

Become a leader



By [Candace McDonald](#)

22 May 2013

According to John Quincy Adams "if your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader". And let's face it, good leadership is crucial to the success of any business - ad agency, marketing agency, retailer or media group.

This is a fundamental aspect to contemplate, especially when people want to make a difference in the world and touch the lives of others. In order to become a leader you have to further your abilities and extend your resources in order to emit knowledge that may help inspire others within society.

In a recent survey attention was drawn to the notion that leadership is crucial to ANY business as it maintains interest in a societal cause that can positively influence people and businesses. When individuals are encouraged and inspired to optimally perform, whether they are employees of an organisation or an individual looking for some form of guidance this is known as corporate social responsibility.

The corporate social responsibility link

Nelson Mandela stated "a leader is like a shepherd. He stays behind the flock, letting the most nimble go out ahead, whereupon the others follow, not realising that all along they are being directed from behind." There is a strong correlation between this quote and corporate social responsibility, as the leader would be the person in the background directing and helping individuals in the company thrive and succeed.

In order for leaders to encourage and engage success, one must first understand what success is and how it is defined. More often than not people relate success to material possessions. The white picket fence, the luxury cars in the driveway and the top management job that you have always dreamed of sounds successful doesn't it? It is easy to forget the modest means of living where money is not the only goal.

Leadership is much more than having money, being seen as an authoritative figure or being able to influence people's decisions. Leadership requires success in values and morals and it requires you to have a positive impact on those around you.

In order to be truly successful, you have to have success in yourself! This means that you need to possess the traits that define true success in life. David Bohl, a life coach, lists qualities that individuals need to possess in order to lead a successful life. Some of these are:

- **Sincerity:** One must be sincere in any form of actions made. This includes not deceiving others in order for personal gain. You need to stand up for what you believe in and stay committed to your values and morals. You must stay true to yourself and people will accept you the way you are.
- **Unfeigned:** Be genuine and honest in everything you do.
- **Wholehearted:** Be passionate in tasks you take on in your life. Remember and prioritise the most important things in your life, such as your family and friends.
- **Honest:** Be honest with yourself and with others. People who are honest are given respect and credibility.
- **Humility:** Be unpretentious and get rid of the feeling of superiority.
- **Personal integrity:** Always stay true to your values and morals. Be someone that people can respect in life.
- **Charity:** Be compassionate towards others and learn to help whenever you can.
- **Empathy:** Be understanding and considerate to the feelings of others.

Now I know what you are thinking, even if I possess, or strive to possess these qualities, how do I begin to take on a leadership role? How do I extend my knowledge and lead the way to a better future?

As Glenn Llopis, a writer at Forbes magazine notes "many people are out of touch with how to be an effective leader. Many people believe that because they carry an important title or have tenure within the organisation, others will automatically follow them."

However, this is not always the case. To be a leader today means extending past the impressive title or authority. Today leadership requires values, ethics and morals.

Leaders: Born or made?

This brings me to the ultimate question of "are leaders born or are leaders made?" Let us go with the notion that leaders are made. After all, we all want to lead, and if leaders are made it means leadership CAN be learned. Leadership can become an unconscious and automatic behaviour for anyone; however, as stated previously, it must be learned. It must be learned from the individuals who have been there, the individuals who have made mistakes and in doing so accumulated experiences and encounters that have made them who they are today.

Leadership requires more than leading a truly successful life in order to have a lasting impact on people, leadership also requires 15 fundamental aspects that Llopis notes. These are: making others feel safe to speak up, making decisions, communicating expectations, challenging people to think, being accountable to others, leading by example, rewarding performance, providing feedback, properly allocating talent, asking questions, avoiding procrastination, staying positive, being a great teacher, investing in relationships and genuinely enjoying responsibilities.

Fifteen fundamental aspects that are easier said than done. Learning leadership requires excellent advice and guidance. In order for businesses and people to flourish, people must adjust their way of living and their attitudes towards life.

ABOUT CANDACE MCDONALD

Candace Bosch has her Masters in Communication and Media Studies. She is a Director at Arion Communications with many years of corporate communication experience. Contact her on candace@arioncommunications.co.za

- ▀ 5 ways good content marketing can help your business grow - 12 Sep 2018
- ▀ 6 reasons why good content is important for your business - 14 Aug 2018
- ▀ Millennials Rising: The Next Generation - 12 Aug 2014
- ▀ How to give presentations with confidence - 31 May 2013
- ▀ Become a leader - 22 May 2013

[View my profile and articles...](#)