

# TEN LEADERSHIP COMMITMENTS<sup>1</sup>

## **CHALLENGE THE PROCESS**

1. Search out challenging opportunities to change, grow, innovate and improve.
  - Question the status quo.
  - Ask customers what they like and don't like
  - Go out and find something that is broken.
  - Ask your staff what could be/needs to be changed.
  - Use MBWA (management by wandering around).
  - Break free of your routines.
  - Treat every new assignment as a turnaround, even if it isn't.
  - Benchmark: Visit other organizations and see what you can learn from them.
  - Become a futurist; look for the "Megatrends," and anticipate the need for change.
  - Break free of your paradigms.
2. Experiment, take risks, and learn from the accompanying mistakes
  - Institutionalize processes for collecting innovative ideas.
  - Put idea gathering on your own agenda.
  - Set up little experiments or pilot projects.
  - Renew your teams.
  - Reward your risk takers.
  - Act on your intuition; try out your hunches.
  - Analyze every failure, as well as every success.
  - Do a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats)
  - Model risk taking.
  - Foster hardiness (a positive outlook toward change).
  - Use creativity techniques, such as brainstorming and nominal group technique.

## **INSPIRE A SHARED VISION**

3. Envision an uplifting and ennobling future
  - Think first about what you and your staff value in your past.
  - Ask your staff what they want to accomplish, what they value, what would make them proud, what would indicate quality or excellence.
  - Determine what you really want to accomplish.
  - Use outcome chaining to identify what's really important: Keep asking "Why?" regarding your goals until you determine the values underlying your goals
  - Write a short essay about the major contribution you hope to make.
  - Write a short statement of your vision for your group.
  - Write an epitaph to yourself.
  - Test your assumptions; ask others to react to them.
  - Use mental rehearsal; visualize yourself accomplishing your goal.
4. Enlist others in a common vision, by appealing to their values, interests, hopes, and dreams.
  - Identify your constituents; determine whom you want and need to enlist.
  - Find the common ground: their goals, dreams, and interests that can be met.
  - Improve your presentations skills.
  - Write a five-minute stump speech and be prepared to deliver it.
  - Make your vision statements inspiring.
  - Refer to your vision as a rationale for decisions.
  - Be positive and optimistic.
  - Remain genuine, sincere.

## **ENABLE OTHERS TO ACT**

5. Foster collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and building trust.
  - Create a climate of trust.
  - Always say **we** rather than "I": share the credit.
  - Create interactions for people who must collaborate.
  - Focus on gains, not losses.
  - Create opportunities for group achievements, rewards, and recognition.
  - Share the credit for individual accomplishments.
  - Involve people in planning and problem solving.

- Be a risk taker when it comes to trusting others.

6. Strengthen others by sharing information and power, and by increasing their discretion and visibility.

- Get to know your people.
- Use your power in the service of others.
- Enlarge people's sphere of influence.
- Keep people informed.
- Make connections for others.
- Make heroes of people.
- Foster expectations of success and extraordinary achievement.

### **MODEL THE WAY**

7. Set an example by acting in ways consistent with your values.

- Write a tribute to yourself to identify your central values.
- Write your leadership philosophy or guiding principles.
- Write a tribute to your organization to identify its central values.
- Communicate your values by the way you spend time, the questions you ask, how you react to crises, and what you reward.
- Publish or display your leadership philosophy and organizational tribute.
- Audit your actions and compare them to your values.
- Establish routines and systems that reinforce central values.
- Be dramatic, to draw attention to central values and priorities.
- Be a storyteller, to communicate central values.
- Find teachable moments.
- Be emotional, to show you care.
- Use symbols to communicate your values.

8. Plan small wins that promote consistent progress and build commitment.

- Create a detailed plan that shows the path to your vision.
- Create a model that demonstrates your vision.
- Take one hop at a time; make visible, incremental steps toward your vision.
- Communicate progress toward the vision.
- Create opportunities for success.
- Reduce the cost of saying yes; remove negative consequences.
- Give people choices and make choices highly visible.

### **ENCOURAGE THE HEART**

9. Recognize individual contributions to the success of every project.

- Develop high, measurable performance standards.
- Install a formal, systematic process for rewarding performance.
- Give informal, spontaneous rewards generously.
- Be creative about rewards.
- Let others help design the reward systems.
- Make recognition public.
- Go out and find people who are doing things right.
- Coach and encourage.

10. Celebrate team accomplishments regularly.

- Schedule celebrations.
- Celebrate progress, not just end results.
- Be a cheerleader in your own way.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Kouzes, J. M. and Posner, B. Z. (1987). *The leadership challenge: How to get extraordinary things done in organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.