

Trust Based Leadership Discussion: Q&A

We have picked a sample of Questions and Answers that were covered in the webinar

Q Are you able to influence and maintain strong morale during times of adversity?

A

Covid-19 is a crucible within which resilient leadership is refined. Acting without perfect information, often with only a few hours or days to spare, CEOs have to guide their organisations through myriad decisions and challenges, with significant implications for their company's whole system; employees, customers, clients, financial partners, suppliers, investors, and other stakeholders, as well as for society as a whole. Clarity of thinking, communications, and decision-making will be at a premium. Those CEOs who can best exhibit this clarity, and lead from the heart and the head, will inspire their organisations to persevere through this crisis, positioning their brand to emerge in a better place, prepared for whatever may come. Crises like these, with deep challenges to be navigated, will also lead to opportunities for learning and deepening trust with all stakeholders, while equipping organisations for a step change that creates more value not just for shareholders, but for society as a whole. Moral and ethical leadership is the key to successful business, yet it's clear from the news that the leaders of some of our most influential governments and corporations are making morally questionable decisions. These decisions will lose the trust of society, customers and employees. Trust is the foundation of high functioning relationships and can only be achieved by meaningful dialogue. It is clear that this is not happening. Instead we're using electronic communication, where it should never be used.

Q Do you have any tips on how I could best monitor the performance of the people I have to lead?

A

There are many moving parts to performance management that need oversight including aspects like performance reviews to make sure employees stay on track. As a leader, your responsibility in any given performance appraisal is to motivate, coach, and mentor through effective means of communication and recognition. Defining performance reviews and performance improvement is a standard for performance management:

The most comprehensive application of a dynamic performance management system occurs when the cause and effect connections of current performance are used to define and align future performance. In the field of human resources, the latter connection can be achieved by incorporating the concepts of goal setting and performance improvement plans into the feedback processes of a performance management system.

Leadership needs a heavy hand in performance management. Organisational leadership sets the standards for employee performance standards and company culture quality. Your employees look to you to set examples and to keep them focused on achieving company goals. You can't do this without an effective performance management strategy and the information to track from that performance management system. Through a strategic performance management system, leaders can identify developmental and training needs throughout the organization and adjust their programs accordingly.

Q

Do you feel that today's leaders have the skills, experience and expertise to be effective leaders?

A

As the world becomes more connected, more transparent, and more diverse, businesses need a new type of leadership. This new leadership requires different skills to lead organizations into the future successfully. The challenge is that few businesses are offering emerging leaders the scope of experience they'll soon need. According to a study by the American Management Association, 48% of organizations believe that developing global capabilities in their leaders is a top priority. That being said, only 18% of multinational companies say they have the strong global leadership pipeline necessary to meet their future business challenges. A new report by Deloitte examines the needs of the future workplace given these changing dynamics. As organizations become social enterprises, they are under increased scrutiny from the public and their stakeholders. Social Enterprises bring meaning back to the workplace and combine generating profits with respect and support for employees, customers, and the communities in which we live. Leadership in these organizations must reflect values of diversity and transparency. Finally, the issues facing organizations are more complex than they've ever been. Everything about work is changing; the influx of technology, geographic expansion, an increasingly complex global world, increased regulations from the government.

A leader can be defined fairly simply as 'a person who leads or commands a group, organisation or country'.

Organisations need to ask three key questions: How suited is your current leadership framework for the new normal? Do you need to adjust your leadership 'signature' (the unique combination of styles that leaders can combine to be effective)? And are leaders themselves involved in this redefinition?

This definition is broad, and could include both formal and informal roles—that is, both appointed leaders and those who emerge spontaneously in response to events.

In recent years, considerable evidence has emerged that the strongest organisations and groups tend to permit and actively encourage each member of the group or organisation to take the lead at the appropriate point. Organisations and families with particularly controlling leaders, by contrast, tend to be fairly dysfunctional.

Leadership, therefore, is in practice fairly fluid: leaders are made by circumstances. The crucial issue is that people are prepared to follow them at the right moment.

People also struggle with the concept of how being a leader is different from being a manager. You may have heard the idea that 'leaders do the right thing, and managers do things right'. This is a fairly delicate distinction, and many leaders are also managers (and vice versa). Perhaps the key difference is that leaders are expected to create and communicate a compelling vision, often associated with change. Managers, on the other hand, are perhaps more often associated with maintaining the status quo.

Q

What advice would you give someone going into a leadership position for the first time?

A

Consider some of the following tips to become a leader and think about ways that you can implement these strategies in your daily life. The fact is we are all shaped by our own experiences and wisdom.

Face challenges. A great leader is a brave yet prudent. You should be ready to face challenges and answer for the consequences of your decisions.

Be honest. Inform your co-workers of both good and bad news, and how the company is going to react. You are responsible for establishing a calm environment among your co-workers, so they are sure they are unlikely to be hit with unpleasant surprises.

Win trust. Your team will become engaged and loyal if they feel they are surrounded by people they can trust. The first and most important aspect of building trust is to get involved in co-workers or employees' everyday work problems. Pay close attention to those who are behind everyone else, and devote some time to explaining their task to them. The second step is to get to know their lives outside the office. But, don't overdo it—no one likes intrusive bosses.

Keep calm. Professionals never show their emotions. You have to stay focused, and if you feel overwhelmed, it is better to take a walk or even stay and work from home. Your colleagues, partners, and even your managers make mistakes; nevertheless you can never allow yourself to correct them in anger. Instead, calmly explain the situation and what you expect them to do in the future.

Pursue your passions. Although it is a bit clichéd, it is true that you will never become a leader if you are heading in the wrong direction in your career. Being young allows us to try and understand what is interesting yet beneficial for us. Use your time well.

Listen and observe. If you are determined to become a leader, you will have to be the best at listening and observing. People express themselves with their manners, words, and body language every day. You can tell a lot about a person if you observe them. See what they are passionate about, what makes them excited, which tasks make them gloomy, and which seem to make them happy.

Set an example. Be the kind of leader you would follow yourself. You may not know every task 100 percent, but it is essential to understand how to solve or better improve each situation. If you were promoted to become a manager of a marketing department, you have to know specifics of the work and each employee. It is you who must take responsibility for each task, and not your coworkers. Your main aim as a leader is to set an example; so for instance, if you want them to be at work on time, you should be punctual yourself.

A

Stay organized. Your desk should be clean and your orders should be easy to understand. You should know the plan for each day and every week.

Be fair. Although it is an obvious statement, many leaders and managers tend to pick their favorites. Even if you are close friends with someone on your team, it doesn't give you the right to be totally permissive to them while throwing most of the work to others.

Earn respect. Earning respect is easy—all you have to do is conduct yourself in an ethical way and model what you expect from the others on your team. Show them you know where you are going, and that you are not only telling your team what to do, but also marching in step.

Stay curious. “Millions saw the apple fall, but only Newton asked why.” Curiosity is one of the main traits of a good leader. Stay passionate, curious, and committed to learning something new.

Be sympathetic. Although you have to be tough, you should also understand that we are all human beings, and sometimes it won't hurt you to cut some slack to those that are going through a rough time, such as a painful break-up or loss of a relative.

Remember that you are young. You have some time to build a wonderful career, and remember to have fun and enjoy the moment you are living in. While it is important to be focused on your career, your private life shouldn't suffer.

Don't put labels on people. If you want to be an effective leader, you will have to lose the practice of assigning labels to others and especially to yourself. This includes the label of being a leader. Who knows when your role may be revoked, especially if you work for someone else, or become drunk on the power of leadership. Your title is not your identity. Be confident, but don't be confident because of your label.

Understand yourself. Try to do everything to notice the impact you have on others. If you reach the point when self-awareness is your strength, it means you are ready to go on a long-term leadership journey.

If you have any further questions for Geoff please do not hesitate to contact him:

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