

# Leaders Lead

by

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As the CEO, president or owner of a business, employees, vendors, and customers look to you as the leader of the company. You are the one with the vision and knowledge that keeps the company on track, understands where the company has been and where it needs to go in the future to retain a competitive advantage. People put their trust in you to make the right decisions for them, as well as, for the company. That's a lot of responsibility. But for a true leader it's just all part of a typical business day.

This may be a difficult concept to understand for some business people. To state it simply: leaders lead. As the head or owner of a company, you need to immediately take hold of the lead position and never relinquish it.

Most people in business are looking to be "saved" in some way; or, to put it another way, to follow rather than lead. These people want to be taken care of rather than addressing what needs to be done, and to have their hands held rather than initiate and create. They want to look to outside influences to solve problems rather than face issues directly themselves. Business leaders cannot allow themselves such options. Issues must be faced and dealt with directly.

Leaders lead by example: without doubt, without nonsense, without regret. Leaders move forward no matter how many times they fail. This doesn't mean that a leader should act like Attila the Hun, invading, making conquests, and totally controlling everything and everyone in the company. Nor does it mean, as the leader, you do all the work, taking on every task and job you can. Leaders set the tone, set the pace and delegate. Leaders take responsibility for the people they hire, weed out non-believers and underachievers, and most importantly, leaders empower their people. They inspire and excite others, yet at the same time roll up their own sleeves and work right alongside others. It is a balancing act. As the leader of a company, you walk the tightrope every day. Those that do it well reap the rewards.

As an example, think about your favorite sports team. Your team has a losing season so the team's owners fire the coach. The new coach comes on board and establishes a new group of assistant coaches that will complement the head coach's philosophy. Even with no team player being traded, the team starts winning games again. Why? Because leaders lead. The coaches come in with a new vision, motivate their players and give them the necessary direction.

Think of your business as the sports team only instead of competing against other athletes, you are competing with other businesspeople, other business leaders. Analyze what your company has to offer. Then think about how to play the game of business in order for your company to win against your fiercest competitors.

To play the game of business in a winning way, examine your company from two perspectives:

1) External – What is your competition doing? How do your customers and industry resources perceive you? What trends will shape your business?

2) Internal – Look at the team you have assembled. Does everyone match your philosophy of business and future goals? Are you hiring people that have their own leadership qualities and potential? Do your employees and managers have up-to-date training and knowledge? How do you lead, motivate, and inspire your employees every day – not just in times of crisis? Do your employees believe that you are there for them? Does everyone know what needs to be done to accomplish the company's goals and objectives?

The leader of a company pays attention to what the salesforce is doing. Although it is an old axiom, it's still true, nothing happens until something is sold. Many business people hold their hourly workers accountable to get the job done but somehow accept the excuses of why the salesforce isn't producing. You can't lead in just one area but rather you need to lead in all areas of your business.

Leaders are not afraid of asking the hard questions or of listening to the answers. They are not afraid of asking what is wrong with the business or how to make it better. Leaders invite and encourage participation.

Leaders do not get caught up in negativity. They set a positive agenda to move their business forward.

Being an effective leader can be a daunting, exhausting task, but in the end those leaders who have exhibited the true strength of character and commitment to excellence at all levels will reap the rewards of their hard work. In the end, the message is clear: Leadership = success, for the business, the owner, the employees, and, perhaps most importantly positions the company for future growth and prosperity of the business.

*Howard Lewinter, Business Management Specialist, is the business expert CEOs, company presidents and business owners throughout the United States consult with to help solve business problems and business issues, to lessen business stress and to achieve more company profit and growth. For more details on Howard's unique style of business consulting go to Howard's blog: <http://www.TalkBusinessWithHoward.com> or contact him direct, toll-free at 888-738-1855.*