LEADERSHIP, DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

Running a successful business requires more than just having a great idea. It requires leadership. And let’s face it – not all of us are natural born leaders.

I have often been told by business owners that they were never taught how to be a leader. They have learnt their leadership skills from the way they were managed in their previous employment and attending the odd workshop. Leadership is vastly different today to what it was 10 or 15 years ago.

The good news is that leadership skills are something you can learn. Regardless of how many employees you have, 1 or 100, you will need to learn how to be an effective leader if you want to build a successful business.

So, what does it take to be an effective business leader, regardless of the size of your business?

There are a number of traits that you need to possess and I recommend that you start working on these 7 important traits first:

ONE
Communicate with your team – It is essential that you communicate effectively. Remember “it’s not what you say, but how you say it”. Communication is what separates a poor leader from an exceptional one.

Effective communication is the glue that helps you deepen your connections to others and improve teamwork, decision making, and problem solving. It enables you to communicate even negative or difficult messages without creating conflict or destroying trust.

TWO
Be a good listener – Genuine listening helps build relationships, solve problems, ensure understanding, resolve conflicts, and improve accuracy. Learn to listen with ears and eyes, picking up on voice tone and physical cues to take in the whole message. Effective listening means fewer errors and less wasted time.

THREE
Surround yourself with smart, talented people – Advertising legend David Ogilvy once said, “If you ever find a man who is better than you are, hire him.” Great leadership means reaching out to find these smart people.
FOUR
Always be looking forward – Where do you want your company to be five years from now? Sound familiar? You will often hear me ask this question. A good leader is always visualising the future. You need to think about what you want for your company and create a plan that helps you achieve that. If you’re not looking forward, you’ll get stuck exactly where you are today.

FIVE
Don’t be afraid to make mistakes – You aren’t perfect. Nobody is. It’s impossible to run a business without making mistakes. If you make mistakes, it’s all right. Everyone makes mistakes. Learn from them and go on. All successful leaders make mistakes, but they don’t let their mistakes discourage them or deter them.

SIX
Be willing to delegate – One of the first things I learned when I had my first business was to delegate work. Surrounding yourself with smart and talented people is pointless if you don’t let them do their jobs. There’s only so much you can do on your own. You have to let your team do the things they do best. You hired them for a reason, after all.

SEVEN
Hold yourself and others accountable – Accountability is important in all companies. When people are accountable, and answer for their actions, it builds trust. Less balls get dropped. People like to work with people they can count on.

You need to set clear expectations for what you want out of your employees and yourself, and you have to hold everyone (yourself included) for the results they produce. That also means admitting when you make a mistake.

Take these 7 traits to heart, implement them and watch and feel the results of being a more effective leader.