



Revisited

The TEN Commitments

of Successful Leadership

by Mickey Straub

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Introduction

One evening a grandfather was talking to his son-in-law in the kitchen just before dinner. As he looked on with a sparkle in his eyes toward his granddaughter, he made a mental comparison of how his other grandchildren were being raised and how they were turning out. His legacy flashed before him. He leaned over the center island, pointed and said, “She’s my only hope.”

Unbeknownst to the grandfather, his words spoke volumes about leadership and the impact it can make on someone’s life. Nothing takes the place of good leadership, whether it is in a family, company or any organization. Leadership gives us hope.

Leaders have a duty to follow through on promises, to do the best, be their best, and bring out the best in others. They have a responsibility to build confidence, and to provide a clear road map and guidance. Without good leadership, an organization cannot grow, and will likely not survive.

With that thought in mind, an old quote kept popping into my head. “Success leaves clues!” I started wondering, “Is it true in leadership?” And is there one key to successful leadership that, if only we knew it, a sense of calmness (and an abundance of riches) would come our way? That’s when my search began.

In this age of quick fixes and a microwave mentality, it's easy to get swept away with that romantic thought. But after pouring over years of notes and files, reading and re-reading collections of best practices, interviewing, observing and studying hundreds of successful leaders and companies across the country over a ten year time period, no such magic wand appeared.

There were, however, multiple keys that kept surfacing among the top performing companies that, once put together, seem to virtually guarantee success. They centered around a leader's level of "commitment" in many areas and this book contains ten of the most important ones, hence the name.

The value of commitment can never be overstated. Price Pritchett put it well in *Firing Up Commitment During Organizational Change*, with this quote, "Commitment energizes, empowers and brings out the best in people." And in *The Purpose Driven Life*, Rick Warren writes, "Your commitments can develop you or they can destroy you, but either way, they will define you."

The *Ten Commitments of Successful Leadership* summarizes the most common threads of successful leaders in an easy to remember format. They are the best practices that seem to separate the overachievers from the under achieving ones and the companies that never stop excelling from those that never really start.

The principles contained herein have no industry boundary lines and traces of them can be seen in any effectively run organization, large or small. Their value is so significant, vital, impacting, and revolutionary, that after they were first put in print I felt that one of my primary missions in life was complete. They work in unison and there is even a word track on the last page to make it easier to remember them.

You can think of the *Ten Commitments* as a “tool box for leaders”. When production or morale is off-target, look to them for part of the cause and the solution and use the Golden Rule as a compass. Natural abilities will always factor in and market conditions have to be adjusted for, especially those on the extreme side, but an organization’s success is ultimately a leadership issue.

Before you get started, be sure to do a check up from the neck up in two vital areas... responsibility and faith. Take responsibility for your actions and outcomes so that you can be the maker and shaper of your circumstances and destiny. Have faith in yourself, your abilities, your mentors, and in powers greater than yourself. Faith can move mountains. And remember, success is a steady march, not a sprint...and your role is vital.

May the *Ten Commitments of Successful Leadership* have a profound impact on your success and that of your team! May they give you hope and a path...and May your best days be still ahead!

Mickey Straub

COMMITMENT

#1

***I commit to
incremental,
public goals
with a
deadline.***

Your first, and perhaps most important step, is to know where you want to go both personally and professionally. As Earl Nightingale said many years ago, “A person without a goal is like a ship without a rudder.”

Set and commit to specific goals to give yourself and your team clear direction. If they can see it, they can believe it! Make them public, which will help you cross the threshold from desire to commitment. Break them down into incremental, bite-size pieces, like steps on a ladder (each with its own deadline) to make the larger goal seem even more achievable and to help you keep momentum. Nothing succeeds like success. Set daily/weekly result and activity goals and treat every day like “game day” with an attitude that failure is not an option. Goals should be: Specific, Achievable, Measurable, Incremental, Activated and Motivational (SAM-I-AM).

Intangible goals, like achieving award level or becoming number one in an office, region, zone or company, can be every bit as motivating as economic, material or tangible ones. But remember, it’s the internal feeling that you get once you achieve the goal that is the true motivator and what will get you out of bed in the morning.

COMMITMENT

#2

***I commit to
personal
and team
accountability.***

There is not now, nor has there ever been, a more powerful principle for driving behavior than accountability. Without accountability there is no consequence. Without consequence, there is no order. Without order, there is chaos and indirection.

As Rudy Giuliani said in his book LEADERSHIP, “All enterprises benefit from increased accountability”. No, or even low, accountability breeds mediocrity at best, and at its worst, lawlessness. By increasing accountability across the citizenry and government during the 1990’s, New York City was able to decrease overall crime (down 70%) and murder rates (down 65%), as well as overtime expenditures and sick leave.

Just as a society could not exist without rules and consequences, neither can a company. Accountability uncovers talent, fosters growth and encourages you to be your best whether you are a team of one or one hundred. There is something about being answerable for our own behavior that drives us. Make sure it is felt and demonstrated across all levels of the organization. It is what is needed for peak performance and can be one of your greatest assets.

COMMITMENT

#3

***I commit to
maintaining
consistent
systems for
consistent
results.***

Systems, which are a set of related action steps that form a procedure, bring structure, confidence and predictability to any work environment and make the buying experience more enjoyable. As Michael Gerber, author of “The E-Myth” says, “A life lacking in comprehensive structure is an aimless wreck. The absence of structure breeds breakdown. Structure provides the relatively fixed points of reference we need.”

It is likely that a common trait of the companies you most enjoy doing business with is consistency, in both the product and how they deliver it. This can only be accomplished with effective systems in place that deliver those consistent results and it probably starts from the moment they answer the phone. Unfortunately,

***“Left to their own devices,
most people will drift.”***

Document, systematize and monitor all internal processes so that your company is less dependent on volatile personalities and more on consistent systems. Systems will also enhance training, as well as impress clients and prospective employees. If organization is not your strong suit, make sure that you hire someone that is and use model weeks, checklists and weekly meetings to stay on course. Systems and culture go hand in hand.