

WRITTEN BY



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LEADING WITH EMPATHY

Leader of the minorities' right movement delivered a radical speech at yesterday's demonstration. Leader of one of the world's largest technological companies has donated half of her wealth to the poor people of Africa.



However, present times require present leaders, and the market is literally waiting for a new generation of leaders.

But what makes a person a leader? A leader is the person in charge, the one who makes decisions which make a difference. It is the guy or the girl who runs the show, mostly the one that stands first in the line. And because leaders need followers, as they want to attract attention, he or she is an influencer.

That reminds me of my first leadership role. As an unprepared freshman to the organization, I was promoted to manage a team consisting of several

of my previous colleagues. I succeeded in managing the team properly. My team had tremendous results and we contributed to the fact that the company swiftly achieved its goal of becoming profitable. When it comes to the number of real followers, I would not be considered an influencer of more than a couple of my teammates. I preferred to be tough, precise; I enforced keep asking questions rather than listening and accepting the given answers.

Later on, an experienced coach, an ex-leader of a reputable corporation, helped me to recognize that management is not leadership. He helped me reveal my suppressed skills and continuously develop them to become a better and more efficient leader. However, present times require present leaders, and the market is literally waiting for a new generation of leaders.

CURRENT CHALLENGES

Besides the fact, that the biggest challenge of any leader is herself or himself, many other issues make this task difficult. The management of generational or gender diversity, crisis communication, and above all the lack of empathy, combine together to create a cocktail of current challenges, which leaders must face.



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IT STARTS WITH EMPATHY

Many leaders struggle with basic correctness and tolerance to empower their followers to welcome the benefits of diverse teams from the point of gender, age, nationality, seniority or any other. I honestly admit that I admire the leaders of teams, where members do not even realize diversity issues, but they live and function with them naturally. Of course, there is a way to develop a leader who will lead by example and inspire others to rethink their values of tolerance and diversity acceptance. As leadership really does not come with titles, it can be developed. One of my former teammates currently works with the leaders who seek to develop their skills and she turns Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) to Chief Empathy Officers (CEOs). One letter in a common abbreviation makes such a big difference.

I WANT MORE...

Currently, all our organizations are dealing with high inflation. That includes higher input prices, an increase of overhead costs, negotiations with our clients to increase the price of our products and services and at the end of the day, there is a demand from our employees to increase their salaries. There are some organizations which ignore it and there is no discussion about this topic going on. It might seem that the leaders of such companies could report: no challenge. It is tricky because their people report: no leader! Let's skip these leaders for now. If there is no leader, there is no challenge, no trust, no loyalty.



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Those leaders who face it without waiting for the bunch of wage increase requests, face the real

The news headlines read: The leader of the famous boy band has decided to start a solo career. The leader of the local ice hockey team has led his team to the semifinal of the tournament. Political party leader succeeded in negotiating the new coalition agreement. Leader of the city enforced setting up a migration camp despite the rebellion of the local citizens.

challenge of a lifetime. I am 45+ years old and I have never experienced such a precedent. Long term high rate inflation hit the family budgets of all of us and our people. I collected several "case studies" and I can provide a general survey outcome. Honest communication and empathy seem to be the key factors.

THIRD LINE MANAGER IS NOT A LEADER. REALLY?

As stated above, one of the biggest challenges for leaders are the leaders themselves. Therefore, the high ranked leaders in organizations tend to overlook, that several floors underneath them, there is a 30-year-old lady, a freshly installed head of one of the many medium size teams, who is a real leader. The big bosses do not see younger skippers who are have a natural following and who influence their people. They stand out thanks to their values, they behave inspirationally in many matters, and they can dominate with their empathy, which is highly appreciated. Let's develop these people, they will not only lead their teams or later the whole organizations, but moreover, they could also lead the community or the country. The king is dead, long live the king.