



LEADERSHIP

The Critical Thing Great Leaders Bring to Work

It didn't take long to realize that morale was at 3 on a 1-10 scale. The team had been through a lot in a short period of time; poor business performance, selfish leadership, and unrealistic expectations. My first reaction was to jump right in and try to start solving problems, but I knew from my mentors that solving problems was only part of the equation. What everyone needed was hope and confidence about the future.

I didn't realize it at the time, but that was the exact definition of optimism. Just this week, on Snapchat, I heard Gary Vaynerchuk say in a quick 10-second snap:

“*The world lacks optimism, it's in short supply. So if you find it, latch onto it. If you have it, much love.*”

Optimism is what stops those with great talent from reaching their full potential. It's a leaders responsibility to bring optimism to the workplace EVERY. SINGLE. DAY. If you do, these are the things that will happen:

People Will be Drawn To You

Optimism is like cookies coming out of the oven – you will draw people to you. Being surrounded by people with a deep interest in what you are doing and the desire to be around you is an enormous part of successfully leading a team to higher levels of performance.

People Will Follow You

You can't be a leader without people following you. Optimism provides a foundation to build great relationships with your team so they are willing to follow. Once someone is willing to follow, you have a chance to win on an ongoing basis. You probably have amazing leader-employee relationships but if you want a short reminder check out this [video \(http://bit.ly/1S7oIWC\)](http://bit.ly/1S7oIWC).

People Will Come to You in Times of Need

A mentor of mine once told me “everybody is going through something.” I don’t care how perfect someone else’s life looks on the outside, they are battling something. That means when people need to talk about their problems and challenges, the last place they want to go to is someone who has a negative outlook. Your optimistic outlook will allow you to help others during difficult times.

People Will Emulate You

Have you ever seen a small child watch their parents then immediately emulate them? This works for both positive and negative behaviors, and as parents it’s our job to set the example for our family. Obviously, your people aren’t children, but just like a family, your example sets a certain level of expectation. Give everyone a good example to follow.

People Will Spread Your Optimism

Your team will pass their new found optimism on to new hires, interns, and their family. Much like the power of social media you begin reaching a lot more people than you could ever imagine.

I am under no dissolution that bringing optimism to the workplace everyday is easy. In many ways, it might be the hardest thing any leader does because there are so much negativity and challenges in the world. That being said, I picked up a few ways to be an optimistic communicator from **Jon Gordon** (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/jongordonenergy>), best selling author and speaker:

1. Shout Praise, Whisper Criticism
2. Encourage
3. Smile More
4. Don’t Complain
5. Welcome Feedback

It’s my hope that by reading this, I will pass my own optimism on to you, at least for the day. The challenge will be evaluating how optimistic you are in your professional and personal life and committing to putting these into practice.

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