

How Leaders Succeed—They En-spire!

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In this **Leadersynth** series, “How Leaders Succeed”, we have explained that leaders learn, empower, achieve, and direct. In this sixth edition, we focus on the importance of motivating the work of others through inspiration and enthusiasm, that is, how to “en-spire”. As a reminder, we believe that, to be a successful LEADER, it is critical that you:

- Learn
- Empower
- Achieve
- Direct
- En-spire
- Renew

En-spire. Research and our own hands-on assessment and coaching experience at Roselle Leadership over the past 20 years has shown us that there are repeating patterns in what motivates and engages employees. These include:

- Doing meaningful work
- Having a say in decisions
- Building new skills, knowledge, perspective
- Developing lasting friendships
- Making clear progress toward goals
- Being paid competitively
- Experiencing balance between work and personal life

In addition to these seven, the 8th motivator for employees is “Relating well with my manager.” This last one is so important, in fact, that poor relationship with manager is the number one reason employees cite in exit interviews for why they are leaving your company.

So, how can you create enthused and inspired followers who do not want to leave you as a manager? A growing body of evidence, as cited in an August 2013 Harvard Business Review article, suggests that the most effective way to engage others as a leader is to express warmth.

Warmth. According to the authors, this attribute undergirds influence, facilitates trust, and aids in understanding communication. Warmth is typically a set of nonverbal indicators that a leader is happy to be with team members and interested in their concerns and ideas. Though most leaders work hard to demonstrate their strength in the role, conveying warmth actually contributes significantly more to others’ positive perceptions and their trust for the leader than does strength/competence.

Warmth is particularly helpful in engaging others. Among the ways you can convey warmth are to be genuinely interested in team members, to speak in a caring voice, and to make sure your eye contact, facial expression, and body language align with a genuinely caring attitude. Furthermore, ask open-ended questions, listen deeply, and find common ground. Validate their feelings, if appropriate.

Warmth alone, however, does not assure that a leader will engage others and generate enthusiasm. In the Great Leaders™ mid-manager workshop series developed by Roselle Leadership, we discuss five other ways that leaders like you can inspire their direct reports. They include: context, analysis, interdependence, direction, and innovation. We discussed “direction” at length in the last Leadersynth article in this series, and we will address “innovation” in our next and final installment of “How Leaders Succeed”.

Here is a brief description of these other three components of inspirational leadership:

Context. This involves recognizing the broader picture outside your department, business unit, or organization. It features peripheral vision to focus on the less obvious factors that might affect your organization, as well as the prescience to anticipate future implications. If your team sees you as someone who is always looking on the horizon to identify potential dangers and opportunities, they will work with a great deal more inspiration.

Analysis. Somewhat hand-in-glove with “context,” analysis encompasses the capacity to make sense of the information you glean from looking outside at the bigger picture. Central to analysis is the ability to make sense of the trends, technology, and talk outside your organization, and then apply it in commonsense ways to benefit your team, department, or organization. It involves, to a degree, the ability to look at data with new eyes and pull helpful themes from it. This gives your team confidence about its ability to solve problems.

Interdependence. Inspirational leaders know how to get things done through a network of relationships across the organization, or a “coalition of the willing.” This might mean creating an inner circle of mentors, subject matter experts, and others who help solve problems and remove barriers to success. The key to this aspect of inspirational leadership is recognizing the significance of strong, interdependent relationships and emphasizing the importance of collaboration.

What about you? Take stock of yourself in terms of your capacity to inspire others and create enthusiasm through your personal warmth, your ability to recognize and analyze important contextual information, and your network of others. In what ways are you effective at inspiring and generating enthusiasm in your team members? Think about what you could do to become even more engaging with the people who report to you.

We hope this sixth in a seven-part series has been helpful. Please give us your feedback, and share with us an example from your own leadership experience that you think illustrates this successful leader component of en-spiring others. We look forward to hearing from you!