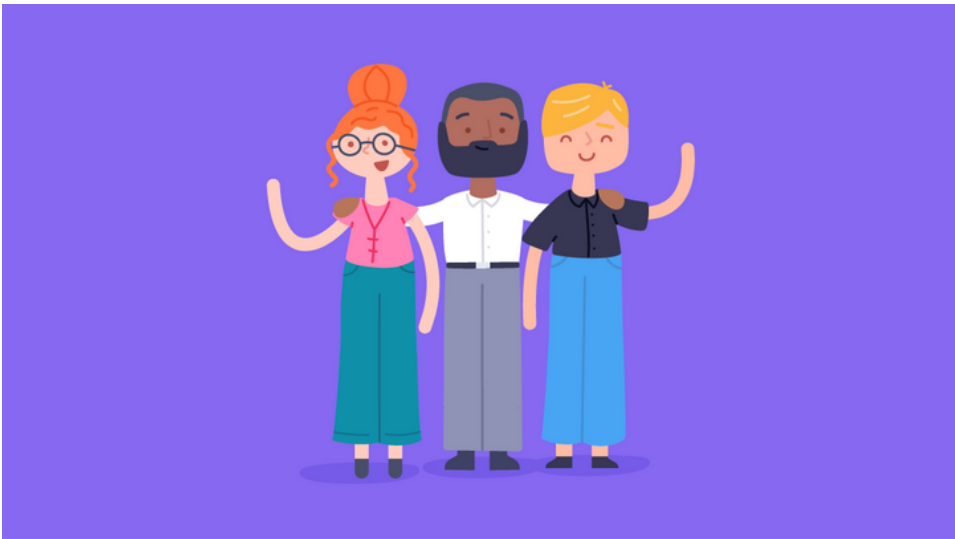teamwork.(/)

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Leadership and teamwork: 10 ways leaders can help their teams

Posted By:Deirdre Scully (/blog/author/deirdre_scully/)/ July 26th, 2019

> *"Ultimately, leadership is not about glorious crowning acts. It's about keeping your team focused on a goal and motivated to do their best to achieve it, especially when the stakes are high and the consequences really matter. It is about laying the groundwork for others' success, and then standing back and letting them shine."*

— Chris Hadfield, astronaut and former Commander of the International Space Station*

What makes a great leader?

When Chris Hadfield was commanding the International Space Station, he learned that it's not about seeking out individual greatness to make yourself look good.

Instead, he found that excellent leadership (https://marketsplash.com/leadership-lessons/) is about building up the people around you: trusting them, empowering them, and ultimately, enabling them to contribute their expertise so that the team can become more than the sum of its parts.

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The importance of teamwork and leadership

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teamwork.(ⁱ)

So why are teamwork and leadership important? Together they provide clarity for your team and have a direct impact on the vision of the company.

But what does that look like in practice? What kind of actions can you take every day to help your team succeed?

Here are ten ways to help your team do better.

1. Foster open and honest communication

Create an environment where openness and honesty in all aspects of communication are encouraged. Ask people to share their views and talk about the obstacles in their way. Ask for — and listen to — feedback. Most of all, ensure your team members have a clear path to your door if they need it.

Related: Try these 5 quick wins to make your team more transparent. (https://www.teamwork.com/blog/how-to-encourage-your-team-to-speak-up/)

2. Create collaborative goals

At the outset, goals should be clearly set and defined. Getting this right at the start may take a little extra time and planning, but it pays major dividends. For the best outcomes, the team needs to buy into the goals (so plan them together), everyone involved needs to be aligned on what success looks like (so outline detailed KPIs (https://www.founderjar.com/key-performance-indicator-kpi/) right at the beginning), and leaders need to acknowledge and support the team throughout the process (so check in frequently and offer guidance where needed).

Related: Set your goals the right way with this cheat sheet (https://www.teamwork.com/blog/how-to-hit-your-individual-and-team-goals-in-2019/), or read our ebook (https://www.teamwork.com/resources/).

3. Celebrate their success

Good job team! Never forget to laud good ideas or targets met. Share your team's successes with the company at large and champion them to leadership. For big wins, you can even organize a lunch or dinner where every member of the team can share in the achievement. However, you choose to mark the moment, do it together.

Related: How to express gratitude to your team (https://www.teamwork.com/blog/how-to-express-gratitude-to-your-team-and-build-a-culture-of-appreciation/)

4. Allow team members to problem solve

Instead of imposing solutions, encourage team members to brainstorm and come up with their own suggestions. By giving your team space (https://www.teamwork.com/spaces/) to find the right solution and propose their ideas, you can empower them to think creatively, develop their confidence, and foster a sense of ownership.

Related: Why you need to trust your team. (https://www.teamwork.com/blog/)

5. Provide adequate resources and training

A great leader doesn't just help their team members to do their current job. They help them to identify room for advancement, so they can develop their skills — and progress their careers. Support your team by giving them the resources they need to excel and reach the next level.

Related: More tips on how you can retain your best talent. (https://www.teamwork.com/blog/3-reasons-top-talent-leave-agency-jobs/)

6. Keep yourself accountable

In your time as a leader, things won't always go perfectly smoothly. You might even make a few bad calls. (Hey, you're only human.) When things go wrong — when a project goes off track, when the scope (https://www.teamwork.com/blog/project-scope-template/) suddenly changes, when the unexpected happens — you need to face it head-on. Take responsibility and work together with your team to address the issues and get back on target.

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7. Keep your eye on the big picture

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As a leader, you need to strike a balance between zooming in on the details and zooming out to see the big picture. In other words, you need to ensure your team is accomplishing the day-to-day tasks without losing sight of the overarching goals you're working towards, and how you're contributing. It's a balancing act, but it's one that any great leader needs to learn how to do.

8. Show some empathy

According to inspirational leadership author Simon Sinek, empathy "is the most important instrument in a leader's toolbox." Simply asking, "Is everything OK?" demonstrates you care about the team member and helps build relationships (https://www.teamwork.com/blog/10-ways-strengthen-team-relationships/).

Related: *More lessons we've learned about working with people.* (https://www.teamwork.com/blog/everything-i-learned-about-working-with-people-when-i-went-from-developer-to-product-lead/)
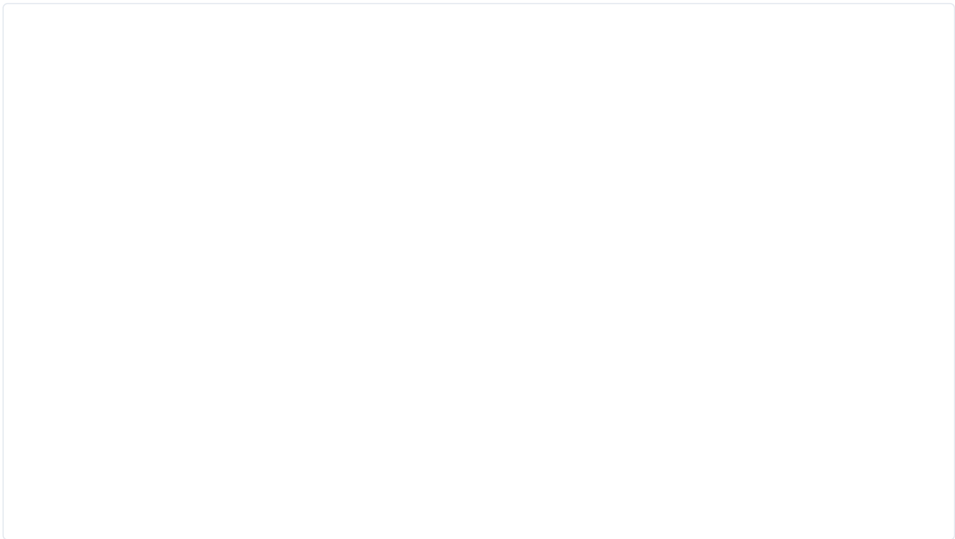
9. Build strong one-on-one relationships

One-on-one meetings are a great way for a team leader to build relationships. They also allow each team member to put their case forward for personal improvement, or raise issues that are blocking them from performing better. Listen to what your team members have to say, and do your best to support them.

Related: *How to turn tough feedback into actionable advice* (https://www.teamwork.com/blog/how-to-give-tough-feedback-to-your-team/) *(and* build relationships with your team even when you're remote (https://www.teamwork.com/blog/the-3-things-you-need-for-successful-remote-work/)).

10. Build respect

Great leaders demonstrate respect for team members in a number of ways, particularly by being engaged with the team and working with them. They're not afraid to admit mistakes or take risks. They understand that respect is earned, through empathy, compassion, and trust.

Resources to build high-performance teams

Related resources

- Create a personalized Gantt chart (https://www.teamwork.com/project-management-software/gantt-chart/)
- Customizable resource management solutions (https://www.teamwork.com/solutions/resource-management/)
- Team management software (https://www.teamwork.com/)
- Tailored project collaboration software (https://www.teamwork.com/solutions/project-collaboration/)
- Project time tracking software (https://www.teamwork.com/project-management-software/project-time-tracking-software/)

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