

How Leaders Earn Brand-Loyalty

We all have a personal brand whether we like it or not. Simply by being ourselves in the workplace, others perceive, think, and feel about us in a certain way. The question is whether we have created the personal brand we want. This is especially important for those who hold leadership positions. If you lead others, the way they perceive, think, and feel about you as a leader, in relation to other leaders, can make or break your short-term and long-term success.

In a recent article, Brenda Bence, a certified executive coach, branding expert and author listed five behaviors that can damage a leader's personal brand.

1. Not taking risks or accepting tough challenges.

When you reach a leadership position in any organization, it can be much too easy to rest on your laurels. If you have a lot of experience, you might become inclined to stick with what you know has worked in the past rather than try something new. We all need challenges. As a leader, it's your job to find them and lead your team through them.

2. Not speaking up when you disagree with top management.

Even leaders have a difficult time speaking up to superiors. It's natural to worry about the reactions of top management when you disagree with their decisions, but it also hurts your leadership personal brand to hold back and keep your opinions to yourself. Most leaders are expected to offer ideas about how to solve problems or improve operations. You will be respected for making your views known.

3. Worrying about being liked, not respected.

A good leader is liked and respected. It's a difficult balance, but it's an important one. If you worry too much about being liked, you probably aren't making enough tough decisions to lead others effectively. If, on the other hand, you worry too much about being respected and don't care about being liked, chances are you won't be able to garner the support you need from your team to succeed.. The best leadership personal brand is one that straddles these two poles.

4. Fearing feedback, both giving and receiving.

Many leaders stop moving up the ladder either because they aren't good at coaching others or they've stopped being coachable themselves. The best leaders are good at coaching their teams and at accepting regular feedback, no matter how high up in the organization they are.

5. Using destructive language on the job.

Too many leaders fail to pay attention to the way they speak. Destructive language—even if it's intended as being funny—has an effect on everyone, including yourself. Take notice how you speak, and if talking negatively is a habit you've developed, start to break it. Figure out how to turn negatives into positives—it will make a world of difference.