

# Becoming a Caring Leader

**You don't have to act like Genghis Khan to get your employees to do their jobs. You'll develop a stronger company if you can develop your people skills.**

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*"You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you."*

-- Dale Carnegie

Successful business leaders appear to be emotionally bionic in order to serve all the demands they're required to meet each day. The good news (and there is some) is that a leader who's well liked by his or her employees inspires loyalty which in turn increases productivity and keeps morale high and turnover low.

Here are some tips and tricks you can use with your employees--and your clients and vendors, too--that demonstrate great leadership skills. By applying these suggestions in your business, you'll create trust and loyalty by consistently showing your employees that you care about them and the work they do.

**1. The start of the day is a great time to demonstrate high levels of enthusiasm for the new workday.** Go out of your way to greet your employees. Deliver compliments early in the day to put your employees in a positive frame of mind as they face their day.

**2. Give your employees lots of opportunities to see you frequently throughout the day.** Walk around the company with your head high and a smile on your face. Avoid hiding out in your office doing paperwork for hours at a time. If your employees don't see you during the day, they can feel ignored or (worse yet) demoralized.

**3. Celebrate victories.** Set small and attainable goals every few weeks or months to give your employees tasks worth striving toward. Don't wait until you complete a big project to congratulate the people who were involved. It's easy to bring in a cake and some soft drinks to reward outstanding performances for a job well done.

**4. Encourage order.** Every few months, give your employees two or three hours to clean their desks, their files, and do minor computer repairs. If you let them know you care about their working conditions and their stress levels, they'll be more dedicated to producing top quality work.

**5. When the afternoon slump hits (around 3:00 p.m.), take a walk around the office** and ask people, "How's it going?" This is a time when everyone needs a quick lift and they'll appreciate your care and concern.

**6. Create a locked suggestion box and periodically review the contents.** Let your employees know you're concerned about their well being by addressing their issues. Post the suggestions by sending out an e-mail newsletter or tacking them up on a bulletin board.

**7. Encourage friendships among co-workers.** People want to have friends at work, yet many are too busy or too shy to know how to go about it. Encourage interaction by giving your employees the chance to share their talents with other employees within your office. Most offices attract a great variety of talented people. For example, if someone in your company plays chess and would be willing to teach chess to other who are interested, allow them to promote their skill and give them a place (a lunch room or vacant office) to teach those who'd like to learn chess. Or knitting. Or another language. Or how to play the harmonica. The list is endless! Your employees will love you for caring.

**8. Hide your anger.** If an employee does something that provokes your anger, instead of blowing up at them, let that person know you're disappointed in his or her behavior and never criticize them as a person. That's the difference between a good critique and criticism. Most people can learn from a well-thought-out critique yet all people hate being criticized.

**9. Show your humanity.** Everyone loves a person with a good sense of humor. You don't need to tell jokes, but learn to laugh out loud easily and often.