Big Data builds Stellar Leaders

By Chris Pehura

What was your first team like? The first corporate team I was on was a team of leaders. Each leader had a different area of expertise. When expertise was needed the appropriate leader led and the rest of us followed. It was drilled into each of us... to be good leaders we must also be great followers.

But when you think about it, leader or not, we all follow somebody. Becoming stellar leaders require us to model ourselves after our favorite leaders. But in doing so we have to be cautious with how we fit ourselves into our leaders' molds. Leadership is an old concept with a lot of historic baggage that just doesn't apply in today's knowledge economy. To be stellar leaders we need to start with an unbiased foundation and then build ourselves up from there. Here are the things we need to understand and do to mold ourselves into being stellar leaders.

Mold 1 - Good leaders and good managers are different. Good leaders see that everything centers on people.

The organization, the processes, the culture is all there to support people to be successful. Good managers, on the other hand, see that everything centers on the organization. People are there to support the organization, the processes, and the culture so the organization is successful. Because leaders and managers have flipped priorities, it's very difficult to be both a good leader and a good manager... at the same time. To be stellar leaders we must accept that leadership and management, though overlapping, are two very different things.

Mold 2 - Good leaders adopt observable behaviors. To be good leaders we cannot alter our traits or personalities. Not only does it take a lot of work, people can sense it. They feel something isn't right with us, that we're hiding something from them. This erodes their trust in us. This dismantles their respect for us. Anyway, it's much easier and much safer for us to learn new behaviors. And we learn new behaviors by practicing them at the right time to "slightly bend" our personalities so we fit much better within the leadership mold. There is a right time to partner, a right time to coach, a right time to empower, a right time to build the vision, and the right time to be the captain of the ship. And we must always be aware of our timing, our personality, and the specific behaviors we're practicing. These behaviors must be observable so they can be easily remembered and adopted by those around us. We don't teach people to be stellar leaders. We show people we're stellar leaders.

Mold 3 - Good leaders look "pretty". How we walk, how we talk, how we stand, and how we sit tells everyone we're leaders.

We have our chests out, shoulders back, a wider stance with our chins slightly raised just enough that we demonstrate our confidence and just low enough to show we're humble. Regular exercise with a good diet and restful sleeps amplify our leadership presence. To show we're stellar leaders we must present ourselves as stellar leaders.

Mold 4 - Good leaders are credible. What we talk about, our actions, our decisions, our ideas, our words, our emotions, our expertise... these all demonstrate we're credible, informed, and people of good character. We increase our credibility by being seen with and working with credible people. We increase our credibility further when we have a plan that is straightforward, insightful, and memorable. We increase our credibility even further when everyone knows the plan, where we fit, where're we're going, and how much steam we need to get there. To show we're stellar leaders we must always have a plan that is motivating.

Mold 5 - Good leaders build great leaders using Big Data. Good leaders mentor and support followers to be great leaders. And we do this through formal leadership-development programs. Programs that are driven by Big Data that measure and track the observable behaviors that all our leaders must adopt and improve on to best support our culture, organization, and people. Programs that are constantly course-corrected based on our behavioral measurements, cultural elements, organizational events and market forces. Programs that promote our leaders to be caring, credible, capable, and strong communicators. Programs

with the authority to give us the capacity we need to succeed as stellar leaders.

Before diving deep into leadership, deep into the torrents of books, articles, and training, we must first set the molds for the kind of leaders we want to be, then constantly practice being those leaders. Once we get the hang of it, we'll have the foundation to become the stellar leaders we need to be.

About the Author

Chris Pehura

Data-centric Business Management

Chris is a management consultant with a data emphasis helping Fortune 100/1000 companies strategically evolve and reinvent their businesses to maximize their revenue growth. Through realignment, to overhauls, to rebuilding things from the top down and ground up, he integrates and solidifies leaders, strategies, and solutions into all aspects of the organization. As practice director for C-SUITE DATA, a Canadian based consulting firm specializing in data and Big Data, Chris serves as a coach, trainer, and the voice for how data is the new capital that drives, multiplies, and maximizes revenue growth.

where leaders, business management, and data converge