

Sound Like a Leader - Talking About Leading and Your Team

Different leaders **adopt** different **approaches**. Some adopt a **hands-on** approach, where they are more directly involved in the tasks that employees are doing. If a manager takes this too far, it can be described as micromanagement. Other bosses adopt a **hands-off** approach, allowing employees the freedom to solve problems and make decisions by themselves.

Leaders have to delegate tasks to their subordinates. In order to delegate tasks effectively, they have to **pinpoint** which members of the team are more suited to which tasks. A leader must pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of each team member.

Leaders really want their team to perform to the best of their ability. In order to **get the best out** of the team, a leader needs to **instil** a positive mindset and a strong work-ethic in the team. In order to do this, a leader can show that they are also working hard and therefore **leading by example**. If a leader is **striving to** work to the best of their ability, then team members will also strive to perform well.

A good manager also strives to **build a strong rapport** with each member of the team, getting to know them as individuals and taking an interest in their lives outside of the office. However, a leader must also **set boundaries** according to what they feel is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. If you establish that something is unacceptable behaviour, it is important to **follow through on** your rules and expectations. Meaning that you have to also lead by example, and you have to ensure that there are consequences for anyone who doesn't meet expectations or anyone who **crosses the line**.

All in all, it is the responsibility of a true leader to **foster** a productive and positive working environment, as well as encourage the development of creativity and innovation.



A) Match the phrases to the definitions

Based on the context of the article, can you match the words in the box to the definitions listed below? Then add the word into the example sentence. You may need to change the form of the word to fit the meaning of the sentence.

to adopt an approach	hands-on	to follow through on	to pinpoint
to get the best out of	to instil	to lead by example	to strive to
to build rapport	to set boundaries	to foster	to cross the line

- To gradually but firmly establish an idea in someone's mind: _____

"I believe that we have really _____ a sense of self-belief in the team."

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2. To try very hard to make something happen: _____
*"I _____ to make everyone in the team feel as if they have something to contribute."
"I am _____ to change the mindset of the team."*
3. To do something which is outside of what is considered to be acceptable behaviour: _____
"He really _____ when he started criticising the whole team in the meeting."
4. To build a close relationship whereby everyone understands each other's feelings and communicates well: _____
"I believe we have _____ a strong _____ in the team, which I am very proud of."
5. To establish what is acceptable behaviour: _____
"I _____ the boundaries as soon as I took over the team. It was important that everyone understood what was expected of them."
6. To ensure that someone performs to the best of their ability and reaches their potential: _____
"I don't think we are _____ out of her at the moment. I think I should set up a 1-1 meeting to discuss how she could improve."
7. To have a way of doing something: _____
"We need to _____ a more strategic _____ if we're going to make this work."
8. To identify something with precision: _____
"It is important to _____ the main strengths of each team member."
9. To encourage the development of something desirable: _____
"I always ensure that we celebrate at the end of every month if we have achieved our targets. That way we can _____ a real sense of progress and achievement."
10. To demonstrate to your team the way that you would like them to approach their work: _____
"You have to be the first one in the office and the last one to leave. That way you can _____."

11. Using direct involvement and intervention in something: _____

"I am more of a _____ manager."

12. To continue something to its completion, especially if you said that you were going to do it: _____

"A strong leader needs to _____ all promises that they make."

B) Key Words in a New Context

Below you can find a paragraph. Can you fill in the gaps in the paragraph with the words from the box below? Some of the words are used more than once. You may need to change the form of some of the verbs in order for them to fit into the sentence.

to get the best out of	to follow through	to pinpoint (x2)
to instil/foster (x2)	to lead by example	to strive to
to build rapport	to set boundaries	to cross the line

Hands-on or Hands-off - Which is the Best Management Strategy to Adopt?

A hands-off management style is characterized by a manager who takes a more relaxed approach to managing their team. They provide general guidance and direction, but they do not micromanage. Instead, they allow their team members to take ownership of their work, to make their own decisions and to _____ to achieve their goals independently. Proponents of this approach claim that that it _____ a sense of independence and self-sufficiency, which can lead to increased motivation and productivity. It also allows the manager to focus on more high-level tasks, such as strategy and planning.

However, if it is taken too far then there is a feeling that the manager is absent, indifferent, or even lazy. It can be challenging to _____ with team members if the manager has little to no involvement in their day-to-day work. In some ways, it can actually make life difficult for a manager, as they are not able to _____ areas where improvements can be made if the manager is not closely involved in the work of their team.

On the other side of the divide, a hands-on manager is heavily involved in the day-to-day activities of their team. They are not afraid to get their hands dirty to make sure that everything is done to their standards. However, if you have ever heard of the term 'micro-manager' or 'helicopter boss', you will know that there can be problems with this style of management. It can be difficult to _____ between the manager and their team in terms of how far the manager should be allowed to intervene. All too often we hear of stories from irritated employees who claim that the manager has

_____ and interfered too much. It can really inhibit creativity, independence and even motivation if taken too far.

So, which approach is the best strategy? It may be best to tailor your approach according to the type of employee you are managing. If you are managing a team of new employees who are still learning the ropes, you might lean towards a more hands-on approach to ensure that tasks are completed correctly, at least to begin with. Logically, if you are managing a team of experienced professionals who are already highly skilled in their work, a more hands-off approach may be appropriate. Either way, it is important to _____ the approach which will _____ each individual team member.

Regardless of which approach you take, it is important to _____ and demonstrate to the team how you want them to perform. Set clear expectations and boundaries, and _____ on them. By doing so, you can _____ a sense of independence and self-sufficiency among your team members, while still ensuring that tasks are completed correctly and efficiently.

C) Comprehension Questions

1. What do you think a 'proponent' is in the first paragraph?

2. If a manager is too hands-off, how could this be perceived by employees?

3. In paragraph 3, what do you think 'get their hands dirty' means?

4. In paragraph 3, there is a verb used which is the opposite of 'foster'. Which verb is it?

5. What is the best approach for a manager to take: hands-on or hands-off?

D) More Uses of Selected Key Words**To adopt**

'To adopt' is a great phrase for business English. Here are some other collocations with 'adopt':

To adopt a strategy / to adopt a new method / to adopt a new policy / to adopt new principles / to adopt a mindset / to adopt new practices

This also works very well in the passive form:

"Things are working very well under the new management. New methods have been adopted, which seem to be boosting productivity."

To pinpoint

This is a great phrase, because nearly every meeting has the goal of pinpointing the solution to a problem or pinpointing the best strategy moving forward. Here are some more great uses of pinpoint:

To pinpoint the root cause of a problem
To pinpoint the solution to the problem
To pinpoint the most effective strategy

To instil

Instil is an excellent Business English phrase with many collocations:

To instil confidence / to instil strong values / to instil strong principles / to instil discipline / to instil motivation / to instil a positive mindset / to instil a sense of trust / to instil a sense of responsibility / to instil strong beliefs

To foster

To foster is also an excellent Business English phrase with many collocations. It is similar to 'instil'. 'Instil' focuses mainly on ideas and attitudes, whereas 'foster' has a much broader meaning, focusing on ideas, attitudes, best practices or anything which could be positive:

to foster innovation / to foster creativity / to foster growth / to foster progress / to foster trust / to foster loyalty / to foster a strong team spirit / to foster sustainability / to foster collaboration / to foster motivation / to foster a positive atmosphere

To inhibit

We can use 'inhibit' with all of the same collocations as 'foster'. 'Inhibit' has the opposite meaning - discouraging the development of something:

"Our lack of budget is really inhibiting our progress."

To build rapport

Here are some other phrases instead of 'build':

To have a strong rapport / to establish a strong rapport

It is also possible to build a strong rapport with an audience when giving a presentation.

"It is important to build a strong rapport with your audience if you want them to take an interest in your pitch."

E) Idioms + 'regarding'

With the idioms in this chapter, we can implement them in a sentence easily followed by the word 'regarding'

To set boundaries regarding..

"We need to set stronger boundaries regarding time spent on lunch breaks."

To cross the line regarding..

"He has really crossed the line regarding his comments in yesterday's meeting"

F) Glossary of words for sounding like a true leader

to adopt an approach
hands-on / hands-off
to follow through on
to pinpoint
to instil
to foster
to inhibit

to lead by example
to strive to
to build rapport
to set boundaries
to cross the line
a proponent of
to get the best out of