

# Top 10 Qualities of Great Team Leaders

Great Team Leaders, Great Teachers and Inspiring Parents possess the following 10 Qualities. They guide, mentor and inspire their wards effectively, efficiently, effortlessly and with effervescence. There is a lot of goodwill, confidence, enjoyment, happiness, peace and productivity around these great people. Here are the Top 10 Qualities.

## 1. Has Personal Integrity Deals Honestly and Gains Trust

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“The glue that holds all relationships together – including the relationship between the leader and the led is trust, and trust is based on integrity.” ~ Brian Tracy “Faith in the ability of a leader is of slight service unless it be united with faith in his justice.” ~ George W. Goethals

Honest dealings, predictable reactions, well controlled emotions, absence of tantrums and emotional blackmails, respect for others – all these characteristics help a manager gain the trust of his people. He then becomes the leader of his team.

What is the use of conquering the whole world if you have lost your soul? A person without personal integrity will not be able to predict his own reactions to various situations. Learn how you need to build Success From Within with a blank mail to [within@sendfree.com](mailto:within@sendfree.com)

## 2. Has Clear Long Vision; Executes First Things First; Inspires Others to Action

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“The very essence of leadership is that you have to have a vision.” ~ Theodore Hesburgh “Good business leaders create a vision, articulate the vision, passionately own the vision, and relentlessly drive it to completion.” ~ Jack Welch “If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.” ~ John Quincy Adams

A great leader has the capacity to visualize the future, to imagine himself already having accomplished his goals and going on to the next set of goals. The further a person can see into the future, the greater his leadership abilities.

The leader is able to direct his actions and that of his team towards the visualized future. The great leader has both vision and discipline to work towards achieving his vision.

“Freedom to be your best means nothing unless you’re willing to do your best.” ~ Colin Powell  
“Whatever you do may seem insignificant, but it is most important that you do it.” ~ Mahatma Gandhi  
“Be willing to make decisions. That’s the most important quality in a good leader. Don’t fall victim to what I call the Ready- Aim-Aim-Aim Syndrome. You must be willing to fire.” ~ T. Boone Pickens

The key is to ACT ... and to inspire others to action.

“Effective leadership is putting first things first. Effective management is discipline, carrying it out.”  
~ Stephen Covey

Being a mere dreamer will not get results. It is only when the leader disciplines himself and his team to take action – with patience and perseverance – that sweet fruits can be achieved.

### 3. Is Positive Enthusiastic Committed; Has Focus-ability

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“The person who sends out positive thoughts activates the world around him positively and draws back to himself positive results.” ~ Norman Vincent Peale

Having gained the team’s trust, the manager needs to keep them motivated, enthusiastic about the task on hand. The best way that he can do this is by example. Therefore a manager should be positive and enthusiastic if he wants to become a great leader.

“If you try to catch two hares, you will get none” ~ Proverb

A great leader is able to Focus on the right activities. He communicates, educates and teaches his group members to Focus on the important things. Sometimes he directly tells them what to focus on; at other times he gently leads them towards the right activities.

### 4. Is Solution-oriented Creative; Makes Top Management Efficient; Empowers Others

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“Don’t find fault, find a remedy.” ~ Henry Ford “Leadership is solving problems. The day soldiers stop bringing you their problems is the day you have stopped leading them. They have either lost confidence that you can help or concluded you do not care. Either case is a failure of leadership.” ~ Colin Powell

The great leader admits his handles any problem in this manner: He is always innovative & creative in his thinking, encourages and fosters creativity in others, teaches his team to be take bold, calculated risks.

A great leader focuses on searching for and discussing solutions and does not harp on the reasons for the problem. This solution-oriented thinking results in a feeling of abundance and plenty from which the great leader operates.

This attitude empowers others to think positively and discuss their suggestions – a participatory decision-making environment prevails where people are not blamed; nor are victims or scapegoats slaughtered.

Together the team compiles a list of possible solutions. Next, they brainstorm the pros and cons of each suggestion and narrow the list to the 3 most attractive solutions. The top 3 list, along with the pros and cons, will help Top Management to make better decisions faster.

“Good leaders make people feel that they’re at the very heart of things, not at the periphery. Everyone feels that he or she makes a difference to the success of the organization. When that happens people feel centered and that gives their work meaning.” ~ Warren Bennis “People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” ~ Anonymous “It’s not empowerment that’s magic, it’s accountability. Give people responsibility and the resource to get something done. Let them understand that they will be held accountable for it, that you are expecting those results, and that they are going to share in the success. Then watch what happens.” ~ Brian Tracy “I start with the premise that the function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers.” ~ Ralph Nader

## 5. Is A Catalyst; Creates Pygmalion Effect; Fosters Self Motivation

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"I am personally convinced that one person can be a change catalyst, a "transformer" in any situation, any organization. Such an individual is yeast that can leaven an entire loaf. It requires vision, initiative, patience, respect, persistence, courage, and faith to be a transforming leader." ~ Stephen R. Covey. "Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you help them become what they are capable of becoming." ~ Johan Goethe "Good leaders make people feel that they're at the very heart of things, not at the periphery. Everyone feels that he or she makes a difference to the success of the organization. When that happens people feel centered and that gives their work meaning." ~ Warren Bennis

Read the Pygmalion effect live case studies to see this aspect of a teacher's influence in action. Refer [www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1985/2/85.02.06.x.html](http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1985/2/85.02.06.x.html) and [www.psybox.com/web\\_dictionary/pygm.htm](http://www.psybox.com/web_dictionary/pygm.htm). The leader-team member relationship is discussed <http://www.accel-team.com/pygmalion/index.html>. "The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and the will to carry on." ~ Walter Lippmann "The ultimate leader is one who is willing to develop people to the point that they eventually surpass him or her in knowledge and ability." ~ Fred A. Manske, Jr.

People love to achieve more than they thought they were capable of. Going through this process of over-reaching himself (while in the presence of his leader) just once in his lifetime is very often sufficient to ensure that the staff member acquires the habit of driving himself to greater heights.

This leads to self-motivation, removes the dependence on the leader and feeds back into the cycle of excellent performance. Thus "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

## 6. Strives for Excellence Always; Is a Transparent Influence

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"A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go but ought to be." ~ Charles A. Cerami "Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it." ~ Dwight D Eisenhower "As for the best leader, the people do not notice their existence. The next best, the people honor and praise. The next, the people fear, and the next, the people hate." ~ Lao Tzu

A great leader exhibits excellence in his activities and expects only the best of outputs from others. He will not tolerate ship-shod work, negligence and oversight. He will create the environment where lack of knowledge is bridged through training, mentoring or coaching. Once this is done, he will not tolerate incompetence and carelessness.

You may have noticed 4, 5 and 6 are three phases in the maturing of the leader and his team members. At first in step 4 the manager creates a participatory environment and empowers subordinates, peers and superiors alike. In Step 5, the leader is a catalyst helping to speed up the process of progress and success. Finally in Step 6, the leader goes completely into the background and his presence is not noticed except as a feeling of security and existence of a safety net.

### 7. Is a Good Communicator; A Great Negotiator; Nurtures Relationships

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“Knowing when to keep your mouth shut is invariably more important than opening it at the right time.” ~ Malcolm Forbes “One of the best ways to persuade others is with your ears – by listening to them.” ~ Dean Rusk “The manager asks how and when; the leader asks what and why.” ~ Warren Bennis “Skill in the art of communication is crucial to a leader’s success. He can accomplish nothing unless he can communicate effectively.” ~ Norman Allen “Outstanding leaders go out of the way to boost the self esteem of their personnel. If people believe in themselves, it’s amazing what they can accomplish.” ~ Sam Walton “Management is about arranging and telling. Leadership is about nurturing and enhancing.” ~ Thomas J. Peters “Learn to help people with more than just their jobs; help them with their lives.” ~ Jim Rohn

### 8. Is Kind-hearted Generous and Giving; Serves Others

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“Tenderness and kindness are not signs of weakness and despair, but manifestations of strength and resolutions.” ~ Cahill Libran “A good leader takes a little more than his share of the blame, a little less than his share of the credit.” ~ Arnold H. Glasgow “When you get right down to it, one of the most important tasks of a leader is to eliminate his people’s excuse for failure” ~ Robert Townsend

“Leadership is an opportunity to serve. It is not a trumpet call to self-importance.” ~ J. Donald Walters “All of the great leaders have had one characteristic in common: it was the willingness to confront unequivocally the major anxiety of their people in their time. This, and not much else, is the essence of leadership.” ~ John Kenneth Galbraith “True leadership must be for the benefit of the followers, not the enrichment of the leaders.” ~ Robert Townsend “You cannot be a leader, and ask other people to follow you, unless you know how to follow, too.” ~ Sam Rayburn

“All veterans know that leadership, at its best, is never autocratic, abusive, or arbitrary. Rather, it relies on commitment, communication, and character.” ~ Robert A. Lutz “We will receive not what we idly wish for but what we justly earn. Our rewards will always be in exact proportion to our service.” ~ Earl Nightingale “The truly wise are content to be last. They are, therefore, first. They are indifferent to themselves. They are, therefore self-confident.” ~ Lao Tzu

### 9. Balances Confidence with Caution; Adapts Management Styles for War & Peace

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“Courage is the first of human qualities because it is the quality which guarantees all others.” ~ Winston Churchill

A great leader can balance confidence in his abilities & that of his team with the fuzzy information available to him. He can take good decisions in a timely manner, adapting his decisions according to the level of information (High/Low) available and the confidence level (High / Low).

With High Confidence and High certainty, the leader says “Our plan is on target. I have every confidence that we are on the right track” and decide to accept the task. With High Confidence and Low certainty the leader says “We have never done this before, but together we can get through it”, estimates the margins for error and decides to accept the task.

With Low confidence and High certainty, the leader says “I know what to do. But they will find it difficult to execute it. This will not work” and decides to drop the task. With Low confidence and Low certainty the leader says “This is hopeless. No one knows what they’re doing” and drops the task.

“A leader or a man of action in a crisis almost always acts subconsciously and then thinks of the reasons for his action.” ~ Jawaharlal Nehru “The ability to find meaning and strength in adversity distinguishes leaders from non-leaders. When terrible things happen, less able people feel singled out and powerless. Leaders find purpose and resolve.” ~ Warren Bennis

The needs of War & adverse business situations requires a management style very different from that required during times of peace & prosperity.

During adversity, the leader should feel the pulse more often, make and break decisions frequently; manage the resultant change and turmoil; take a more active part in operations; remain optimistic and resilient; combine the capability to adapt to change with the ability to size up situations and people in ways that help them make good choices and avoid pitfalls.

“In matters of style, swim with the current; in matters of principle, stand like a rock.” ~ Thomas Jefferson

In a stable environment, a great leader should (a) have all the answers yet be willing to empower people (b) be in charge yet delegate effectively (c) set clear directions and guidelines and then get out of the way – allow subordinates and peers to manage the operations (d) develop strategic plans that remain valid over a longer period of time.

10. Rejuvenates Self; Sharpens his axe; Transforms his Strengths into Talents  
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“To have the sense of one’s intrinsic worth which constitutes self-respect is potentially to have everything.” ~ Joan Didion “As soon as you trust yourself, you will know how to live.” ~ Goethe “To know yourself is the first and most important step to pursuing your dreams and goals.” ~ Stedman Graham “Act as if you were already the person you want most to be.” ~ Brian Tracy “Nothing splendid has ever been achieved except by those who dare to believe that something inside them was superior to circumstance.” ~ Bruce Barton

“Project Serenity – How to gain happiness and peace” gives you 10 Quick and Easy yet Powerful Steps to Manage Yourself, Your Projects and Relationships to rejuvenate yourself. Use these techniques regularly and success becomes a habit.

“Make continuous learning and growth a part of your daily routine.” ~ Brian Tracy “The leader who exercises power with honor will work from the inside out, starting with himself.” ~ Blaine Lee “Ability is what you’re capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it.” ~ Lou Holtz “Take time to sharpen your axe” ~ Stephen Covey

# What makes a good team leader?

The way a team is led will have a major impact upon the success or otherwise of the team. When asked what they want from a team leader, team members will often identify several values they would want a leader to hold :

- ~ commitment to people as well as task is the first key element.
- ~ desire to support and serve the team as well as lead from the front.
- ~ enthusiasm, energy, inspiration and sufficient expertise.
- ~ willingness to shoulder responsibility rather than pass the buck
- ~ ability to make the team come together to achieve more than a group of individuals.

(See what makes a good [team member](#))

## **Commitment to people**

Most team members are primarily concerned about relationship and about being valued as a team member, before they are concerned about the task that the team is to undertake. Feeling secure in a group environment is an important pre-requisite before individual contribution. The good team leader is able to spend time [building the team](#), not only when the team starts off, but when a newcomer joins an existing team.

## **Desire to Support and Serve**

Whilst team members want to see the ability to lead from the front, they are also strongly motivated by the ability to lead from the back! [Servant leadership](#) from the team leader is vital if team members are in turn, to want to serve each other. This is a particularly key topic for Christian leaders. There is a balance to be struck between a willingness to take on any chores that need to be done by the team, and taking an inappropriate balance of roles so that the leadership is diminished.

## **Enthusiasm, Energy, Inspiration and Expertise**

Unsurprisingly team members want to be inspired and motivated by team leadership which has the energy and enthusiasm to fire them up. However, they also want to feel secure that the team leader has themselves, or has access to, the necessary expertise to lead the team in the right direction. The leader doesn't have to be the most knowledgeable of the subject at hand, but if they are not, they must encourage the input of others.

## **Willingness to shoulder responsibility.**

Team leaders are tested under pressure. When challenges arise, as they inevitably will, the leader will need to take responsibility to ensure that they are fixed as far as possible and that the team is strengthened as a result. This does not mean that the leader should admit that issues beyond their control are in any way their fault, (although they should be honest in admitting their mistakes), but rather adopt a proactive stance to ensure the team is not deflected from its course.

## **Ability to achieve more as a team.**

Teams only become a team once there is some synergy within the group ie the team process adds value to that which a disparate group of individuals would achieve undirected. This is likely to require the team leader to explore leadership models that share the leadership role within the team, to have an understanding of different individuals team roles, strengths and gifts, establish a mutual accountability within the team, and to create a team environment which is open, fun and allows healthy and productive discussion.

# Choosing a New Team Leader

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## *Selection of the Right People*

How do we select the right people for leadership training?


People are very different.

- in scope. Exodus --- look for people who will cover 10 people, 100 people etc. Some receive 1 talent, some more. People do have different capacity for covering. Loren covers 10000 in Youth With A Mission.
- people have different gifts
- and temperaments --- consider Peter and Thomas. Extroverts and introverts, sanguine choleric...
- cultural differences. There is a rapid internationalisation of the world. In any city get mixed races and cultural backgrounds.
- preferred style of learning --- contemplative, practical, intellectual....

This is the spectrum of people we are dealing with.


## What Characteristics Are We Looking For?


Many different [qualities](#) touted but in light of the many ask what is necessary and what is desirable? What basic qualities do we need to see before what is desirable. So Gunter's list of indispensable. (What sort of men was Jesus looking for? What sort of men were the disciples? Did He choose just anyone? I have a gift but I haven't been able to mentor everyone --- I have got it wrong.)

- **zeal** --- cannot train anyone complacent with the status quo. Cannot train the interested, only the committed. It will take time to train. Those who are desperate to go on with God are the best to train. Dawson Trotman founder of Navigators was an excellent discipler. He asked, "What are you doing at 5am on Wednesday morning?"
- **faithfulness** --- [2Timothy 2:2](#)  Paul speaking to his disciple/protégé who will find faithful men to train others. Paul says to look for not able, willing men but faithful men. Don't want to invest in those who won't do it. It is death to the process if they won't do it. Paul praises the aspect of faithfulness. Perhaps that's why he didn't take on John Mark --- he had been unfaithful.
- **respect for the mentor** --- they must respect or admire something in the mentor. If you can choose love or respect, go for the respect. Nowhere in the gospels did they call Jesus, Jesus. They called Him Lord, rabbi, master. How do we get respect? You either have it or you don't. It is the degree of godliness. It is not distance and the aura of leadership. It is godliness --- not into such things... It is not the buddy relationship that some leaders try to cultivate with their followers. Shouldn't have respect for the office but for the individual. Respect should be earned.
- **teachability** --- they are open for divine truth. Don't want to get into theological debates. The disciples had a willingness to respond and be obedient.
- **servant heart** --- a willingness for people to serve me. Not a selfish agenda but they want more than selfish greed.
- **leadership potential** --- on top of natural gifts and potential

- **divine call to leadership** --- if God isn't working in and through them I don't have time to give to them. It isn't to simply benefit the individual. Peter followed through the strategy of Christ --- Peter, Philip, Ethiopian eunuch, church planted in Africa.

Not everyone is suitable for leadership training. Very disillusioning for many. In the upper room it was 11 trained out of 120 and only one trained for significant leadership. How many sent out as scouts into the promised land? One. One son of Jacob. David trained 400 and only 37 heroes. It is wrong to think that whomever we are dealing with will be called to significant leadership. It is unlikely to be more than 10%.

Jesus wasn't open to just anyone. [Mark 5:18-19](#)  Gaderene man wanted to follow Christ and be one of His close disciples. He begged to follow Christ but Jesus sent him home. He saw something in the person of Christ or in His relationship with the 12 that he wanted. Christ sent him home to be an evangelist. Jesus wouldn't enrol him in His leadership programme.



[Matthew 19:21](#)  the rich young ruler. This young man must have led an exceptional life. It is the exact opposite of the Gaderene, Jesus wanted him, but he refused. Perhaps Jesus was open to accept him as a 13 apostle. He didn't fulfil the necessary requirements. Jesus didn't try to follow him up, "Do you want to think again about that."

One wanted Him and He said no, the other Jesus wanted and he said no. The main qualifications of leadership are of the heart. If they are not in place they are disqualified.

It is God who calls into leadership and gives the gifts to.

Not everyone we come across is God's prime candidate for leadership. Satan's prime weapon to destroy missions is people who aren't called there? Go after people who have God's hand on them.

## Practical Suggestions in Choosing Leaders.

- don't be blinded by outward appearance. Samuel went to Jesse's family and thought it was the older handsome one.
- mustn't fear diversity. Don't be afraid if the person is very different. In the diversity, we grow. It is always two-sided.
- don't avoid problem people. If Jesus had gone like that half the disciples wouldn't have made it! The sons of thunder!
- don't cut out those more gifted than you. That is the insecurity we mentioned before.
- don't choose for lack of weakness, but strength.
- don't be in a hurry. The first encounter Jesus has with the disciples is in [John 1](#)  . But in [Mark 3:14](#)  He chose them to be with Him. The dates appear to be 14 months apart. He had ample time to observe them to see if they would be obedient and faithful. And they had time to see if Jesus would be the one to follow. It is a serious commitment.
- don't take on too many. A bird only hatches as many eggs as it can cover with its wings. If you take on 8 and only do a good job with 2 it is bad advertising.
- don't go for less than reproduction. Make it clear to the mentoree. "My vision is that you will be able to run a cell group and train another." That way when the training is done they will have the vision to reproduce.
- don't neglect waiting on God about every aspect. Prayerfulness is extremely important.



Need an observation phase. Need to be in the right context to find the people --- travelling, ministering, looking about. Must be where the people are. Start a relationship, get to know them not just as spiritual beings but their kids, the food they like, what interests them, eat with them. Many things we ought to find out. As you get to know the person, assess the need. How can you help them. You are thankful for the material you have but must zero in on the mentorees needs. They will need different answers depending on their needs --- poor self-image, lack of faith, whatever. Only when their is confirmation on part of both sides that should proceed.

One problem is that we inherit the situation --- may be assigned assistant home fellowship leader --- but must still look for the right people. Find the most promising candidates.

Practically then may set aside the time to develop the mentoring relationship.

We will never find the time, we must make it. If you don't have time to train someone, ask how much time you spend on the car, the tv, the cat, swimming etc. We find time to spend on the things that are valuable to us. Business are quite innovative in finding time --- breakfast meetings, Saturday at 6am. If you develop a heart for this you will be able to make time. If there is no time then ask what governs your time. Rearrange priorities to reflect your values. Christ with all on His plate and agenda spent more and more time on the 12. Mightn't He have hired a great Roman amphitheatre? He didn't --- **bless the many, build the few.**

## **Team but No Leader? (Helping a Team Chose Its Own Leader)**

Helping a Team Chose its Own Leader

Meet with the team and give them time to do the following:

Think of three 'projects' you have been involved in during the past 10 years that you both enjoyed and did well. Describe them in as much detail as possible.

Then ask them questions and listen to one another (and to God!). It may be obvious by the end of the discussion who should be the main leader --- if it really matters!

Ask questions to get at their:

- role, especially their leadership role
- the relationships with others while doing that thing, including team
- what was the thrust/subject/nature/idea of the venture
- what did they get out of it personally, what was in it for them
- how were decisions made
- what did you need other people for
- whose idea/initiative was it
- what was your relationship to the other leaders
- what did you get out of it, what did you enjoy the most, gave you the greatest buzz
- what leadership style did you exercise

And look at [Team building](#)

## What qualities define a great team leader?

What are the key things that a leader (not necessarily a CEO) must do to become great at leading...

**Paul LaFontaine**, VP Global Distribution at Playdom/Dis...

I define a team leader's effectiveness more by actions than by qualities. Some actions that arise from good habits and experience:

1. Shapes the situation so the mission is achievable. Pushes back on upper management or investors when it is not. Everyone on the team feels confident that the team is skilled, it can accomplish its mission and success is inevitable.
2. Sets clear group direction. The series of necessary tasks are clearly defined and the most important tasks are prioritized in accordance with the reality of the situation.
3. Understands the balance between thinking and action. This means there is a time to take in data and explore options, then once a decision on a course of action is made the team leader lets the team work without distraction until it is time to take in data again. (This balance in my opinion is a hard thing to learn).
4. Knows the individuals and what kind of work interests them. Steers the situation so people are working on what interests them while the entire team has every avenue covered.
5. Gives clear feedback. After every action cycle (per #3 above) follows up on actions and says "I like this thing you did" or "This didn't go as well as we thought. What happened and how can we improve on this?" Listens to reasons things happened as they did. Gives suggestions.
6. Has the presence, charisma and clarity of communication to demonstrate to great people not on the team that #1 - 5 is how this team works. Great people volunteer to join the team. A people hire A people because A candidates can intuit whether things are working as described in the points above.

Hope that kicks off a good discussion.

## *Qualities Of A Good Team Leader*

A number of inquiries, searches and questions seem to consistently come up when thinking about the "qualities of a good team leader" Certainly, managers and executives have both thought about these qualities and possess some or all of them in some degree. Those of you who have followed my Blogs and Articles know my bias toward seeing these questions through the "Eyes of the Employee." Some of these qualities are straight forward; good communicator, knows the business, trustworthy, good listener, professional, fair and balanced. These are qualities I have heard most often from employees and a manager's direct reports.

One of the most important, a quality that is more felt and experienced than thought about, is the manager's ability to get things done effectively through excellent work delegation skills. Employees really do feel a sense of confidence, and willingness to take on challenging assignments when they work for a manager that delegates very well. The manager can be tough, demanding, a stickler of quality and timely results and the employee team will support this if the manager has demonstrated the ability to manage work through delegation. The three categories by which the employee sees evidence of this ability are:

1. Quality planning of work assignments and projects.
2. The ability to assign work or project action steps effectively.
3. Tracking the progress and keeping the team focused and on track for execution.

The employees know what to expect. The Plans have been reviewed with them and in many cases they may have had input or at least a chance to have a Q & A about the assignment. They have confidence that any work assignments they are given will define exactly "What" needs to be done, "When" it needs to be done and "How" it needs to be done. They also realize they will be held accountable and that their manager will stay on top of each assignment and help them stay on track. Until you work on a project team with a manager who is solid in the qualities of a good team leader and is an outstanding "Delegator" of work, you may not fully grasp the significance of the delegation strength.

## SUCCESS AS A SUPERVISOR/TEAM LEADER

Does your beer distributorship have supervisors or team leaders? What is the difference? Does it really matter? Probably not! The main point being supervisors/team leaders and their work groups are responsible for accomplishing a multitude of tasks with limited resources. The position of supervisor/team leader is probably the toughest job in a beer distributorship.

Their duties require them to interact with not only the executive management of your distributorship but also with retailers. Many times these two groups have different and conflicting goals. Executives want the assigned tasks completed as quickly and as cost effective as possible....retailers are demanding more and more services....a demand that is not necessarily cost effective.

As a former supervisor, executive, and now consultant there appears to be several characteristics to the supervisor/team leader position that if known and developed can help satisfy the needs of both the executives and retailers. A supervisor/team leader must simultaneously satisfy these two groups if he/she is to be successful.

1.If a supervisor/team leader is to be effective he/she must maintain self-confidence and self-esteem whenever they are interacting with executives, retailers, and the employees of their work group. Without self-confidence and self-esteem the supervisor/team leader cannot be effective. The best supervisors/team leaders have an air of self-confidence (not arrogance) about them. Supervisors/team leaders are not born with self-confidence. Self-confidence is a learned behavior that comes with experience, task accomplishment, positive feedback, and self-awareness.

2.By the nature of the position the supervisor/team leader must have excellent communication skills. The position is the pivotal point between the distributorship achieving its goals and the retailer promoting your products. The supervisor/team leader that gets directly to the point, focuses upon specifics, shows respect to all, and allows for two-way communications will be an effective communicator. The effective supervisor/team leader must be capable of communicating with executives, retailers, and employees in his/her work group with equal effectiveness.

3.The effective supervisor/team leader must be a teacher. The teaching demands of this position are not limited to the employees within his/her work group. The supervisor/team leader must be able to teach the executives what is happening in the market and with retailers. He/she must also be able to teach retailers product knowledge and the nuances of merchandising and pricing. The most important teaching task the supervisor/team leader has is with the employees of his/her work group. He/she must be able to describe the steps of each task, demonstrate each of these steps, observe the employee performing the task, and provide constructive feedback to each employee.

4.The supervisor/team leader in a beer distributorship must be an excellent salesperson. This obviously applies to the selling of your products to retailers. However, it also applies to his/her ability to sell ideas and concepts to executives, retailers, and the work group. The ability to sell the intangible is an absolute necessity. This ability like many of the characteristics discussed here is a learned skill and comes through practice and experience.

5. The ability to plan and reach goals is also an absolute necessity for supervisors /team leaders. Holding a pivotal position between executive management and retailers is difficult at best; not having a plan that focuses the work group on the goals of the company and the service demands of retailers invites disaster. The supervisor must have a plan to deploy his/her limited resources (the work group) to accomplish the multitude of tasks and demands.

6. The successful supervisor/team leader will demonstrate initiative when working to balance the executive's demands for goal achievement with the retailer's demands for more service. Those supervisors/team leaders that succeed in this most difficult of environments will demonstrate a high degree of initiative.

7. A trait present within all successful supervisors/team leaders is a company orientation. They support the "company line" even when they do not agree with a decision. They never put down the decision; not to their work group and certainly not to the retailers. They are however self-confident enough to discuss in private with the executive the decision and the underlying reason.

8. Dependability is without question a supervisor/team leader characteristic that may in many cases be the most important. A little lack of planning or difficulty with communications can be tolerated; lack of dependability will ensure failure every time regardless of how strong the other characteristics.

9. With the many demands placed upon the position of supervisor/team leader he/she must be very flexible and adaptable to a changing environment. The business of beer distribution is far too complex for a supervisor/team leader to try to go down a road that has no twists or turns. It is important to have plans, key account call schedules, and other regimented systems. It is how goals are achieved. However, it is vitally important for the supervisor/team leader to be flexible enough to change directions on a moment's notice and take advantage of situations as they arise.

10. Finally, supervisors/team leaders must have all the functional skills needed to perform their duties. They must be able to run routes, build displays, fix draft lines, understand pricing, operate hand-helds, and be able to generate the needed reports from the computer system. Without these functional skills they will be a drag on the distributorship's productivity and profits....something that cannot be tolerated.