve these goals on your own or if you will need help from

an outside source to do so. Don't be afraid to reach out to others for help achieving your own goals and desires.

Tips for creating your own goals:

- Make them realistic
- Make goals for work and for personal life
- Set tentative timelines
- Identify if you will need help in certain areas to reach your goals

## **PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION**

Benny and Whitney have just finished with a recent team project and were going over the results. Benny explained how this last project has been a real strain on him and felt like he was running in circles. Whitney asked him if he had any way to relieve or vent his feelings, such as with a journal or notebook. She told Benny that's how she kept track of her feeling and project progress so that it didn't overwhelm her. Whitney then asked Benny if he ever took the time to identify his needs on the project or if he had established any personal goals. Benn admitted that he hadn't and just focused on the team during the time they worked. Whitney told Benny before they started the next group project; she wanted him to take time to identify what goals he wanted for himself and how he was going to reach them. She also asked him to make a list of any strengths or weaknesses he could use during the next project.

*"I want to make sure you focus on yourself as well as our employees,"* Whitney told him.

*Alone we can do so  
little, but together we  
can do so much.*

HELEN KELLER

# CLOSING THOUGHTS

- **Jim Rohn:** The challenge of leadership is to be strong, but not rude; be kind, but not weak; be bold, but not bully; be thoughtful, but not lazy; be humble, but not timid; be proud, but not arrogant; have humor, but without folly.
- **Sam Walton:** Outstanding leaders go out of their way to boost the self-esteem of their personnel. If people believe in themselves, it's amazing what they can accomplish.”
- **Eleanor Roosevelt:** You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing you think you cannot do.”
- **Nelson Mandela:** It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You take the front line when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership.”



**Rick Chisholm** made history when he single-handedly changed the professional Audio Visual industry by breaking all the rules and capitalised over 50% market share in Australia with very little capital, no partners, mergers or lenders and set up the first franchise operation of its kind in the world in the late 1990's and early 2000's.

As a 7x founder of companies and 30x businesses such as Innovest, AI Machine, Lightsounds, LSW, Light Emotion with revenue in excess of \$300 million and having employed more than 1,000 staff over the last 35 years. Rick is known as the Start-Up and SME Guru and is Author of a number of books including Business Success for Life. Unlike many mentors, he actually walks the talk and has a number of businesses under management in such areas as Automation, Events management, Importing, Distribution, Retailing and E-commerce.

His BIG passion is Business Education empowering Businesses Owners through knowledge and skills. Whilst Rick has experienced great success, he has also endured many failures. Rick has faced and overcome the exact same challenges you are facing now.



**Tala Chisholm** is an SME specialist who has owned and managed several small to medium sized businesses in the last 20 years, several of which were eventually sold. She has extensive experience in the fields of retail, franchising, licensing, dealerships, education, importing, distribution and consulting.

Her expertise lies in building and implementing customised cross-platform database and software solutions for businesses, automation, IT, web marketing, advertising, graphic design, business administration, process refinement and implementation. Her business experience ranges from bricks-and-mortar Giftware retailing to highly technical fields such as Security, CCTV, Entertainment Lighting and Audio sales, hire and installations as well as e-commerce.

Throughout her career she also trained and mentored Franchise business owners as well as internal division managers. Some areas of training included retail operations, management practices, business strategy, accounting, cash-flow, marketing, customer service and IT. She has also headed up the drafting of Operating Compliance Manuals for Franchise operations and implementation of all the elements involved.

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Phone: +61 2 8007 2907  
E-mail: [admin@innovestsmc.com.au](mailto:admin@innovestsmc.com.au)  
Website: [www.innovestsmc.com.au](http://www.innovestsmc.com.au)