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Ten Essential Skills All Good Leaders Share



[An insightful article recently published in *Inc.* magazine describes the characteristics of good leaders.](#) Whether you are already a leader, or aspire to be one, you most certainly want to be a great leader. It's a goal that can take many forms—you may envision making an impact with your company or making change on a global scale. **Whatever your situation, there are specific skills that can help you become the leader you want to be and know you can become.**

Here are 10 important ones:

1. **Build collaboration.** A common misunderstanding of leadership is that it's about acquiring power. The best leaders use whatever power they have--and their time and energy--to collaborate with others. Position yourself as a leader who is there to support the success of those around you. You'll find that when they succeed, you succeed.
2. **Focus on your team.** The people working with you are your most important asset. Be there to serve them by investing in them, appreciating them, and developing them. Get to know them, and give them the space and respectful environment they need to get to know each other and do great work together.
3. **Call out dysfunction.** Nobody likes dealing with drama. But sometimes it's necessary to keep small problems from growing into something overwhelming. Leaders must be able to address dysfunction in their team with consistent policies and a strong stand expressed calmly and confidently.
4. **Challenge the status quo.** To develop into a great leader, you first need to understand where and how you can truly make an impact. Strong leadership

doesn't maintain the status quo but takes on powerful challenges and finds a way to make a significant difference in any situation.

5. **Concentrate on learning.** Keeping up isn't enough. Business is competitive, and as a leader you have to be ahead of the curve. Learning, growth, and responding to change are key. Cultivate a passion for learning in yourself and your team.
6. **Be accessible and available.** It really is lonely at the top, which is reason enough not to isolate yourself, but access and accountability benefit your team at every level. Great leaders understand the value of connecting with others and spend time with their team on a regular basis.
7. **Establish your values and convictions.** Every action you take speaks to who you are as a leader, and every expressed value demonstrates your beliefs. By establishing your values and standing up for your convictions, you let others know where you are. A leader's values are like fingerprints: nobody's are the same, and you leave them on everything you do.
8. **Demonstrate accountability at every level.** Accountability is essential to getting things done, the glue that ties commitment to results. To work, accountability has to be consistent at all levels--including your own.
9. **Lead with character.** Values and convictions are important, but character is what keeps your actions and words in line with what you believe. There's nothing more important in leadership.
10. **Pass your leadership on.** Leaders who rely on fear and power and intimidation aren't so much leaders as bullies. True leaders are always nurturing and mentoring others on the team, which means letting them take the wheel sometimes. When you allow others to take the lead, you give them a chance to showcase their skills and talents, and you inspire your whole team to bring their best.

Great leaders don't set out to be a leader... they set out to make a difference. It's never about the role, position or title, it's always about making an impact.

At Executive Forum, we focus on building these essential skills and producing real behavioral change for our clients. Our [leadership development pathway](#) offers a clear route for expanding leaders' skills while filling the leadership pipeline and ensuring long-term continuity.

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