

Wali Zahid's leadership tips for CEOs

If you are wondering what can make you a great, not just good, business leader, here are a few tips that can help you on your way. Your 'arrival' will depend on how ready you are. Remember what they say: when the student is ready, the teacher arrives. Or what they say about luck: Luck is being ready when the opportunity comes. So here we go.

Your teams

- Create self-managed entrepreneurial teams. Let them get on with achieving targets or KPIs or whatever you call these.
- Excite them. Sell the mission or the challenge, not the job or the position!
- Create a fun, collaborative workplace, where people want to come back to, rather than forced to.
- You can use nearly anyone's potential to achieve almost anything. Waiting for the rightly skilled or trained people is a thought of losers.
- Catch people doing something right. As opposed to doing something wrong as earlier generation of CEOs used to do. Remember: you will see what you want to see.
- Celebrate successes – even small ones. Make heroes out of them.
- Make them accountable through stated and practiced values
- Develop a successor for everyone in your organisation (without being threatening to your people)
- Challenge each other. Allow team members to challenge you. Listen to their wisdom. In most cases, they are smarter than you. Allow them to say no to you. Use conflict positively.
- Finally... Delegate everything! (I know it's scary!) Free yourself for thinking work and being accessible to people when they need you

Your style

- Do not be perfectionist! Only God can afford this.
- Tolerate ambiguity. There's very little black and white in this world!
- Tolerate mistakes – even when they are repeated. Create a culture of trial and error and trial and error. People are well-intentioned beings.
- People who work with you know a lot about you – more than what you can think of.

- Remember: Every word you say raises expectations somewhere. So be watchful of what you say while talking to one team member or whole teams about your plans and their future in the company.
- Be available to your people. Coaching is what you are paid for.
- Alter your communication style to suit the needs and preferences of your team members. Like size, one style does not fit all.

Your inspiration

- Listen to your gut. It usually gives you right signals and early warning signs.
- Reflect. Spend some quiet time every day. Most of big ideas come away from work. (And if you are a Muslim, speak to God every day and seek his 'input'.)
- Be externally aligned. Talk to customers. Be customer-centric. No, become customer-obsessed
- Learn from other sectors, other industries, other places.
- Make it really effortless! Getting all this right is better than hard work. You will be amazed how you achieve results and greatness with so little effort!
- Take care of yourself. Unless you are emotionally and physically fit, what hope if there for your business and teams.
- Take care of your family. There's no greatness without them. It will drain you if you ignore their needs. Spend quality time with your family.
- Give back – volunteer! What great numbers cannot bring, this can!

Wali Zahid is a leadership coach and a mentor to many CEOs and works in Pakistan. He can be reached at:
wali.zahid@gmail.com