

5 basic ingredients in effective leadership

by Kim Bassett, President and CEO, Steward Norwood Hospital, Massachusetts



Leadership at its heart comes down to how well you are able to connect with people. It doesn't matter how much education or business training you have. Some of the world's best leaders have had little to no education (Steve Jobs, Abraham Lincoln, John D. Rockefeller, Henry Ford and Mark Twain just to name a few). It's simple. If you are unable to connect to people on a basic level, you won't be a good leader.

Ingredients for effective leadership

1) Listen and follow up. Find common ground, listen and express genuine interest in the other person. In a meeting, leaders should speak the least. Listening is key; everyone wants to be heard. But what comes next is equally as important as the listening element. You absolutely *must* follow up on issues identified. Even if you cannot satisfy the request, it is important to let the staff know that their issue cannot be addressed to their satisfaction. This is how you show the other person you were listening. It's cause and effect. Listen, then follow up. Repeat. Over time this builds trust and loyalty among employees.

2) Take action on the little things. This is a continuation of the follow-up process. No issue brought to your attention is too small. Often it's the small things that you can make the most immediate headway with because they are easy to solve. For example, if employees don't feel secure walking out to their cars at night, address it directly by adding security and/or lights.

It's a simple fix and shows your employees that you:

- a) Listen.
- b) Follow up.
- c) Take action.
- d) But above all, it shows that you care.

3) Be accessible. It is vital that you make yourself visible and accessible. Having an open-door policy might seem counterproductive to your effectiveness, but being available to your employees and staff should be your first priority. Don't get stuck in your head and lose sight of what makes your organization successful. You are only as good as the people who surround you.

4) Be genuine. People are human lie detectors. There is no way to fake caring about others. You are either genuine ... or you're not. This is not something you can teach, but rather something that good leaders instinctively know to do. It's often what people refer to as the "nice guy" quality. Effective leaders care. This leads to listening, taking action and being accessible.

5) Mentor and cultivate talent. Create a culture of personal growth in your organization. Many employees want to know there is an opportunity for them in your organization. As a leader, you should be able to spot an

individual's potential. As a *good* leader, you see the value for both the individual and the organization to cultivate this talent. It not only makes the person more satisfied and thus more likely to stay, but also benefits the entire organization. One of my favorite things to do is find talented people and help them grow, but then get out of the way and let them do their job.

"I would rather earn 1% off 100 people's efforts than 100% of my own efforts." - **John D. Rockefeller**

"If there is any one secret of success, it lies in the ability to get the other person's point of view and see things from that person's angle as well as from your own." - **Henry Ford**

"When a person cannot deceive himself, the chances are against his being able to deceive other people." - **Mark Twain**

As an experienced healthcare executive, [Kim Bassett](#) is a strong believer in the "can-do" attitude, focusing on team-building, communication and creativity to find the "win-win" in every situation. She thrives on challenges, especially those that involve bringing teams and people together to provide exceptional healthcare. Her mission in life is to care for every patient as if they were family.