

8 Power Principles for Transformational Leadership

The following are eight of the most important leadership principles I have learned as a senior leader over the past three decades. I have found that each of these leadership principles is vital to the success of any organization, whether it be faith-based or not.

1. They Continually Cast a Compelling Vision

The Bible teaches us that without a vision the people perish (Prov. 29). This means that people are like sheep and will scatter and/or lose focus if they are not continually motivated and guided as to the mission and purpose of the organization or church they belong to.

Every executive leader must be personally empowered and full of passion so he can continually remind the people of the vision and purpose of their existence. An organization without a compelling vision is going to lose momentum and membership. Leader without a compelling vision don't know why they are leading, which will result in their organization experiencing a lack of cohesion and power.

2. They Set Practical Goals to Attain Their Vision

Having vision without practical goals to implement the vision is tantamount to merely having a dream that disappears once you wake up. Even if your vision was given to you supernaturally by the Lord, goals are necessary to take it from the mystical realm to the practical realm. For an effective goal I like using the acronym SAM. Each goal should be:

S: Specific

A: Attainable

M: Measurable

If a goal is too ambiguous then it is no good. For example, "This year our church will grow larger" is too ambiguous. If a goal is too lofty and not attainable then it is a pipe dream. For example, "This year our church will grow by 50 percent" when it has never grown more than 5 percent in the past 20 years. If a goal is not revisited to evaluate if you achieved the desired results, then it was not measured and is worthless.

Eventually, when the principles of SAM are not followed, the people in the organization become discouraged and believe that the vision of the leader is nothing more than rhetoric and good oratory, and they will cease following him or her.

3. They Build Strong, Competent Teams to Perpetuate the Vision

Every leader needs to process the vision and mission of the church with a competent team that will have ownership over its fulfillment. When leaders merely give out direction and orders to their team, then they are creating followers who can't think for themselves. Thus, as the organization grows, the leader will have more and more burdens upon his shoulders, which will eventually become a bottleneck.

However, when leaders build a team around their strengths and/or weaknesses they will have people around them who will compensate for the gifts and abilities the leader doesn't have. A leader doesn't have to be the smartest or most capable person in the organization; leaders' greatest job is to surround themselves with the smartest and most capable people and get them to work together to accomplish the task before them.

For example, macro directive leaders need micro operational people around them, as well as team builders, to fulfill their vision. When macro leaders don't have micro leaders then there aren't proper systems or people in place to carry out their directives.

Finally, effective leaders are constantly encouraging and building the confidence of their team which counteracts all the negative things they either think about themselves or the negative information they are bombarded with via media and relationships. One of the greatest things an effective leader does is build faith, confidence and courage in their team so they come to the place where they believe they can achieve great things!

4. They Put First Things First

Effective leaders are continually grounding themselves in their core values of faith, family and personal renewal. Those who are not grounded will either burn out or disqualify themselves because they will eventually fail to have integrity either within themselves or in their families.

In regards to their organizations, effective leaders have learned to put their finances and time toward empowering the people with the most potential so they can bear the burden of the work and expand the capacity of the organization. They have also learned not to have transactional relationships that objectify people, so that people only feel valuable if they are contributing to the success related to fulfilling their goals. When executive leaders treat people with dignity and respect, they will get more output than if they merely use and abuse people.

5. They Constantly Recruit Emerging Leaders

The greatest baseball teams are the ones with the best farm systems that continually replenish the major league team with high-caliber players. Effective leaders are continually looking to recruit onto their team the best talent and most capable people who are also trustworthy.

One of the most important things I have done over the years is to have a primary leadership group that I meet with at least once or twice per month, and an emerging leaders group of

newer people who have the potential to lead in the next generation.

Without doing this, an organization and/or leader will be stuck with people who have already flatlined and will limit the ceiling of the vision. When you continually empower the next generation of leaders then it is easier to replace the team members who move on to other organizations or who disqualify themselves from remaining on the team.

6. They Create a Culture of Accountability and Trust

There is an old saying: "People won't do what you expect, they only do what you inspect." This is true. Many leaders are shocked when they find that what they say and teach is not being practiced or followed by the top leaders on their team.

Ronald Reagan once said, in relation to how he dealt with the Soviet Union and their nuclear arms treaty with the USA: "Trust but verify." I have learned that if you don't hold people accountable they will lose focus and not follow through on their tasks because of the many distractions that come their way. It is also good to require regular reports from your staff so that you can gauge the amount of work and productivity for each person.

Just as important as accountability is to create an atmosphere of trust with your top team members so there is an ability to share weaknesses, temptations and even moral failure. A culture of trust will build greater capacity for love and teamwork, and will empower all to move mountains and achieve great things!

7. They Put the Mission of the Organization Before Their Own Personal Agenda

Many leaders who obtain power and affluence begin to think that the organization, ministry or church they founded exists merely to serve their own personal needs. When leaders put their own personal needs and agenda before the mission and

vision of their organizations it creates a culture of self-centeredness, which will eventually backfire because it will spread to all the secondary leaders who will in turn poison the rest of the organization and its members. Self-focused entities do not have long shelf lives; if they do survive they will not be effective.

In regards to pastors, God says very harsh things to shepherds who merely feed themselves and do not minister to the flock of God (read Ezek. 34 and Jer. 23), who think the flock exists just to feed them.

8. They Continually Devise Strategies to Finance the Vision

As we read 2 Corinthians Chapters 8 and 9 we see that the apostle Paul devoted much of his time to fundraising for the vision of planting and establishing local churches.

It doesn't matter how much of a great speaker you are, how great your team is, and how talented you are; if you are not effective at fundraising you will never be able to accomplish God-given goals and vision! Money and goals serve as the bridge between vision and reality.

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