



**Private Club
Performance Management**

**SERVICE-BASED LEADERSHIP
TRANSFORMS YOUR OPERATION**



Ed Rehkopf

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“The soft stuff is always harder than the hard stuff.”

Roger Enrico, Chairman, PepsiCo

*“What are we really talking about when we speak of ‘the soft stuff’?
In short, it’s the people skills – those aptitudes and abilities used to get the best
out of our human assets. It encompasses all those things we talk about when
discussing leadership – the relations with multiple constituencies and the highly
nuanced interactions with a diverse workforce that result in motivation, morale,
enthusiasm, focus, commitment, productivity, teamwork, organizational
cohesiveness, and group success.”*

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The Absolute Importance of Leadership?

Strong, stable, and consistent leadership is the single most important requirement for successful club operations. While there are many styles of leadership suited to any industry or endeavor, experience over many years makes it clear that a service-based approach to leadership works best in the service industry with its often young, mixed gender, and multi-ethnic workforce. This style of leadership has as its primary motivation service to others – to members, the board, and the employees.

This leadership style differs from others in its focus on serving the needs of employees to provide them with the proper tools, training, resources, motivation, engagement, and empowerment to serve the club's members. In simplest terms, when employees are served by their leaders, they will better serve members, who by their continuing patronage serve the club's bottom line. An understanding of the importance of this style of leadership can be inferred from the simple question,

“How can employees provide quality service if they are not properly served by the leadership, engagement, support, and example of their managers?”

While it is recognized that the general manager must be a strong leader, it is also critical that the club's subordinate managers and supervisors are also trained to be strong service-based leaders. While some degree of a leader's skill set may be inborn, such as personality and an analytic mind, and others, such as confidence, judgment, and basic communication abilities, are developed early in life, the great majority of a leader's skills are attitudinal and can be learned.

But to expect that managers with varying backgrounds, education, and experiences will have a common understanding of what constitutes effective leadership is naïve in the extreme. Unless junior managers are systematically trained to develop the skills which have to do with building and sustaining meaningful work relationships with their constituencies, particularly employees, their leadership development will be hindered and haphazard.

This results in the general manager's vision and message of service not being communicated consistently or faithfully to line employees. Instead of having a cohesive team dedicated to a common purpose and acting in a concerted way to further the aims of the enterprise, the club is a collection of tribes who don't approach the mission or their jobs in the same way or with the same attitude.

Without leadership consistency, employees get a mixed service message, and their morale, engagement, and commitment will vary from manager to manager and department to department. It's really quite simple – if your management team does not provide consistent:

- Vision, values, and example,
- Communication and engagement,
- Training, resources, support, and
- Regard for and treatment of employees,

You'll never gain consistency of employee commitment, contribution, and performance.

But the good news is that successful leadership skills can be taught and learned. Warren G. Bennis, widely regarded as a pioneer in the field of contemporary leadership studies, has said, *“The most dangerous myth is that leaders are born – that there is a genetic factor to leadership. This myth asserts that people simply*



either have certain charismatic qualities or not. That's nonsense; in fact, the opposite is true. Leaders are made rather than born."

Given the primary importance of leadership in any successful venture, it should never be left to chance. Even if confident of your own leadership abilities, do yourself and your managers a favor by promoting a consistent, club-wide conception and application of leadership. When consistently reinforced by your leadership and example, it will have a dramatic impact on their performance, as well as that of the club.

Good Leadership – It's Just Common Sense

I recently read an Internet-posted news article entitled *Disney Offers Customer Service Training*. Written by Adrian Sainz, the article talked about Miami International Airport employees taking customer service training from the Disney Institute, a division of Walt Disney Company set up to teach its principles and practices to other companies. Let's pick up on the story.

"Now the Institute has taken another client: Miami International Airport, which many travelers will tell you needs customer service training like an airplane needs wings. Surveys rank its service among the nation's worst. The airport's terminal operations employees are taking classes taught by Institute instructors, learning leadership practices, team building, staff relations and communication skills – many formulated by Walt Disney himself.

Disney takes great pride in ensuring a fun time and repeat business, mainly by emphasizing customer service and attention to detail while trying not to appear too sterile or robotic

Early in the training, a handful of Miami airport managers visited the Magic Kingdom, where they were shown examples on how paying attention to detail and removing barriers were integral in making guests happy and keeping them informed."

The article went on discussing various techniques used by Disney to enhance customer service. While I found this discussion interesting, it was the reader comments posted below the article that really caught my attention. Here they are:

1st Posted Comment: *"I work for a medical practice in Georgia that sends a few of their employees to Disney for training each year. Our patients (guests) really responded well to our new customer service guidelines. However, management really needed to attend the training as well as the regular employees. They became complacent in their 'ivory tower' and expected all of us to treat the patients well (and of course we did); however, management needed to extend the same courtesy and good manners to their employees. In the past 3 months the company has had record turnover and still harbors a large, disgruntled employee pool. No idle words . . . 'Treat others the way you would want to be treated.'"*

2nd Posted Comment: *"When we returned, all 1st level management (the ones dealing with the customers) were asked to implement the Disney experience in our daily activities. To this day we have weekly meetings with our senior management to report how our teams are embracing the changes. Unfortunately, many of the associates treat it as 'the flavor of the month' program to improve customer satisfaction. We are still trying to make a culture change with our staff. The most unfortunate part of the Disney experience was that although our senior management went along on the trip, I am yet to witness the impact it had on them when dealing with us 1st level managers."*



3rd Posted Comment: *“I agree with the posters who feel that senior management should lead by example and treat their subordinates with dignity and respect. It just seems like common sense, that when employees are happy and feel well-treated, this will filter down to the way they treat the customers. Everyone in an organization deserves to be treated well and this makes for optimum performance.”*

Three of the four postings by readers made the same point about management. This suggests the obvious: that without the active involvement and example of senior leadership (and Service-Based Leadership at that), improvements in employee morale, dedication, empowerment, and in member service will not happen.

Service-Based Leadership

In some organizations fear-based management is the standard leadership style. But fear-based management impedes organizational teamwork and effectiveness. Because of its corrosive effect on employees, customers, and the bottom line, such a leadership style should not be tolerated in any enterprise. Some symptoms of fear-based management are:

- Employees covering their backsides.
- Unwillingness to take a risk.
- Lack of initiative and acceptance of the status quo.
- Employees afraid to express opinions or answer questions.
- Lack of trust.
- Defensiveness and blame-placing.
- Lack of communications or only top-down communication.
- Poor motivation and morale.
- Lack of cheerfulness, friendliness, and smiles.

At the other end of the spectrum is the ideal of Service-Based Leadership. With Service-Based Leadership, the attitude and primary motivation of the leader is service to others – to customers, to employees, to shareholders. This approach to leadership naturally creates relationships – the deep and abiding bonds that sustain the efforts of the group. This outward focus of the leader sets up a dynamic where:

- Employees are continually recognized.
- There is an open flow of ideas, opinions, and information.
- Initiative and risk are highly regarded.
- Problem discovery and solution is a focus while placing blame is unimportant.
- Every employee feels energized and part of the team and is valued for his or her contribution.
- Prestige is derived from performance and contribution, not title or position.
- Members are treated well because employees are well treated.
- The energy and initiative of all employees is focused on the common effort.



With Service-Based Leadership, you will find that service to both internal and external customers is effortless. Less energy is expended in processing complaints, grievances, and conflicts. Work is more fun, and everyone's job is easier.

Constituencies

Before you can effectively exercise your leadership skills, you must clearly recognize your various constituencies – those groups who depend on you and for whom you must provide leadership and service. For many positions this is clear cut; there are customers, employees, and a boss. However, for some positions there may be other groups who rely upon your exercise of leadership.

So, for every leadership position, one must identify the constituencies served. Once you have identified these, make a list of each constituency's needs and how you and/or your team can best serve them. In most cases you need to visit with constituents to hear directly from them what they need or expect from you.

With a clear understanding of their needs, you are in a far better position to determine priorities and execute your responsibilities.

The key to serving the needs of those you serve lies in ensuring that you build strong relationships with individuals. How do you do this? Begin by:

- Treating everyone you meet with courtesy, respect, and good cheer.
- Focusing on each person you deal with as if he or she were the most important person in the world.
- Taking the time to get to know people, sharing your time and attention with them.
- Learning about other people's jobs, and the challenges and difficulties they face.
- Keeping promises and following through on commitments.
- Being principled, showing fairness, and demonstrating integrity.
- Recognizing the ultimate value of people in all you do.

Relationships depend upon how you view yourself in relation to others. If you see yourself as separate and apart from your constituencies, if you view others as the means to your ends, if your vision and goals lack a broader purpose than your own needs and ambitions, establishing meaningful relationships will be difficult, if not impossible. On the other hand, when you see yourself as part of a team with a shared mission, then a sense of service will be an intrinsic part of your service team relationships.

Becoming a Service-Based Leader

Developing leadership skills is not memorizing a list of things to do or not to do, though such lists are useful in helping people learn. Leadership is not the accumulation of managerial abilities, such as budgeting, computer skills, or the specific work skills of a particular industry, though such aptitudes will certainly enhance your overall skill set and add to your competence. Leadership is not a position or a title.

Successful leadership depends on **the quality of relationships between a leader and followers**. As such it entails relationship skills – the personal characteristics and abilities to connect with and inspire the enthusiastic efforts of a diverse group of people toward a common goal.



True leadership requires an understanding of what makes people tick – individually and in group settings. It requires sensitivity to the needs and desires of others, even when they may not be able to define or communicate these themselves. It requires openness and accessibility, so followers are comfortable bringing their concerns and issues to the leader. It requires a person who is self-analytical, who examines every less-than-optimum outcome for improvement, often discovering a better way to interact with followers. It requires a person who puts the needs of the enterprise ahead of personal ambition, who recognizes that tending to the group welfare in a disciplined way will bring about better performance.

Finally, learning leadership skills is not a one-time event. Just as different endeavors and levels of organizations require different skill sets for managerial success, leadership skills must expand and develop as the individual moves up to higher levels of authority. Satisfactory leadership skills in a front-line supervisory position are clearly inadequate for the challenges of a general manager, division manager, or president of a company. But the skills learned in the early years of one's career will be the foundation for the broader skills necessary when one takes on greater responsibilities, particularly if you understand that true leadership is a lifelong journey, not a destination.

The Single Most Important Requirement to Becoming a Service-Based Leader

Becoming a Service-Based Leader is a transformative process; it's about personal growth. One must be prepared to challenge ingrained attitudes and beliefs about self and others. It requires a willingness to closely examine motivations and habits. The emerging leader must also be willing to accept personal responsibility for his or her life and decisions. But most of all, it requires **a great deal of personal honesty**. Self-delusion and denial are the committed enemies of personal growth.

As you progress through your career, promise that you will search the depths of your being to get to and understand your deepest motivations, not those that you glibly repeat because you have so often heard others say them and think they're the norm. True leadership is not the norm and becoming an effective leader will require you to step outside your comfort zone and confront the beliefs and attitudes you hold, not from conviction but from unexamined habit.

The Rewards of Service-Based Leadership

Developing the skills of a Service-Based Leader will reward you in a variety of ways. First and foremost, I believe the foundation of Service-Based Leadership and a recognition of the value of people in all you do, can, over the course of a career, lead you to the Level 5 Leadership that Jim Collins found at the top of all Good to Great companies.

Second, because Service-Based Leadership is all about developing successful relationships, it can bring success to other parts of your life – your family relationships, your friendships, and the way you interact with people wherever you meet them.

Lastly, Service-Based Leadership will help you develop the self-analytical skills to examine life's challenges and better understand how you react to them. It will help you to grow as a person and learn to face difficulties with greater calmness and purpose.



Leadership and Relationships

John C. Maxwell, bestselling leadership author, says that **the definition of leadership is influence**. While it is first the ability to influence followers, it also requires that the leader influence those people who make up any and all constituencies.

In a free society, all but the most socially and economically disadvantaged have choices – they can choose to work for you and your business, or they can take their talents and abilities elsewhere. It is, therefore, the way you as a leader engage them that determines your level of influence.

Influence is derived from the relationships you create with your followers and other constituents. How you act and interact with others is the basis for your success as a leader. **The quality of your relationships will determine your outcomes**. But you must understand that each of your followers and constituents is a unique individual with different needs and motivations. What may work with one person may fail miserably with another. And, unfortunately, creating meaningful relationships with other people can be a challenge for all of us – witness all the dysfunctional families, rocky romances, and failed marriages – and no less challenging for leaders who must interact with a wide variety of followers.

But the art of relationships can be learned. Generally speaking, while it requires experience, judgment, a measure of sensitivity to the needs of others, and a fair degree of emotional maturity, the ability to form and sustain meaningful relationships improves with age.

Developing leadership, or relationship skills, is a cumulative process. It's why Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great, Why Some Companies Make the Leap . . . and Others Don't*, proposes the Level 5 Hierarchy leading to the consummate Level 5 Leader. It is why potential leaders must be identified early, why young managers must be trained in the skills of leadership, and why such skills should be nurtured and shaped with each increase in responsibility and each step of the career ladder. Clearly, the rudimentary skills of direct face-to-face leadership that serve the front-line supervisor so well are inadequate for the more complex and subtle exercise of authority required of a mid-level manager or senior executive.

Creating and sustaining meaningful relationships is at the heart of Service-Based Leadership. The extent to which you can develop those relationships early in your career will have a great bearing on your future success – but not only in your career. The bonus is that in developing Service-Based Leadership skills, you develop the skills to form meaningful relationships in other areas of your life.

Charisma and Trust

People often speak of an especially effective leader's charisma – that mysterious ability to connect with people in a profound and moving way. We can all think of leaders, usually on the national or international stage, who possessed charisma. Some names that come to mind include Eleanor Roosevelt, with her quick wit and commitment to social equity, and Ronald Reagan, called the "Great Communicator" for his skill in connecting with people. More recently we recognize Oprah Winfrey and her engaging manner with people from all walks of life and Barack Obama for his undeniable ability to move audiences with his presence, eloquence, and oratory.

While charisma can add to a leader's skill set, it must be based on a foundation of trust. Without earned and merited trust, a charismatic personality is little more than a con artist. Two important ways to gain and hold the trust of followers and constituents is to demonstrate both integrity and competence in all you do.



Integrity is not simply honesty, though truth and truthfulness are significant parts of it. Integrity is being true to yourself and your beliefs. The dictionary defines integrity as “the adherence to moral or ethical principles.” This implies that one’s actions match her words – that she does what she says she will do regardless of consequences, that she has a moral compass that guides her in all instances, and that she can be counted on to do the right thing. At the end of the day, a person who has integrity can be trusted by others in all situations.

In addition to possessing integrity a leader must demonstrate competence. No one wants to follow someone who is inept, no matter what authority he may possess. In fighting wars, a follower’s life may depend upon it. During the American Civil War, a fellow officer said of Gen. Nathaniel Banks that it was murder to send soldiers out under him. While this political appointee of President Lincoln had the authority to command, he clearly did not possess the competence to lead.

The U.S. Marine Corps in its Fundamentals of Marine Corps Leadership tells its aspiring leaders that they must be technically and tactically proficient. To develop this ability, they are told to “seek a well-rounded [professional] education” and to “seek out and associate with capable leaders. [To] observe and study their actions.” Lastly, Marines are told to prepare themselves for the job of leader at the next higher rank. This advice applies to leadership in any situation or endeavor.

By cultivating and demonstrating both integrity and competence in all you do, you will gain the trust of your followers. While only a gifted few possess natural charisma, it may be argued that it is not required for the smaller arenas in which most of us labor. Yet as you continue to grow and nurture your leadership skills through practice and experience, you may discover that your followers consider your leadership to be charismatic. As with beauty, charisma is in the eye of the beholder.

Consistency and Common Decency

In addition to possessing integrity and demonstrating competence, leaders must also be consistent in their values and vision. Such consistency requires a foundation of principles for one’s actions and a well-developed guide for how to proceed. Followers will quickly lose confidence in an erratic leader or one without a clear and compelling vision.

Being consistent does not in any way imply rigidity or inflexibility in your thinking, planning, or execution. A hallmark of leadership is the recognition that we operate in a fluid world where everything changes all the time. As German military theorist von Moltke said, “No battle plan survives contact with the enemy.” The same could be said for any plan and the constantly unfolding realities faced by every enterprise.

When a leader demonstrates consistent values and a persistent pursuit of well-defined objectives, followers can feel confident in their leader and the direction he or she is taking them. An unpredictable leader, who bounces from one initiative to another and whose plans, performance, and behavior are constantly changing, creates a situation much like the Doom Loop described by Jim Collins in Good to Great.

“The comparison companies followed a different pattern, the doom loop. Rather than accumulating momentum – turn by turn of the flywheel – they tried to skip buildup and jump immediately to breakthrough. Then, with disappointing results, they’d lurch back and forth, failing to maintain consistent direction.”



Employees can deal with some agenda changes from senior management, but continually changing initiatives sap them of their enthusiasm and willingness to adapt. This is particularly so when they are not involved in decision-making, and they are treated as if they didn't matter.

This brings us to common decency and how followers are treated. While every person may have his or her own conception of what is decent, common decency encompasses those behaviors considered to be the ideal in human intercourse. Among them are:

- Respect – regard or consideration for others and their needs.
- Sensitivity – heightened awareness to needs and concerns of others.
- Courtesy – polite behavior, respect, consideration, helpfulness.
- Kindness – goodwill, generosity, charity, and sympathy toward others.
- Generosity of Spirit – absence of meanness or smallness of mind or character.

When a leader demonstrates these behaviors in her dealings with all constituents, it naturally creates strong, trusting relationships. Once again, though, consistency is essential. A leader cannot be kind one day and callous the next and expect his constituents to trust him.

As children we were taught the common decency of the Golden Rule – treating others as we wish to be treated. But as we grow older, we are often faced with stressful situations and unpleasant people who cause us to develop our own defensive responses and disagreeable behaviors.

Yet, just as these habits were learned over time, they can be unlearned by conscious effort. While we cannot control what happens to us, we can control our reactions to events. Making the effort to treat others well will go a long way toward building meaningful relationships with all constituents.

Motivation and Morale

Attitude and morale are important ingredients in hospitality operations where friendliness, good cheer, and enthusiasm are bedrock requirements for success. While hiring the right people with the right personal qualities has always been a safe bet when building service teams, the very act of creating teams brings its own challenges. The group dynamic often creates problems and can interfere with the smooth functioning of the work team. To be crystal clear, poor morale comes from poor leaders. Employees are not to blame. They are simply responding to a lack of leadership.

So how does a leader go about ensuring good morale within his or her team? Foremost, are the requirements of service-based leadership – of the need to communicate well with the team; of engaging daily with team members and providing direction; listening to and addressing their concerns; providing the tools, resources, training, and support for employees to do their jobs well. Beyond that is the need to recognize the ultimate value of people and act on that principle; to treat all employees with dignity and respect; to lead by example and address concerns promptly; to ensure closure on issues; and to be open and approachable to employees.

When all these things are done conscientiously and consistently by the leader, good morale is a natural by-product. By focusing on being the best Service-Based Leader you can be, morale and its attendant group enthusiasm and good cheer will come naturally.



The Ultimate Value of People

Without employees there would be no successful business leaders.

Without customers there would be no money to pay employees.

Without owners willing to risk their capital there would be no businesses to hire employees.

The distinguishing characteristic of these three statements is that they all involve people. And while every person is an individual, unique in background, experience, and education, the great majority have a common set of needs as they negotiate their worlds. They:

- Wish to be treated fairly and with dignity and respect.
- Want value for their labor given or money spent, in other words, they don't want to feel cheated.
- Want to know what's going on and appreciate timely and accurate information that affects them.
- Prefer to trust and be trusted.
- Appreciate kindness and generosity of spirit, especially when unexpected.
- Recognize someone who is principled and whose words and actions are grounded in values.
- Want to be recognized for who they are, not lumped into some great unknown, and often unnoticed, mass.

While any person can hold a position of authority, true leadership and its attendant success flows naturally from that person who recognizes the ultimate value of people in all he or she does.

While this seems trite, my experience has clearly confirmed that many managers and supervisors do not intuitively understand this critical point. Many are so wrapped up in their own ambitions and agendas they seem oblivious to those around them. And this is a recipe for personal and professional failure as demonstrated by the following story.

Several years back I was at the checkout counter of the local outlet of a national home improvement chain. As I placed my purchases on the counter to be scanned, the cashier began complaining about the lack of adequate cashiers on duty and then rambled on, expressing a general dissatisfaction with her bosses and the company. Not anxious to know all her issues with her employer, I was noncommittal in my responses; yet on and on she went. I couldn't wait to get away.

While I was during a major do-it-yourself home renovation and making frequent trips for supplies and materials, I began driving an extra mile to two to a competitor store where the selection and pricing was comparable, but the staff seemed more contented and committed to service.

Having discovered the new, happier store, I spent and continue to spend a considerable sum of money with them. The disgruntled employee may have been an isolated case, yet service-based leaders should have been available for her concerns or, by being more closely engaged with the staff, discovered her "attitude" problem and resolved it without losing a potentially good customer.

In today's busy world where convenience, location, pricing, and technology drive many purchase decisions, the human touch is often overlooked. Yet I know half a dozen employees at my favorite home improvement store by name and have periodically written letters of commendation to their company when they are particularly helpful.



This is the way I prefer to do business. While I may not be in the majority, I can't help but believe there are many others like me who enjoy friendly human contact. When major corporations are vigorously contending for a few percentage points of market share, the human touch inherent in Service-Based Leadership should not be overlooked. People matter! And true leaders understand this.

How to Get the Best from Your Service Team

There has been much discussion in the business and popular press about the work ethic, attitudes, and commitment of younger employees and the challenges faced by employers in getting the best efforts from these workers. While there are certainly some markedly different societal and cultural trends in today's workforce, leadership skills are still the primary means of positively influencing employees to better performance.

W. Edwards Deming, American statistician, professor, author, lecturer, and consultant who made significant contributions to Japan's reputation for innovation and quality, famously said, "The worker is not the problem. The problem is at the top! Management is the problem!" So, when you look for the reasons why you seem to be forever dealing with people problems and service issues, look to your management team's leadership and the way they interact with staff. Here are some of the basic things that can make all the difference in getting the best from your employees:

- The way you hire and onboard them.
- The organizational values you define for them.
- The culture of service you immerse them in – service not only to customers, but to each other.
- The consistency of leadership provided to them throughout the organization.
- The example their leaders set for them in all they do and that all leaders are equally dedicated to the organization's mission and focus on service.
- The way you establish and communicate your expectations to them.
- The quality of training you provide them.
- The fact that their leaders are continually engaged with them; that management is accessible, listens to their issues, concerns, and suggestions.
- The way that their leaders do not tolerate problem employees or bad attitudes that degrade the efforts of others.
- The ongoing recognition and positive reinforcement given them for superior performance.
- The fact that their leaders see them as integral to the success of the enterprise and all it does.

Not one of the above requirements is anything more than common sense and represents the way all people would like to be treated in their jobs. But to ignore these basic needs condemns you, your management team, and your workplace to constant issues and problems, not the least of which is ongoing high levels of turnover and poor service execution.

Given all the downsides inherent in poor leadership, why wouldn't you make the effort to provide a consistent application and example of leadership at your club?



The 100/0 Principle

Al Ritter has written a great little book, *The 100/0 Principle*, subtitled *The Secret of Great Relationships*. While this may sound like any one of the score of self-help books published annually, one merely has to look at Mr. Ritter's resume – MBA from Dartmouth, marketing and operations positions with PepsiCo, CFO at Swift and Company, Senior VP for Citigroup, consulting for Accenture, and founding his own consulting company – to recognize that this short, simple, and easy-to-read book holds much promise for business leaders in any setting and level of organizational hierarchies.

I believe the simple concept at the heart of this book is the single most important guarantor of success in any relationship, certainly in the personal arena, but beyond that in any organization or business enterprise. Such well-known leadership authors as John C. Maxwell, Brian Tracy, and Warren Blank have all recognized the central role of relationships in any attempt to lead. As Maxwell said, "People who are unable to build solid, lasting relationships will soon discover that they are unable to sustain long, effective leadership."

What Mr. Ritter so strikingly advocates in his book is that if you want any relationship to be successful, you must take 100% responsibility for the outcome while expecting nothing in return. While this statement may seem shocking to some, I believe it is counter-intuitive wisdom of the highest order. To examine why, consider the following statements relating to leadership:

- A leader is responsible for his own success.
- A leader is responsible for everything her organization does or fails to do.
- In a free society, all but the most socially or economically disadvantaged followers have choice and can go elsewhere.
- Meaningful relationships are based on trust.
- Followers don't automatically extend their trust to a leader; it must be earned.
- As the one with the power and authority, the leader must take responsibility for establishing trust.
- If, for whatever reason, a relationship with followers is not going well, a leader cannot expect or wait for others to fix it.
- Therefore, she must take responsibility for the relationship.

Mr. Ritter states and I believe that taking complete responsibility for your relationships and expecting nothing in return will yield vastly improved results in every arena of life. His book offers concrete advice and steps, such as creative listening, suspending judgment, and unconditional acceptance, for readers to adjust their thinking and change their responses to difficult people, challenging situations, even "toxic" bosses. While his experience with *The 100/0 Principle* has been mostly successful, he outlines a few situations where it doesn't apply. He also candidly admits that there are no guarantees that it will always work, but that in most situations, dramatic results are achieved.

Read Al Ritter's book – it offers a simple and straightforward approach to getting the soft stuff right!



Consequences

Albert Einstein said, "Setting an example is not the main means of influencing another, it is the only means."

- Always keep in mind the consequences of your behavior as a leader:
- If you are not loyal to your employees, they will not be loyal to you.
- If you do not respect your employees, they will respond in kind.
- If you don't care about your employees, they won't care about you or your endeavors.
- If you don't look out for their interests, they won't look out for yours.
- If you don't treat your employees with respect, they will not treat you or our customers with respect.
- If you are abusive to employees, the good ones will leave; only the poor ones will stay.
- Remarkable service is all about attitude; treating employees badly fosters bad attitudes.

"A leader leads by example, whether he intends to or not."

Unknown

Your example sets the standard for all your employees. Don't blame them if they don't have high standards.

Give Them More than Just a Paycheck

Throughout my career I've too often heard managers complain about the labor pool, the lack of work ethic and sense of responsibility among workers, and the constant headaches that came from their human "resources." The overwhelming sense from these managers was, "We pay too much to these people whose only interest is in collecting a paycheck."

Yet at the same time and in the same or similar markets, there were other managers who did just fine in finding and retaining good people who made a real contribution to their organizations. What then made the difference? The answer is quite simple – good leadership!

So instead of just providing your employees with a paycheck consider giving them the following:

Respect. The life of all human beings is important to themselves, yet too many people are treated by their bosses as if they didn't matter. This maltreatment is not necessarily by design; it's often the byproduct of busy bosses too focused on themselves or the many problems they face in busy operations. But every employee deserves to be treated with the utmost respect and the common courtesies of human interaction. When consistently and sincerely given, this respect will transform any work team.

Responsibility. Placing responsibility on your work team demonstrates your trust in them. Trust given returns trust. In contrast, when you treat your employees like idiots or children, many will respond by acting like idiots or children.



Recognition. Every day your employees do hundreds of things right. Make sure you recognize that essential contribution to the success of your operation. When sincerely given, a simple thank you or handshake of appreciation has a profound impact on morale, commitment, and contribution.

Responsiveness. Leaders must engage with their employees every day and respond to their issues and concerns. In any group of people working in a complex, fast-paced, and detail-intensive business there will be conflict and turmoil. Without the leader's guiding hand, this turmoil can consume the operation. Leaders must stay engaged, be approachable, and respond to concerns.

Example. As said before, "A leader leads by example, whether he intends to or not." The leader's example is paramount in setting the standards of the operation. If the leader doesn't seem to care about his employees, they won't care about her or her initiatives and agenda.

Training. Most people want to do a good job and appreciate when they are properly trained to improve their knowledge, skills, and job performance. Lack of training leads to a chaotic and confusing work environment, the loss of conscientious employees, and a staff dominated by people who "couldn't care less."

Removal of Roadblocks. Leaders should be hyper-sensitive to anything in the workplace that inhibits efficiency. Do whatever is necessary within reason to identify and eliminate anything that makes employees jobs more challenging, time consuming, and frustrating. Not only do you gain speed, efficiency, and improved productivity, but your employees will understand that you are dedicated to improving the operation and you care enough about them to address legitimate concerns.

All the above steps from leaders will have a dramatic effect on employees and the operation. In contrast, when you give your employees no more than a paycheck, you shortchange them, the organization, and your customers.

The Enemies of Effective Leadership

While we all like to think of ourselves as effective leaders, it's always good to do a brief reality check.

The following list includes some things that can destroy anyone's effectiveness as a leader:

Lack of Values. To lead others, you must have a grounding or center of moral and ethical values that you hold to regardless of situation. This center is who you truly are and will see you through any difficulty. With a strong center, your integrity is intact, and you can be trusted by your constituencies to do the right thing. A person without bedrock values is frequently seen as an opportunist – doing this or that or whatever serves the interests of the moment.

Lack of Integrity. Your integrity is dependent upon the values you hold and your steadfastness in maintaining those values in the face of challenge and adversity. Integrity also means that you are whole, sound, and true. Lacking this, you cannot be counted on by others.

Personal Insecurity. Insecure people are fearful, defensive, and sometimes paranoid. They assume the worst and look for every piece of evidence to support their fears. Consciously or unconsciously their fearful actions damage their relationships with others. Being fearful, they do not trust. In not trusting they are quick to blame and act defensively, which causes offense to others. Their words and actions destroy the very trust that underlies any meaningful relationship.



Lack of Vision. Without an understanding of where you're taking your followers, they will not be inclined to join you on your journey.

Poor Communicator. Even with a profound vision, you must be able to communicate it to your followers. They want to know where they are going and how they will get there. But you don't necessarily have to be a great orator to communicate effectively – you just have to communicate often and thoroughly.

Large Ego. History is littered with failed hero cults – Adolph Hitler, Joseph Stalin, James Jones, and Nicolae Ceausescu, to name a few. As Jim Collins points out in *Good to Great* there is a negative correlation of “celebrity” CEOs and great companies. Every great company he identified in his book had Level 5 leadership – the combination of personal humility and overwhelming drive for the company's success, not one's own.

Lack of Competence. Your followers will never trust you if you can't demonstrate competence in your field of endeavor. Without trust in your abilities, they won't follow you. Some “leaders” have been able to mask their incompetence with bluff and braggadocio and gain a following, but in the words of Abraham Lincoln, “You cannot fool all the people all the time.”

Lack of Initiative. Leading isn't just about talking, it's about doing. You will be judged as a leader by what you successfully accomplish. Initiative is taking your thoughts and words into the realm of action.

Lack of Organization. Leadership is a group activity. You are required to motivate your followers to accomplish some goal or mission. To do this effectively you have to be able to organize their efforts. Your followers will lose heart if your efforts and theirs are chaotic.

Lack of Standards. Just as you have values, a leader must have standards – for herself as well as her followers. An ill-disciplined army can win a battle but lose the war for failing to maintain basic standards of human behavior. As a leader, you will be judged by the actions of your followers. Therefore, they must understand the high standards that you have and hold dear.

Lack of Personal Accountability. Harry Truman said, “The buck stops here.” Every true leader must be prepared to accept the responsibility he assumes. Dodging responsibility will quickly cost the trust of your followers. Be a stand-up person and recognize that not everything you do will be right. Your followers will readily understand that if you simply hold yourself to the same high standards you expect of them.

Lack of Confidence. You must be confident in your vision and your cause for people to willingly follow you. Most people are looking for guidance and direction and will embrace your well-thought-out course of action when you demonstrate your confidence in it.

Failure to Value Followers. You cannot use people. They will gladly follow a trusted leader with a compelling vision but will become cynical and alienated when they know they are being manipulated for your purposes alone.

Lack of Ongoing Involvement. Accomplishing a challenging task requires persistence and effort over the long haul. An effective leader sees the task through to successful conclusion, whereas the dreamer or visionary can envision the result but has no conception of how to accomplish it. As a leader, you must remain engaged in your enterprise until you've accomplished your mission. If your followers sense your detachment from the effort, you've led them to, they will lose interest and their willing efforts will rapidly erode.

Lack of Emotional Maturity. To win the hearts and minds of your followers you must have the emotional maturity to build solid, enduring relationships with all manner of people. As a result, you can't be



impulsive, rash, or overly emotional in your dealings with others. Likewise, you must maintain a leadership presence by avoiding childish actions and immature reactions to others around you.

Effective leadership is never easy, but the best leaders seem to rise from the challenge of the moment. In the words of one hospitality executive, “The longer I’m in this business, the more I realize it’s all about leadership.” With this thought in mind put your time and emphasis where it will have the greatest impact and do the most good.

In Conclusion

Let Service Begin with You. In attempting to affect positive change in your company, do not wait for others to do their part. Whether your boss or your peers believe in or apply the principles of Service-Based Leadership, make your contribution by taking the initiative. In time, your example will have an unmistakable impact on all around you.

Last Thoughts. While we have discussed a lot of leadership principles, attributes, and disciplines, keep the following foremost in mind:

- The quality of your leadership is determined by the influence you have with your followers, which, in turn, is established by the quality of your relationships with them – and your relationships are built on a foundation of trust, of which integrity, competency, consistency, and common decency are primary ingredients.
- As you progress through your career and assume greater authority and responsibilities, you will find it helpful to periodically remind yourself of leadership basics by reviewing this material. Even after a forty-year career, I find it helpful to return to this foundation.
- All of Jim Collins’ good to great leaders possessed the qualities of Level 5 Leadership, a paradoxical blend of personal humility and a fanatical zeal for the success of their enterprise. I believe that Service-Based Leadership is the underlying foundation of those qualities.
- Never stop learning and always be open to the never-ending lessons around you. Even bad examples and failure can be powerful instructors.
- Care for and sincerely value people. While there are many avenues to success in life, everyone, except that of a successful hermit, requires that you recognize the ultimate value of people in all you do.
- You owe it to those who come after you to pass on your life lessons and hard-won wisdom. The world will always need Service-Based Leaders and, unfortunately, they are in short supply. While your example will be the best teacher, a formal structure of leadership basics is a critical starting point.

Thank you for your interest and effort in making this journey. I trust that it will lead to success in your career, as well as in life. Best wishes and good luck in all your endeavors!

Two books on the PCPM Marketplace Store provide more discussion of Service-Based Leadership:

[Leadership on the Line, A Guide for Front Line Supervisors, Business Owners and Emerging Leaders](#)

[Leadership on the Line – The Workbook](#)

About the Author

Ed Rehkopf is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy and received a Master of Professional Studies degree in Hospitality Management from Cornell's School of Hotel Administration. During his long and varied career, he has managed two historic hotels, managed at a four-star desert resort, directed operations for a regional hotel chain, opened two golf and country clubs, worked in golf course development, and launched a portal web site for the club industry.