



What is the definition of leadership?

Leadership is a method of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the accomplishment of a unified goal.

This definition can be broken down into 4 key takeaways:

1. Leadership is about being able and willing to inspire others and motivate them into action. It's about social impact — not using power, status, or force.
2. Leadership requires the support and assistance of others. A leader cannot simply work alone.
3. Leadership isn't a one-size-fits-all approach. There are many styles of leadership and paths a leader can take to achieve their vision.
4. Leadership is working toward and guiding others to achieve a shared goal. One cannot influence without an intended outcome.

Leadership not only refers to a set of traits that can be nurtured but also a collection of skills that can be learned and perfected. Because of this, everyone has the ability to be an effective leader, and leadership can be utilized in any role, industry, or organization — including both within the business and the community.

Leadership Explained

1. How leadership actually works
2. The seven primary leadership styles
3. Leadership vs management
4. What does a good leader do?
5. Leadership skills that make a great leader

1. How leadership actually works

In business, leadership is the major factor that makes everything work together seamlessly. It involves the ability of a company's management to set and achieve specific goals, act decisively, outshine its competitors, and inspire employees to perform to their absolute best.



In the business world, people with strong leadership skills are often promoted to senior positions such as:

CEO (Chief Executive Officer)

COO (Chief Operating Officer)

CFO (Chief Financial Officer)

President

Chairman

When we talk about leadership roles in business, we are referring to those in high-performance roles who ultimately have the expectation of increasing their company's bottom line. While the term leadership isn't generally linked to profit, it is a big driving force behind a leadership role within a business.

These profit expectations might be set by higher management, boards, and/or shareholders. If someone in a leadership role fails to meet these expectations, then they may be terminated from the position.

In business, leadership is important, as it offers the following benefits:

Ensures the company maintains its vision

Inspires morale among employees

Guides a company towards diversity

Communicates new strategic decisions

Ensures employees remain motivated

Acquires necessary resources and support

Encourages continuous learning and development



Inspires a collective identity between staff and their company

2. The seven primary leadership styles

When it comes to leadership styles, there isn't a one-size-fits-all solution. The way a person leads will depend on their own strengths and preferences, as well as the preferences of their team members and organization.

Additionally, different situations will call for different leadership styles to achieve the best possible outcome. The seven primary leadership styles are:

Authoritative leadership: a hierarchical approach to leading

Consultative leadership: relies on consistent feedback from the team and an open-door policy

Democratic or participative leadership: the decision-making process is heavily influenced by team members

Laissez-faire or delegative leadership: team members' progress is monitored, but they are ultimately in charge of their day-to-day tasks or projects

Persuasive leadership: similar to an authoritative leadership style, but leaders share an honest justification behind decision-making policies

Transformational leadership: leaders focus on creating an environment that supports innovation and inspires team members to reach past their full potential

Collaborative leadership: places an emphasis on employee satisfaction and teamwork

3. Leadership vs management

Leadership and management are often mistaken as the same thing, however, they each differ in several important ways.

While it's true that both leadership and management involve having to successfully utilize and be in control of the resources available, the traits of a true leader go beyond these duties. For example, a leader must inspire those who follow them and drive them



toward a common goal. While a manager might drive their subordinates toward specific tasks or actions, they may or may not be described as inspiring by these fellow employees.

Leaders also highly value innovation, as they themselves are often seen as a trailblazer. As a result, they're not concerned with existing structures or traditions and will aim to do whatever it takes to achieve a specific goal. Managers, on the other hand, belong within a corporate structure and therefore have less freedom to break rules in order to achieve their goals. Chaos is something to be avoided by a manager, yet leaders work fairly independently and don't see potential chaos as an obstacle to their goals — particularly if they achieve those goals in the end.

Caring less about potential chaos can present problems, however, as it means leaders are less likely to worry about the negative side effects on interpersonal relationships or the wellbeing of those around them. Managers, alternatively, see it as part of their role to smooth over any conflict between employees, helping potential issues from worsening over time.

To summarize,

A leader:

May or may not be in a managerial position

Must inspire those who follow them

Values and encourages innovation

Isn't afraid to challenge existing structures

Operates with a lot of independence

May be less concerned with social or personal relationships

A manager:

May or may not be considered a leader



Doesn't have to inspire those who follow them

Values reasonability and command

Seeks to conform to and preserve existing corporate structures

Generally, operates as a link in the business chain of command

May be more concerned with social or personal relationships

Of course, these are general guidelines, and may not be applicable to every type of manager or every type of leader.

4. What does a good leader do?

At the very core of leadership lies ideas, both original and borrowed. It is a leader's ability to seek inspiration from existing ideas and use skills such as innovation, clarity, and foresight to develop their own vision. This vision will build upon existing structures and aim to produce an outcome that is more effective for all involved.

When you think about leaders within your own life, you might think of a:

President

CEO

Sports team captain

Church minister

School principal

Essentially, a leader is someone who:

Produces an inspiring vision of the future

Motivates and inspires others to connect with that vision



Manages what is required to achieve the vision

Creates and mentors a team, to increase the chances of achieving the vision

5. Leadership skills that make a great leader

Leadership skills are the abilities you use when coordinating with other people to reach a common goal. These skills are often utilized in management roles or when leading a project, as leadership qualities are required to motivate team members to get the job done, often within a tight schedule.

Developing leadership skills that make you a good leader is something you can strive for at any stage in your career. These skills are used in every organization and at every level, so you can be assured that they will never go to waste.

Great leadership involves not just one, but several attributes which work together successfully. We'll be exploring each of these skills here below.

Leaders serve. Leadership serves the team — not the other way around. A top leader will ensure their group feels monitored, supported, and recognized for their efforts. Additionally, it is the purpose of the leader to make sure team members have the tools and resources required to do their job properly.

Leaders have a vision. Leading a group of people begins with an important vision that is then shared among each other. This is how a leader inspires their followers, as they focus on a singular, overarching goal that is both bold and ambitious. Keep in mind, however, that your vision isn't the same as your pitch. Instead, it's more philosophical and involves asking important questions such as:

What are we trying to achieve?

Why do we do what we do?

Where do we want to be as a company in 10 years?

Leaders are empathetic. Leaders are required to have emotional intelligence that allows them to put themselves in the shoes of others, understand their troubles, and solve



issues that arise. It's this ability to empathize with clients, team members, and other employees that elevates a leader and earns them respect from their peers.

Leaders take risks. The key to a great leader is knowing when to take calculated risks that will ultimately pay off with rewards. They see opportunities where others might not and are able to spread this enthusiasm among their followers. Not only does a great leader have the confidence required to make a big decision and see it out, but they also have the humility to admit when they make a mistake, without blaming it on others.

Leaders build teams. True leadership is about working with a group of people with a shared vision. However, managing people is often the most difficult aspect of being a leader. Successful leaders maintain a positive attitude with their followers and instill trust within them. They're also experts at boosting morale and keeping a team unified towards a common goal.

Leaders are thorough. The best leaders don't believe in a hands-off approach to their vision. Instead, they set the bar high for their team and give them every possible opportunity to fulfill their potential. By being detailed, methodical, and diligent in their leadership position, they bring out the best in those around them, while treating them with the care, respect, and attentiveness they require.

Leaders motivate. One of the main features of a good leader is they know how to motivate people toward action. It simply isn't enough to only speak and give orders; instead, leaders need to ask their team members questions, allow them to offer their point of view, and both listen and understand what they need.

An important part of this motivation is setting goals and targets for each team member to monitor and accomplish. These goals should be SMART (Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound)

Leaders make decisions. Leadership is about setting clear directions in the face of uncertainty. They make the decisions necessary to overcome obstacles and progress toward the desired result. Not only is it important to direct others on this path, but also to take responsibility for any potential fallout that comes with those decisions.

Leaders coach. It is a leader's role to train and mentor others so they perform extraordinary work. In this sense, they are also like a coach, and therefore must share



their own knowledge and expertise to build others up and put them on their own paths to success.

Leaders are confident. Despite leading their followers, one of the vital aspects of a leader is that they don't seek recognition, nor do they feel the need to please everyone. It is this confidence within themselves that sets them apart from others, while their ability to have confidence in their team members earns them mutual respect from their peers.

Leaders influence. While leaders might be seen as powerful people, it's true that power alone doesn't allow someone to lead. Instead, successful leaders are influential, and they win over the hearts and minds of their followers. Through a combination of the leadership skills discussed in this section, a leader has the ability to influence people's thoughts and actions.

Leaders innovate. Excellent leadership involves inventing, transforming, and revolutionizing. It's all about being innovative enough to adapt things for the better and never being afraid to challenge existing models, systems, or processes.

Leaders get results. It's one thing to lead a team, but it's another entirely to achieve results. Leaders don't just say they'll achieve something and lack the evidence to back it up. Instead, they're results-driven and look to performance indicators to track their progress.

The bottom line

Being a great leader is more than just operating as a manager. It involves the social impact you have on those around you, and the ability to inspire and motivate them into action towards a shared goal.

There are many benefits to strengthening your leadership skills and qualities, such as being able to identify your own strengths and weaknesses, understand your company's direction, and get the absolute best out of your team.

Courtesy of Fiverr