

Admired Leader

By Lisa Harvey Roach

Do you know what it takes to be an admired leader?

There is a Chinese proverb that says “If you think you are leading and you look behind you and no one is following, then you’re just taking a walk.” You don’t want to be a leader with no followers.

How do you become a leader people are willing to follow repeatedly? One way is to apply the advice of authors Posner and Kouzes. Their book, *The Leadership Challenge*, contains 30-years of research on leadership characteristics. They have found that the same characteristics and qualities of effective leaders have held true for 30 years.

Characteristic #1 – Honest

If you want to be a leader that people admire you need to be honest. As a leader, you may not always be able to share everything but share what you can. The key is to avoid being dishonest. Once trust is eroded, it is hard to regain.

For example, if a project gets cut, because a different project takes precedence over it, keep the team motivated by being encouraging and honest. Praise the team for the great project work they have done to date and share why the new project has a higher priority. Your team will appreciate your honesty.

Characteristic #2 – Forward Thinker

Admired leaders are forward thinkers. They can look ahead and see what's coming on the horizon. They have a vision and a plan to implement it. This is required to prepare the project team for success.

You may not be able to predict all things that will impact business, like COVID, however, there are ways you can prepare for success. You can read industry articles and books, communicate and innovate with your customers, and study the competition for clues.

Characteristic #3 – Competent

People want to follow someone who is competent, someone who knows their stuff and can provide direction. As a new leader realize there will be a learning curve, so be patient with yourself. Your expertise will grow with time.

These are just three characteristics of an admired leader. What other characteristics do you feel are important? I challenge you to challenge yourself, to be an effective leader that can be admired, trusted and followed. Intentionally practice one characteristic each week and watch your influence grow.

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