

Test your leadership qualities

By Cynthia Edwards

Who is a leader? Some people think everyone of a superior rank to them is a leader. The truth is, leaders come in all sizes and at all levels of an organization. Whatever your job description or title, your purpose contains the seeds of your own greatness.

Leadership can be defined in many ways, but to my mind the most important qualities of a leader are character, vision, decisiveness, risk-taking, being proactive, and having a thirst to learn and grow. It's not about being right all the time, and it's not about taking the glory for oneself. Leaders empower others.

Also, a leader is more than a manager. In the memorable words of Stephen Covey, "Management is efficiency in climbing the ladder of success; leadership determines whether the ladder is leaning against the right wall."

Think about ways you can bring leadership qualities to your job. If you see a problem, try to fix it, either yourself or by involving others. If you see an opportunity for job-related personal growth, such as taking on a different challenge, or enrolling in continuing education or reading a valuable book, do it. If you have an idea that might make a client more profitable, suggest it. In the long run, your ideas will not be evaluated on the basis of your title, but on the quality of your vision.

**Example is not the main thing in influencing others,
it is the only thing. — Albert Schweitzer**

Take this test

Check your leadership potential by considering how you exemplify the following attribute, skill, and knowledge areas. If you want to be a better leader, use this grid as a plan to improve your personal qualities.

Scoring

Give yourself

- 1 point for every "Not yet"
- 2 points for every "Working on it"
- 3 points for every "Very good"
- 4 points for every "I rule"

Results

- 25-50 Still just a nine-to-fiver but you can improve with effort.
- 51-75 Climbing the ladder.
- 76-90 Close to the top.
- 91-100 Ready to take over!

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	Not yet	Working on it	Very good	I rule
Attributes				
Do I view problems as opportunities?				
Am I a priority setter?				
Am I customer-focused?				
Am I courageous?				
Am I a critical and creative thinker?				
Do I have a positive attitude toward change?				
Am I rigorously honest in my work?				
Do I pursue continuous learning?				
Skills				
Do I debate, clarify, and articulate my values and beliefs?				
Can I fuel, inspire, and guard the shared vision?				
Can I communicate the strategic plan?				
Do I ask the big picture questions and “what if”?				
Am I developing cross-functional knowledge and versatility?				
Do I encourage dreaming and thinking the unthinkable?				
Do I engage in goal setting?				
Do I build alliances to further corporate goals?				
Can I develop and implement action plans?				
Knowledge				
Do I know my role and responsibilities?				
Do I know the strategic planning process, short- and long-term planning tools?				
Do I know the company vision, values, and mission?				
Do I possess the knowledge I need for my top job performance?				
Do I know the best practices and research on improving my business?				
Do I know strategies to involve and communicate with others?				
Legacy				
Will my contributions leave “footprints”?				

For further resources on leadership, including web sites and books, contact Cynthia Edwards at writer@creative-word.com.

