**22 Qualities That Make a Great Leader**

## 1. Focus

“It’s been said that leadership is making important but unpopular decisions. That’s certainly a partial truth, but I think it underscores the importance of focus. To be a good leader, you cannot major in minor things, and you must be less distracted than your competition. To get the few critical things done, you must develop incredible selective ignorance. Otherwise, the trivial will drown you.”

## 2. Confidence

“A leader instills confidence and ‘followership’ by having a clear vision, showing empathy and being a strong coach. As a female leader, to be recognized I feel I have to show up with swagger and assertiveness, yet always try to maintain my Southern upbringing, which underscores kindness and generosity. The two work well together in gaining respect.”

—Barri Rafferty, CEO, Ketchum North America

## 3. Transparency

“I’ve never bought into the concept of ‘wearing the mask.’ As a leader, the only way I know how to engender trust and buy-in from my team and with my colleagues is to be 100 percent authentically me—open, sometimes flawed, but always passionate about our work. It has allowed me the freedom to be fully present and consistent. They know what they’re getting at all times. No surprises.”

—Keri Potts, senior director of public relations, ESPN

## 4. Integrity

“Our employees are a direct reflection of the values we embody as leaders. If we’re playing from a reactive and obsolete playbook of needing to be right instead of doing what’s right, then we limit the full potential of our business and lose quality talent. If you focus on becoming authentic in all your interactions, that will rub off on your business and your culture, and the rest takes care of itself.”

—Gunnar Lovelace, co-CEO and cofounder, Thrive Market

## 5. Inspiration

“People always say I’m a self-made man. But there is no such thing. Leaders aren’t self-made; they are driven. I arrived in America with no money or any belongings besides my gym bag, but I can’t say I came with nothing: Others gave me great inspiration and fantastic advice, and I was fueled by my beliefs and an internal drive and passion. That’s why I’m always willing to  offer motivation—to friends or strangers on Reddit. I know the power of inspiration, and if someone can stand on my shoulders to achieve greatness, I’m more than willing to help them up.”

—Arnold Schwarzenegger, former governor of California

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## 6. Passion

“You must love what you do. In order to be truly successful at something, you must obsess over it and let it consume you. No matter how successful your business might become, you are never satisfied and constantly push to do something bigger, better and greater. You lead by example not because you feel like it’s what you should do, but because it is your way of life.”

—Joe Perez, cofounder, Tastemade

## 7. Innovation

“In any system with finite resources and infinite expansion of population—like your business, or like all of humanity—innovation is essential for not only success  but also survival. The innovators are our leaders. You cannot separate the two. Whether it is by thought, technology or organization, innovation is our only hope to solve our challenges.”

—Aubrey Marcus, founder, Onnit

## 8. Patience

“Patience is really courage that’s meant to test your commitment to your cause. The path to great things is always tough, but the best leaders understand when to abandon the cause and when to stay the course. If your vision is bold enough, there will be hundreds of reasons why it ‘can’t be done’ and plenty of doubters. A lot of things have to come together—external markets, competition, financing, consumer demand and always a little luck—to pull off something big.”

—Dan Brian, COO, WhipClip

## 9. Stoicism

“It’s inevitable: We’re going to find ourselves in some real shit situations, whether they’re costly mistakes, unexpected failures or unscrupulous enemies. Stoicism is, at its core, accepting and anticipating this in advance, so that you don’t freak out, react emotionally and aggravate things further. Train our minds, consider the worst-case scenarios and regulate our unhelpful instinctual responses—that’s how we make sure shit situations don’t turn into fatal resolutions.”

—Ryan Holiday, author of[The Obstacle is the Way](https://www.amazon.com/Obstacle-Way-Timeless-Turning-Triumph/dp/1591846358/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&linkCode=ll1&tag=entaff-20&linkId=f72c8c3b74498fee599ecf358f6574d3" \t "_blank)and former director of marketing, American Apparel

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## 10. Wonkiness

“Understanding the underlying numbers is the best thing I’ve done for my business. As we have a subscription-based service, the biggest impact on our bottom line was to decrease our churn rate. Being able to nudge that number from 6 percent to 4 Percent meant a 50 percent increase in the average customer’s lifetime value.  
We would not have known to focus on this metric without being able to accurately analyze our data.”

—Sol Orwell, cofounder, Examine.com

## 11. Authenticity

“It’s true that imitation is one of the greatest forms of flattery, but not when it comes to leadership—and every great leader in my life, from Mike Tomlin to Olympic ski coach Scott Rawles, led from a place of authenticity. Learn from others, read autobiographies of your favorite leaders, pick up skills along the way... but never lose your authentic voice, opinions and, ultimately, how you make decisions.”

—Jeremy Bloom, cofounder and CEO, Integrate

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## 12. Open-mindedness

“One of the biggest myths is that good business leaders are great visionaries with dogged determination to stick to their goals no matter what. It’s nonsense. The truth is, leaders need to keep an open mind while being flexible, and adjust if necessary. When in the startup phase of a company, planning is highly overrated and goals are not static. Your commitment should be to invest, develop and maintain great relationships.”

—Daymond John, CEO, Shark Branding and FUBU

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## 13. Decisiveness

“In high school and college, to pick up extra cash I would often referee recreational basketball games. The mentor who taught me how to officiate gave his refs one important piece of advice that translates well into the professional world: ‘Make the call fast, make the call loud and don’t look back.’ In marginal situations, a decisively made wrong call will often lead to better long-term results and a stronger team than a wishy-washy decision that turns out to be right.”

—Scott Hoffman, owner, Folio Literary Management

## 14. Personableness

“We all provide something unique to this world, and we can all smell when someone isn’t being real. The more you focus on genuine connections with people, and look for ways to help them—rather than just focus on what they can do for you—the more likable and personable you become. This isn’t required to be a great leader, but it is to be a respected leader, which can make all the difference in your business.”

—Lewis Howes, New York Times bestselling author of*[The School of Greatness](https://www.amazon.com/School-Greatness-Real-World-Living-Leaving/dp/B019HGKWK0/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&linkCode=ll1&tag=entaff-20&linkId=6da3ad335811d740c28987550369a189" \t "_blank)*

## 15. Empowerment

“Many of my leadership philosophies were learned as an athlete. My most successful teams didn’t always have the most talent but did have teammates with the right combination of skills, strengths and a common trust in each other. To build an ‘overachieving’ team, you need to delegate responsibility and authority. Giving away responsibilities isn’t always easy. It can actually be harder to do than completing the task yourself, but with the right project selection and support, delegating can pay off in dividends. It is how you truly find people’s capabilities and get the most out of them.”

—Shannon Pappas, senior vice president, Beachbody LIVE

## 16. Positivity

“In order to achieve greatness, you must create a culture of optimism. There will be many ups and downs, but the prevalence of positivity will keep the company going. But be warned: This requires fearlessness. You have to truly believe in making the impossible possible.”

 —Jason Harris, CEO, Mekanism

## 17. Generosity

“My main goal has always been to offer the best of myself. We all grow—as a collective whole—when I’m able to build up others and help them grow as individuals.”

—Christopher Perilli, CEO, Pixel Mobb

## 18. Persistence

“A great leader once told me, ‘persistence beats resistance.’ And after working at Facebook, Intel and Microsoft and starting my own company, I’ve learned two major lessons: All great things take time, and you must persist no matter what. That’s what it takes to be a leader: willingness to go beyond where others will stop.”

—Noah Kagan, Chief Sumo, appsumo

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## 19. Insightfulness

“It takes insight every day to be able to separate that which is really important from all the incoming fire. It’s like wisdom—it can be improved with time, if you’re paying attention, but it has to exist in your character. It’s inherent. When your insight is right, you look like a genius. And when your insight is wrong, you look like an idiot.”

—Raj Bhakta, founder, WhistlePig Whiskey

## 20. Communication

“If people aren’t aware of your expectations, and they fall short, it’s really your fault for not expressing it to them. The people I work with are in constant communication, probably to a fault. But communication is a balancing act. You might have a specific want or need, but it’s superimportant to treat work as a collaboration. We always want people to tell us their thoughts and ideas—that’s why we have all these very talented people working with us.”

—Kim Kurlanchik Russen, partner, TAO Group

## 21. Accountability

“It’s a lot easier to assign blame than to hold yourself accountable. But if you want to know how to do it right, learn from financial expert Larry Robbins. He wrote a genuinely humble letter to his investors about his bad judgment that caused their investments to falter. He then opened up a new fund without management and performance fees—unheard of in the hedge fund world. This is character. This is accountability. It’s not only taking responsibility; it’s taking the next step to make it right.”

—Sandra Carreon-John, senior vice president, M&C Saatchi Sport & Entertainment

## 22. Restlessness

“It takes real leadership to find the strengths within each person on your team and then be willing to look outside to plug the gaps. It’s best to believe that your team alone does not have all the answers— because if you believe that, it usually means you’re not asking all the right questions.”

—Nick Woolery, global director of marketing, Stance Socks

# The Top 7 Leadership Qualities & Attributes Of Great Leaders

Many leadership qualities have been identified that are important to great leaders across time. But there are seven specific qualities of leaders that seem to stand out as being more important than the others.

### What Makes A Great Leader?

Great leaders find balance between business foresight, performance and character. They have vision, courage, integrity, humility and focus along with the ability to plan strategically and catalyze cooperation amongst their team.

### ****Vision****

“Good business leaders create a vision, articulate the vision, passionately own the vision, and relentlessly drive it to completion.”– Jack Welch

Great leaders have vision… They can see into the future.

They have a clear, exciting idea of where they are going and what they are trying to accomplish and are excellent at strategic planning.

This quality separates them from managers. Having a clear vision turns the individual into a special type of person. This quality of vision changes a “transactional manager” into a “transformational leader.”

While a manager gets the job done, great leaders tap into the emotions of their employees.

### ****Courage****

“Courage is rightly considered the foremost of the virtues, for upon it, all others depend.” – Winston Churchill

One of the more important qualities of a good leader is courage. Having the quality of courage means that you are willing to take risks in the achievement of your goals with no assurance of success. Because there is no certainty in life or business, every commitment(承诺) you make and every action you take entails a risk of some kind.

Among the seven leadership qualities, courage is the most identifiable outward trait.

### ****Integrity****

“With integrity, you have nothing to fear, since you have nothing to hide. With integrity, you will do the right thing, so you will have no guilt.”– Zig Ziglar

In every strategic planning session that I have conducted for large and small corporations, the first value that all the gathered executives agree upon for their company is integrity(正值，诚实). They all agree on the importance of complete honesty in everything they do, both internally and externally.

The core of integrity is truthfulness.

Integrity requires that you always tell the truth, to all people, in every situation. Truthfulness is the foundation quality of the trust that is necessary for the success of any business.

### ****Humility****

Humility gets results. Larry Bossidy, the former CEO of Honeywell and author of the book Execution, explained why leadership characteristics, such as humility, make you a more effective leader:

“The more you can contain your ego, the more realistic you are about your problems. You learn how to listen, and admit that you don’t know all the answers. You exhibit the attitude that you can learn from anyone at any time. Your pride doesn’t get in the way of gathering the information you need to achieve the best results. It doesn’t keep you from sharing the credit that needs to be shared. Humility allows you to acknowledge your mistakes.” – Larry Bossidy

Great leaders are those who are strong and decisive but also humble.

Humility doesn’t mean that you’re weak or unsure of yourself. It means that you have the self-confidence and self-awareness to recognize the value of others without feeling threatened.

This is one of the rarer attributes – or traits – of good leaders because it requires containment of one’s ego.

It means that you are willing to admit you could be wrong, that you recognize you may not have all the answers. And it means that you give credit where credit is due – – which many people struggle to do.

### ****Strategic Planning****

“Strategy is not the consequence of planning, but the opposite: it’s the starting point.” – Henry Mintzberg

Great leaders are outstanding at [strategic planning](http://www.briantracy.com/blog/personal-success/personal-strategic-planning-4-step-action-plan-to-strengthen-your-personal-skills-personal-mission-statement/" \t "_blank). It’s another one of the more important leadership strengths. They have the ability to look ahead, to anticipate with some accuracy where the industry and the markets are going.

Leaders have the ability to anticipate trends, well in advance of their competitors. They continually ask, “Based on what is happening today, where is the market going? Where is it likely to be in three months, six months, one year, and two years?” They do this through thoughtful strategic planning.

Because of increasing competitiveness, only the leaders and organizations that can accurately anticipate future markets can possibly survive. Only leaders with foresight can gain the “first mover advantage.”

### ****Focus****

“Successful people maintain a positive focus in life no matter what is going on around them. They stay focused on their past successes rather than their past failures, and on the next action steps they need to take to get them closer to the fulfillment of their goals rather than all the other distractions that life presents to them. – [Jack Canfield](http://jackcanfield.com/the-most-important-principle-to-great-leadership/" \t "_blank)

Leaders always focus on the needs of the company and the situation. Leaders focus on results, on what must be achieved by themselves, by others, and by the company. Great leaders focus on strengths, in themselves and in others.

They focus on the strengths of the organization, on the things that the company does best in satisfying demanding customers in a competitive marketplace.

Your ability as a leader to call the shots and make sure that everyone is focused and concentrated on the most valuable use of their time is essential to the excellent performance of the enterprise.

### ****Cooperation****

“If your imagination leads you to understand how quickly people grant your requests when those requests appeal to their self-interest, you can have practically anything you go after.” – Napoleon Hill

Your ability to get everyone working and pulling together is essential to your success. Leadership is the ability to get people to work for you because they want to.

The 80/20 rule applies here:

Twenty percent of your people contribute 80 percent of your results.

Your ability to select these people and then to work well with them on a daily basis is essential to the smooth functioning of the organization.

Gain the cooperation of others by making a commitment to get along well with each key person every single day. You always have a choice when it comes to a task: You can do it yourself, or you can get someone else to do it for you. Which is it going to be?

### A Few Thoughts On Leadership Qualities

Most of the time, leaders think about good leadership qualities and how to apply them on a daily basis.

The most important contribution you can make to your company is to **be a leader, accept responsibility for results, and dare to go forward**.

## BONUS: 3 Extra Leaderships Traits To Accelerate Your Career

### Bonus Tip 1 – Great Leaders Are Future Oriented 100% Of The Time

The predominant quality of **great leaders** is that they think about the future most of the time. They think about where they are going rather than where they have been. They maintain a positive attitude and think about the opportunities of tomorrow rather than focusing on the problems of the past.

Only about 10% of people have this quality of future-orientation. This small percentage includes all the movers, shakers, entrepreneurs, business builders, top sales people, artists, musicians, and creators of all kinds.

**Free Report:**[**Discovering Your Talents!**](http://www.briantracy.com/files/pages/poc/optin.html)

To think like a leader, you must practice “idealization” in each area of your life. To get the most out of the use of idealization, you should begin by imagining that you have no limitations at all on what you can be, do or have.

Imagine for a moment that you have all the time and money that you need. You have all the education and knowledge. You have all the talent and experience. You have all the friends and contacts. You are a “no-limit” person who can do anything that you really put your mind to.

If you were the very best professional business person that you could possibly be, what additional knowledge, skills and**leadership qualities**would you have developed to a high level?

When you begin the practice of idealization, you can then extend this exercise to your family, your finances and your physical health. If your family life was ideal in every way, what sort of lifestyle would you be living? If your financial situation were ideal, how much money would you have in the bank, and how much would you be earning from your investments each month and each year? If your levels of physical health and fitness were ideal, how would you be different from today?

When you begin to develop leadership qualities, you begin to engage in what is called “long-term thinking.”

### ****Bonus Tip 2 – Keep A Positive Attitude****

Top people maintain a [**positive attitude**](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-PURfoGn4yw) and are long-term thinkers. Average thinkers think only about the present, and about immediate gratification. But great leaders think about where they want to be in five and ten years, and what they have to do each hour of each day to make their desired futures a reality.

Great leaders inspire other people, their friends, customer, associates and even their children because they are inspired themselves. They are excited about the possibility of creating an exciting future for themselves. They get up every morning and they see every effort they make as part of a great plan to accomplish something wonderful with their lives and push forward with a positive attitude.

Leaders are optimistic. They see opportunities and possibilities in everything that happens, positive or negative. They look for the good in every situation and in every person. They seek the valuable lessons contained in every problem or setback. They never experience “failures;” instead, write them off as “learning experiences.”

Most of all, great leaders have a sense of meaning and purpose in each area of their lives. They have clear, written goals and plans they work on every day. Leaders are clear about where they are going and what they will have to do to get there. Their behavior is purposeful and goal-directed. As a result, they accomplish five and ten times as much as the average person who operates from day to day with little concern about the future.

### Bonus Tip 3 – Take Responsibility

One of the most important leadership qualities is the acceptance of personal responsibility. Leaders never complain, never explain. Instead of making excuses, they make progress. Whenever they have a set-back or difficulty, they repeat to themselves, “I am responsible! I am responsible! I am responsible!”

Great leaders see themselves as victors over circumstances rather than victims of circumstances. They don’t criticize or blame others when something goes wrong. Instead, they focus on the solution, on what can be done.

Leaders are intensely action-oriented. They are constantly in motion. They try something, and then something else, and then something else again. They never give up.

Finally, leaders have integrity. They tell the truth at all times. They live in truth with themselves, and they live in truth with others.

The acceptance of leadership is a great responsibility. It is both scary and exhilarating. Once you decide to become a leader in your life, you cast off the shackles of fear and dependency that hold most people back and pursue life with a [**positive attitude**](http://www.briantracy.com/blog/personal-success/how-to-manage-stress-and-overcome-difficulties-4-ways-to-maintain-a-positive-attitude-and-keep-moving-forward/). With your own hands, you design your own future. You set yourself fully on the path to becoming everything you are capable of becoming.