

## An Effective Leadership Philosophy

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*“Leadership is not meant to exploit, but to lift; not to exterminate, but to rescue; not to rend, but redeem; not to devour, but to carry; not for primacy, but for priority.” Elizabeth Elliot*

### Effective Leadership

I consider the role of a Leader to be much the same as that of an orchestra conductor. Although a Leader has overall responsibility for keeping the organization on the same sheet of music and ensuring that everyone is playing their part, they do not necessarily have the technical ability or the experience to play all of the instruments in the orchestra. That’s the subject matter expert’s role and privilege, as the ‘musicians’. An effective Leader, defined as someone who can lead an organization to the accomplishment of its objectives while at the same time allowing the people that make up the organization to learn and grow, understands their role, and the role of the people looking to them for guidance and direction.



*“If I command you ‘Pick up that bowl’, and set a sword point to your back, you will obey but no part will own the action. But if I only suggest and you comply, then you must own your compliance and, owning it, stand by it.” Alcibiades*

Effective Leaders don’t micro-manage, having a fundamental belief that everyone wants to be good at what they do and will conduct themselves accordingly. If it seems that an effective Leader is assuming too dominant of a role in someone’s daily activities, it’s because they are either attempting to learn more about the subject matter, or they believe that the person needs additional assistance. In either case, an effective Leader should communicate their intentions. If they don’t, it’s up to the team members to point this out and express their thoughts.



An effective Leader is an approachable person, and encourages others to come to them when they need something or have an issue. A major part of a Leader's role is to provide their team with the support they need to do their work. If it wasn't for the team's jobs, the Leader wouldn't have one.

## Individual Leadership Expectations

*"There go the people. I must follow them for I am their leader." Gandhi*

### Personal Leadership

In a professional environment, everyone in the organization should be considered a leader in their respective areas of responsibility. As such, an effective Leader expects everyone to assume that role and be the driving force behind their projects/tasks.

### Initiative

Be proactive, not reactive. An effective Leader expects everyone to take the initiative not only in their own areas, but in other areas of the organization as well. If someone has an idea or sees an issue with another team member's project, the Leader should expect them to share that with the team member. The entire team can benefit from each other's ideas and experience.

*"Good communication is as stimulating as black coffee, and just as hard to sleep after." Anne Morrow Lindbergh*

### Communication

Without effective communication, we are unable to accomplish anything as a team. A Leader expects the team members to keep everyone informed of anything that may affect them or their projects. No one likes to be blind-sided, and that goes for the Leader and his leadership team as well. If someone is going to miss a deadline or they are struggling with a project or task, the effective Leader expects them to let him know before it becomes a major issue. Communication is a two way street, so if a team member feels that the Leader is not communicating effectively, they should let them know as soon as possible.



*“The leaders who work most effectively, it seems to me, never say “I.” And that’s not because they have trained themselves not to say “I.” They don’t think “I.” They think “we”; they think “team.” They understand their job to be to make the team function. They accept responsibility and don’t sidestep it, but “we” gets the credit. This is what creates trust, what enables you to get the task done.” Peter Drucker*

## Teamwork

This is a critical issue with effective Leaders. Everything the organization does, it should do as a team. Although everyone has their individual tasks and responsibilities, they all tie-in together at a higher level. Despite any personality issues, an effective Leader expects everyone to ask for help when they need it, and provide help when they see someone struggling. The organization succeeds or fails as a team.



## Professional Loyalty

As individuals we may not always agree with the organization’s leadership, or company position and philosophy on a particular issue. Effective Leaders encourage team members to express these differences in opinion in organizational meetings, or behind closed doors if they prefer. Team member thoughts and opinions are valuable inputs into what the organization does.

Whatever the outcome of the discussion, as professional team members are obligated to publicly support the organization and its initiatives. Expressing doubt or disagreement to outside entities, intentionally distancing oneself from a particular issue, or openly attacking the organization’s position only serves to create a negative image of the organization and its goals.

In no way should an effective Leader ask anyone to compromise their personal ethics. If a team member believes that a particular situation is creating an ethical dilemma for them, they need to let their Leader know as soon as possible so the conflict can be resolved.

*It’s important to know that words don’t move mountains. Work, exacting work moves mountains. Danilo Dolci*

## Work Ethic

How we make use of our time is a major driver behind our success or failure. An effective Leader ensures that the team is effectively using its time to accomplish their tasks and meet the organization’s



goals. Although we all have administrative issues we have to deal with, the majority of our time should be focused on moving the organization forward.

### Work-Life Balance

Like all of the team members, effective Leaders have responsibilities and roles in life outside of work, and strongly believe in a good work-life balance. They strongly encourage team members to take time off to spend with their friends and family, doing the things they enjoy.

### **Conclusion**

Effective Leadership is not just about being assigned to a Leadership role, and executing one's responsibilities and relentlessly driving toward a goal. Effective Leadership starts with knowing and understanding the people that make up the organization, learning their strengths and challenges, and assisting them in becoming a coherent team. An effective Leader will start by communicating and instilling the expected behaviors discussed above, giving their team some general guidance and direction, and then by getting out of the way so they can get on with getting the job done.

