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The issue of being a good leader and developing your people to be good leaders is likely at the forefront of your mind every day. For this week's Food for Thought, I am forwarding you some good "common sense" skills on leadership that I ran across. They are worth reviewing and taking stock of. If any of this piques your interest, I wanted to remind you that P Squared has one of the best co-op based leadership training programs that encompasses all of these concepts.

Do You Possess the Qualities of a Good Leader?

Source: *AllBusiness.com*

Almost everybody thinks they're a good leader. But according to a Gallup Poll, 25 percent of U.S. employees would fire their bosses if they could. That means at least one in four of your supervisors, managers – your leaders - are failing.

But that number's not surprising when you consider how few leaders receive any kind of formal management training. If you're curious about how your people stack up, ask them to determine how many of the following practices they follow and how many they need to incorporate into their management style. It's never too late to learn.

1. **Communicate the big picture.** If you want your employees to work hard and be committed to your business, you've got to keep them in the loop. Open communication helps foster loyalty and gives employees a sense of pride. It helps them understand how their work contributes to the company's success. Set up a recurring meeting (some companies call them "all hands" or "town hall" meetings) to inform your employees about new business developments and answer any questions.
2. **Delegate work and responsibilities.** Now that you're a leader, share your workload with them. Delegate projects according to people's strengths and weaknesses, and let employees develop their own good work habits and leadership skills. Control freaks will struggle with this initially. Before you take on a project, try to get in the habit of asking yourself if one of your employees can handle it instead.
3. **Help employees set goals.** Setting deadlines and goals helps keep employees focused, busy and motivates them to do their work. Talk to each of your employees about the company's goals, and work with them to set individual goals directly linked to your business's mission. Make sure each employee understands their professional growth path in the company.
4. **Recognize problems.** It's impossible to know about personality conflicts, lagging productivity or other problems in the office if you've got your head in the sand. Stay tuned in to your employees so you can be proactive and resolve situations before they escalate. If you notice a change in an employee's work habits or attitude, try to get to the root of the problem before it starts affecting the rest of your group.
5. **Reward employees.** Everybody appreciates raises and bonuses, but monetary rewards aren't the only way to thank employees for a job well done. In fact the easiest way to recognize a worker's contribution — by simply saying "thank you" — is often the most overlooked. Whether you do it with words, money, an employee-of-

the-month program or other incentives, make sure your employees know you value their efforts and contributions.

6. **Be a mentor.** As a leader, one of the greatest gifts you can give your employees is sharing your knowledge and experience. Showing your employees firsthand how you close a deal, forecast sales or solve a problem is far more effective than just talking them through it.
7. **Provide feedback.** Employees need feedback about their performance to improve their skills and grow professionally. Set up a formal review program and give performance appraisals once or twice a year. If you set goals and give performance reviews in the same meeting, make sure you spend equal time addressing past performance and future goals.
8. **Take the time to be a leader.** During busy times when work's piling up, don't forget to be a leader. Employees depend on your strength and guidance — especially when they're stressed out or faced with new projects that require your time and input. Give employees your undivided attention when they want to talk. If you can't do that in your office, head out to a neighborhood café and chat over a cup of coffee.

Many companies are now realizing that through promotion from within - making “super workers” into supervisors – they have a management team without any formal training. You guarantee their success by providing valuable training to develop your managers and supervisors leadership skills.