



## 6 Defining Traits of Effective Leaders

by Alan Ovson

Since leadership is the art of accomplishing goals through other people, a leader who cannot communicate, inspire, and guide others will go nowhere. Social intelligence is the biggest factor of success for any leader. It is the make-or-break leadership skill set.

Following are six characteristics that define the social intelligence traits of good leaders:

### **1. They Communicate Clearly and Directly**

Clear and direct communication is the single greatest skill effective leaders possess. Many leaders have a great resume, but only those leaders who communicate clearly and develop interpersonal relationships will see their businesses thrive.

### **2. They Influence, Guide, and Inspire Others**

Any leader can hire people with great technical skills, but then you've got to motivate, guide and inspire these employees. That's what good leaders do. If you can't influence and inspire others, you are nowhere.

### **3. They Listen to Varieties of Input**

Effective leaders develop trusting relationships so that people feel comfortable giving feedback. Great leaders actively listen to this feedback and are open to ideas from others. These leaders make decisions based on varieties of different sources.

### **4. They Take Responsibility for Their Decisions**

When all sides have had their say, a good leader will make a decision and take responsibility for his/her actions. Real leaders acknowledge responsibility for their decisions. Leaders mean what they say: in conversations, meetings, presentations, videos, speeches, memos, articles, and white papers. Because effective leaders take responsibility, people trust them.



### **5. They Give Credit to Others**

Effective leaders acknowledge that the people they lead make initiatives successful. Effective leaders know they are only as effective as their team. They recognize the value of others, and a good leader will help his/her organization build more good leaders and promote others into leadership roles.

### **6. They Know Their Value**

Leaders understand their strengths – and how these strengths help them lead. Leaders know what they contribute to an organization's success. Real leaders are comfortable recognizing their own value.

Good leaders are not born into leadership roles. They study, get mentored, and work hard at the basic skills of interpersonal communication and social intelligence. It takes time to learn the skills of effective leadership. Is it worth it? You bet!

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