

# FINANCIAL POST

Leadership / Executive / Careers

## Have you recently landed a leadership role? Here's what you need to know

*With so many resources available, finding the right information to help you become an effective leader can be overwhelming*

[Crystal Campbell](#) • ACPC

Published Nov 06, 2014 • 4 minute read



Fotolia

If you've recently landed a leadership role, you can gain access to thousands of book titles, articles and websites dedicated to leading well in the time it takes to type "new leader" into a search engine. With so many resources available, finding the right information to help you become an effective leader can be overwhelming. Embracing these five tips as a freshly minted leader can support you as you set direction, allocate resources and, ultimately, inspire others to take action.

## Learn to hand over the reins

Make no mistake. You've been promoted because you're a top performer. Your skills, talents and efforts are now being recognized. The trick is to leverage your experience and know-how while permitting your staff to leave their own mark. You want to channel your energy into having someone else take on your former role. Then give them the leeway to go at it. They likely won't do it your way, but it's no longer your task. Let me repeat that: The tasks you performed previously are no longer yours to execute. So take a deep breath and let go. Release yourself of the specific ways that you would handle the project or issue while remembering you *are* responsible for the results.

## Demonstrate respect for your direct reports

As a leader you will be called upon to measure everything from whether your staff show up for work to if they met their annual goals. Acknowledging employees for what they do *and* who they are as fellow human beings expresses both conditional and unconditional respect and is key in building an environment of trust. For instance, staying exclusively focused on how your team performs can signal that they are simply a means to an end. You respect them upon the condition that they meet their objectives. By further showing you respect them as individuals, you'll convey that you value them beyond their capacity to complete tasks, and that equates to unconditional respect.

## Don't assume your direct reports share your career goals

You may have been schooled in the saying, "Treat others the way you want to be treated." This adage is great in theory. However, your direct reports may have different career goals than you. Assuming someone wants more opportunities could be faulty thinking. The person may be content where they're at in their career now. He or she may possess high skill along with the experience to perform the role, but low will or desire to achieve more. Recognize your differences and respect their perspectives. Remember they are individuals with their own views of what they want from the workplace, their careers and from you as their leader.

## Know your communication style

Most of us have a preference in how we communicate. Are you more likely to be clear or flexible? Do you value presenting a well-defined direction and objectives? Do you want people to know where you stand on an issue? Or is it important that you are accommodating, open to reason, and able to make adjustments on the run? Effective

leaders move between both types of communication — clear and flexible — depending on the circumstances. After all, being clear can be interpreted as being rigid, and your desire to be precise can come across as portraying a “my-way-or-the-highway” attitude. Similarly, if you’re too flexible, you may be seen as wishy-washy and lacking direction.

## Decide how you will decide

Just as you likely have a favourite communication style, leaders tend to have a default decision-making process. The spectrum of approaches can range from “command and control,” where you unilaterally decide, to “consensus,” where you have agreement from everyone on the decision. The most effective leaders are pros at figuring out which approach best fits their situation. They recognize they must decide how they’ll decide as part of their responsibility as leaders. To determine which method you’ll use, consider these four questions:

1. Who will be impacted by the decision?
2. Who has the expertise to make this decision?
3. Who needs to be involved to gain commitment?
4. How many people are required to make a good choice?

Set an intention to follow these five leadership pointers and you’ll be out of the starting blocks and moving towards becoming an effective leader. As you progress on your leadership journey, be sure to reflect occasionally on which principles you’re doing well, which ones need fine tuning and where you want to invest more time developing your leadership acumen.

*Crystal Campbell, PCC leads c2 coaching + consulting, a career and leadership development firm that helps propel leaders and teams to new levels of impact and excellence. She is a seasoned executive with 20 years’ experience in communications, marketing, and change management. Connect with her at [crystal@c2coaching.ca](mailto:crystal@c2coaching.ca).*