



› Driving the economic development of Queensland ‹

Leadership - introduction

What is leadership?

Whatever management roles or business goals you have - whether it's to be more visionary, to manage relationships better or inspire high-energy performance from staff - the critical factor to begin with is YOU.

Before you can lead outwards, you need to look inwards. Successful management is influenced by your own levels of self-awareness and personal mastery.

Managing with self-awareness:

- Starts with understanding your thoughts (not just *what* but *how you think*), behaviour (*what you say/do*), emotions (*what you feel*) and values (*what is most important to you*).
- Means wanting to know more about yourself – *what you want, why you behave in particular ways, how my behaviour affects others* - even if this is hard or painful.
- Involves deciding how much you're willing to know about yourself, how comfortable you are with that and what parts of yourself you're willing to change or work on to be a better manager or business leader.

We're all extremely good at advising others how to change, improve, behave better, be more productive... We're *not* so good at this when it comes to ourselves.

Why is leadership important to your business?

Leadership skills enable a manager to more effectively:

- Have more control over their own thoughts, feelings and actions.
- Make choices and decisions.
- Focus on your personal vision and the business goals you want to achieve.

Self-awareness can bring numerous benefits to a manager as follows:

- It helps you connect with and retain staff - show your genuine interest in them *as people* not just resources. When staff feel you relate to them, they're more likely to be focused, productive and to want to stay and grow with your business.
- It helps your staff to achieve performances they're proud of - connecting with staff builds their 'self-efficacy' - their ability to persist, bounce back in the face of setbacks and achieve their work goals - which helps your business prosper.
- It helps you read your staff *more sensitively* and be able to tell what's going on with them. This helps you to positively influence, coach and be a more effective leader for them.

How to develop leadership qualities

There is no single model of personal change to suit everyone, but here are some milestones to pass on the way to being a more self-aware, emotionally intelligent manager.

- 1. Develop a personal vision:** Who I really am, my self-identity, inner-strengths, talents (eg. I'm a great organiser), real aspirations, what drives me and my personality traits.
- 2. Think about your thinking:** Reflect on your mental models, beliefs, values and thought processes that influence the way you see things (and change those that don't work for you).
- 3. Become mindful of your moods:** What I feel: I think I know what I feel at any given time. But much of the time I'm actually out of touch with my real feelings. I replace them with glib primal labels like 'angry', 'sad' - which tell me little about my real feelings underneath.
- 4. Uncover your identity dramas:** The triggers that make me feel and behave the way I do. The image I have of myself that can lift up my self-esteem, optimism or confidence or drag it down.
- 5. Reflect on your behaviour:** How much you know about why you behave the way you do, how this impacts on others and seeing your contribution to situations that arise around you.
- 6. Get feedback from others:** Seek honest and constructive feedback, and endeavour to make improvements as required. Although confronting and challenging, this is a useful method to identify opportunities to progress.
- 7. Set manageable goals:** Begin with small changes and not too many at once. Make them things you feel would really make a difference. And identify some new behaviours to try and some real-life try-out situations to test these in.

Developing self-awareness as a manager is not an easy road - and it's doubtful if any of us really finish this lifelong journey - but it yields rich rewards along the way in terms of personal improvement, more productive relationships and business success through the trust, optimism and inspiration it engenders in you and your staff.

Further information

The following fact sheets provide further information on these issues:

- Apply the principles of succession planning
- Boost employee morale
- Business values
- Control your stress
- Develop a succession plan
- Effective work teams
- Good management
- Help employees balance work and family
- Implement change
- Leadership – advanced
- Manage business growth
- Manage with emotional intelligence
- Management pitfalls
- Motivate employees
- Retain your best employees