



Readings in Basic Leadership and Management I



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Leadership

It all starts with leadership. Strong and stable leadership is the single most important requirement to successful club operations. While there are many styles of leadership suited to any industry or endeavor, experience over many years in the club business makes it clear that a service-based approach to leadership works best in the service industry. This style of leadership, variously called “servant leadership” or “enlightened leadership,” has as its primary motivation service to others – to members, to the owners of the club, **and** to the employees.

This leadership style differs from others in its **focus on serving the needs of employees** to provide them with the proper tools, training, resources, motivation, and empowerment to serve the club’s members. In simplest terms, when leaders serve the club’s employees, they will serve the members, who by their continuing enthusiastic patronage will serve the bottom line of the club and its owners. An understanding of the importance of this style of leadership can be summed up by the simple saying,

“How can employees provide quality service if they are not properly served by the leadership and example of their managers?”

Being a serviced-based leader requires many different skills, but two are so important to providing quality service that they bear special mention. First is the **will to make it happen**. Building a Remarkable Service Infrastructure is not a one time event or a single set of instructions to employees. It is a challenging and ongoing endeavor that may take years to fully implement.

This is so because, at its root, building a RSI is about changing people’s attitudes and behaviors. Even in a start-up operation where there is no tradition or ingrained institutional habits to overcome, newly hired managers and employees bring their own service experiences with them. Given the inconsistent and relatively poor state of service throughout the industry, most often they simply bring bad habits or those they practiced in their previous jobs. This multitude of experiences and habits must then be forged into a unified system that supports the discipline of quality.

The second necessary skill is **communication**. To build the infrastructure the leader must communicate service values at every opportunity and continually reinforce the culture of service. The leader must be both patient and persistent. Instructions and reinforcement will have to be given over and over again. Training and implementation must be repeated at intervals until every employee gets the message and provides consistent quality service in every situation.

While it is recognized that the General Manager must be a strong leader, it is also critical that the club’s subordinate managers and supervisors are also trained to be strong service-based leaders. While some degree of a leader’s skill-set seems to be inborn, such as personality and an analytical mind, and others (confidence, judgment, and basic communication abilities) are developed early in life, the great majority of a leader’s skills are learned. Unless junior managers are systematically trained to develop the skills which have to do with **building and sustaining meaningful work relationships**, their leadership development will be haphazard and the General Manager’s vision and message of service will not be communicated consistently or faithfully to line employees.

Managers' Code of Ethics

1. As a representative of my club, I understand that my actions and behavior, both at and away from work, reflect on the organization that provides me employment. I will, therefore, do everything in my power to represent them faithfully and professionally in all my dealings with members, guests, employees, vendors, and the community at large.
2. I will organize the work areas for which I am responsible and thoroughly train the employees I supervise to ensure the most efficient operation with the highest levels of service possible.
3. I will not use or remove club property for personal use and will protect the assets and resources of the club as if they were my own. My vigilance and example will ensure the employees I supervise do likewise.
4. I understand that my leadership and example set the standard for my employees. I understand that a manager who shirks responsibilities, cuts corners, fails to give an honest time commitment, pilfers food and supplies, fails to secure inventories, or is not personally productive in time or commitment, can expect his or her employees to do the same.
5. I will not exchange club goods or services for personal favors or services from members, non-members, or vendors. Further, I will not accept personal favors, gifts, or rebates from vendors in any form. Such items benefit me at my employer's expense and are appropriately considered kickbacks. My only interest is to get the best price for my place of business and will make every effort to do so by seeking competitive pricing from several vendors.
6. While I may direct employees' work, their productive effort and well-being serve the interest of the club. Therefore, I must work hard to ensure their maximum contribution to the mission and goals of the club. I can only do this if I value each employee as an individual whose contribution to the collective effort is directly dependent upon my leadership, as well as the tools, training, resources, and support I provide them.
7. I will never use my position or authority to request or require personal services or favors, sexual or otherwise, from employees.
8. I will never enter into personal or intimate relations with any employee who works under my direction or is directly or indirectly supervised by me. Such an inappropriate relationship damages the organization by implications of favoritism and clouded judgment. Ultimately, it irretrievably harms both my ability to lead and my personal and professional reputation.
9. While maintaining a positive interest in and influence over the efforts of my employees, I recognize the importance of maintaining a professional distance from them. I will not socialize or party with those I supervise, except while attending club-organized social events or in the furtherance of club business.
10. Finally, I recognize that my integrity is at the core of my personal and professional standing. It is the most important ingredient of my leadership and is the foundation for any success I will achieve in my career and life. I will never be tempted to squander this most precious possession for the sake of expediency or inappropriate gain.

Management Professionalism

Certain actions on the part of managers and supervisors will cause problems for you and the club. The following basic guidelines will help you avoid problems and set the proper example for those you lead.

Consistency in all personnel actions

In today's litigious society it is essential that all personnel actions from screening interviews, to hiring, to providing opportunities for training and promotion, to counseling, disciplining, and terminating be consistent, fair, and professional.

No retaliation

Employees have a right to come forward with their problems and concerns. While you may expect that they will come to you first, they may feel that you are part of the problem.

Should employees go over your head or file complaints against you, do not retaliate against them. The best way to avoid this is to have open communications with employees and be approachable for their problems and concerns.

No sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment,
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting the individual, or
- Such conduct has the purpose or the effect of interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment is against the law, and it is the policy the club that any incident of alleged sexual harassment be reported to management immediately. Allegations must be quickly and thoroughly investigated.

No discriminatory practices

Biases, prejudice, disparaging remarks or jokes on the basis of race, creed, religion, gender, national origin, ethnic group, age, handicap, or sexual orientation cannot be tolerated. There is no place for bigotry or personal and cultural insensitivity in the workplace. While each person has his or her own biases and prejudices, do not let them interfere with your conduct and decisions as a leader. There are two good reasons for this:

- Senior management will deal swiftly with leaders who exhibit such behavior, and
- This behavior demeans people. It demeans those who do it and those who are subjected to it. Since your club is the sum of its parts, words or actions that attack the self esteem of any employee damage the club's efforts as a whole.

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