

# What Leaders Do: Five things that can help you become a great business leader

By Wali Zahid

Leaders do five things:

## 1. Leaders Achieve Business Results

1. By challenging themselves and people on their team
2. By challenging conventional wisdom
3. By being creative and innovative in solving problems
4. By taking risks and tough decisions in consultation with each other
5. By being customer-obsessed
6. By being externally aligned and by being ahead of competition and market
7. By showing firm resolve against internal and external setbacks

## 2. Leaders Build and Sustain Systems

1. By not being indispensable – taking them ‘out of daily equation’
2. By creating a minimal set of fair ground rules
3. By creating champions and successors in every sphere
4. By creating a fun, collaborative, team-based workplace which thrives even in their absence

## 3. Leaders Create Leaders

This is their *only* job!

1. By answering WIIFM (what's in it for me?)
2. By giving their people both challenging as well as rewarding/fulfilling tasks & celebrating their successes
3. By empowering them to take difficult decisions and by delegating their work to them
4. By exciting them about work and opportunities that lie ahead by showing them the big picture
5. By guiding and coaching them
6. By encouraging diverse, opposite, nonconformist views (no yes-men needed here!)
7. By building on each individual's strengths (and yes, ignoring their weaknesses!)

## 4. Leaders Do [Wali's] Four T's™

1. Tolerate ambiguity & uncertainty
2. Tolerate mistakes
3. Tolerate failure
4. Tolerate dissent/challenge to their ideas and leadership

## 5. Leaders Take Care of Themselves

1. By believing that they have a legitimate role to play in wherever they are
2. By knowing themselves better (their EQ), their insecurities, vulnerabilities and blind spots
3. By listening to their gut and trusting their instincts while remaining humble
4. By creating a work-life balance
5. By networking and volunteering
6. By investing time and energy in their growth: self-educating them, reskilling them
7. By raising the bar and creating new challenges everyday so that they do not enter into a comfort zone

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