

Top Leadership Behaviors

Jeff Boss, an author and coach who specializes in leadership, suggests in a recent Forbes online article that a leadership gap exists in industry today. In many circles leadership has become an exception rather than the rule due mainly to a “me” centric approach that governs self-interest. If leadership is about authentic self-expression that inspires others to act or think in a certain way, he asks when was the last time you were led by someone? He cites a recent McKinsey & Company study that looked at just this question where researchers asked 189,000 people in over 80 different companies across the globe what types of leadership behaviors they valued and which ones they wanted to avoid.

According to the survey, the top leadership behaviors people espouse are:

Leaders are doers. They understand the big picture and clearly assign roles, responsibilities and expectations that will lead the organization in the right direction. Additionally, they work with a sharp focus on the priorities that drive value.

Leaders seek diversity of thought. The smart ones know that if they want to improve themselves and their company that the only way to do so is to surround themselves with people smarter and more experienced than themselves. We can all learn what not to do. However, in the leadership realm, listening to diverse perspectives only serves you (if you’re the leader) to make better, more informed decisions.

Leaders show support. They have a thankless job sometimes. Not only are they expected to know their role as leaders, but also the roles of their people. They must be emotionally, socially, and self-aware enough to know when to promote, grow, and challenge their people. Furthermore, they oftentimes have to resolve conflict and make difficult decisions that support the best interest of the company rather than themselves.

Leaders solve problems. Leadership entails making difficult decisions, but that only comes after you have solved the problem. The most effective leaders solve problems by sharing information up, down, and across the corporate chain of command because doing so feeds back into diversity of thought above.

Everyone has their own picture of the “ideal” leader and the behaviors they exhibit.

In assessing your own organization, what leadership gaps exist and how can they be filled?