



Paul's Leadership Tips

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LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES TRUST, RESPECT, AND ROLE MODELING

For many years now, I have had the opportunity to travel around the country conducting leadership training for many organizations. Whenever I ask about positive leadership characteristics, trust and respect are the two most often mentioned terms. The dictionary defines *trust* as “a firm reliance on the integrity, dependability and character of a person,” and *respect* as a “feeling of appreciation, esteem or regard with honor.”

A huge liability faces any leader who has failed to obtain trust and respect from his/her team members. Effective leaders realize there is no shortcut to building trust. Trust isn't obtained by telling people you are trustworthy. It is earned by behavior. In other words--role modeling.

Role modeling is not a matter of what you say; it's a matter of what you do. A strong philosophy that successful leaders adhere to is “Say what you are going to do, then do it.”

I recall a story about a young father who comes home from work and finds his daughter working on a school project with a large set of colored markers.

Father. “Great work. Where did you get the colored pencils?”

“I took them from school,” the daughter replied.

Father. “Are you allowed to do that?”

Daughter. “Not really. But it's a stupid rule. I'll return them when I finish this homework,”

The father was upset. “I can't believe you would do that. It's against everything I have ever taught you. If you needed them so badly, why didn't you tell me? I would have taken them from the office.”

“I'm so upset with you I'm going to call in sick tomorrow so I can talk to your teacher.”

Though he wanted to teach his daughter a positive lesson about honesty, the father's own willingness to cut moral corners obscured his good intentions.

“Do as I say, not as I do” has never been an effective teaching strategy. The people we want to influence put much more weight on our actions than our words.

Question:

As a supervisor, what steps would you take to obtain the trust and respect of your crew and what you would do to be a good role model in the eyes of the crew?