



WHAT LEADERS DO: A CHECKLIST

Article by Herb Rubenstein, President, Sustainable Business Group, and Founder, THE LEEEGH

Introduction

Over 30 years ago Jack Wallace and I developed the first computerized evaluation system so that students could evaluate faculty members at a college. We were at Washington and Lee University and today similar evaluation systems are widely used throughout the United States on hundreds of college campuses.

In order to evaluate a group or an individual, you need to know what are the key elements of that person's job or responsibility. We have compressed the leadership literature into list, in a checklist format. This list describes what leaders do in an organizational context. We understand fully that a critical component of leadership is successful leadership of one's self, although this checklist does not delve into the "lead yourself" aspect of leadership. We hope that you find this checklist useful in rating leaders, in developing leaders and, most importantly, in becoming a more successful leader yourself, starting today.

Checklist 1: People Management:

1.1 Clearly communicates expectations
1.2 Recognizes, acknowledges and rewards achievement
1.3 Inspires others and serves as a catalyst for others to perform in ways they would not

undertake without the leader's support and direction

1.4 Puts the right people in the right positions at the right time with the right resources and right job description

1.5 Secures alignment on what is the right direction for the organization

1.6 Persuades/Encourages people in the organization to achieve the desired results for the organization

1.7 Makes sure not to burn out people in the organization, looking out for their well being as well as the well being of the organization

1.8 Identifies weak signals that suggest impending conflict and deals with the sources of conflict effectively

1.9 Holds people accountable

1.10 Encourages the human capital development of every person in the organization and allocates sufficient resources to this endeavor

1.11 Correctly evaluates the actual performance and the potential of each person in the organization

1.12 Encourages people in the organization to stand up for and express their beliefs

1.13 Creates a non-fear based environment where all persons in the organization can speak the truth as he or she sees it without concern for retaliation

1.14 Able to empathize with those he or she leads

Checklist 2: Strategic Management

- 2.1 Flexible when necessary to adapt to changing circumstances
- 2.2 Sets, with input from others including all stakeholders, the long term direction for the organization
- 2.3 Understands the competitive environment, social trends, competitors, customers and all stakeholders
- 2.4 Correctly analyzes the risks of all decisions
- 2.5 Correctly analyzes the returns of all decisions
- 2.6 Has the ability to focus without losing breadth in his or her ability to see at the outer edges gathering worthwhile information that others miss or fail to see as significant
- 2.7 Understands the strengths and weaknesses of the organization; how to exploit the strengths and address the weaknesses successfully
- 2.8 Can develop and implement strategies to improve the strengths and to combat the weaknesses of the organization
- 2.9 Can identify appropriate partners, strategic alliances and outside resources to tap into to help further the organization's goals
- 2.10 Can articulate the values of the organization and develop strategies consistent with the core values
- 2.11 Demonstrates a strong commitment to diversity and change, improvement
- 2.12 Demonstrates a strong commitment to creating and sustaining a learning organization (Learning is the foundation for all sustainable change).

Checklist 3: Personal Characteristics

- 3.1 Lives with honesty and integrity
- 3.2 Selects people for his or her team who are honest and have high integrity
- 3.3 Will, passion and desire to succeed

- 3.4 Willingness to shoulder the responsibility for success (without being a "thunder taker") and failure (without casting blame)
- 3.5 Innovative and open to new ideas
- 3.6 Not willing to accept the ways things are since they can always be improved; never satisfied completely with the status quo
- 3.7 Smart, intelligent, emotionally strong
- 3.8 Confident without being arrogant
- 3.9 Able negotiator
- 3.10 Willing to be patient
- 3.11 Decisive when necessary
- 3.12 Able to think analytically
- 3.13 Quick learner
- 3.14 Respectful to all
- 3.15 Perceptive and sensitive to the needs of others
- 3.16 Diligent, disciplined and has strong perseverance capabilities
- 3.17 Comfortable with ambiguity
- 3.18 Willing to be original
- 3.19 Informed risk taker

Checklist 4: Process Management

- 4.1 Able to manage change
- 4.2 Promotes innovation
- 4.3 Able to secure resources
- 4.4 Able to allocate resources
- 4.5 Great problem solver
- 4.6 Able to anticipate crises
- 4.7 Able to handle crisis when it explodes
- 4.8 Can create and manage budgets
- 4.9 Can create and manage timelines, work plans
- 4.10 Great project management skills
- 4.11 Can translate long term vision into step by step plan
- 4.12 Able to measure results
- 4.13 Knows when a process is not working
- 4.14 Willing to redesign processes as often as necessary

Conclusion

This checklist, of course, is not complete. Leaders do many other things. However, it serves as a guide as to how to evaluate yourself and others as a leader. We hope you find this checklist useful in your work, in your nonprofit organizations and throughout your personal and professional life.

About the Author

Herb Rubenstein is the President of the Sustainable Business Group and Founder of the nonprofit, THE LEEEGH, which stands for leadership in education, energy, environment, governance and health. He is also an attorney (admitted in DC, MD and VA) and advisor to nonprofit organizations. He is co-author of *Breakthrough, Inc. – High Growth Strategies for Entrepreneurial Organizations* (Prentice Hall/Financial Times, 1999) and author of *Leadership for Lawyers* (American Bar Association, 2ed, 2008). He has been an Adjunct Professor of Entrepreneurism at Colorado State University, has served as an Adjunct Professor of Strategic Planning and Leadership at George Washington University, and has been an Adjunct Professor of Entrepreneurism at George Mason University. He served as a member of the board of directors of the International Leadership Association, is a founding member of the board of director of the Association of Professional Futurists, and is the author of numerous articles on boards of directors, leadership and strategic planning.

He has his law degree from Georgetown University, his Master of Public Affairs from the LBJ School of Public Affairs, a

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