

B Tech I Year
SOFT SKILLS
BAS 105
UNIT V: WORK PLACE SKILLS

LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

Effective leadership is one of the greatest fundamentals to building great organisational cultures. A leader can be anyone who has influence or authority, regardless of title, and leaders set the tone for organisational culture.

Following are the qualities of leadership:

Collaborative

Leadership is a collective process that requires leaders and their team members to work together to achieve success. An effective leader focuses on aligning their goals to that of their team members. It keeps the employees and leaders on the same page about business goals and objectives.

Accountable

An effective leader does not hold his team accountable for the failure of a project. Instead, they find out the root cause of the failure and discreetly work on solving the issue. This very quality of a good leader sets them apart from managers, who generally hold their subordinates responsible for every discrepancy.

Courageous

An effective leader is courageous and can face difficult situations alone. They dare to do what they deem is right, a decision that leads them closer to their goal. Undeterred and unaffected, a good leader takes many decisions that seem unpopular at first but turn out to be successful.

Good listener

A good listener understands, processes information communicated and acts upon it or provides feedback. An effective leader should be a good listener who works upon the information shared. Strong leaders also provide feedback and ask the right question at the right time.

Effective communicator

This is one of the top **leadership** qualities that every leader should possess. An effective leader's words can light a fire in people that pushes them to achieve the unthinkable. A good leader should be articulate and put across their point succinctly. Effective communication ensures that business goals are met smoothly in the stipulated time.

Flexibility

The adversities of the current business environment do not bother a good leader because they have a flexible personality trait that makes them accommodate change. This very quality of a good leader also helps them embrace different perspectives and empower team members by providing them with a place for growth. A leader works with a team of distinctive individuals from different walks of life. So, welcome new ideas with open arms.

Empathetic

Leaders foster emotional intelligence, which helps them empathize with people around them. In addition, being an active listener helps them understand the thought process of their team and become a good leader.

Focused

Being focused is one of the many distinctive qualities of a good leader. They are focused on achieving long term benefits for the business and their team. Good leaders push their team members towards achieving the best of their capabilities.

Challenges status quo

An effective leader challenges the status quo rather than confiding in it. They guide their team members through difficult times and motivate them to do the same. This quality of good leaders differentiates them from average leaders and managers.

Eager to learn

Effective leaders are aware that learning is a continuous process. Therefore, they undertake different **leadership and management certification courses** to hone their skills. Besides that, they keep themselves updated with the ongoing business trends.

Creative

Fostering creativity helps in solving business problems in innovative ways. An effective leader bustles with creative ideas to solve the hardest business problem tactfully. They also encourage creativity and innovation in their teams by conducting activities like brainstorming.

Optimistic

Good leaders are optimistic about the future of their organization, it transcends to the team members, who leave no stone unturned to do their best in achieving business objectives.

Passionate

Leaders direct their team members toward their goals. Effective leaders are passionate about their goals, and evoke the same emotion in their employees, who take their goals seriously and try tooth and nail to achieve them.

Resilient

A good leader remains unaffected by failure, and they remain perceptive and resilient in difficult situations. A resilient leader focuses on the end result and not the journey. They communicate the same to their team, who follow the footsteps of their leader and set an example.

Patient

Effective leaders know that mistakes and failures are inevitable. They remain patient during difficult times and offer guidance to team members who find it hard to tackle failures. A good leader works on resolving the issues.

Transparent

Honest and open leaders foster a work environment that is efficient and enjoyable. An efficient leader must be transparent with their team members, making it one of the must-have qualities of a good leader.

Inspiration

An effective leader is a role model for many, from team members to colleagues. Everyone looks up to them for their dedication and hard work. They also inspire others to be the best version of themselves.

Visionary

Leaders are strategists who formulate various strategies for the efficient functioning of the business. Therefore, leaders are visionaries who set the company in the right direction. An effective leader's charisma ignites the fire in people to give their best.

Self-aware

Another unique quality of a good manager is that they are self-aware of their skills and knowledge. Therefore, they work on honing what they know and what they may not be an expert in.

Problem solver

Having problem-solving skills allows teams to effectively solve business problems and move past roadblocks. Good leaders are great problem solvers. Therefore, aspiring leaders undertake many certification courses to attain these skills.

There is no litmus test to evaluate the effectiveness of leadership. However, the above-mentioned qualities of good leaders guide aspiring leaders to develop these skills to excel in their job. In the succeeding sections, we'll discuss the characteristics of a good leader, and enlist the skills required by a leader.

Characteristics of a Good Leader

Leadership is about solving problems, fostering creativity, aligning business goals to personal goals, and more. Therefore, a leader must have peculiar characteristics that distinguish them from other business roles. If you aspire to become a good leader, here are the characteristics that will make anyone an effective one.

Influential

Leaders must exercise authority from the first day of the project. Then, gradually, increase the influence over the team to steer them in the direction you think the company should head to achieve their long-term goals.

Transparency

Another characteristic of a good leader is transparency. The more open leaders are to the organization's goals and challenges, the easier it is for the team to understand their role in the business. However, never be overtly transparent with employees; draw boundaries on the information you would and wouldn't share from the first day.

Encourage innovation

Innovation ensures that the company has a competitive advantage. It is the guiding force behind the success of a brand. Therefore, leaders must encourage teams to foster innovation and creativity within the organization.

Innovation can often lead to failure, so develop an ecosystem that embraces failures. It encourages the employee to experiment as they see creativity is valued in the company.

Value ethics

To ensure maximum employee engagement and motivation, a leader must adopt high ethical standards in the business. It fosters a safe environment where everyone feels valued. Employees want their leaders to treat them fairly.

Decisiveness

The evolving complex business environment forces leaders to make strategic decisions quickly, making decisiveness one of the important characteristics of a good leader. However, an effective leader sticks to their decision unless there is a compelling reason to shift focus.

Skills of a Good Leader

Every organization looks for an effective leader who possesses the below-mentioned skills. If you aspire to build a career in leadership, here are must-have skills that will prove valuable for anyone applying for the job.

- Integrity
- Relationship building
- Critical thinking
- Realistic goal setting
- Positive reinforcement



1. Continuously invest in themselves [Dealing with change]

High impact leaders know the most important thing they must never stop doing is developing themselves. They know they can't grow other leaders or their organization beyond their own leadership ability. High impact leaders are relentless in their pursuit of growth and spend countless hours and thousands of dollars on their own personal development. Without this hunger to grow and develop their own leadership ability, they would be just another leader among the masses getting mediocre results.

The side effect of their passion: they have amazing teams that are always achieving amazing results.

2. Continuously invest in their top leaders. [Performance appraisal]

High impact leaders are not selfish and stingy when it comes to growing their leaders. They live with an abundance mentality. When they identify a high potential leader, they put them on an accelerated leadership development program. They expect their top leaders to be fully engaged at all times with leadership development. As a result, they make the funds available, allow them time for development, and encourage them to attend leadership training seminars and leadership certification programs.

High impact leaders know this: the return on developing their leaders, although hard to measure, is greater than the cost.

3. Create and maintain an internal leadership program.

High impact leaders take leadership in their organizations to a very high level. They create an internal, ongoing leadership program for their entire team from top to bottom. They train the trainers. They not only have outside leadership professionals come in to help develop their top leaders and themselves, but they and their top leaders actively engage in training their lower-level leaders and followers. High impact leaders know the best way to learn leadership is to teach leadership because it makes them accountable for modelling what they teach.

4. Focus on the strengths of their leaders.

High impact leaders quickly identify the strengths of their leaders. They want to leverage the strengths and ignore the weaknesses. They know when a leader is allowed to work in their strength zone, they are unstoppable. They know nothing energizes a leader like results. When leaders are allowed and encouraged to work in their strength zone, they exhibit high energy and experience a deep passion, while simultaneously motivating and inspiring others around them to action. High impact leaders make sure their leaders are intentionally positioned within the organization to take advantage of their strengths. They don't wait for it to happen by accident. High impact leaders make it happen intentionally.

5. Do not treat leaders the same.

High impact leaders do not hesitate to reward leaders doing the right things. Not only are they rewarded, but they are publicly acknowledged for their contribution. If you want to see your top leaders walk out the door, treat them like a mediocre leader. In an explosive growth atmosphere, high impact leaders are not treated the same. They learn more, so they earn more. They lead by example, so they are made to be the example. High impact leaders are quick to shine the light on the behavior they want to see in other leaders. They spend more time with them, ask them more questions, and give them high profile special assignments.

They send the message: "If there's any doubt, this is what I'm looking for in a leader."

6. Make time for their leaders.

High impact leaders invest time with their leaders. They tend to apply the 80/20 rule. They spend 80% of their time with the top 20% of their leaders. The top 20% are typically responsible for 80% of the results in the organization. Low level leaders do just the opposite. They spend 80% of their time with the bottom 20% of their leaders trying to get them on board. What a waste of time! They are not on board because they don't want to be on board. Focus on those wanting to make things happen, and they will make things happen.

Schedule meetings with your top leaders, go to lunch with your top leaders, or schedule an off-site leadership retreat for the top 20%. That's really a win-win because everyone gets to grow together on purpose for a purpose. These top 20% leaders will lead and develop the other 80% for you.

7. Give their leaders more responsibility.

High impact leaders feed the need. They know their leaders want to do more, be more, and have more. They take their leaders outside of their comfort zone and place them in the growth zone. They continually challenge their leaders to grow by giving them ever increasing responsibilities that stretch them beyond their current level of awareness. High impact leaders know when a leader isn't being stretched, they aren't being challenged to reach their full potential. They're leaving a lot on the table.

Stretching does not come naturally to everyone.

There's a story about a country boy called Bubba who was once offered a full-time job by a landowner who was having problems with beavers building dams on his property. The landowner hired Bubba to rid the creek of all the beaver and even provided a rifle for him to use.

Bubba was excited because it had been a while since he had a regular payday. Not long after he started, a friend stopped by to see Bubba and found him sitting on a grassy bank, kicked back with the gun across his lap.

"Hey Bubba, what's up?" he asked.

"Working," said Bubba half asleep.

"Working on what?"

"Getting rid of the beaver in this creek."

His friend looked over at the creek, and just about that time a beaver popped up from beneath the water. "There's one!" the friend exclaimed. "Shoot it Bubba!"

Bubba didn't even wiggle. Meanwhile the beaver dove back under. "Why didn't you shoot it Bubba?"

"Are you crazy?" replied Bubba. "Do you think I want to lose my job?"

As this simple story reveals, not everyone is looking to stretch themselves. Many are happy to simply coast along and maintain the status quo. But, for a high impact leader, stretching themselves and others is a part of their mission.

"Everyone chooses one of two roads in life- the old and the young, the rich and the poor, men and women alike. One is the broad, well-traveled road to mediocrity, the other the road to greatness and meaning." ~ Dr. Stephen R. Covey

Many leaders want the benefits of multiplication but are unwilling to pay the price to attain it. Therefore, they remain at the helm of a mediocre team or continue leading a mediocre organization. It's not the people's fault. It's the leader's fault.

Before you can lead others to explosive growth, you must experience explosive growth. If you haven't achieved explosive growth in your personal life relative to character growth, start there. If you have, the next step is to define and refine a competency that will allow you to grow professionally. As you achieve results personally and professionally, you must continue to invest in developing yourself in order to one day be in a position to invest in and develop others.

"In times of change, learners inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists." ~ Eric Hoffer

COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR LEADERS

Leaders must be good communicators because they inspire and empower people around them, and without good communication skills, a leader would never be heard or understood by others. Therefore, effective communication is an important non-technical skill that every leader must possess. Below are some reasons why good communication skills are essential for effective leadership.

Develop a bond

Effective leadership is measured by the time a team takes to complete a task without any friction, and good communication skills play an important role in that. It brings together the team members to achieve desired results by clearly defining goals and responsibilities. Meanwhile, a lack of communication makes it tough to achieve goals and decreases productivity. By clearly communicating goals, roles, responsibilities, important information, and other things with their team, a manager develops a strong bond with the team, devoid of miscommunications and quarrels.

Builds trust

Trust binds a team together, and effective leader ensures that they undertake different activities to build trust among their team members. Leaders clearly communicate the roles and responsibilities of all team members in a project beforehand, avoiding confusion in the team and promoting trust.

Active listening

A leader should be an active listener to become an effective communicator. They should know when to stop talking and when to listen to their team members. By doing this, they gain the employees' trust, who then share their opinions, ideas, grievances, etc., with the leader. Active listening also helps the leaders to understand their team better, therefore, listening skills are equally important to communication skills for effective leadership.

Clarity

An effective communicator has a clarity of thought which transforms into the words they use to instruct and interact with team members. They clearly define the goals to be fulfilled by team members and monitor if the team has successfully completed the goal by the end of the milestone. If the team members fail to meet the goals, effective leaders simplify goals to help employees understand them.

Empathy

Empathy is believed to be the top leadership skill needed to successfully execute several business functions. Therefore, leaders must acknowledge and be empathetic towards the perils and adversities their employees face. If need be, they should put themselves in employees' shoes and make decisions that benefit them. In addition, an empathetic leader helps in keeping the team together.

Ability to ask open-ended questions

Effective leaders push their team members to do their best, and in that process, they encourage them to ask open-ended questions. It helps in developing a great bond between team members and their leader. In addition, it helps leaders understand their employees' motivation, thoughts, and goals better.

Receiving and implementing feedback

Feedback helps leaders work on themselves; therefore, an effective leader doesn't just listen to feedback but also implements it. They also provide constant feedback to their team members to improve their efficiency and productivity. This is one of the must-have skills besides possessing effective communication skills for leadership.

Transparency

Transparency plays a crucial role in breaking down the communication barrier between leaders and their teams. It is believed that many managers and executives hardly know anything about their organization. As a result, they are unaware of the organization's policies and goals, which leads to low efficiency and productivity. By speaking openly about the company's goals, a leader builds trust between employees and themselves.

Body language

Possessing communication skills for effective leadership is not limited to words; non-verbal action behavior also plays an important role. It is believed that non-verbal cues are an important part of effective communication skills. Therefore, a leader must work on their body language and non-verbal cues while interacting with employees to ensure that their message is rightly conveyed to the team members.

Further in this article, we will discuss the role of communication in leadership and delve deep into different types of leadership courses that can help aspiring leaders learn effective communication skills.

MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK PLACE

Safe and healthy working environments are not only a fundamental right but are also more likely to minimize tension and conflicts at work and improve staff retention, work performance and productivity. Conversely, a lack of effective structures and support at work, especially for those living with mental health conditions, can affect a person's ability to enjoy their work and do their job well; it can undermine people's attendance at work and even stop people getting a job in the first place.

Stress is basically the tension or anxiety caused by any sort of pressure in everyday life. The ability to handle or minimize the physical and emotional effects of such anxiety is known as one's stress management skills.

The process of stress management is named as one of the keys to a happy and successful life in modern society. Although life provides numerous demands that can prove difficult to handle, stress management provides a number of ways to manage anxiety and maintain overall well-being.

MANAGING STRESS TECHNIQUES:

These tips are things we can all benefit from doing more of. The techniques are categorized into three groups:

1. Be assertive

Clear and effective communication is the key to being assertive. When we're assertive, we can ask for what we want or need, and also explain what is bothering us. The key is doing this in a fair and firm manner while still having empathy for others.

2. Reduce the noise

Switching off all the technology, screen time, and constant stimuli can help us slow down. How often do you go offline? It is worth changing, for your own sake. Make time for some quietness each day. Remember that recharging is a very effective way of tackling stress.

3. Manage your time

If we let them, our days will consume us. Before we know it, the months have become overwhelmingly busy. When we prioritize and organize our tasks, we create a less stressful and more enjoyable life.

4. Creating boundaries

Boundaries are the internal set of rules that we establish for ourselves. They outline what behaviours we will and won't accept, how much time and space we need from others, and what priorities we have. Healthy boundaries are essential for a stress-free life. When we have healthy boundaries, we respect ourselves and take care of our well-being by clearly expressing our boundaries to others.

5. Get out of your head

Sometimes it's best not to even try contending with the racing thoughts. Sometimes you just need a break. Distract yourself. Watch a movie, phone or catch up with a friend, go for a walk, or do something positive that you know takes your mind off things.

6 Affirmations and imagery

The power of positive imagery and affirmations is now scientifically proven to increase positive emotion. So, replace those negative thoughts with positive statements and challenge and change the way you see and experience the world.

7. Diet and Exercise

You've heard it before, but you are what you eat. Be mindful of having a balanced and healthy diet. Making simple diet changes, such as reducing your alcohol, caffeine and sugar intake is a proven way of reducing anxiety. Another guaranteed way to reduce stress is exercise.

8. Meditation and physical relaxation

Use techniques such as deep breathing, guided visualizations, yoga, and guided body scans. These activities help relax the body.

9. Talk it out

Don't hold it all inside. Talk to someone close to you about your worries or the things getting you down. Sharing worries can cut them in half, and also give you a chance to laugh at potentially absurd situations. If you don't feel up to sharing, writing them down is also a great way to release them. Or maybe engage with an independent professional.

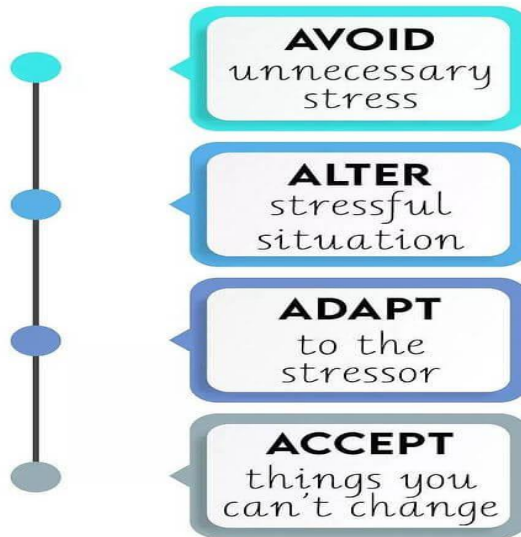
10. Sleep

Getting a good night sleep is fundamental for recharging and dealing with stressful situations in the best possible way. While it varies from individual to individual, on the exact amount of sleep needed, an uninterrupted sleep of approximately 8 hours is generally recommended.

APPLICATION OF A'S

The four A's to deal with stressful situations are as follows:

4 A'S TO COPE WITH STRESS



www.calmnsage.com



1. Avoid the stressor.
2. Alter the stressor.
3. Adapt to the stressor.
4. Accept/Access the stressor.

1. Stress Management Strategy-

Avoid Unnecessary Stress: Not all stress can be avoided and it's not healthy to avoid a situation that needs to be addressed.

i. **Learn how to say "no"**- Know your limits and stick to them. Whether in your personal or professional life, refuse to accept added responsibilities when you are close to reaching them. Taking on more than you can handle is a sure-fire recipe for stress.

ii. **Avoid people who stress you out**- If someone consistently causes stress in your life and you can't turn the relationship around, limit the amount of time you spend with that person or end the relationship entirely.

iii. **Take control of your environment**- If the evening news makes you anxious, turn the TV off. If traffic's got you tense, take a longer but less-traveled route

iv. **Avoid hot-button topics**- If you get upset over religion or politics, cross them off your conversation list. If you repeatedly argue about the same subject with the same people, stop bringing it up or excuse yourself when it's the topic of discussion.

v. **Pare down your to-do list**- Analyse your schedule, responsibilities and daily tasks. If you've got too much on your plate, distinguish between the "should" and the "must."

2. Stress Management Strategy-

Alter the Situation: If you can't avoid a stressful situation, try to alter it. Figure out what you can do to change things so the problem does not present itself in the future.

i. **Express your feelings instead of bottling them up.** If something or someone is bothering you, communicate your concerns in an open and respectful way. If you do not voice your feelings, resentment will build and the situation will likely remain the same.

ii. **Be willing to compromise.** When you ask someone to change their behaviour, be willing to do the same. If you both are willing to bend at least a little, you all have a good chance of finding a happy middle ground.

iii. **Be more assertive.** Do not take a backseat in your own life. Deal with problems head on, doing your best to anticipate and prevent them. Ex: If you have got an exam to study for and your chatty roommate just got home, say up front that you only have five minutes to talk.

3. Stress Management Strategy-

Adapt to the Stressor: If you cannot change the stressor, change yourself. You can adapt to stressful situations and regain your sense of control by changing your expectations and attitude.

i. **Reframe Problems-** Try to view stressful situations from a more positive perspective. Rather than fuming about a traffic jam, look at it as an opportunity to pause and regroup, listen to your favourite radio station, or enjoy some alone time.

ii. **Look at the Big Picture-** Take perspective of the stressful situation. Ask yourself how important it will be in the long run. Will it matter in a month? A year? Is it really worth getting upset over? If the answer is no, focus your time and energy elsewhere.

iii. **Adjust Your Standards-** Perfectionism is a major source of avoidable stress. Stop setting yourself up for failure by demanding perfection. Set reasonable standards for yourself and others and learn to be okay with “good enough.”

4. Stress Management Strategy-

Accept the Things you cannot Change: Some sources of stress are unavoidable. You cannot prevent or change stressors such as the death of a loved one, a serious illness, or a national recession. In such cases, the best way to cope with stress is to accept things as they are. Acceptance may be difficult, but in the long run, it’s easier than railing against a situation you can’t change.

i. **Do not try to Control the Uncontrollable-** Many things in life are beyond our control— particularly the behaviour of other people. Rather than stressing out over them, focus on the things you can control such as the way you choose to react to problems.

.ii. **Share Your Feelings-** Talk to a trusted friend or make an appointment with a therapist. Expressing what you are going through can be very cathartic, even if there’s nothing you can do to alter the stressful situation.

iv. **Learn to Forgive-** Accept the fact that we live in an imperfect world and that people make mistakes. Let go of anger and resentments. Free yourself from negative energy by forgiving and moving on.

Best of luck