Independent Banker

April 2024

Portfolio

[tag] Leadership at All Levels

**[hed] 10 quick wins for new leaders**

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Here’s the scenario: You’ve just been put in charge of a new team or new project. No matter how seasoned a leader you are, that can be daunting. You’re aware that eyes are on you and expectations are high, and you want to make a great first impression. To successfully transition into your new role, there are a few key steps you should follow.

1. **Introduce yourself.** If the team doesn’t already know you, set up a meeting in the first few days to get to know them and tell them who you are. Share some stories about yourself. Invite the team to ask questions and share concerns. Follow up with one-to-one meetings with as many team members as you can. And be sure to get to know their daily routines and pain points.
2. **Encourage transparency.** You should set expectations clearly, ask questions and ask for feedback to create an environment where people feel safe to express themselves. Keep the communication flowing by setting up regular check-ins over the following weeks, either in person or by email.
3. **Communicate the “why.”** Go beyond explaining what you are planning to do; explain *<i>why<i>* you are doing it.
4. **Define roles clearly.** Everyone on the team should know what they are responsible for, who they report to and how to communicate any issues.
5. **Lead by example.** Do the same things you expect from the team, whether it’s being punctual, meeting deadlines or getting out to community events. A leader should make themselves visible.
6. **Plan ahead.** Prioritize actions based on their impact, and don’t leave things to the last minute. Again, lead by example here by communicating priorities clearly and sticking to the plan yourself.
7. **Set clear goals.** What are your objectives? Find goals that everyone wants to work toward, and get the team’s buy-in. If you make a to-do list or wish list, make sure all the goals are achievable. While shooting for the stars is admirable, setting unrealistic goals for the team can be demoralizing.
8. **Play to individual strengths.** Figure out what each team member does best—and enjoys most—then help them focus on that area. Encourage them to do a deep dive into that area with additional training, and let them shine.
9. **Stay upbeat.** You set the tone within the team, even if there are serious issues to deal with. Positivity and optimism go a long way. Handle potential confrontations quickly, and don’t let issues fester.
10. **Drive performance with inspiration.** Think of motivators to keep things interesting, and celebrate the wins. When there are successes, acknowledge them and praise your team verbally or in writing. Appreciation takes practically no effort but goes a very long way. If you do want to make a little effort, buy treats that you know your team will enjoy, and take some time to enjoy them with them.

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