

The most important 'P' word — **people**

By Monica Wofford

Persistence, perseverance, and purpose. These three "P" words are important to leaders, but not as important as a fourth "P" word — people.

Leading is not managing. It is about people. Managing is about controlling. And as almost everyone knows, it is not possible to control people.

You manage things; you lead people. Leading is about people and inspiring them to do what needs to be done. Effective managers are good leaders.

So, how is leadership done? How do you inspire quality

work that is perhaps even more than you asked for?

The answer is simple: Acknowledge, recognize, and respect the unique nature and value of each of the people with whom you work. See each person's uniqueness and treat him according to who he is. See her value and respect her worth to the team.

The answer to leadership is simple, but its implementation is not easy.

- **Be interested in 'growing' your staff.** And get involved in their growth as much as they are.

Growth can be personal or professional. Some managers/business owners might argue, "Why should I care about the growth of my employees? Isn't it enough I give them a paycheck?"

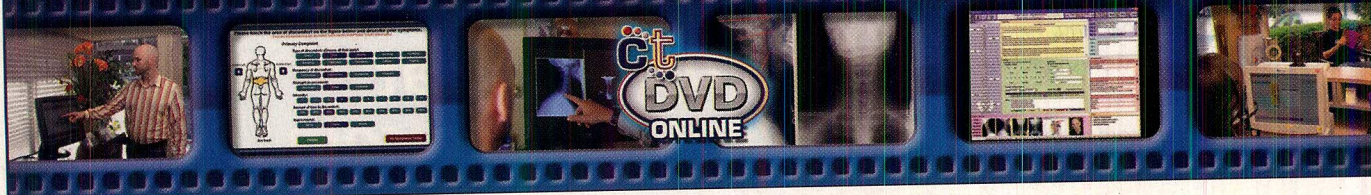
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There is a large gap between “enough” and “great.” Managing is good enough; leading is great. And leaders take an active interest in developing their employees.

However you take interest in your employees’ growth, genuine interest will usually gain you respect, dedication, and often loyalty. More importantly, it will develop a more productive, fulfilled, and effective direct report.

If in the past you have displayed little or no interest in the growth of the employees on your team, then start small. If you are not truly interested in developing your employees, be aware that missing this step in your leadership journey may cause you to stumble, or even fail as a leader.

• **Genuinely care about your staff.** Politicians make strangers feel like close friends. Leaders make employees feel like friends.

Treat employees with the same interest you would a close friend on a professional level.

Make your employees feel as through you care about who they are, and where they want to go. Give them guidelines, parameters, and tools for the journey. Remember the adage: “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” Insincerity, though, is easy to detect, and many people react badly to it. On the other hand, if you can “fake it until you make it,” you may find employees will positively reinforce your behavior and showing you care will become easier for you.

• **Learn to forgive graciously.** The people you work with and lead will make mistakes. Mistakes are made in varying degrees of consequences, yet most can and should be forgiven.

Give your employees guidelines, instructions, rules, and policies. Without knowledge of these things,

they will make mistakes. And even if they have knowledge of them, they may accidentally err.

If you forgive their mistakes, the chances are good they will forgive yours. ☺



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