

Are you a gifted leader?

Tina Coulsting, Director of the Mentor Consultancy, explains the true qualities of a great leader – take the test and find out if you are one...

The key to being considered a true leader lies in becoming an inspirational influence in the workplace. Anyone can take the step towards leadership as long as they are prepared to develop more self awareness and awareness of others. According to Tina Coulsting, being inspirational is the magical ingredient that defines the best leaders in our organisations. "Excellent leaders and potential leaders tend to stand out at work," explains Tina. "They are those people who are always personable; they encourage their colleagues and bring positive energy to meetings. I call them the 'heroes of the work place' because leadership often requires you to fight fear and take creative risks, especially in

your management of other people."

If you already hate the sound of these people for being just 'too good' then it is probably because you feel that you cannot match up. But Tina Coulsting says think again. "You are not alone in feeling like this, but actually most people are not natural leaders. It is something we need to work at. Much of it comes down to confidence. Lots of people are reticent about taking on a leadership role due to fear – fear of looking daft, fear of making the wrong decisions and so on. I believe that inspirational leadership is largely dependent on excellent

communications skills. And these can be learnt by anyone who has a mind to have more influence in their work place.

Sadly there are plenty of senior managers around who have not yet learnt to be good leaders and lots of employees who do not even think about it. Employers should do what they can to encourage everyone to pursue leadership skills because leadership at all levels of the organisation pays off with higher morale, better performance and more motivation amongst staff.

To help you assess your own areas of strength and areas for improvement, look at Tina Coulsting's top attributes for leadership. ■

1. You can make decisions
 - a. Yes
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Let me think about it
2. You always think about better ways to do things
 - a. Yes, I have loads of ideas
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. I do it how it's always been done
3. You are aware of your own weaknesses and look for ways to develop yourself
 - a. Yes
 - b. I know my weaknesses but I can't change
 - c. I have no weaknesses!
4. You are objective and consistent when dealing with others
 - a. All the time
 - b. Yes, except for Colin in accounts
 - c. I let my personal feelings cloud my judgment
5. You have a cheerful disposition and encourage optimism
 - a. Yes
 - b. When I'm in a good mood
 - c. Bugger off
6. You make an effort to understand others' concerns and needs
 - a. Yes
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. I'm not a bloody agony aunt!
7. You take on responsibility
 - a. Of course
 - b. It can sometimes get a little much
 - c. I shirk it
8. You are trustful of others, respectful of their abilities and delegate well
 - a. Yes
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. I delegate the tea making and that's it
9. You get the best out of others through praise, encouragement and recognition
 - a. Yes
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Intimidation also works well
10. You are a unifying influence in the work place
 - a. Yes
 - b. I suppose
 - c. Yes - they are unified in hating me
11. You are good at listening to others and respond positively
 - a. Yes, good point
 - b. I could be better
 - c. You what?
12. You look at the wider picture and understand organisational needs
 - a. Yes
 - b. I suppose
 - c. Not really
13. You give many signals of support and praise
 - a. Yes
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. It's a business – not a bloody commune
14. You help others to build on their ideas
 - a. Yes
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. No – I just want them to do what they're paid to do
15. You understand the importance of fairness
 - a. Yes, I am always fair
 - b. I sometimes could be fairer
 - c. Yes – blondes have more fun
16. You have confidence in your abilities
 - a. Yes
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. I wouldn't employ me
17. You encourage dialogue and draw out contributions from others
 - a. Yes – in fact I'm going to ask others to take this test
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Nah – talk is cheap

Mostly a's
 Bravo Branson! Now work on any areas you answered b's

Mostly b's
 With a bit of work you can become a better leader. You'll get more out of people and reduce staff turnover. Have a think how you can improve things, then make a list of ten resolutions and stick to it!

Mostly c's
 Seriously?! You shouldn't be running a company.

What do all great leaders have in common?

The proven secrets of successful leadership are surprisingly simple to learn yet the results will astound you. With exceptional leadership, your organisation can run 100% slicker; with enhanced camaraderie, lower staff turnover and radically increased potential for growth. Improve the way you handle the media, crisis management, presentation and communication with our expert consultants.

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