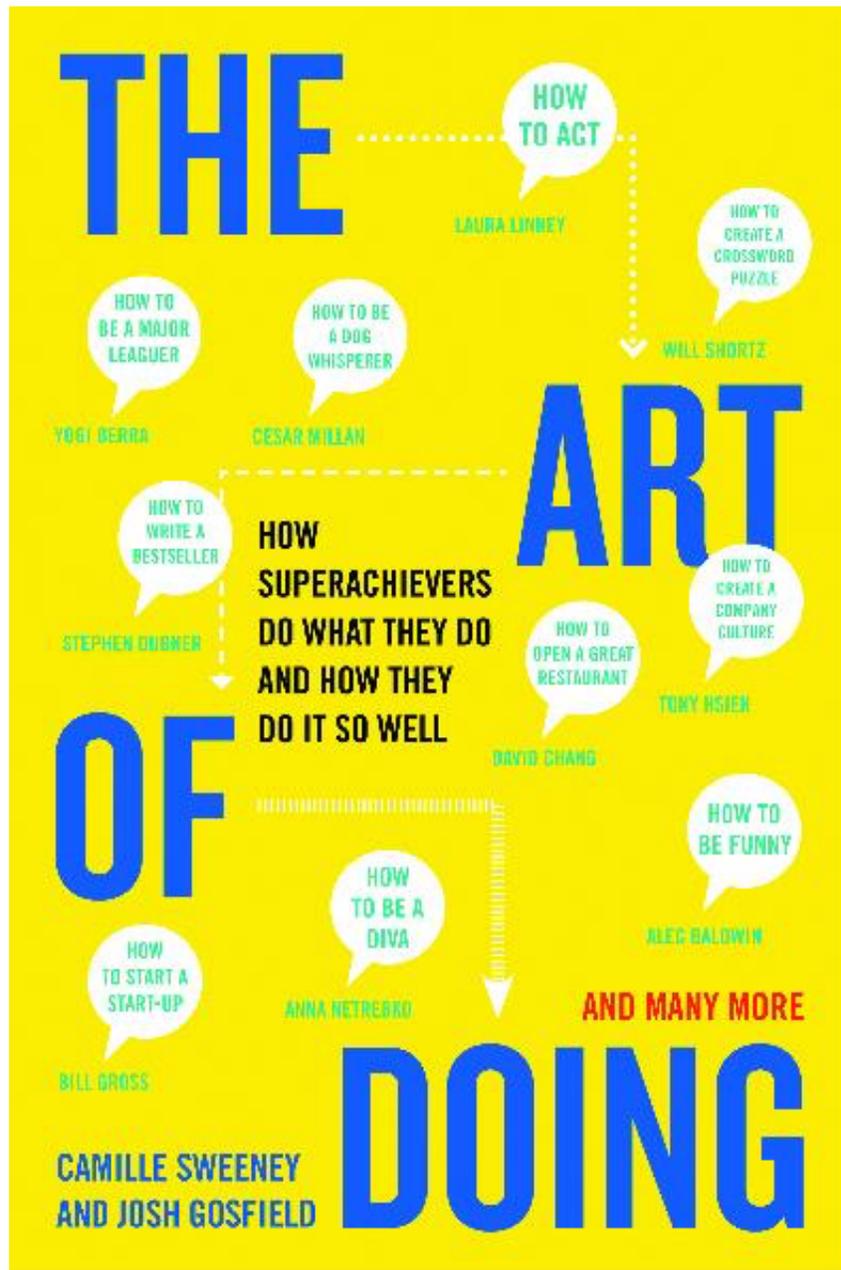


Top 10 Qualities That Make A Great Leader by Tanya Prive- Forbes

Tanya Prive Contributor





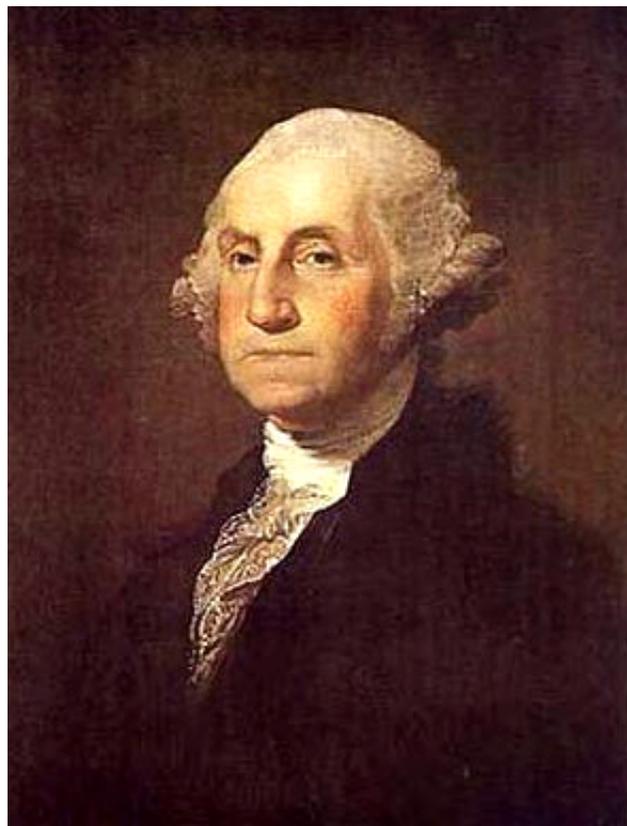
*For their new book *The Art of Doing*, Camille Sweeney and Josh Gosfield interviewed 36 super-achievers at the tops of their fields. They started seeing patterns emerge. These are the 10 most common practices of the highly successful.*

Having a great idea, and assembling a team to bring that concept to life is the first step in creating a successful business venture. While finding a new and unique idea is rare enough; the ability to successfully execute this idea is what

separates the dreamers from the entrepreneurs. However you see yourself, whatever your age may be, as soon as you make that exciting first hire, you have taken the first steps in becoming a powerful leader. When money is tight, stress levels are high, and the visions of instant success don't happen like you thought, it's easy to let those emotions get to you, and thereby your team. Take a breath, calm yourself down, and remind yourself of the leader you are and would like to become. Here are some key qualities that every good leader should possess, and learn to emphasize.

Honesty

Whatever ethical plane you hold yourself to, when you are responsible for a team of people, its important to raise the bar even higher. Your business and its employees are a reflection of yourself, and if you make honest and ethical behavior a key value, your team will follow suit.



As we do at Onevest, the crowdfunding platform for entrepreneurs and small

businesses I co-founded, try to make a list of values and core beliefs that both you and your brand represent, and post this in your office. Promote a healthy interoffice lifestyle, and encourage your team to live up to these standards. By emphasizing these standards, and displaying them yourself, you will hopefully influence the office environment into a friendly and helpful workspace.

Ability to Delegate

Finessing your brand vision is essential to creating an organized and efficient business, but if you don't learn to trust your team with that vision, you might never progress to the next stage. Its important to remember that trusting your team with your idea is a sign of strength, not weakness. Delegating tasks to the appropriate departments is one of the most important skills you can develop as your business grows. The emails and tasks will begin to pile up, and the more you stretch yourself thin, the lower the quality of your work will become, and the less you will produce.

The key to delegation is identifying the strengths of your team, and capitalizing on them. Find out what each team member enjoys doing most. Chances are if they find that task more enjoyable, they will likely put more thought and effort behind it. This will not only prove to your team that you trust and believe in them, but will also free up your time to focus on the higher level tasks, that should not be delegated. It's a fine balance, but one that will have a huge impact on the productivity of your business.

Communication

Knowing what you want accomplished may seem clear in your head, but if you try to explain it to someone else and are met with a blank expression, you know there is a problem. If this has been your experience, then you may want to focus on honing your communication skills. Being able to clearly and

succinctly describe what you want done is extremely important. If you can't relate your vision to your team, you won't all be working towards the same goal.

Training new members and creating a productive work environment all depend on healthy lines of communication. Whether that stems from an open door policy to your office, or making it a point to talk to your staff on a daily basis, making yourself available to discuss interoffice issues is vital. Your team will learn to trust and depend on you, and will be less hesitant to work harder.

Sense of Humor

If your website crashes, you lose that major client, or your funding dries up, guiding your team through the process without panicking is as challenging as it is important. Morale is linked to productivity, and it's your job as the team leader to instill a positive energy. That's where your sense of humor will finally pay off. Encourage your team to laugh at the mistakes instead of crying. If you are constantly learning to find the humor in the struggles, your work environment will become a happy and healthy space, where your employees look forward to working in, rather than dreading it. Make it a point to crack jokes with your team and encourage personal discussions of weekend plans and trips. It's these short breaks from the task at hand that help keep productivity levels high and morale even higher.



At Onevest, we place a huge emphasis on humor and a light atmosphere. Our office is dog friendly, and we really believe it is the small, light hearted moments in the day that help keep our work creative and fresh. One tradition that we like to do and brings the team closer is we plan a fun prank on all new employees, on their first day. It breaks the ice and immediately creates that sense of familiarity.

Confidence

There may be days where the future of your brand is worrisome and things aren't going according to plan. This is true with any business, large or small, and the most important thing is not to panic. Part of your job as a leader is to put out fires and maintain the team morale. Keep up your confidence level, and assure everyone that setbacks are natural and the important thing is to focus on the larger goal. As the leader, by staying calm and confident, you will help keep the team feeling the same. Remember, your team will take cues from you, so if you exude a level of calm damage control, your team will pick up on that feeling. The key objective is to keep everyone working and moving ahead.

Commitment

If you expect your team to work hard and produce quality content, you're going to need to lead by example. There is no greater motivation than seeing the boss down in the trenches working alongside everyone else, showing that hard work is being done on every level. By proving your commitment to the brand and your role, you will not only earn the respect of your team, but will also instill that same hardworking energy among your staff. It's important to show your commitment not only to the work at hand, but also to your promises. If you pledged to host a holiday party, or uphold summer Fridays, keep your word. You want to create a reputation for not just working hard,

but also be known as a fair leader. Once you have gained the respect of your team, they are more likely to deliver the peak amount of quality work possible.

Positive Attitude

You want to keep your team motivated towards the continued success of the company, and keep the energy levels up. Whether that means providing snacks, coffee, relationship advice, or even just an occasional beer in the office, remember that everyone on your team is a person. Keep the office mood a fine balance between productivity and playfulness.

If your team is feeling happy and upbeat, chances are they won't mind staying that extra hour to finish a report, or devoting their best work to the brand.

Creativity

Some decisions will not always be so clear-cut. You may be forced at times to deviate from your set course and make an on the fly decision. This is where your creativity will prove to be vital. It is during these critical situations that your team will look to you for guidance and you may be forced to make a quick decision. As a leader, its important to learn to think outside the box and to choose which of two bad choices is the best option. Don't immediately choose the first or easiest possibility; sometimes its best to give these issues some thought, and even turn to your team for guidance. By utilizing all possible options before making a rash decision, you can typically reach the end conclusion you were aiming for.

Intuition

When leading a team through uncharted waters, there is no roadmap on what to do. Everything is uncertain, and the higher the risk, the higher the

pressure. That is where your natural intuition has to kick in. Guiding your team through the process of your day-to-day tasks can be honed down to a science. But when something unexpected occurs, or you are thrown into a new scenario, your team will look to you for guidance. Drawing on past experience is a good reflex, as is reaching out to your mentors for support. Eventually though, the tough decisions will be up to you to decide and you will need to depend on your gut instinct for answers. Learning to trust yourself is as important as your team learning to trust you.

Ability to Inspire

Creating a business often involves a bit of forecasting. Especially in the beginning stages of a startup, inspiring your team to see the vision of the successes to come is vital. Make your team feel invested in the accomplishments of the company. Whether everyone owns a piece of equity, or you operate on a bonus system, generating enthusiasm for the hard work you are all putting in is so important. Being able to inspire your team is great for focusing on the future goals, but it is also important for the current issues. When you are all mired deep in work, morale is low, and energy levels are fading, recognize that everyone needs a break now and then. Acknowledge the work that everyone has dedicated and commend the team on each of their efforts. It is your job to keep spirits up, and that begins with an appreciation for the hard work.

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