



What Successful Leaders Avoid

By Chanon Collins

Philip Massinger's words speak of true leaders – "He that would govern others, first should be Master of himself." Strong leaders are rare, but once found, will change the course of any organization. Unfortunately not all leaders can be placed in the successful category. Some might lack certain skills, others may be leading in the wrong direction. Whatever the case, leaders can control their direction and followers by avoiding specific pitfalls which plague those in power.

Martha Sawyer and Art Bowman, of Hudson Sawyer Professional Marketing Services, Inc., in Atlanta, Georgia, have identified ten of the greatest mistakes a leader can make. Unsuccessful leaders lack action. They do not embody the drive and stamina needed to motivate others to action. A lackadaisical attitude is a sure sign of doom in a leader. Sawyer and Bowman also believe that those who "believe leadership is a position" are bound to destroy the integrity of the team. Seeing the action of leading as a status symbol will destroy the essence of leadership. A leader must be willing to do everything that he or she asks the team to do – from answering the phone to presenting speeches to the masses.

There are those leaders who make grave errors and jeopardize the integrity of the position. Any leader who will sacrifice the cause for an easy win is sure to fail. Great leaders have many commonalities other than steadfast integrity. These leaders prevail in developing meaningful relationships with everyone in the organization. Those leaders who take the time to greet team members and acknowledge accomplishments – great and small – will be successful and remembered.

Sawyer and Bowman have seen many leaders who make the mistake of believing that management is synonymous with leadership. Managing the work effort and leading the team to the final destination are not the same activity and require distinctly different skills. Those successful leaders will enhance and foster lines of communication and will also inspire their team to embrace and achieve the organizational vision.

A leader is one who is willing to take risks, rage against the elements, and defy all odds to achieve the dream of the organization. This leader places heart, body, and soul into attaining the final goals of the team.

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Great leaders are recognized for their ability to lead and to rear future leaders. Those who refuse to acknowledge their future retirement and groom their replacements fall short of receiving the title of “successful leaders.” Since you are “only as good as your last performance,” don’t let your deletion of a successor be your final curtain call.

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