

# Leadership

Strong leaders are themselves signs of hope. At their best, they help create the future. They choose directions and people, measure successes and processes. They deal with the unexpected and must discipline themselves as well as their organization. What are some of the vital elements of leadership?

## Ben Bradlee

I'm a student of credit. You get an awful lot that you don't deserve, because there are good people underneath you — and in my case, someone over you, Katharine Graham — who made it all possible. ... You can't underestimate that. [A person] will not be a good editor if he doesn't have a good owner.

## Burl Osborne

You have to practice candor, and respect.  
You have to build common understandings.  
You have to cause people to work as a team.  
And most important, you must apply your values so your team will apply them.  
All easy to say. All hard to do.

## William Hearst III

There was a young CEO at a conference who was describing his experiences as an Army lieutenant. A group of soldiers came to a certain place where the road had collapsed and needed to be shored up. There was no way to do this except to get down in the cold mud and push the dirt back up to where it needed to be. He went on to say that he realized he had a jeep with a heater in it. He said he could stand up there and tell people what to do and then go back in the jeep. But he felt that he shouldn't do that. He should be willing to get down in the mud with his troops.

At this point, somebody across the room expressed disagreement with him and said that he had defined a kind of leadership that's just about being one of the guys.

I remember reading about (Gen. George) Patton going and firing all of the different kinds of machine guns and weapons so that he at least had some sense of what he was

asking his people to do. I remember a story about Churchill walking the battlefields in Europe before World War II because he was certain there would be a war and it would be inevitably in these places, so he wanted to see with his own eyes the lay of the land.

You can't ever be too good in understanding the real world, whether you stay in the jeep or whether you get in the trash. I think you have to know it's damn cold down there in the mud. That's one of the things that you can't delegate away. You've got to find some way to connect with people.

## Jay Harris

You never have all of the information that you would require to be 100 percent sure that you are right.

Do not look over your shoulder. The time will seldom come that you know all that you need to know.

I have seen too many otherwise exemplary leaders miss a grand opportunity because they were not willing to do what rigorous research and well-honed instinct told them.

I have seen people let their organizations somehow become weakened because they were not willing to make the big bet at the right time.



You need to recognize the difference between being busy and doing what you should be doing. The latter requires really having thought deeply about the role you play in an organization.

How do I, as a leader, add the greatest value to the success of the enterprise in achieving its goals — and at a more personal level, [decide] what am I good at and what am I not good at? I think that is enormously important.

## You need to recognize the difference between being busy and doing what you should be doing.

Secondly, come to understand that, for reasons that we all can appreciate, people want to have time with you. That is enormously important to them.

[To] meet demands on your time ... actually define things like: Time to think. Time to regroup. Time to walk around. Define those as part of your job. Actually get them on the calendar.



Gandhi was an enormously powerful man. And yet all he had working for him was principle ... and absolute conviction to that principle. Staffers look for the slightest indication that there is some gap between what you say and what you do, between what you would have them do and what you do yourself.

## Jack Fuller

The principal thing that you do in leadership jobs is to apply energy to the system. [You] get it to go in directions that it wouldn't go otherwise. ...

Basically, you're trying to get many good brains thinking that it's important to think about these changed directions. Eventually the change begins to happen.

## Sandy Rowe

The real responsibility of an editor is to be able to get the resources. So you do have a responsibility to fight for resources and to make the case the intelligent way, in a way that you can be successful.

If I want to get resources, I have to make sure that the resources I'm asking for are things that will translate as successful for the paper, (and) that the publisher can see the quality in a way that makes him want to invest next time I come to him, as surely I will.

## Steve Isenberg

Think of people who work for you, the people who are your equals in an organization and those above you. Look at the things that they do that you really admire. And not only acknowledge it in them, but see whether or not there's a little of that you can steal for yourself.

## Tom Johnson

Get onto the newsroom floor. Get into the field. Get out to the bureaus. Listen to those who are closest to the action. Frequently they know more about what's really happening than all of us in a headquarters in New York or Washington or Atlanta.

I need an environment where I have authority, autonomy and responsibility ... the power to make it happen, whatever "it" happens to be. And I felt it was important for all of those executives who worked with me to have the same power. To the extent possible, [I] delegated to them the full authority to run their own channels, to run their own services, and to be as creative and independent as possible.

I also believe you need to have very clear annual goal setting. You measure your people at least once a year on the basis of how well they and you achieved those goals.

Set clear, very simple goals for achievement. And make sure that these goals are shared with each other.

## Tim McGuire

I was working with a workplace consultant and complaining about a [certain group of staffers causing trouble]. He made a point that there are no bad people.

We create bad people by our leadership and our management. Then he said something that prompted me to say, "I can't profess to be a person of faith on Sunday and not act that out Monday through Friday."

He looked at me with a little smile of triumph. Since that day, I have not been an angel, I have not been perfect to the people who work for me by any means, but I hope at least once a day, maybe twice, I think of how my faith beliefs intersect with

my work life and how they intersect with the people who work for me. I try to keep that connection.

### **Mark Whitaker**

My whole generation of leadership probably is much more willing to praise people. Sometimes the most talented people are the most self-critical and neurotic.