



THE 15 SKILLS: HOW TO BE A
**GREAT
LEADER**

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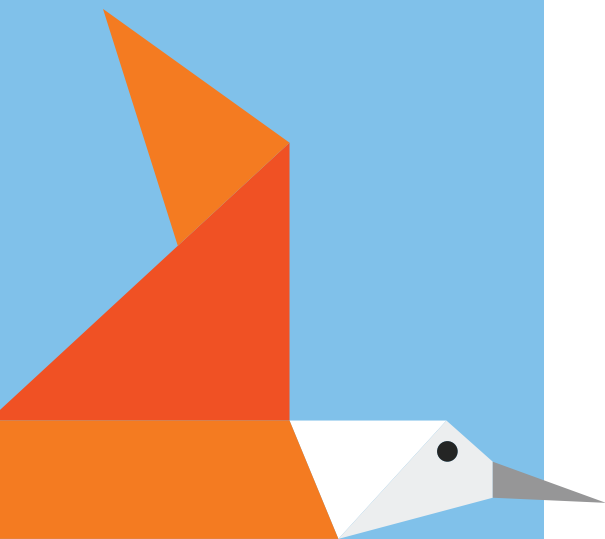
QUANTUM
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“
**A LEADER
KNOWS THE WAY,
GOES THE WAY,
AND SHOWS
THE WAY.”**

John C. Maxwell


Armed with engagement surveys from millions of employees, we set out to learn what’s different about the people who lead America’s best workplaces. Our goal was to escape from management theory and consultant jargon — and break leadership down to its most universal elements. We sequestered 136 heads of HR from companies recognized as America’s Best Places to Work. Presented with a list of 26 leadership competencies and detailed descriptions, each participant ranked all 26 in order from most critical to least. Fifteen of those 26 dominated the responses.

**THESE ARE THE 15 TRIED AND TRUE SKILLS THAT
WILL MAKE YOU A LEADER WORTH FOLLOWING:**



KNOW THE WAY

[STRATEGY]



Great leaders have foresight, the ability to see a preferable future-state. They're able to plot a course toward that vision and manage the inevitable obstacles that pop up along the journey.

1.

DEFINE YOUR DESTINATION

[VISION OF THE FUTURE]

**ALL GREAT LEADERS HAVE SOMETHING IN
COMMON: VISION.**

Whether you're leading a huge company or a small team, you need to be able to communicate an inspiring vision of the end goal. Leading implies movement from here to there. Great leaders envision and communicate the destination. What's your purpose? Sit down and write out your vision, the end goal. This will become a rallying cry so prepare to communicate your vision again and again. Without vision, you can't lead; you can only wander.



2.

CHART YOUR COURSE

[CLARITY]

**IF VISION DEFINES THE DESTINATION,
CLARITY IS THE ROADMAP.**

In an uncertain world, people are hungry for clarity. Great leaders see the trip in their minds before they leave and plan for the road ahead. Your people want to know how their role specifically supports the greater vision. Sit down with each member of your team and help them understand how they fit into the mission.



3.

BE READY TO ADJUST YOUR COURSE

[ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT]

AS THE JOURNEY EVOLVES, YOU'LL SEE UNEXPLORED LANDSCAPES AND POTENTIAL SHORTCUTS.

Great leaders are willing to take prudent risks on their way toward the destination. You'll need to make tough choices about which shortcuts are worth exploring and which shortcuts are too risky.



4.

BECOME CHIEF PROBLEM SOLVER

[CONFRONTING ISSUES]

**YOUR MAP WON'T ALWAYS BE ACCURATE.
SHORTCUTS WON'T ALWAYS WORK OUT.
THERE WILL BE PROBLEMS.**

Great leaders are great problem solvers. You need the ability to recognize and address a problem before it becomes an emergency. You'll need to be a fair mediator when conflict arises between members of your team. And great leaders never tolerate a bad crew member. Think about your team, are their people who are threatening your journey?



5.

EMBRACE CHANGE & TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

[MANAGING CHANGE]


GREAT LEADERS TRACK THEIR PROGRESS TO GET BETTER AS THE JOURNEY GOES ON.

As you confront problems, change course and explore new ground, you'll also need to gather feedback and learn from your mistakes. Never get comfortable; complacency is the beginning of the end for many leaders. You should always be challenging the status quo and looking for opportunities for improvement.



GO THE WAY

[BUSINESS RESULTS]



Great leaders have the ability to prioritize, execute and achieve business results, regardless of the difficulty, risk, or personal hardship involved.

6.

BE AN EXPERT

[BUSINESS ACUMEN]

GREAT LEADERS ARE ETERNALLY CURIOUS.

You might be leading a journey through uncharted territory; but you can always learn from other expeditions. Study the competition and those that have gone before. Seek out ways to learn about what stands between you and the goal. Understand the financial implications of your decisions relative to the budget for your journey. Don't expect people to follow you if you're not an expert – or at least on your way to becoming one.



7.

INNOVATE

[DRIVING INNOVATION]

INNOVATION STEMS FROM THE LATIN INNOVATIO, MEANING “TO RENEW OR CHANGE”.

And since leadership is all about creating positive change, leadership is fundamentally tied to innovation. Maybe innovation is your end goal (like a new product or service). Or maybe it's a new way to get to your end goal (like the compass was for ancient mariners). Either way, leaders must constantly look for innovative ideas and solutions. They develop a 'culture of innovation', an environment that encourages and rewards innovation. And most importantly, great leaders are good at picking which innovations to pursue.



8.

GET THINGS DONE

[ACHIEVING RESULTS]

**IDEAS ARE OVERRATED.
EXECUTION IS WHAT LEADERSHIP IS REALLY ABOUT.**

Great leaders set and communicate aggressive goals. They are able to manage priorities during hard times and point their people toward the most worthwhile problems. The best leaders understand that they cannot do it all; they delegate responsibilities to their team and hold their team accountable for the results.

9.

EXERCISE GOOD JUDGEMENT

[SOUND JUDGEMENT]

TO EARN YOUR FOLLOWERS TRUST AND RESPECT, YOU'LL NEED TO MAKE SOUND DECISIONS.

Don't subscribe to the trust-your-gut school of leadership. Great leaders make data-driven decisions. They collect and analyze the right data to make sound decisions. They look at all their options and balance short and long-term considerations when making judgments.



10.

KNOW YOUR CUSTOMERS

[CLIENT FOCUS]


LEADERSHIP CAN BE LONELY.

At times you will feel isolated, even from the members of your own team or inner circle. It can be tempting to hole up in your ivory tower, mapping out strategy. But great leaders maintain their focus on the client. They get out into the field to intimately get to know their customers' needs. They develop and encourage strong relationships with customers. And they successfully prioritize customer requests.



SHOW THE WAY

[EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT]



Great leaders build great teams, inspire them,
connect them and earn their trust.

11.

BUILD A GREAT CREW

[BUILDING TEAMS]

**IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT ATTRACTING FOLLOWERS.
IT'S ABOUT ATTRACTING THE RIGHT FOLLOWERS.**

Great leaders know there's a ceiling to what they can get done alone – so they need to surround themselves with great people to leverage their effectiveness. Great leaders don't stack their team with weak players in order to cement their leadership; they surround themselves with the best players they can find.

12.

INSPIRE TEAM

[INSPIRING OTHERS]

MOST PEOPLE THINK INSPIRATION LOOKS LIKE THE COACH'S HALFTIME SPEECH AT A FOOTBALL GAME.

But you don't need to be a motivational speaker to inspire your team. That's because actions talk louder than words. You'll get the best commitment from your team by setting an example for your team. When they see your energy and enthusiasm in pursuit of the vision, they'll be inspired to follow suit. Intrinsic rewards like feeling valued and pursuing a worthy goal are often more motivating than extrinsic rewards like cash or other concrete benefits.



13.

EARN THEIR TRUST

[INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION]

ONE OF THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS FOR LEADERSHIP IS TRUST.

What builds trust? Honesty (telling the truth) and integrity (keeping your promises) are vital to earning and maintaining trust. Then sit down and listen to your people. Get to know their skills and interests — repeat it back to them so they know you've heard. Do it because it's the right thing to do — and also because you'll earn their trust.

14.

BREAK DOWN WALLS

[COLLABORATING]

GREAT LEADERS ARE CONNECTORS.

They connect their followers to one another. They tear down barriers to collaboration. They bring together teams and people to drive results. They develop collaborative partnerships to make things happen. And they evangelize the vision across this network of connected followers, teams and partners. What more can you do to connect your followers in order to create new opportunities?



15.

CARE. REALLY, TRULY GIVE A HOOT.

[CLIENT FOCUS]

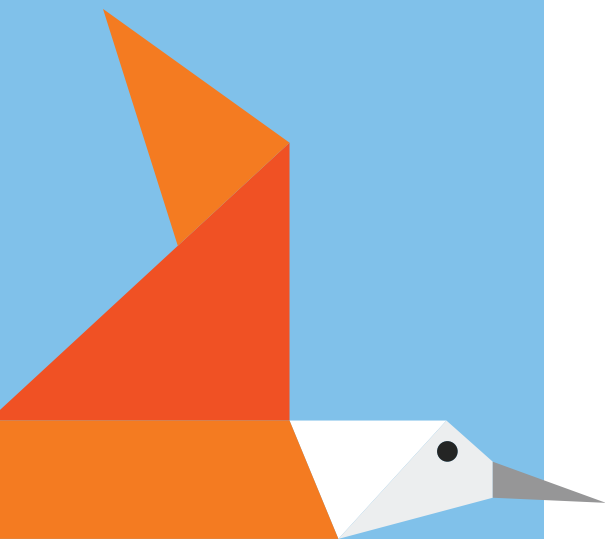
GREAT LEADERS ARE COMMITTED TO KEEPING THEIR PEOPLE AROUND.

How do you retain your best people? First, genuinely acknowledge your people for great work. Sometimes that means publicly, but authentic recognition also happens one-on-one; it means pulling them aside to say “I noticed what you did. And it was awesome.” The key to retaining your best people is demonstrating genuine care and concern for them and proving your commitment to creating a great workplace.



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Sometimes what gets left off a list is equally as interesting. A sampling of leadership skills that were discarded by leading HR executives were: financial acumen, global perspective, and executive presence. Perhaps these were too narrow to apply to broad leadership teams. Or perhaps they represent a generation of management competencies that have been left behind. What we know is that the 15 elements above are the great separators. They are the characteristics that distinguish adequate from awesome.

As you think about how you'd grade in these 15 competencies, pick one or two to focus on. Progress comes to those who focus on one skill at a time. Get feedback from your peers and direct reports. Find someone in your company or community that's widely recognized for excellence in the competency you're focused on — and buy her lunch. Once you've mastered one, move on to two. Excellence happens one step at a time.

GET THE RIGHT TOOLS TO SUPPORT YOUR FEEDBACK CULTURE

From employee surveys and 360 feedback to one-on-one meetings and recognition, Quantum Workplace's Employee Feedback Platform fosters feedback loops throughout the entire employee experience.

QUANTUM WORKPLACE'S FEEDBACK PLATFORM WILL...

- Facilitate 360 feedback via scheduled feedback cycles or let employees request it at anytime
- Give you the option of supporting attributed or anonymous feedback or both
- Allow employees to add comments and questions on feedback to improve clarity
- Provide managers access to feedback on their direct reports
- Track one-on-one meetings, both impromptu or via an automated recurring schedule
- Customize feedback questions to fit your culture
- And so much more!

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