

- Title:** **Characteristics of Exemplary Leaders**
- Objective:** **Identify key leadership characteristics that are significant on the road to culture change.**
- Directions:**
1. Select the four qualities you most look for, respect, and admire in a leader—someone whose directions you would willingly follow.
 2. Put them in rank order (1 through 4) with #1 representing your top choice.
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Ambitious

Broad-Minded

Caring

Competent

Cooperative

Courageous

Dependable

Determined

Fair-Minded

Forward-Looking

Honest

Imaginative

Independent

Inspiring

Intelligent

Loyal

Mature

Self-Controlled

Straightforward

Supportive

Title: **Five Fundamental Characteristics of Exemplary Leaders**

From the: Leadership Challenge

By: Kouzes and Posner

“Leadership isn’t the private reserve of a few charismatic men and women. It’s a process ordinary people use when they’re bringing forth the best from others. Liberate the leader in everyone, and extraordinary things happen.”

I. Instructions: **For your assigned quality:**

- Discuss how and why this quality is essential in any change process, especially culture change. Allow ample time for in-depth discussion and for each person at the table to contribute.
- Discuss what has to happen for leaders to act in this way. Think of ways of implementing this characteristic on a day-to-day basis. Once again, allow ample time for in-depth discussion and for each person to contribute.

1. CHALLENGE THE PROCESS

2. INSPIRE A VISION

3. ENABLE OTHERS TO ACT

4. MODEL THE WAY

5. ENCOURAGE THE HEART

According to the Kouzes and Posner survey, most people follow leaders who are:

- ▲ Honest
- ▲ Forward-looking
- ▲ Inspiring
- ▲ Competent

Honesty 90%

- ▲ Truthful, ethical, principled, has integrity
- ▲ Measured by consistency between words and actions
- ▲ Has clear beliefs which he or she stands by

Forward-looking 75%

- ▲ Clarity of purpose and direction, ability to look ahead, envision a future
- ▲ Not magical thinking; down-to-earth

Being Inspiring 68%

- ▲ Enthusiastic, energetic, positive about the future, confident
- ▲ Enlist people to shared vision

Being competent 63%

- ▲ Capable, effective, knows the business
- ▲ Functional competence necessary but not sufficient; “value-added competence”
- ▲ Type of competency required varies with leader’s position and the condition of the organization

Title: **Leadership**

Goal:

1. To give participants an opportunity to examine their own leadership qualities.
2. To understand that leadership is a skill that we sharpen and hone throughout our lives.
3. To have a direct experience of participatory leadership through a team exploration of the topic.

Description: **Overview:** Using Kouzes and Posner, we will explore how the five fundamental characteristics of exemplary leaders help us through the culture change journey. These five exemplary practices are:

1. Challenging the Process
2. Inspiring a Vision
3. Enabling Others to Act
4. Modeling the Way
5. Encouraging the Heart

Kouzes and Posner describe a way of bringing out the best in others and allowing extraordinary things to happen. Leaders are often perceived as solitary extraordinary figures. Kouzes and Posner, through decades of research, consistently found that the best leaders are those who bring out the extraordinariness of others. In essence, they build leadership capacity in those around them.

Directions:

- Have participants review the worksheet listing 20 qualities of leaders and rank in order the top four qualities that they most look for and admire in a leader and whose direction they would willingly follow. Stress the word “*willing*.”
- After they have completed their own ranking, ask them to compare their answers with each other at their table, talk about why they each chose their answers, and to collectively agree to four choices.
- Have an open discussion where people from each table talk about what they chose, and why.

There is no right or wrong answer. The purpose of this is to generate thinking about leadership qualities and to learn from each other and our own experiences what qualities we think are important in leaders.

In Kouzes and Posner's surveys of thousands of leaders over three decades, they found that most people follow leaders who are:

- Honest
- Forward-looking
- Inspiring
- Competent

Open the discussion as to why participants feel that these qualities would consistently rank at the top. Bring out points from the resource material, which provides more information about what these top-ranked characteristics mean to people. Check in with the group to see how this information fits with their own experience.

Review five characteristics of exemplary leaders:

1. Challenging the Process
2. Inspiring a Vision
3. Enabling Others to Act
4. Modeling the Way
5. Encouraging the Heart

Assign one characteristic to each table. Ask groups to discuss how their assigned quality is essential in any change process, especially culture change. Depending on the size of the room, you may have more than one table working on a topic.

Discussion:

Closing Points:

You can't lead alone. You can't make change alone. Good leadership creates good leadership. Change is hard. In order for change to be sustainable, a good leader builds the organization's capacity to take on the change by building leadership qualities in every level of the organization, among all who will be involved in and affected by a change.