

Leading the way

How top leaders leverage their skills
to hire and retain winning teams



Table of contents

Discover the top
skills of successful
leaders and how
to develop them

Introduction	3
• What's in a leader?	
1. The foundation of a leader	4
• The top skills great leaders use to hire and nurture	
2. Hiring the leaders of tomorrow	7
• Source	
• Attract	
• Screen	
3. Leaders build winning teams	11
• Engage in the hiring process	
• Focus on an employee's strengths	
• Ensure trust is baked in	
• Have the hard conversations	
• Lead by example	
4. Growing the inner leader	14
• Give leaders the tools to succeed	
• Let leaders grow	
Conclusion	17
• Finding your next leader	

Introduction

What's in a leader?

A good leader is anyone who can get a group of people to accomplish a common goal. When a leader is doing their job well, it looks effortless. They inspire everyone around them to do their best work, turning teams into a well-oiled machine.

So what skills go into creating a good leader? How do you attract and hire them? What do they do differently when it comes to managing others? And how do you develop strong leaders?

Unlocking the answers to these questions can help you establish strong leadership across your company – resulting in more harmonious and successful teams.





1 The foundation of a leader

The top skills great leaders use to hire and nurture their teams

It's not just guesswork: many of the world's top leaders share a few core traits and skills. Hiring and promoting for certain skills can create a solid foundation on which to build a stellar leader – leading to stronger, more satisfied teams.

In fact, **93% of employees** say they're more likely to stay with an empathetic employer. Finding a leader with skills like empathy can lead to higher retention rates at your organization.

1 The foundation of a leader

The habits of successful and unsuccessful leaders

Soft skills should carry just as much weight as hard skills

✓ Good leaders

- Delegate effectively
- Manage their time well
- Listen carefully
- Focus on solutions
- Share the credit

✗ Bad leaders

- Micromanage
- Constantly multitask
- Control the conversation
- Jump to blame
- Criticize before they praise



70%

of employees say that motivation and morale would improve massively with managers saying thank you more.

“25 Fascinating Statistics About Employee Engagement,” Rise 2017

1 The foundation of a leader

The soft skills of successful leaders

Passion

Passionate leaders energize employees – and themselves – through their enthusiasm, supercharging their team's productivity and causing morale to soar.

Humility

While it's important for a leader to be confident, don't mistake confidence for cockiness. The best leaders have a healthy dose of humility who are skilled at promoting collaboration.

Communication

Strong communication skills are essential for delegating tasks, setting goals, and giving constructive feedback. Leaders who have mastered these skills are also good listeners.

Empathy

An empathetic leader is highly attuned to the thoughts and feelings of their employees.

Integrity

Leading with integrity means being honest and open with employees, earning their trust, and inspiring everyone to live by the company's values.



92%

say soft skills matter as much
or more than hard skills.

2019 Global Talent Trends, LinkedIn



2 Hiring the leaders of tomorrow

How to source, attract, and screen leaders

Cultivating the development of a leader once you've got them in your organization is one thing, but how do you find them first?

It often feels like it can be an uphill battle – especially since studies show some of the most compelling leaders aren't actively looking for a new position, but are open to the **right opportunity** if it's put in front of them.

Our three-pronged approach to hiring effective leaders – sourcing, attracting, and screening – can not only help discover great hires, but also keep them.

2

Hiring the leaders of tomorrow

Source

Discover what leaders want

What do the best leaders want from a job? According to [Russell Reynolds Associates](#), most leaders are intrigued by the possibility of a more challenging or interesting role. Once you discover where those leaders are hiding, it's important to remember that you're selling yourself just as much as they're selling themselves.

Use the profiles of top performers to direct your search

What do the best leaders at your organization have in common? Kick off your search for new management talent by identifying the kinds of leaders you'd want to clone. Build your search filters around their specific skills, background, and experience.

Storytelling

Critical thinking

Microsoft Excel

5+ years experience

Marketing

Business development

Leadership

Public speaking



Leverage the LinkedIn Recruiter “Find more people like…” feature to discover replicas of some of your best employees.

[Learn more →](#)

2

Hiring the leaders of tomorrow

Attract

Grab leaders' attention

Unsurprisingly, candidates with the most leadership experience are in extremely high demand. Get them to notice you by sharing something they can't ignore.

Think about what makes your organization especially attractive to managers. Is your culture relaxed? Do you invest heavily in leadership training and development? Whatever it is, highlight it in your job descriptions.

How to make your job post stand out in a crowd:

- ✓ Promote company culture
- ✓ Be specific
- ✓ Target people moving up, not sideways
- ✓ Optimize your bullet points
- ✓ Avoid buzzwords



Use these **tried-and-true templates** to start.



Target the leaders
who match your
specific hiring
needs with LinkedIn
Recruitment Ads.

[Learn more →](#)

Screen

Ask the right questions

Hiring expert Lou Adler recommends two questions to start screening for leadership skills.

Step one: a significant accomplishment

Ask the candidate to describe their biggest accomplishment. This can help you predict job performance.

Step two: the problem-solving question

Ask the candidate to solve a realistic job-related problem. Listen closely to their process for solving it. This can help you assess their critical thinking and planning skills.



Use our [Interview Question Generator](#) to discover top questions hiring managers use to screen hard-to-assess skills.



At its simplest, I define leadership as the ability to figure out the best way to solve a problem and then executing on that solution.



Lou Adler
CEO / Performance-Based
Hiring Learning Systems



3 Leaders build winning teams

Strong leaders encourage, support, and trust their teams

Some say that employees leave managers, not companies. That's why it's so important to have exceptional leaders at your organization if you want to build winning teams that will stick around for the long haul.



75% of employees have left a job voluntarily because of their boss, not the role.

[State of the American Manager: Analytics and Advice for Leaders, Gallup](#)

Using the following examples, learn to engage the great leaders you already have, so they can continue to build, nurture, and retain winning teams.

Engage in the hiring process

When strong leadership is plugged into the hiring process, everyone benefits. Leaders can help recruiters gain a better sense for team culture, handpicking candidates who might thrive in the role. They can also help candidates understand the team's management style, while building meaningful relationships that'll carry over into the job.

Focus on employee's strengths

The best managers help employees develop their strengths and build their confidence. As a result, they build teams like a jigsaw puzzle with every member bringing a different and complementary set of skills. They also recognize their own strengths and shortcomings, surrounding themselves with people who are skilled in areas where they're lacking.

“

I surround myself with people who have knowledge and talents in areas where I might not be so well versed.



Richard Branson
Founder, Virgin Group

Ensure trust is baked in

Micromanaging doesn't benefit anyone. That's why it's important for managers to inherently trust their employees. Trust can be communicated in a lot of different ways – like empowering employees to make certain decisions without seeking leadership approval first.

Have the hard conversations

Good managers don't let their desire to be liked get in the way of having difficult conversations. They approach each conversation with care and thoughtfulness. This means avoiding exaggeration, giving specifics, and then working together to find a solution that makes everyone happy.

Lead by example

Enthusiasm is contagious. Employees are motivated to do their best work, and feel satisfied, when a leader is passionate.

“

[If we were able to] reallocate the amount of time spent talking *about* employees and make more of an effort talking *to* employees ... the outcome would be much better.”
(Emphasis our own.)



Kevin Delaney
VP, Learning & Development,
LinkedIn



4 Growing the inner leader

How to help employees build and refine their leadership skills

Today's leaders can play a critical role in educating the next generation – but creating an effective advancement plan requires a thoughtful approach to training and development.

It's crucial to identify employees with leadership potential early and provide resources for advancement. Work with leaders to spot any skill gaps, build training around the employees, and help them take their career to the next level. Otherwise, you risk losing potential leaders to competitors.

Give leaders the tools to succeed

A training program helps you nurture existing leaders, while also preparing the next generation. What's more, it shows employees that you're invested in their growth and development.

This isn't just an effective way to encourage skills development – it's also a useful way to spot leadership potential. The employees that take the time to pursue leadership training likely have the drive and passion to spur them toward greater things.



56%

of employees would take a learning course suggested by a manager.

2018 Workplace Learning Report

94%

of employees would stay at a company longer if it invested in their career.

2018 Workplace Learning Report

45%

of employees who left companies said it was over a lack of advancement opportunity.

How Learning Programs Attract and Retain Top Talent

Let leaders grow

Whether you build internal training programs or lean on external providers, let employees know what resources are available to them, and what's expected of them.

Can they spend time training during work hours, or is it something they should do in their spare time? Will their training efforts be reflected in promotion decisions? And who can they turn to if they have questions?

Armed with this knowledge, employees can dive into training without hesitation. Those that take the initiative to hone their skills may be ready for promotion.



When people hear that we have LinkedIn Learning, it certainly helps a candidate to make the decision to join our organization over others.

Jodi Atkinson,
Global Learning Director, [Deltak](#)

LEARNING

With over 13,000 on-demand courses, LinkedIn Learning can supplement your existing training resources – or be a one-stop shop for learning and development programs.

Preview these leadership courses today:

- **Leadership Foundations:**
Leadership Styles and Models →
- **Building High-Performance Teams** →
- **Developing Executive Presence** →

Conclusion

Finding your next leader

Whether it's curbing attrition or sending profits soaring, bringing the right leaders into your company can make all the difference.

Every company can benefit from a different kind of leader, so it's important to keep your values and organizational style in mind when searching for the next leader. But when you have someone inspiring, dedicated, and empathetic at the helm, you really can't go wrong.




Employees who feel their voice is heard at work are **4.6 times more likely** to feel empowered to perform their best work.




Experience LinkedIn in action

It's one thing to find and retain a strong leader – it's another to cultivate them. With LinkedIn's data and insights, you can not only engage with the right leaders, but also give them the tools to nurture future ones.

Founded in 2003, LinkedIn connects the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful. With 630+ million members worldwide, including 75% of the US workforce, LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network.

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