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10 Principles of Servant Leadership

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When it comes to leadership, there are several different management styles that you can use in the workplace. Servant leadership is a style that can help you build strong teams with members who are personally and professionally satisfied and who contribute high-quality work that helps your company succeed. In this article, we discuss how a servant leader manages, 10 principles of this leadership style and how to become one with examples.

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What is servant leadership?

Servant leadership is a management style in which you focus on your team's growth and well-being to put their needs first. The theory is that instead of employees serving the leader, the leader serves the employees. This type of manager believes that when their team members feel personally and professionally fulfilled, they produce high-quality work more efficiently and productively. Employee satisfaction and collaboration are important concepts in servant leadership. You can use this leadership style in any type of business but it is particularly popular within nonprofit organizations.

Servant leadership is important in business because it creates a work environment in which employees at all levels of your organization feel respected, appreciated and valued. Businesses that follow a servant leadership philosophy tend to have stronger work cultures with high employee morale and engagement.

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10 principles of servant leadership

Here are the 10 principles of effective servant leadership to help you become a better leader:

1. Listening

Effective servant leaders don't just speak but listen to what their team has to say. They give ample opportunity for all members to be heard, and then, listen carefully to what is being said and potentially what is not being said. They give others their full attention, notice coworkers' body language, avoid interrupting and give constructive feedback. By gathering observations and insight from all team members, they understand growth opportunities.

Related: [How To Improve Your Listening Skills](#)

2. Empathy

Effective servant leaders care about their team on a personal level. They understand that

when their team feels happy and fulfilled in their personal lives, it contributes to success in

their professional lives. They value others' perspectives and approach situations with an open mind. Because of this, servant leaders make it a priority to show team members they care about them and try to help them with personal issues when they can.

Read more: [How To Be Empathetic in the Workplace](#)

3. Healing

Effective servant leaders understand the importance of fixing problems before moving on to new goals and projects. For example, your team may have suffered a setback last quarter due to a team disagreement. To face the new challenges of this quarter, the team needs to be able to heal and come to an agreement first. Servant leaders make sure their team has the knowledge, support and resources to do their jobs effectively,

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4. Self-awareness

Effective servant leaders are aware of themselves and their teams. Self-awareness is the ability to look at yourself, think deeply about your emotions and behavior and consider how they affect the people around you. In being self-aware, servant leaders accept and grow from their own weaknesses. Just as important is that as leaders, they are aware of their team's individual strengths and weaknesses to help them grow and learn.

Read more: [The Importance of Self Awareness in Leadership](#)

5. Persuasion

Effective servant leaders guide and persuade team members. Where an authoritarian leader might tell team members what to do, a servant leader tells them why it's the best method or process. They seek to convince the team as a whole and build a consensus.

Related: [Persuasion Skills: Definition and Examples](#)

6. Conceptualization

Effective servant leaders can think beyond small tasks and communicate larger goals and why they are important to their teams. They help their team understand their roles and stay motivated while focusing on the company's long-term objectives and goals.

Read more: [How Conceptual Skills Can Make You a Better Leader](#)

7. Foresight

Effective servant leaders understand the importance of learning from past mistakes and successes and using lessons learned to productively evaluate present decisions. They identify what's happening now and understanding the consequences of their decisions and then help their team do the same. They use tools like [SWOT analysis](#) to evaluate their current situation and environment and [SMART goals](#) to plan ahead.

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8. Stewardship

Effective servant leaders acknowledge and understand the importance of their responsibilities. They protect and uphold the trust and confidence given them in their role and communicate this to their team. As a steward of their company's assets and goals, they work hard, arrive on time and are dependable. They lead by example, demonstrating the values and behaviors that they want to see in others.

Read more: [The Difference Between Accountability and Responsibility](#)

9. Commitment to growth

Effective servant leaders motivate their teams to grow. They are committed to helping their teams develop professionally. Servant leaders help their team members become leaders themselves by leading by example and providing their team with opportunities to grow and develop. They also find out what their employees' personal goals are and give them projects or more responsibilities to help them achieve those goals.

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10. Building community

Effective servant leaders encourage collaboration and engagement within their organizations. They value the opinions of everyone on their team and encourage them to share those opinions and to actively contribute to the team regularly. They provide opportunities for interaction through social events, workspace design or by even opening meetings with non-work-related conversations.

Read more: [How To Build a Team Environment](#)



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How to become a servant leader

Follow these steps to help you develop the skills of a servant leader:

1. Lead by example

A servant leader should always lead their team by example. As a servant leader, you should be willing to do anything that you ask your team to do. When your team members see you are willing to put in the same amount of work and effort they do, it helps motivate them to engage in their work and the organization.

Read more: [**8 Ways To Lead By Example in the Workplace**](#)

2. Show people why their job is important

When employees feel that what they do is important to the overall success of the organization, they usually feel more empowered and are willing to work harder to help it succeed. You should try to make sure your team members know why the work they do is important and how their work directly affects the company's overall success.

3. Encourage collaboration and employee engagement

Servant leaders are also great at making their teams feel their voices and opinions matter. When you take steps to encourage your team to work together and suggest ways to improve the organization, it shows them you care about what they have to say and appreciate their contributions. This can motivate your team to put forth their best effort to produce higher quality work.

Read more: [**How To Increase Collaboration in the Workplace**](#)

4. Help your team grow and develop

Servant leaders don't only focus on being great leaders themselves but are also interested in helping their team members become great leaders. You should encourage your team to participate in continuing education and employee development programs to help them expand their knowledge and skills.

You can encourage team members to take active leadership roles during group projects. If they know you are committed to their professional growth, they are more likely to listen to suggestions to help improve their work.

Related: [**11 Ways To Improve Employee Development**](#)

5. Care for your team members personally

Another thing you can do to become a servant leader is to show your team members you care about them on a personal level. Being empathetic and trying to offer advice when you can help create a more positive work-life balance for your employees and help them cope with personal stress better. When your team feels that they matter as individuals and not

just as employees, they are more likely to be happy about coming to work and producing quality work.

Read more: [How To Be Empathetic in the Workplace](#)

6. Ask for feedback

Finally, servant leaders should always be looking for how they can improve their own leadership and contribute to their team. Encourage your team members to provide feedback when they have an idea to improve workflow or help the company succeed. Try to make your team members feel empowered to come to you with suggestions at any time and regularly ask for feedback from those who don't naturally provide it.

Related: [How To Demonstrate Leadership Skills at Work](#)

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Servant leadership examples

Here are a few examples of servant leadership in the workplace:

1. Leading by example

A sales team supervisor shows they are a servant leader by always being willing to do the same work that they ask their team members to do. When their team is falling behind on meeting their sales goals, the supervisor contributes by joining them on the sales floor and helping them reach their sales targets.

2. Example of encouraging collaboration

The leader of a large call center encourages their customer service associates to voice their opinions on how the company can improve by holding regular small group sessions. During these sessions, associates are asked to share their opinions about how the company can improve their customer experience, make the job of the associate easier and what the management team can do to improve leadership.

3. Caring for your team personally example

A medical office wants to show their employees that they not only care about their patients but also their employee's overall health and well-being. The company implements an employee wellness program to encourage healthy habits by reimbursing gym memberships and rewarding gift cards to employees who get their annual wellness checkups or meet certain personal health goals like losing weight or smoking cessation.

Read more: [What Is a Corporate Wellness Program? \(And How To Create One\)](#)

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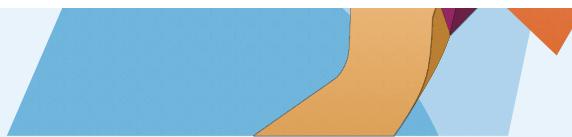
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