

# Will the leader please stand up

Colt Mackenzie McNair's new executive service, CMM Solutions, offers highly focused business support services to senior managers in the golf industry. Here, **Biddy Lloyd Jones**, CMM's new Head of Consultative Services, offers readers 10 tips on great leadership.



## 1. Ensure your managers have the right skills to manage

The most common mistake companies make is to promote people into management positions and give them no support or formal training. The result of this is that the person loses confidence, their manager questions their ability, the team reporting to them loses confidence in their manager and, ultimately, the business suffers.

If an employee is good at a particular discipline, let's say sales, it is not a given they will be automatically good in the newly promoted role of sales director.

Invariably, when you are a new manager you are so desperate to succeed you try and hide what you don't know, or don't currently have the ability to do, and that is bad for the person and a problem for the business.

Senior executives, too, may have experienced this scenario as they rose through the ranks, but that doesn't make it acceptable to muddle through. Training is absolutely essential if a business wants to create a team of high-performing managers.

## 2. Leadership is as much about attitude as it is about what you know and what you do

So, are you a manager or are you a leader? There is a big difference between the two and you may be successful at one and not the other.

Managing is all about what you do, the tasks you complete and your skills to get the job done. Leadership is about who you are, how you behave, your attitude to people and the business, your beliefs and your integrity.

You don't always have to be a senior manager to be a leader. To be a leader you have to recognise if people will follow you. Do people want to emulate you? If the answer is yes, that makes you a leader.

All great leaders have the humility to accept that people who work for them may be better at certain things than they are. Accept the fact that you are there to lead and may not necessarily have the skills or knowledge to do every job in the business.

## 3. Clarify what you expect from members of your team

Tell people what you want them to do, but also what you don't want them to do. Essentially, people come to work to do a good job. Do you honestly know anyone who goes to work to do the opposite? Employees want to please their managers and you should give them the chance to achieve this.

## 4. Don't rule by fear

Be fair and firm. Communicate the vision but also be clear on the boundaries. Fear in the workplace quells creativity, blocks enthusiasm and eradicates any willingness from people to follow you through good times and bad.



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## 5. Act in the way you would expect others to act

Understand and recognise your actions, mannerisms and communication techniques create culture, good and bad, in a business. As a leader, if you openly discuss clients, people or teams in a derogatory way, for example, expect this to become the accepted culture of the business going forwards. You set the agenda of what is acceptable behavior and the way you operate on a day-to-day basis is vitally important.

## 6. Admit your mistakes. Be human

It helps to be open and honest with your staff. If something has gone wrong, look in the mirror and ask yourself what you could have done better. It may be that you could have done things right, but the timing could have been wrong.

Learn from your mistakes and instill this in your team. It's better if you create a culture where your team feels they can admit a mistake to you before your customers see it. You've then got the chance to put it right.

Experience shows that people don't keep making mistakes if they feel they are learning from them. If you can't learn from mistakes don't expect to hold a leadership role for very long. Leaders who fail to admit mistakes and, furthermore, try to pass them on, create a culture of fear and blame that is highly destructive for both the people around them and the business.

## 7. Treat your team as grown ups

If you parent people, or overprotect them, you will create a scenario of overdependency. Assume people are intelligent and treat them as such. In an adult-to-adult relationship you will be able to hold people accountable and, equally, you will be in a positive position to offer constructive feedback, coach them and allow them to think for themselves.

Whole cultures built around autocratic and overly directive leaders are unhealthy and create cultures where individuals (and teams) wait to be told what to do, rather than using their initiative, and creative and professional talents to do a good job.

## 8. Give feedback... but at the right time

Be conscious of the fact that the moment you tell someone you are going to give them feedback, they will start to feel very sensitive. And, never give feedback before you have built a relationship with them and they have learned to trust and respect you.

If you wade in, it will be more destructive than constructive. Also, choose your language well, and avoid using the word BUT. “You were really great in that presentation today, BUT you could improve your delivery” should be “You were really great in that presentation today AND it would have been even better if you could have enhanced the delivery.”

Feedback shouldn't nit-pick, avoid commenting on things that irritate, and remember comments should always be relevant to the wider business, and be fair and balanced.

## 9. Don't hide from difficult situations

When you are faced with a difficult situation always do thorough research before tackling it. Find out what is not working and be straight with the person or team about what you find.

It is important not to dwell when tackling issues and certainly never hope they will just go away... often they just get worse.

As a leader you will require emotional resilience and fortitude in moments of pressure and don't be afraid to 'lift up the rug and see what is under it'. Be honest with yourself and honest with people about what is not working.

## 10. Understand what constitutes 'reward and recognition'

It is important to understand that reward and recognition isn't just about money. Often it is seen as the only way to offer a 'reward' but as a leader or manager you should understand that recognition and that feeling of being rewarded isn't just about take-home pay.

For many people, rewards come from a sense that they feel they are genuinely growing within an organisation and they are developing additional skills that will help them grow their career. Rewards come in many forms, whether it be additional training, a simple thank-you or offering them something unexpected, even a personal letter of praise delivered to their home.

As a leader, the most valuable reward you can give your team is your time. Be genuinely interested in them as people and what they want from life. This is not something you should give in place of money – people expect to be paid for what a job warrants – but teams and individuals will always remember the leader who cared and was interested.

It's a fact that a high percentage of people leave businesses because of poor management, it's not normally about money. **EBD**

### About Biddy Lloyd Jones

**Biddy** is an experienced development consultant with a distinguished career in her field. She has worked in the private, SME and public sector, with companies such as easyJet, BDO Stoy Hayward, London Underground, UK Atomic Energy Authority, NHS, Izodia, The Serpentine Gallery and Qatar Airways.

Biddy's area of expertise is enhancing the success of businesses through the effectiveness of its leaders, by coaching and developing individuals and teams responsible for its future success. She focuses on behavioural and cultural change, management development and dynamic working relationships.

She helps organisations to ensure they are 'fit for business' by forward focus on their vision, ensuring their processes and people are aligned for the future not simply the present. She assists them in spotting and developing high potential to retain the stars of the future.

Biddy is a qualified licensed Insights Practitioner and NLP Business Practitioner. She also has a certificate in counselling and is accredited to deliver Self Esteem Mentoring (SEM) and Power of Connection (PoC) courses through the Reality Based Learning programmes. She trains trainers and runs personal coaching programmes.