

WHITE PAPER

Enhance Your Leadership Status

What it takes to be a respected leader in today's business world.



The value of a leader is often evident in how they manage conflict, implement change, and motivate their employees. In order to reach that next level of success, you must always be honing your leadership status, expanding your management style, and adding to your leadership toolkit.

In this eBook, we explore three ways to enhance your leadership status and earn the respect of your employees, managers, and stakeholders. Learn how to:

- Persevere: Become a Resilient Leader
- Cultivate: Effectively Manage Millennials
- Transform: Effect Change

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Persevere: Become a Resilient Leader

It's likely you've heard it said that the best way to judge the performance of a company's customer service is how it handles problems. The same thing can be said for leaders; their success is often reflected in their resiliency, the ability to persevere — remaining focused and moving forward with their responsibilities and goals in spite of obstacles and challenges.

Leaders are certainly not expected to be robotic, without feelings, but it's critical that their leadership development enables them to learn to control their emotions so as not to panic or confuse those who serve under them. Presenting a sense of calm is an important trait for all leaders to have, regardless of what external or internal stressors they face.

Three Traits of Strong Leaders

Strong leaders must have three traits to allow their employees to know how they will respond in any situation:

- Predictability
- Consistency
- Accountability

Leaders who can't appropriately manage their emotions are simply "wild cards," and their lack of control will be reflected in the behavior of their teams. When leaders panic, employees follow suit, and operating in a mode of fear is never a good thing for a business.

This is not to say that leaders shouldn't be emotional about things that cause them angst, but they need to give themselves time to be upset and quickly gain control before making decisions. From a leadership development standpoint, moving from an emotional state to a problem-solving mode needs to occur in a timely fashion.

Learning Resiliency

Is being resilient an innate trait? It can be, but the good news is that it can also be learned. Several core features of resiliency are necessary to incorporate into an effective resiliency training program:

- Developing personal/professional vision and goals
- Aligning individual values, principles and beliefs with the organization
- Creating a work environment that fosters support
- Assessing individual motivation for change
- Encouraging self-initiation of coaching process
- Teaching effective coping skills, effective problem-solving skills and strategies to increase self-efficacy

It's beneficial for everyone to learn coping mechanisms that allow them to manage their emotions and move forward, judging their success on the decreasing frequency of "meltdowns" and their durations. For leaders, the need to recover quickly is magnified since their teams take behavioral cues from them. When employees mirror a leader who's highly resilient, they adapt easier to change, are more productive, and have a positive effect on coworkers and the business as a whole.

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Cultivate: Effectively Manage Millennials

A lot has been said and written regarding Millennials as employees, and much of it is pure speculation, not based on research. One of the biggest inaccuracies about this generation — defined as those born between 1982 and 1994 — is that they're not motivated to work hard. Leaders that say this about Millennials aren't bad managers, they simply need to change how they manage this particular generation of workers. As Millennials constitute a growing portion of the working population, it's essential to learn leadership skills that will cultivate them for success.

Millennials are willing to work hard and can be essential members of your organization and future leadership if they are managed effectively. Understanding what motivates Millennials and what matters to them at work is essential to properly managing and inspiring them for success.

Understand the Needs of Millennials

So what is the main differentiator of Millennials when compared to older generations? Millennials have different values than Baby Boomers and other older employees. Many of them question the effort and sacrifice their parents made for their careers, and they wish to forge a different path for themselves. The unique approach Millennials take to their careers is often what is construed as laziness or not wanting to work hard by managers and older coworkers.

Don't Judge Millennials By Traditional Values

A recent study conducted by Bentley University of college-educated Millennials in the workplace noted they have a different set of professional values and motivators than their older colleagues (Source: Bentley University, Millennials in the Workplace, 2013). The biggest mistake many leaders make today is judging Millennials based on the values of the generations that came before them. It's a brave new world; the rules have changed. It's time for Millennials to be viewed using a new lens.

What Do Millennials Want?

The top need cited in the Bentley study is that Millennials want workplaces that accommodate their personal values with respect to time and relationships. To Millennials, their personal time and relationships are highly valued and they expect a great employer to understand those values. As such, Millennials can be fiercely loyal to leaders that allow them to live by their true personal and family values; they want their employers to care about them.

Flexibility

Millennials crave flexibility; they want to work for companies that care more about the quality of work being done than the time it took to do it. To them, a good worker doesn't necessarily work long hours — they do the job well.

I've seen recent instances of this type of loyalty in my work as a business performance advisor. One of my client's daughters is a perfect example of this caring = loyalty philosophy. She had some medical challenges associated with her pregnancy that made it difficult for her to be in the office, but she kept up with her work at home. Her employer didn't keep score on the number of hours she put in, but was satisfied that she completed her assigned tasks. This woman has received offers from other companies — some with a higher salary — but she's loyal to the employer that understood her need for flexibility. She elected to turn down these lucrative offers because the flexibility offered by her current employer was more valuable than a raise.

Company Culture

They want career success just like everyone else, but company culture matters more to Millennials than it does to Boomers and other non-Millennial employees. The Bentley study noted that Millennials are less likely to endure unpleasant conditions at work; nearly three of four (70%) would seek another opportunity. As a leader, you can retain your Millennial workforce by focusing on creating a company culture that accounts for the personal time and relationships that Millennials value so highly, rather than focusing strictly on monetary compensation and hours worked.



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Strategies for Managing Millennials

The message here is that Millennials do care — but they care about different things than their older colleagues. For instance, they don't differentiate by hierarchy, something that could be seen as insubordinate, but they believe "we're all in this together" and everyone should have to earn respect.

What are the best strategies to attract and retain Millennials? It comes down to the three things that affect everyone's motivation:


1. The strength and consistency of our needs.
2. Our expectations.
3. The value of our perceived reward.

It's important to understand Millennials' values and realize a disaster will occur if the gap between what they value and what the company values is too great. In addition, when their expectations are met and they aren't judged for what they value, the result will likely be an increase in their performance — and their loyalty.

Final Note: Offer Mentorship

One more thing the Bentley study identified is that very few Millennials rely on their colleagues or bosses as a sounding board, preferring to go to their parents or spouses. Pairing them with genuine mentors at your organization can make a big difference to them personally and to the company as a whole.

Millennials can be valuable members of the workforce if effectively managed. Learning what they value and providing mentorship is an excellent way to integrate them into your existing workforce and position yourself as a respected leader in their eyes.

A man and a woman in business attire are looking at a tablet together. The man is on the left, wearing a grey suit jacket, and the woman is on the right, wearing a dark blue blazer over a white blouse. They are both looking down at the tablet, which is held by the man. The background is bright and out of focus, suggesting an office or meeting environment.

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Transform: Effect Change

It's not a big secret that most people are averse to change, since it's more comfortable to retain the status quo—even if it's not working. This creates a significant challenge for today's executives and leaders, especially those with the vision to make transformational changes; having great new ideas is one thing, but understanding how to get buy-in from those who must implement them is another.

Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz is considered a visionary leader, and he recently announced a radical change to the way the company operates. This year, following the example of fashion brands that have haute couture and mass-market lines, Starbucks will start opening luxury Reserve stores where customers can get a more rarefied and expensive assortment of coffee.

It's an interesting concept, but like anything else that's new, the employees who will roll it out must embrace the change or it's likely to have a quick and painful death.

What is the best way to ensure that happens?

The following four conditions must be met to ensure employees buy-in to change:

- **A Compelling Story.** Employees must see the point of change.
- **Role Modeling.** Employees must see colleagues they admire modeling the desired behavior.
- **Reinforcement Systems.** Surrounding structures, systems, processes and incentives must be in tune with the change.
- **Required Skills.** Employees must have the skills to do what is required of them as a result of the change.

The Starbucks example is certainly transformational, but who's to say what might fall under that heading at other companies? It could be anything from using a new software program and dealing with a total rebrand to implementing minor or major organizational restructuring. Regardless, the conditions noted above are still applicable.

Confirm, Assess, Communicate

Also imperative to leading employees through change—especially transformational change—is creating an engaged work culture that is open to new ideas. There are three keys to doing that: confirm, assess and communicate. It's critical not to make assumptions, to manage expectations and to break down complex behavior.

Since change is so hard, it's important to involve those who are going to be affected by it in the process of determining how it will be implemented. As an executive leader, you should present a few options and give employees the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions, really listening to what they have to say. There's no question that this discussion will be worthwhile, as employees are five times more likely to embrace change if they're involved in the process of making decisions about it.

Persevere. Cultivate. Transform. Enhance your leadership status by earning the respect of your employees, peers, and managers.



About Dr. Denise P. Federer

Clinical psychologist and executive coach Dr. Denise P. Federer is the founder and principal of Federer Performance Management Group, LLC. She brings more than 20 years experience as a clinician, researcher, speaker, author and consultant to her work as a performance coach.

Dr. Federer, who received her B.A. in Psychology from the Honors Program at the University of Michigan and her PhD in clinical psychology from Nova University, is an expert in stress management, health and wellness, communication styles, performance enhancement and motivational strategies. She has extensive experience providing guidance to leading U.S. firms and their executives and in private practice as a psychotherapist to couples, families and individuals—an intense focus that has led to her interest and expertise in peak performance coaching and in the unique dynamics of closely held and family-owned businesses.

Dr. Federer is a member of the International Coaching Federation (ICF) as a credentialed Professional Certified Coach (PCC).

She has also received certificates in Family Business Advising and Family Wealth Advising. Her professional affiliations over the past twenty four years include the following:

- National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology
- American Psychological Association
- National Association of Women Business Owners
- National Association of Female Executives
- Society for Psychologists in Management



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