



Leading With Strength and Insight

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Most employees deeply want and need an insightful and strong leader. In every intake interview session I have conducted worldwide, the data is clear. People deeply desire a leader who communicates with them, involves them, and establishes accountabilities for everyone in the organization—especially the leader herself. This successful leader learns to set the example by being kind yet firm, makes the decisions, doesn't get pulled off course by pushy people or groups, provides a unified vision that people buy into, outlines a clear path for employees to follow, and supports people so they are successful. Here is a condensed list I have collected from thousands of employees and what they told their CEOs, owners, supervisors, and directors, what they needed to make their company's successful.

1. **Get our opinion:** We know our particular job better than anyone else in the company, we know what the customer wants or doesn't want because we work directly with them, and they tell us.
2. **Listen to us:** Really listen to us and don't multitask when you do. Respect us, and show us that you value our ideas by implementing some of them or discussing the vision or processes with us. (This will empower employees, unite them, involve them and help them feel pride in what they are building. And most important, they will buy into what they helped create).
3. **Make the decision:** Ultimately you are our leader and so you must make the final decision. We want to be lead by a confident and insightful leader who we trust to lead us through the difficult times and out-smart the competition so we can win. And we need a leader who we admire and are proud of.
4. **Don't waver with your decision:** We need a leader who is strong-willed and won't be swayed by an overbearing employee or a group who wants special treatment because they have been here longer and feel entitled. Your decision should be made for what is best for the company—period.
5. **Give us a clear vision:** The vision should be created with all of our input but synthesized by you and delivered back to us in a crystal clear manner. In essence, what will be our company vision and destination in 6 months, 12 months, and 18 months?
6. **Outline a step-by-step Roadmap:** To make our journey less ambiguous and scary, please provide a very clear step-by-step roadmap for us to follow so that we can follow and trust you even when it's dark.
7. **Support us along the way:** We know our jobs, but we constantly need professional development in how to do them better, more efficiently or how to approach this new vision from a different perspective so that we can fully believe in it and totally support it, even when we are not 100% sure what we are supporting. We do this because we believe in you. Can you please provide us with these skills and insights so that we can have pride in ourselves, in our company and in you, our leader?

All company success is built with and through its people, but the leader must know how to unite and ignite these people. In essence, the leader is similar to a conductor of an orchestra, if she lacks the skills, there won't be inspiring music for people to hear, but rather disorganized noise. Just like highly trained music conductors; leaders of companies must possess leadership skills. Are you worthy of being your company's leader? Depending on your answer, you may need to seek personal professional development in order to be the leader you are capable of becoming.

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