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# From being a manager to a leader

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After completing my graduate studies at Northwestern University, Evanston, I started my professional career at a large US corporation in Chicago as a software programmer. I cultivated a friendship with a respected manager, who eventually became my mentor. The advice my mentor gave was that I had to be distinctly better than my peers to move ahead – this needed to be achieved by the quality and quantity of my work, displaying a positive attitude, being a team player and also be willing to take on more responsibilities.

Whatever ethical plane you hold yourself to, when you are responsible for a team of people, it's important to raise the bar even higher. Your business and its employees are a reflection of yourself and if you make honest and ethical behaviour a key value, your team will follow suit.

If you expect your team to work hard and produce quality content, you're going to need to lead by example. There is no greater motivation than seeing the boss working alongside everyone else. By proving your commitment to the brand and your role, you will not only earn the respect of your team, but will also instill that same energy among your staff. It's important to show your commitment not only to the work at hand, but also to your promises. Being able to inspire your team is great for focusing on the future goals.

A leader's success is not only dependent on the sharpness of his mind; rather it's a combination of his mind and mindset. In the corporate world, it's absolutely necessary to have an



■ To move up the corporate ladder, you must display a positive attitude and be a team player.

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open mind and inspiring attitude to achieve great heights.

I followed these mantras religiously; years later, when my boss was promoted, I was promoted to my boss's position. My mentor coached me how to become an effective manager – I would be judged based on the results of the team. I persevered to build an effective relationship with my direct reports so that they trusted and enjoyed working for me, which enhanced the productivity and dynamics of the team

## MY JOURNEY AS CEO

This is an era in which the demand for leadership exceeds the supply. Organisations need people to (a) manage others; (b) manage managers; and they also need (c) functional man-

agers; (d) business managers; (e) group managers; (e) enterprise managers.

When individual contributors are promoted to first-level managers, they often rely on a hands-on problem solving approach. They need to stop relying on their ability to solve problems themselves and instead, learn to plan the work that needs to be done, select capable people to do it, set objectives, hold people accountable for results and offer necessary feedback.

Borrowing Jack Welch's advice, I spend a significant percentage of my time in coaching and mentoring my first level managers. I offer them the advice my mentor gave me years ago: that they will be judged based on the output of their team, that they need to

understand the importance of developing an effective, productive team while also earning the respect of their team members.

The ultimate output is a leader who is an amalgamation of competent skills, humility, empathy and social skills, working in cognition with a bigger mission and vision. He is a motivator to the masses, an architect of the company, a visionary and an advocate of good governance and transparency. The culture of mentorship is prevalent to envisage the opportunity of development of the prodigy into a future leader.

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