What Makes a Great HR Leader? 7 Leadership Qualities to Have

What are seven important qualities for great HR leaders to possess? This article highlights certain qualities will differentiate a good leader from a great one.

Published August 5, 2019

Taline Schmidt is a contributing author for Markitors, a digital marketing company. When you think of an effective leader, what words come to mind? It's not enough to simply be good at your job. There are certain qualities that will differentiate a good HR leader from a great one. Below are the seven most important qualities for great leaders to have. Keep reading to find out what it means to be the best in the HR industry!

1. **Ethically Sound** Bias for action is one of the necessary traits of a leader in human resources. They solve problems related to employees and create new policies, and by doing so, they set an example for everyone else. Doing what's right is an important part of being an HR leader. Human Resources are the problem-solvers of your company, and they can often be the moral compass for ethical dilemmas. Remember that your HR manager will be handling the critical components of your business. Ultimately, you have to hire someone you can trust with your company and your employees. Ask thoughtful questions and follow up on the answers, and you'll find a great fit in no time. Recruiterie

2. **Ability to Navigate the Grey Areas** Following a step-by-step policy is easy. But what about when issues that can't be solved with predetermined rules and policies arise? HR deal with issues every day that is simply up to their own judgment. They must possess the ability to navigate these with poise. Grey areas in themselves do not need canned solutions; rather, they need innovative ones. Unfortunately, many HR leaders, when faced with these inevitable grey areas, run to the employee handbook or just require unchallenged compliance with company policy. Every single employee issue is unique and each requires an equally unique solution that secures the interests of the employee and the company. -Chris Chancey, Founder of Amplio Recruiting

3. **Ability to Lead When Necessary** While it's important for managers to be emotionally present, they're responsible for enforcing the policy as well. Being able to toggle between leadership, management, and friendship is critical. The individual has the ability to recognize the "Leadership Zone" and chooses to step into it when appropriate. A person is not constantly practicing leadership, as sometimes they are practicing management. When stepping into the leadership zone, they put the needs of others ahead of their own comforts. When in the leadership zone, they use influencing techniques rather than managerial practices. -Greg Githens, Author of How to Think Strategically

4. **A Good Listener** A good HR leader has strong emotional intelligence and puts an employee's interests first since a company's most important asset is its people. And while this is important, a

true leader can only do this by knowing themselves, their strengths, and their weaknesses. Taking the Myers-Briggs assessment can promote greater self-awareness that will not only create better leaders in HR but better company culture and performance as a result. There are also other personality assessments like the DiSC Behavior Inventory or The Hogan Personality Inventory. The most important service that a leader can bring to a firm is the willingness to listen to every single employee. They are empathetic and understanding, happy to understand workers from every walk of life. Employees in every department have value; the best leaders, therefore, will strive to maximize, engage, and retain every worker. -Vivek Kumar, CEO of Qlicket

5. Technically Skilled Technical skills are equally as important as soft skills when it comes to being an HR leader. These skills will help a good human resources leader think critically and creatively about how to create policies or programs which can prevent problems from happening. Technical skills are a must-have foundation, and behavioral skills allow leaders to be effective communicators, ethical stewards, internal consultants, and overseers of global and cultural effectiveness. Leaders are more effective when they are hired by organizations that embrace the strategic partnership that HR can bring to the executive leadership of an organization. - Deb Cohen, PhD., Author, Professor, and former SHRM Executive

6. A Good Communicator Great leaders in HR reach out to the people first and make sure everyone on the team is able to be their best self. He or she needs to communicate well with the employees and upper management and to encourage sound communication throughout the organization. A good HR leader provides open lines of communication between them and their entire organization. It's essential that an HR leader needs to effectively work with people from all different areas of the business from entry-level employees to senior directors and CEOs. This requires the ability to accurately and empathetically communicate with employees at each level and deliver the support, advice, and guidance they need to be tailored to the situation. -Megan Meade, Software Path

7. Curiosity A great HR leader creatively plans for the future of their organization. It's important to be focused on the future as well as the day-to-day. They're innovative, and they don't focus on doing what's already been done. I wish more human resource leaders would be curious about the "what if's." There's a tendency to do what's been done or just take the easy/safe route. It's that checklist mentality, and that doesn't necessarily do your audience any favors. Being more curious about the needs of your customers and asking for the fresh perspective of agencies is a great way to entertain the "what if" question and push onboarding innovation forward. -Brent Shetler, Owner & Executive Creative Director at Mindspace

Are you a Great HR Leader?

HR leaders need to be assertive and bold to help organizations see the value that hiring and developing talent in forward-looking ways can bring to an organization. Though this list isn't the end-all-be-all of HR leadership, it does contain some key pointers. If you're looking for ways to improve

your leadership skills, try out some of the tips mentioned above. If you have other tips on becoming a stellar leader, let us know! Learn more about our HR services here.

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