



CHRONICLE

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QUALITIES OF A GREAT LEADER

You may have heard of the term "Level 5 Leader" from the book **Good to Great** by Jim Collins. He defines two sides of a level 5 leader - professional will and personal humility as indicated in the chart below. These are some of the qualities the ASLON Group looks for in the people we recruit. This issue will expand on the qualities of a great leader and will explain how to increase emotional intelligence which can increase your chances of becoming a great organization.



"Leaders are like eagles - they don't flock ... you find them one at a time."

Professional Will	Personal Humility
Creates superb results, a clear catalyst in the transition from good to great.	Demonstrates a compelling modesty, shunning public adulation; never boastful.
Demonstrates an unwavering resolve to do whatever must be done to produce the best long-term results, no matter how difficult.	Acts with quiet, calm determination; relies principally on inspired standards, not inspiring charisma, to motivate.
Sets the standard of building an enduring great company; will settle for nothing less.	Channels ambition into the company, not the self; sets up successors for even greater success in the next generation.
Looks in the mirror, not out the window, to apportion responsibility for poor results, never blaming other people, external factors, or bad luck.	Looks out the window, not in the mirror, to apportion credit for the success of the company—to other people, external factors, and good luck.

Below are the five characteristics that are found in a Level 5 Leader:

1. The person must share the core values of the organization before coming on board. This means that these values must already be a part of his/her life and not something to be learned after joining.
2. The person is not someone who must be managed but someone who will step in, see a hole that needs to be filled and fill it.
3. The person will have the potential to be one of the best leaders in the organization.
4. As simple as it may sound, this person must have a clear understanding of the difference between having a job and holding a responsibility.
5. Finally, this person must be someone who, after knowing and working with for a while, you would want to hire again.

Five Characteristics of an ASLON leader

When we are conducting searches for our clients we finely tune our search strategy to fit with the company culture. We look for people who have the potential to assimilate easily and step into a higher role. We have combined our experienced assessment skills with our mission statement to develop five categories of our own that make up the characteristics of the ASLON leader.

1. Bias toward action

Our leaders are “can do” individuals who see a need, develop a plan, and work the plan to completion. They may be considered intense or passionate about their work but they also make time to spend with their families, thereby creating a balance in their life that they promote in their teams.

2. Submit to authority

No matter what level you are in in an organization there will always be someone in higher authority than you, even if it is a share holder. Great leaders must be able to submit to authority when an idea or decision is not embraced and then accept the decision wholeheartedly for the good of the organization. This approach produces healthy companies that can weather a storm such as an economic downturn or the threat of competition by creating a workforce of loyal employees. Organizations that take a genuine interest in their employees' well being will have staff members who stand by the company in rough times and, although decisions may be tough, will understand the long-term vision and strive to accomplish the results needed to turn them around.

3. Window and the Mirror

Great leaders look in the “mirror” when things go wrong. They take the blame, research the problem, learn from mistakes and move on. They don't lay blame or point fingers. On the reverse, when things go well they look outside the “window” to give praise to others and share the glory with the team/organization. They are highly respected individuals who may not be in the spotlight but, when looking over their shoulder, know they are in the lead.

4. Grand Vision

A great leader is motivated to grow an organization to a higher level. He surrounds himself with great people and has a vision of where the organization should be and how it can get there. Communication is a skill that must be present to advance this vision and to get the rest of the team motivated to achieve it.

5. Sacrifice to commit to a vision

A great leader must have a passion for obtaining the vision of the organization and be willing to make sacrifices in life to succeed. Leaders must also be flexible if the path toward that vision needs to be tweaked and must have the right team on board who would also be flexible with the changes.



Having the right people in the right seats will make your organization great.

Actions Speak Louder than Words

Several articles of late have mentioned how analysts and thought leaders are predicting that, as the economy in the United States begins to recover at an increased pace, voluntary turnover among many U.S. corporations will skyrocket. Some analysts are predicting involuntary turnover rates as low as 20%, while others peg the amount of pent-up turnover somewhere near the 45% mark... Many state that their employees say they are “satisfied” — and therein lay the problem. As any marketing professional worth their weight in salt will tell you, keeping someone merely satisfied is not the same as keeping them loyal... Loyalty comes from continuously exceeding expectations — not your own expectations, but rather those of your target audience which in this case are your employees... To help stave off the impending wave of turnover in your organization, you need to determine what your employees expect and deliver wherever possible... Just because your company has made it this far, does not mean it is time to rest on your laurels. Another war for talent is coming, and a battle plan is needed. If you do nothing else to help prepare, make an attempt to understand your employee's expectations and exceed them wherever possible.

Dr. John Sullivan: [Inside Today's Retention Edition - 11/10/2003](#)

<http://www.erexchange.com/articles/db/B226B4C7883D4F638813AD4329438B03.asp>

Emotional Intelligence, Part III

"Because I Said So" and Other Ways of Leading

A frequent concern from executives today is, **"Why don't my people do what they are supposed to do?"** They seem concerned about motivating their people but also want to maintain authority. This is a challenge but success can be achieved by developing realistic expectations based on an understanding of what really drives people.

Most parents can relate to this dilemma -- how many times have you wished, "If only my child would just do what I say to do!" The difference is that while parents know their kids won't listen the first time, or even the fortieth, employers expect that their employees will.

Leaders -- especially senior leaders -- assess situations in dramatically different ways from most employees.

Lesson One: Just because it is obvious to you does not make it obvious to them--and just because it is important to you, does not make it important to them.

1. An effective leader understands what is important to his/her people and helps them understand what is important to him/her.

Lesson Two: People want to belong to something great because it adds meaning and purpose to their lives.

2. A powerful leader ensures that his people see their work has meaning and purpose by doing it too, and by "connecting the dots" between the day-to-day work and the larger vision.

Lesson Three: Long-term greatness outweighs short-term discomfort.

3. A wise leader reacts in ways that grow employees who will be exceptional in five years.

Three exercises to raise your EQ awareness

Lesson one: List three critical corporate objectives from your current strategic plan. Add three "human" objectives such as "make our company a place where people love to come to work," and "create open communication between departments." Ask people from each level of the organization if they had to put in an extra day of work to meet one of these, which would they choose to work on.

Lesson two: Interview several line employees and make a list of all they are required to do and see if they know why. Go through the list and see if you can articulate the "why" in a way that makes sense to you, then do it again and articulate it in a way that makes sense to them.

Lesson three: Make a list of all the people who report to you, and list a frustration you've got with each one. Then, identify their greatest strength or asset that if developed, would make them a star employee. Now look at the list and see if you can think of an example for each employee where you acted on the frustration, and in so doing "dented" that potential for greatness.

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<http://www.6seconds.org/>

The ASLON Process

Our proprietary process is unique and contains three foundational blocks: Leadership Quantified, Leadership Identified and Leadership Delivered. We match our client's needs in terms of corporate culture and industry positioning, as well as technical requirements to the candidate's profile. These qualifiers for selection are important but not nearly as valuable as our assessment of the candidate's potential for success. We know that the ultimate determinant for business leaders rests largely with who they are as people rather than with their accumulated experience.

"Emerson said, "Our chief want in life is somebody who will make us do what we can."

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"The single most harmful step you can take in a journey from good to great is to put the wrong people in key positions."
Jim Collins

Our mission is to be the leading integrity-based retained search firm focused on identifying, assessing and delivering world class leaders.

"What a mistake! – I should have hired a Professional" by Timothy Smith

With so many unemployed senior executives in the active job market, convincing companies to spend seemingly large retainers to hire a search firm is becoming a job for the broad shouldered, determined and strong willed consultants who continue to persevere in a field that has taken a major hit in the last two years. During a recent conversation with a past potential client, my determination that retained search is the best way to find the "great" leaders was reinforced as he told the sad story of how the company he ran eventually fell into demise.

John (not his real name) was the CEO of a profitable consumer products company that had successfully grown to national distribution through solid branding. He was making a career change as he was recruited to another company, so he was given the task of finding his replacement. His company had borrowed heavily during the heyday of available money and needed someone to maintain their momentum while restructuring the debt load to solidify their cash position. ASLON was called in to make a presentation about our retained search services and to explain the process recommended for finding a great leader. I emphasized the value of conducting original research for highly qualified and engaged executives, making sure their characteristics and background fit the culture of the organization and the value of our expertise when finalist negotiations were being conducted. Because money had become very tight, John's board decided to forego hiring a "Professional" and to rely on the network of candidates that had been identified through their board of directors.

In my effort to work with them I mentioned a search I had completed recently for a CEO whereby the client had already identified two potential candidates and wanted my expertise in interviewing them and in finding other topnotch executives for a comparison. We negotiated a plan to include the original candidates in the total mix and I conducted my search with the option that it could be canceled if we decided one of the initial candidates turned out to be the best. After a thorough investigation and identification of other candidates, we all agreed that the best executive was not one of the initial candidates but one identified through our process. The search continued and we successfully placed the CEO.

John was not swayed by this story however, and met with four board recommended individuals that had been identified earlier who matched many of their qualifications. During the interview process and negotiations, the top three individuals were lost and they settled on the fourth who had remained a very interested unemployed CEO. Although this person seemed to be qualified, he did not come from the same industry and was not able to turn the company around. The final outcome for the company was filing for bankruptcy and a major loss to the shareholders.

John indicated that in hindsight if they had hired a "Professional" to conduct the search, he felt confident that more capable people would have been identified, or at a minimum they would have landed one of the top candidates they were most interested in hiring. In a May 2003 article from **Executive Recruiter News**, "Arthur Levitt, former chairman of the US Securities and Exchange Commission, suggested that corporate reform in the US would not only make search consultant's tasks more difficult, but that efforts to increase standards of due diligence on assessing executive level candidates would help search firms demonstrate the value of their work". John's exact words were "they made a huge mistake by not hiring a 'Professional' to conduct the search."

By saving a retained search fee, this company gambled with their future and the trust of their shareholders and ultimately lost. Companies that have the best interest of their organization and shareholders in mind should weigh all options before settling on second best. In today's economy an astute leader who is attuned to the changes in the marketplace is an invaluable asset to a company's future and companies should only accept the best possible candidate. Not only is the future of the company at stake, but the welfare of the company's workforce who really make up the backbone of the organization. As Jim Collins said in his book **Good to Great**, "The single most harmful step you can take in a journey from good to great is to put the wrong people in key positions." "If we get the right people on the bus, the right people in the right seats, and the wrong people off the bus, then we'll figure out how to take it someplace great." To take your company "someplace great" don't gamble with the future of your organization and your employees by putting the controls into the hands of someone who is just good. Remember, "good can be the enemy of great".