



The 14 Qualities of Great Leaders—How Many Do You Have?

In a recent *Advisor*, business and leadership blogger Dan Oswald offered his thoughts on qualities of great leaders. - See more at: <http://hrdailyadvisor.blr.com/2014/04/11/the-14-qualities-of-great-leaders-how-many-do-you-have/#sthash.oe3t1BkS.dpuf>

Dan quoted Marvin Bower, who said anyone who wants to lead “must develop certain qualities and attributes.” He defines qualities as a person’s character and personality, which he admits are very difficult to learn. He describes attributes as skills that can be learned. What are the qualities and attributes Bower identifies? They are listed below and you might well find them interesting and surprising

1. **Trustworthiness.** Bower calls this “integrity in action.” A leader must be inherently honest to build the trust of those around him or her. Without trust, there is no leadership. It’s as simple as that
2. **Fairness.** How many times have you heard about a leader who is “tough but fair”? It’s a common term. People will respect leaders who are tough on them as long as what they demand is considered fair
3. **Unassuming behaviour.** Too often, when people achieve a position of importance, they let their ego get the best of them and become arrogant. It’s difficult to be an arrogant or pretentious leader
4. **Listening.** A strong leader is a good listener. Many managers believe that when they are put in a position of authority, they should be the one talking and giving orders. Instead, they should focus on listening even more. Managers who don’t listen can’t really be leaders because they won’t know what’s truly happening around them
5. **Open-minded.** Leaders don’t believe they have all the answers. Instead, they are confident and secure enough to know they don’t and that it would be smart to listen to what others have to contribute
6. **Sensitivity to people.** To get people to openly share with you, they must believe you care about them as individuals and about their ideas. If you can’t develop a rapport with people, you can’t lead them
7. **Sensitivity to situations.** Bower says, “Situations are created by people and must be dealt with by people.” Often a manager is put in a position where he or she has to resolve disputes or disagreements. A leader can analyse the situation, consider the feelings of those involved, make a prudent decision, and communicate it effectively. It doesn’t mean everyone involved will like or agree with the decision, but if the manager can display sensitivity to the people and the situation, he or she is likely to be an effective leader
8. **Initiative.** Bower considers this an attribute, not a quality, and therefore believes it can be learned. To be a leader, a person must be willing to take action. When opportunities present themselves, a leader takes the initiative and pursues them relentlessly
9. **Good judgment.** A leader with good judgment has the ability to consider the facts available and other potentially relevant information and has the intuition to combine what is known and unknown to make the best decision. It’s as much art as science, and good leaders understand they will never have all the information or perfect data and is comfortable acting with what he or she has
10. **Broad-mindedness.** This manifests itself in a leader as the ability to see the big picture. A good leader doesn’t get mired in every last detail but can step back from situations to consider many alternatives. Seeing the forest for the trees is important for a leader
11. **Flexibility and adaptability.** A true leader must be able and willing to change direction quickly or admit when he or she has made a mistake. A leader is open to change and can adapt easily when necessary.
12. **Capacity to make sound and timely decisions.** If there’s one thing all successful leaders share, it’s the ability to make decisions. And if a leader is to be successful, those decisions must be made after appropriate consideration. But indecisiveness kills the ability to lead

13. **Capacity to motivate.** This one, in my mind, is broad. Many people associate the capacity to motivate with a fiery leader or an eloquent and effective speaker. And passion and strong communication certainly can aid in one's ability to lead, but it takes more to motivate others. The courage of your convictions, a certain degree of confidence, and a shared purpose also are necessary to get others to follow you
14. **Sense of urgency.** A good leader favours action over inaction. A good leader wants to move quickly and make things happen. Slow, reactive, passive people don't tend to end up in leadership roles—and for good reason

These 14 qualities and attributes outlined by Bower are a great tool for all managers to determine what type of leader they are. How many of these qualities and attributes do you possess? Better yet, how many of them would the people you manage say you demonstrate? Isn't that the true test of a leader?

**We have pleasure in welcoming and introducing our two new Consultants
Debea Sebelebele and Carmen Naidu. Welcome to the team!**



Dabea

Dabea holds an HR Diploma and has extensive experience working in a call centre environment since 2006, where she gained experience in motor, telecommunications and finance arenas.

Carmen

Carmen holds a BPsych (Honours degree) and has recently completed several internship at psychology institutes. She has a passion for working with people and is looking for new opportunities within the recruitment space.



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