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The Straits Times

Are you the boss from hell?

WORK!

If you fancy yourself a good leader, the checklist below will tell. There's more to being a manager than ordering people about!

44 You can only be a leader when others want to follow you," said Ms Doris Cheng, director of executive search firm, TASA Worldwide.

"When you are leading a team of followers, what you really are is a team captain. Thoughts and opinions of those out in the field 'fighting the battle' are frequently the most important. As a leader, you need to know when to follow those you lead."

A good leader is recognizable by certain traits, such as a genuine interest in developing people and being prepared to put others before self.

He or she is also someone who is impartial, willing to speak up on behalf of others and play an active role in carrying out plans.

"HEAVY (On Action, 10th Floor) King and Queen, some more good leaders" she is heard.

"Like responsibility for your team members' actions. Remember that when your team looks good, you look good." — Pigeon

Basic do's and don'ts of leadership

<p>DO ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a direction — You are responsible for your team's success. Set a clear direction and communicate it effectively. • Communicate effectively — Listen to your team and communicate your vision clearly. • Empower your team — Delegate responsibilities and trust your team to do the job. • Lead by example — Your actions should inspire your team. • Build a strong team — Hire the right people and work together to achieve common goals. 	<p>DON'T ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a micromanager — Trust your team and avoid interfering in their work. • Ignore your team's needs — Listen to your team and address their concerns. • Be inconsistent — Stick to your word and be fair to everyone. • Fail to communicate — Keep your team informed and involved. • Be a lone wolf — Work with your team and seek their input.
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He or she is also someone who is impartial, willing to speak up on behalf of others and play an active role in carrying out plans.

"NATO (No Action, Talk Only) Kings and Queens never make good leaders!" she quipped.

Take responsibility for your team members' mistakes. Remember that when your team looks good, you look good.

Basic Do's and Don'ts of Leadership

Do...

- **Establish common direction**
Have a clear understanding of your company's goals and objectives. A common direction brought about by focused leadership makes group achievements more attainable.
- **Consider the personal needs of team members**
Aligning your team members' needs to corporate goals results in greater motivation to achieve company targets.
- **Lead by example**
There is nothing worse than not practicing what you preach. You will lose respect.
- **Manage expectations**
Agree to do only what you are capable of doing and do what you agree to do. This is vital to maintain credibility.
- **Bring out the best**
Empower your team members appropriately to help them grow. When a mistake is made, help them fix it and ensure they have learned from it.

Don't...

- **Keep changing your goals and directions**
Bear in mind that when targets keep changing, you create anxiety in those whom you lead.
- **Apply the same style and approach with everybody**
This calls for different levels of support from you as a leader.
- **Assume that everyone will appreciate what you do**
It is a challenge to recognize what goes well with each person.
- **Ask a team member to do something that you will never do yourself.**
This is common sense, but a surprising number of team leaders readily volunteer their followers for things they themselves would not touch with a 10-foot pole.
- **Be the first to take credit for good results**
Similarly, don't be quick to blame others when things go wrong.

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