

RECRUITING AND TRAINING LEADERS

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW RIGHT NOW



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INTRODUCTION

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rganisational excellence often emanates from talented leaders. Obviously, there are a variety of approaches and concepts surrounding what actually constitutes an effective leader.

Depending on your niche or industry we will probably agree that a leader must have a good grasp of the situation and employ the most appropriate style of leadership. However, in my experience as a recruiter in the food and ingredients sector,

I often find the most talented leaders tend to adapt their style accordingly. It really isn't a case of one size fits all. Each team is different, but the common thread is that a good leader can help the people around her feel inspired.



You may just find a Jedi master. Yet the goal of most leaders is to get people to think highly of them as a leader. However, the goal of the exceptional leader is to get the people to think highly of themselves.
- Chris Haggarty

DO AS I SAY NOT AS I DO



A top-down approach meant that those at the bottom rarely felt their views and needs were taken into consideration. With flatter structures being more in vogue a leader functions within a very different environment in the twenty first century and needs to act accordingly.

What we have witnessed in the past decade or so is the understanding that it takes more than knowledge to be considered an expert in any field. One lesson diversity and inclusion has taught us is that there are many different perspectives.

We all look through our own narrative arch and that has its own internal biases. These can be a product of gender, sex, religion, belief, culture, and experience of life. Therefore, an effective leader will ask for different opinions and ensure that a variety of perspectives are taken into consideration.

This is not a matter of lip service it becomes an integral part of any decision-making process. This in itself has been transformational. This is also why I made the decision to update my thinking on leadership.

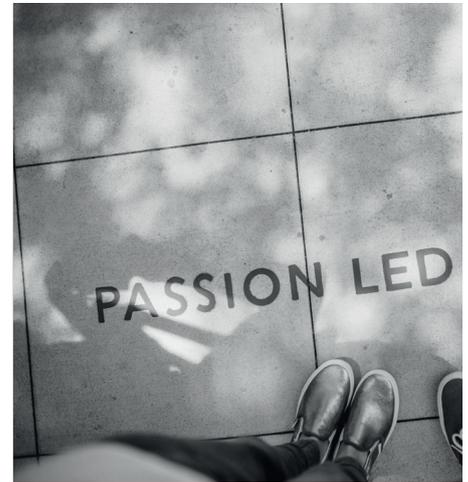
It has been based on experience and conversations with a variety of top-level managers in a wide variety of food and ingredient organisations.



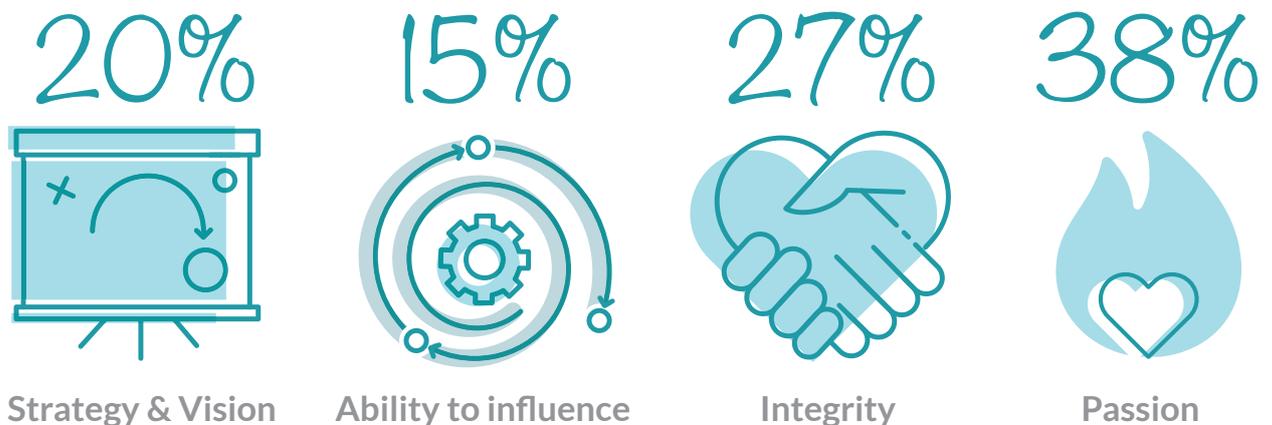
WE PUBLISHED A POLL ON LINKEDIN

The question we asked was, what is the most important leadership quality? The results were quite interesting. We gave our pollsters four options:

- Strategy and vision
- Ability to influence
- Integrity
- Passion



Consider those four qualities for a moment and decide where you stand. The results from the poll were as follows:



Are you surprised by these percentages?

You might even wonder if passion is really more important than integrity or strategy and vision? However, passion is very much a contemporary flavour and personally speaking I wonder whether it is rather overused. What does it mean to have passion for something? Is it enough to actually get the job done?



According to the Cambridge University Dictionary passion is defined as:

‘something that you are strongly interested in and enjoy or a powerful emotion or its expression, especially the emotion of love, anger or hate.’

So, you can see that passion can be somewhat problematic. It probably is used to indicate a strong interest or enjoyment.

Can you be a leader without it?

Are you hampered by having too much passion?

These are points worth considering.

In a new biography about John Lewis, yes there was such a man, by biographer Victoria Glendinning entitled Family Business she discusses a man that began life in abject poverty and developed the brand we still know and love.

Yet, having opened his very first shop on Oxford St in 1864 he was never interested in his workers and extracted as much profit as possible from the business. You may be surprised by this revelation. It was only his son Spedan's vision, who was appalled at his father's approach, that became the 'ethical corrective' that we understand today.

The business has been a success, but its founder may well have been a ruthless leader that had little interest in the people that worked for him.

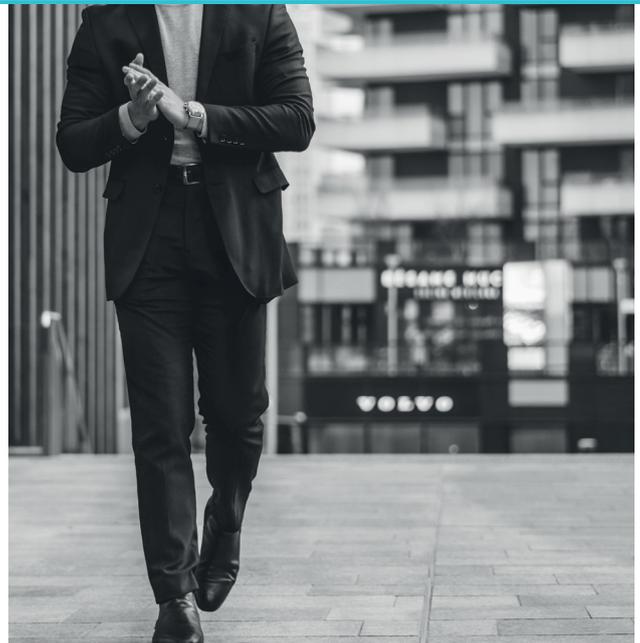
GENERATION Z WORKERS

Compare this with the attitude of Generation Z workers that are beginning to emerge in the workplace. Their attitude mirrors Spedan's and leading this cohort will demand a very different approach.

This is where passion and integrity really will be two stand out qualities for future leaders. A significant difference between the past, present, and future is the passion with which chosen leaders develop and nurture those around them to succeed.

A leadership and or talent pipeline should be built by leaders who need the emotional intelligence to spot emerging talent. Perhaps a leader is more enabler than 'general'. The culture of any team will underpin its success or failure.

With the working landscape changing so rapidly, cohesion, confidence, and collaboration will all make a difference. Leaders that can abolish a fear of failure and encourage thoughtful risk taking that can instil a sense of ownership and passion in those working alongside them will see results.

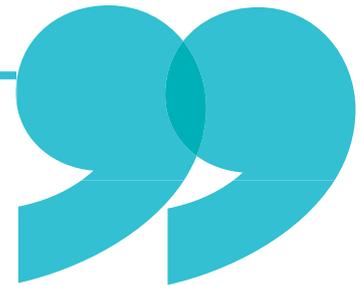


Gen Z will have the ability and desire to demand greater personalisation. Their attitude mirrors Spedan's and leading this cohort will demand a very different approach.



A great leader is one that is effective. You can have great ideas, but with success comes total focus. Leadership is a long game and requires the ability to persevere however tough the circumstances. Making a team accountable and designed in such a way that results are almost guaranteed is part of a leader's responsibility.

Mike Meyrick



In that poll I did not add emotional intelligence, and this is a skill that requires constant attention and development. Personalities change as teams evolve. Understanding the dynamic and the place a leader inhabits requires constant adjustment and self-knowledge.

The important consideration is how to manage in a state of constant readiness to embrace change, be agile and flexible without losing a sense of direction. One of the most damaging quality is perhaps one where leaders are constantly 'chasing shiny things.' And not giving 'time to time'.



DO YOUR LEADERS UNDERSTAND THE TEAMS THEY WORK WITH?



How much training and preparation do you give new leaders? When you recruit for a new leadership role one imagines you are hiring an expert in the field. However, does that expertise extend to understanding the new team's strengths and weaknesses.

This is not just as a collective but on an individual level. When every individual works to the best of their ability and are happy and confident about what they do and how they do it then the team's outcome is likely to be successful.

01_

Do you help new leaders to develop their vision and also align this vision with the specific resources available at that time?

02_

Are they skilled and experienced in taking risks?

03_

Have you put them through any exercises to test their ability to make really tough decisions especially if there is a possibility, they may eventually be proved wrong?

04_

Have you tested the quality of their emotional intelligence and their capacity to be agile in testing conditions?

05_

- Are they people centric?
- Have you got to the bottom of their prejudices and long held beliefs?
- Will these impact in any way on the management strategy?

ARE LEADERS ENTANGLED IN THEIR EGO?

The adjective 'great' is often aligned with 'leader'. It can be quite unhelpful. Like the word 'genius' it can be gendered and also suggests that someone simply 'is a great leader' rather than great leadership as a process that never ends.

Certainly, leaders can get tied up with past successes. Perhaps it's time to learn lessons from strategies that lead to success but also to consider whether current conditions suggest that trends are changing, and another approach might be required.

The business approach that begins 'we've always done it this way with great success' may not be the most helpful right now.

Successful leaders need to be confident in bringing people into their team that may well be more talented. The strength of a team will determine the success of any venture or project.

A team is not just an amorphous mass it should be populated by individuals who are all talented but understand the importance of teamwork and the possibilities it offers.

A successful leader will know the direction of play and have a vision that is well defined. Their ability to adapt short- and long-term goals while inspiring confidence in their decision making will go a long way to ensuring success.

This is yet another example of the nurturing skills a leader should possess.



DEVELOPING SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS

I would like to reiterate that a talented leader should not live on past successes. Assuming people understand what, they need to do, resting on one's laurels and taking one's eye of the ball is tantamount to a recipe for disaster.

Effective leaders should watch themselves constantly. Their focus should be sharp and perseverance total. Team building is a full-time job.

People will come and go and relying on individuals without any back up can be tantamount to a catastrophe.

Ensuring everyone involved is accountable works and a team needs a leader, and a leader needs her team.

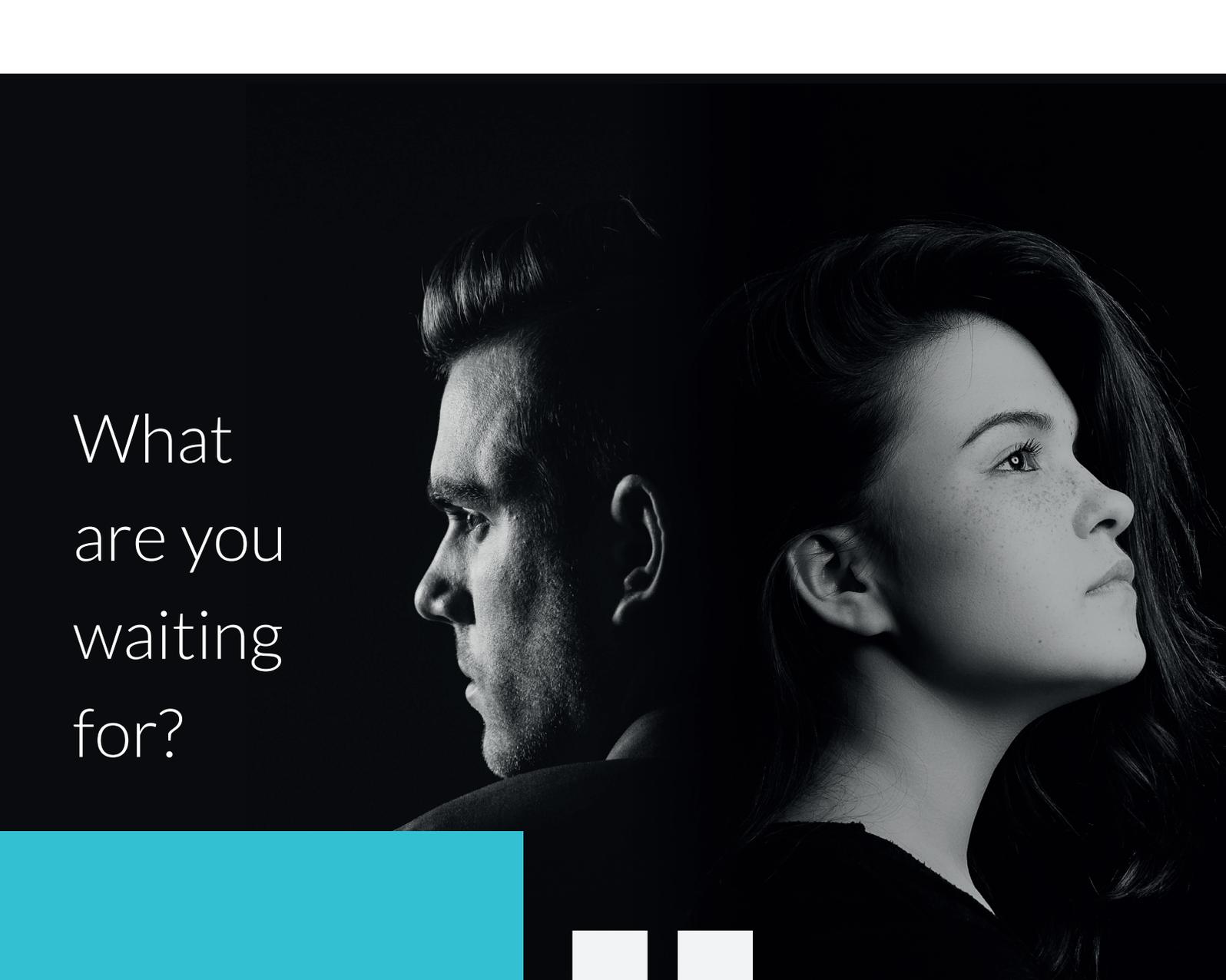
When a number of people work on a project they will have as many perspectives and experiences as the number of people involved.

Maintaining the sense that everyone's opinions and knowledge is valuable, even if it is not used in a specific instance gives people a sense of ownership.



A team relies on their leader's ability to act. It is not enough to know what to do, a leader needs to act, and this will require considerable personal and professional development that is ongoing. Developing the ability for self-reflection, humility, empathy, and understanding are significant skills. Being able to encourage feedback, acting in a transparent environment and reacting positively on observations will gain respect and backing.

We are specialists in recruiting executives into the food and ingredients sector. With knowledge and understanding of both the sector and the qualities required for key positions we can help you create collateral to attract candidates to your positions. We have a clear focus on search, initial hire, post-hire, and retention. Should you wish to discuss your current and/or future needs please do not hesitate to give me a call. This ebook is just a taster of the expertise on offer.



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are you
waiting
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Start solving some the
biggest food & ingredient
leadership challenges
today by contacting us here.

Thank You

Should you wish to discuss how we are able to offer support around your key leadership requirements and, also help you attract the top performing executives across the sector, please drop me a confidential message to mike@meyrickconsulting.com. After all, a discussion can bring clarity. I look forward to speaking with you.

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