

THE INSPIRATIONAL LEADER

“Leadership is based on a spiritual quality; the power to inspire, the power to inspire others to follow.” - Vince Lombardi

“Inspirational Leadership is not about telling people what to do, running things by a rule book, being serious all the time, or stretching people more than they can give.

So, what is it? It is about being authentic, open straightforward and, bluntly, inspirational. We all know it when we see it, yet somehow we don’t all either know how to be inspirational or have the energy to try to be inspirational. Inspirational is draining.” – Mick Yates, Super Leaders

It’s a tough duty. Here are a few thoughts on what it takes:

- **The Inspirational Leader is a reflection of the aspirations and goals of others.** It’s not about ‘you’ – it’s about ‘them’.
- **The Inspirational Leader is a clear thinker** and a good strategist; he or she does not necessarily know all the answers – but knows where to find them, and finds people who do know.
- **The Inspirational Leader picks (and supports) great people.** Maybe a bit obvious, but so many managers do not how to ‘pick and support’.
- **The Inspirational Leader has real passion about the organization’s mission** – and he or she shares that with great abandon. The leader knows why the organization exists, and delights on sharing that with others.
- **The Inspirational Leader takes risks**, and cuts through the crap to make things happen.
- **The Inspirational Leader is an active listener** – meaning he or she listens and then responds, instantly. The leader makes meaning where complexities abound. He or she tells stories, and makes things human for everyone in the organization.
- **The Inspirational Leader touches the enterprise, top to bottom.** Inclusion is the norm, and everyone feels part of the work being done.
- **The Inspirational Leader is trustworthy** – with great integrity. This is not just espoused, but it is seen day to day, year in and year out. Everyone knows what the inspirational leader stands for. The leader strives hard to get people to deliver – but always says thank you – and means it.
- **The Inspirational Leader has a clear vision of the future**, of the change that needs to be made. And he or she empowers the organization to go do it. He or she provides the resources to get it done, and helps clear the path of obstacles. He is both part of the team and outside it, to observe and help course correct.
- **The Inspirational Leader stretches people** – but only just a little bit more than they think they can give – he or she does not break people. His/her role is to support greatness. He/she believes in his people – and they know he does. He proves that in his actions, big and small.
- **The Inspirational Leader has attitude, edge, call it what you will.** They know it, and others like it.
- **Net: The Inspirational Leader facilitates the process of others rather than control things.”**

What Inspiring Leaders Do:

- a. Set stretch goals with a team**
- b. Spend time developing team members**
- c. Engage in highly collaborative behavior**
- d. Encourage team member innovation**
- e. Adept at making emotional connections**
- f. Effective in communication and spends time doing it**
- g. Ardent champion of change**
- h. Effective role model within the organization**

How They Go About It:

- a. Create a compelling vision (Visionary)**
- b. Meet with team and collectively set goals**
- c. Tossing a challenge to the team (driver approach)**
- d. Encourage goals focused on organization mission**
- e. Use enthusiast approach to goal setting**
- f. Use expert approach to effort (best skills)**

With awareness, good feedback, and a plan of development research shows that leaders are able to improve this most important of all leadership competencies – inspirational leadership.