

How Will You Be Known?

Building Your Leadership Legacy



By Michelle Braden

An



Leadership Resource

INTRODUCTION

Most leaders don't think about their leadership legacy. They think a legacy is something for older people or something you leave when you die. A Legacy, however, is something more. A true Legacy is a living thing that is a gift to both the giver and recipient and as it is passed on, it adds to the leader's reputation. It is possible a legacy is not "formally" recognized until after a person retires; however, just as a person begins building their financial legacy from the day they begin their career, so a leader begins building their leadership legacy the day you begin leading. This means leaders who desire a meaningful legacy need to be proactive.

Leaders cannot afford to overlook the importance of thoughtfully and authentically creating their legacy now.

It is important that leaders identify the legacy they want to build. A person would not decide to build a home and just start building, randomly and wherever. The person would want their home to be in the right location, secure, safe, built with quality materials, a strong foundation... something that will outlast them...something that can be passed down and enjoyed by their children as well as their children. If a person would take so much thoughtful care to build a home, shouldn't leaders take equal amounts of care to build their leadership legacy?

1

LEGACY LEADERS ARE AUTHENTIC LEADERS

Authentic leaders are those that consistently align their values and passions with their actions. There are also specific characteristics found in leaders who build a strong legacy.

- Communicate effectively
- Value the differences in people
- Have strong interpersonal skills
- Deal with complex problems
- Develop and inspire others
- Hungry to learn
- Agile
- Manage change successfully
- Visionary
- Introspective (self aware and self managed)
- Trustworthy
- Consistent
- Know their values
- Are authentic
- Recover after setback and failure



2

Authentic Leadership and Employee Engagement

It is crucial for leaders to identify to identify the alignment of their behavior and values. This alignment will effect a leader's ability to lead authentically. Leadership legacy is not something that should be "hoped for". Legacy is purposefully created and that legacy that will ultimately inspire, engage, and invigorate teams and orgainizations.

When an employee is engaged they are consistently enthusiastic about their work and show an increased amount of commitment. In turn, fostering employee engagement, through cultivating your leadership legacy, will quickly translate into "business outcomes essential to an organization's financial success, such as productivity, profitability and customer engagement."¹

Employee Engagement - an individual's involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work²

To investigate this phenomenon, Gallup Research created what is known as **The Gallup Q¹²**. This research clarified the differences between engaged employees and disengaged employees. It also identified what employees need from their leaders in order to be more engaged to do their jobs well every day.

With items ranging from “I know what is expected from me at work” to “In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress”, the **Q¹²** is designed to quantify an employee's level of satisfaction, expectations, and purpose. In terms of developing your leadership legacy, the most important item on the **Q¹²** is “There is someone at work who encourages my development”³. By creating a learning environment and by encouraging personal growth and enrichment, legacy leaders are setting up their organizations, and their team members, for success³.

3 areas of employee engagement:

- **Engaged employees** work with passion and feel a profound connection to their company. They drive innovation and move the organization forward.
- **Not-Engaged employees** are essentially “checked out.” They are sleepwalking through their workday. They are putting in time, but not enough energy or passion into their work.
- **Actively Disengaged employees** aren't just unhappy at work; they're busy acting out their unhappiness. Every day, these workers undermine what their engaged co-workers accomplish.

What the numbers say⁴:



From a sample size of 80844 US adults.

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The Bottom Line

Teams that were actively engaged compared to actively disengaged had⁵:

- 41% **LESS** absenteeism
- 59% **LESS** turnover
- 70% **LESS** safety incidents

And

- 17% **MORE** productivity
- 20% **MORE** sales
- 21% **MORE** profitability

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Conclusion

Communicating clearly, practicing Emotional Intelligence (self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness and relationship management) and consistency are crucial to developing your leadership legacy. A leader's ability to respond authentically is the keystone in their legacy plan. This plan will solidify and validate your leadership legacy in order to engage your teams. The more a leader's teams clearly understand them, are brought into the vision and know the leader's inner inner core, the more the more engaged they will be. If they agree and are brought into the mission and values, their engagement is increased and a leader's legacy is more clear. On the other hand, if teammates disagree with a leader's inner workings, it is more of a challenge to actively and genuinely show up at the table and participate authentically. When leaders intentionally practice their leadership legacy, they will bear the fruits that productivity and engagement have to offer.

Legacy leaders lead authentically and build engaged employees. They are aware when their team members begin to lose connection and work diligently to pull them back in. Legacy leaders are self aware of their own waning from engagement and use their support network to pull them back into alignment.

The bottom line is, leaders cannot afford to overlook the importance of thoughtfully and authentically creating their legacy now (not someday). They must recognize the importance and value of taking the necessary time to identify, create, and live into their legacy. No one ended up "successful" by accident; neither will your legacy happen by accident.

References

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Michelle has coached and trained leaders and teams for over 20 years. She is the founder of the Authentic Leadership Summit, the Emerging Executive Leadership Program and has served as a panelist for the World Coaching Conference. Michelle is a certified coach with ACC credentials from the International Coaching Federation and the author of three leadership books: *Stand Out*, *Dare to Make a Difference*, and *Bottom Line*. She is also a long-term thought-leadership contributor to several blogs/publications including: *Thought Leaders*, *Lead Change* and *Leadership Courseware*.

Michelle is committed to partnering with leaders to identify their motivators, drivers, values and principles that increase their awareness of who they are and how they want to be known as a leader. She works with leaders to uncover both productive and challenging behaviors that may be enhancing their leadership or holding them back from being the leaders they want to be. Ultimately, leaders are motivated to set and achieve their highest goals.



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