Leaders should create an environment where people are respected and trusted, and the sign of a good leader is one who can adapt his leadership style to the personality of each individual.

Everyone within an organisation are different. While it may sometimes be tempting to incorporate a one-size fits all strategy, people should be treated as individuals who react differently to situations.

People require different degrees of motivation, feedback and inspiration and it is the role of the leader to identify their individual traits and adapt their own leadership style accordingly. Trust and respect are vital for the success of a leader; if you don't develop these amongst the people you work with, all is lost.

Leaders are only as powerful as their teams. No leader is powerful enough to overcome a team that doesn't really believe in them and want them to be successful, unless they are a tyrant!

But actually isolating the characteristics of great leaders is not easy. At the top level, leaders are a difficult bunch to classify. They do not exhibit the same traits – the spectacularly successful are, by definition, unusual. Trying to group them together is a forced and artificial process. It simply isn't right to say "leaders are charismatic" or "leaders are focused", because there are plenty of great leaders who are neither. Neat definitions don't work.

Leaders need to accept the blame if things go wrong – and expect similar standards all the way down the chain. Market credibility and staff morale are just two areas that can take a hit if grand initiatives are announced but not executed. The answer is simple: announce initiatives once you know they are working.
Develop and Communicate Strong Beliefs
One of the greatest sources of leadership power is belief. Most people do not develop strong beliefs during their working life. Constrained by the day-to-day realities of office politics, pragmatism and fear, people do things "because that's the way they're done", not because that is the way they should be done. Those who look to you for answers have a right to know how you see the world.

It is an observation that accords with common sense. If we think of the inspirational leaders we have known and worked with, they are generally people who know what they believe in. One of the few characteristics common to all leaders is that they have firm views and stick to them: they do not flap in the breeze, moving with the current fashion. It is hard to lead someone if you do not know where you are leading them to.

A leader "must bring people aboard, excite them about his vision, and earn their support. They in turn will inspire those around them, and soon everyone will be focusing on the same goal; the effort will come from within, which always results in more forceful advocacy than if someone is just going through the motions to please their boss.

People are the greatest asset a leader has at his disposal. They are the reason why he is a leader. He is there to lead not a group of robots, animals or inanimate things. He leads people. To be an effective leader of people he must believe in those whom he is leading. He must develop the right attitude and belief about his followers. People are not failures and problems. They are great opportunities for the leader. Believe in them and let them know that you believe them.

Suffice to say that to lead, you need to believe in something, and have the capacity to make others see the value of your position.

Organise Around a Purpose
Most organisations are structured in such a way that they do not actually focus on a valid purpose. They start off well, but over time lose focus on their real reason for existence. Logistics and operations have no purpose other than to fulfill the business' goals, but does it need to be that way?
Reflect, Then Decide

This is about decision making: don't rush. Faced with any important decision, always envision how each alternative will play out before making it. During this process, don't be afraid to change your mind. Many are tempted to decide an issue simply to end the discomfort of indecision. However, the longer you have to make a decision, the more mature and well reasoned that decision should be."

Simple enough advice! But think about its implications if carried out properly.

The point that many people are tempted to simply close off discussion on an issue is a key observation. How often have you chaired a meeting and made a decision on a matter simply to move things along

Personal Humility
Great leaders are self-effacing, quiet, reserved, and even shy - more like Lincoln and Socrates than Patton or Caesar. Great leaders lead quietly. Some leaders want their presence felt, but higher performance comes when the follower is free. Freedom gives them confidence and competency. The leader leads from the back encouraging and supporting his followers and he rejoices every time his followers win. He is happy when people don't give him credit for their successes and when people don't even notice him. People rarely know his existence.

Inspired Standards to Motivate
Inspirational leaders rely on instilling inspired standards and not inspiring charisma to motivate. They build a culture of discipline. It is not a tyrannical disciplinarian one but one that enables freedom and responsibility. Self-disciplined people are hired who are willing to go to lengths to fulfill their responsibilities.

They will realistically determine what the organisation can be the best in the world at and do the things they are deeply passionate about. This passion is not stimulated or imposed but discovered.

Channels Ambition to the Organisation
Inspirational leaders channel their ego needs away from themselves and toward building a great organisation. They often will sacrifice their own gain for the gain of the organisation.

Often the superhero Chief Executive either eliminates any potential successors from his management team or chooses weak successors.
Assumes Responsibility for poor results and gives credit to others

When things do not go well, Inspirational Leaders take responsibility for the failures and never blame other people, external factors, or bad luck.

When CEO Joe Cullman reviewed the decision by his company Philip Morris to buy 7UP in 1978 and sell it 8 years later at a loss, he admitted that it was his mistake and it could have been avoided if he had listened better to the people who challenged the idea at the time.

When they do go well they attribute success of their companies to external factors or their team

Professional Will
Unwavering Resolve to Produce Long-Term Result

Inspirational Leaders set on a path to improve long-term results that go unnoticed by the outside for years. They then suddenly appear well on their way to becoming great. The ability to improve requires that the truth be told.

“... But leadership is equally about creating a climate where the truth is heard and the brutal facts confronted. There's a huge difference between the opportunity to 'have your say' and the opportunity to be heard. The great leaders understood the distinction, creating a culture wherein people have a tremendous opportunity to be heard and, ultimately, for the truth to be heard.”

Sets Standards for Building an Enduring, Great Organisation
Inspirational leaders create standards and doggedly keep to those standards for the years of their tenure.

The transition leader of Abbot Laboratories was George Cain, an 18 year veteran when appointed Chief Executive and a member of the founding family. To deal with a crippling nepotism, he systematically rebuilt the board and the executive team. If a member of the family was not the best executive in the industry in the area of his responsibility, he was replaced.

These leaders deliver what they promise. There is no hype, no spin, no excuses; just understated, realistic expectations. The expectations may be challenging but they are met.

They focus on great followers
A great leader is one who makes his followers great. He is humble but has fierce determination to make others great and achieve his goals.

The leader has to develop the resources that are at his disposal if he wants to be effective and successful. The optimum and wise use of resources like values, interests, skills, situations, feelings, imagination, experience and willpower along with material resources will determine how effective the leader is going to be.
But this is not all. He has the greatest of all resources at his disposal: the human persons who are his followers. When he develops the people around him he develops himself to become a great leader. Great wisdom is around us in the form of people and situations. We must be open to people around us, the environment around us and listen to both keenly to become great leaders.

Big profits, achieving targets in time and optimum use of material resources alone will not make us great. It doesn't matter whether we are heading the biggest organisation or the richest company. We don't need to be a leader to do that. But your ability to make your people great will make you a great and admired leader. When you make your people great, your organisation becomes great and surely in the process you too become great.

They are ‘real’ leaders
The ‘real’ leaders are those who become leaders without any selfish motives. They are so passionately moved by the desire to help other people that they can't sit idle but become leaders. Great leaders like Mother Teresa, Gandhi and Buddha became leaders to express their love and predilection for humanity.

They become a smiling leader
Every leader must have this characteristic: the ability to smile always even in the midst of hopeless situations. He must be a leader of good cheer. Your smile can create confidence in your followers. Believe that every problem has a solution and that you don't need to worry; when you look at problems positively worries cease to exist.

They recognise, respect and reward
A Inspirational leader is one who takes a little more than his share of the blame and a little less than his share of the credit. You must appreciate your followers through encouragements, gestures and rewards. Make them feel important. People perform better when they know where they are standing and with a positive pat on their back they will be able to do miracles. Motivate, challenge and excite them to achieve the goals.

They are a committed, convinced leader
If the leader is not convinced and committed to the goal, how can he lead the others? A leader has two characteristics: first he is going somewhere, second he is able to persuade others to go with him. He is leading a team of people. People will evaluate his sincerity and commitment before they begin to follow him. If they don't see in him strong convictions and fierce determination then he will soon become a loner not a leader.

They become great communicators
An Inspirational leader has a vision in which he strongly believes. He will become an effective leader if he is able to communicate this vision to his followers. He must be able to articulate clearly the needs of his people and visualise their future and communicate guidelines and limits so that they are able to reach their goals. A good leader believes in informal, friendly and open communication. He seeks the opinions of others before he plunges himself into anything.
No one is a born leader. Leadership is something learnt and acquired through constant and conscious practice.

Below are the aims & objectives of a recent ‘Inspirational Leadership’ workshop we’ve run.

- To know what ‘having a purpose’ is and that inspiring leaders have a ‘purpose’
- To understand the difference between self-leadership and self-management
- To know what it takes to be a ‘leader’ of your own life and career and find some leadership characteristics to introduce into your own life
- To know the positive power of visualisation and affirmations and how to use them both
- To write your own ‘vision & mission statement’
- To understand the theory behind the ‘leadership styles’ and how to use them flexibly in the workplace to develop your staff.
- Developing an assertive interpersonal leadership style
- Inspiring others through your communication
- How to use the principles of ‘performance coaching’ to inspire and motivate others
- Motivating individuals and teams

Before the workshop we can carry out a 360° profile with the delegates and also ask them to carry out an assignment, project or case study. We would encourage them to bring the theory they have learnt on the programme to life through a chosen assignment. Completion of an assignment will cement learning and give delegates further confidence to put the training into practice and to apply it in the working environment.

At the end of the workshop action plans would be agreed, coaching support can be offered and some time after the workshop we can facilitate an ‘action learning set’ to review progress with delegates, share experiences and encourage further progress.

Not only will you have ‘inspirational leaders’ you will have highly effective people committed to the future success of your organisation.

Call us now on 01460 61459 to discuss having highly inspirational leaders taking your organisation to the next level.

Below is an outline of a recent ProAction 2-day ‘Inspirational Leadership’ workshop
INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Aims and objectives:

An interactive, fun and informative 2-day workshop, to give you the skills, knowledge, confidence and mindset to be an inspirational, professional and motivational leader. You will learn practical strategies to get the best from your team, gain greater commitment and engender a culture of ‘full-engagement’ within the team. You will learn from some great inspiring leaders past and present and develop your own flexible style of leading.

Day 1 Agenda

0900: Introductions, icebreaker, aims and objectives, learning styles (questionnaire to be completed before the workshop)

0945: Getting inside the mind of an ‘inspirational leader’ – who are they, what do they do, how do they inspire, how do they lead? Including DVD clips of some great leaders.

1045: Developing the beliefs and mindset of a highly effective and motivational leader

1115: Break

1130: What is the difference between leading and managing?

1145: Understanding and reviewing our own leadership styles.

1245: Review of the morning and action plans

1300: Lunch

1400: Key leadership skills – developing vision, mission and strategic thinking. Visualising, positive affirmations and providing clear direction.

1430: Developing your interpersonal leadership style – being ‘assertive’ to get the best from others & dealing with difficult situations

1530: Break

1545: Developing influencing skills through your communication. How to ‘inspire’ without talking!

1645: Summary of the day, action plans.

Day 2 agenda

0930: Review of day 1 & overview of day 2
0945: Coaching for motivation and commitment – performance coaching techniques

1115: Break

1130: Performance management

1245: Summary of morning & action plans

1300: Lunch

1400: Motivation – the theory and how to motivate

1530: Break

1545: Inspiring a team – DVD clip of a highly motivated and inspired team

1630: Course summary, action plans.

Designing, aligning and implementing vision, mission and strategy is key for long-term success for any organisation. For a free demonstration of our unique strategic planning process please call us now on 01460 61459. Our process will really bring strategic planning alive in a visual way and bring commitment, clarity and accountability to the procedure.