

Servant Leadership Is a Winning Style

By Gene Gatty, Ph.D.

Servant leadership is the idea that in order to be an effective leader, one must be willing to serve his/her followers. What does that entail? It means first that the leader must provide the followers with the materials and resources needed to get their jobs done. Too many times one hears the complaint from a subordinate stating that there is something missing or is needed to do the work expected of them. I was consulting in an organization that expected a service manager to find the best prices on parts needed for vehicle repair. That person had a computer, but was restricted to only certain sites he could access. It caused a lot of frustration because he knew there were substantial savings found at other places, and it did mean the company could not take advantage of those available savings. It is a shame that “rules are rules,” however. A servant leader will and must provide her or his subordinates with the proper resources to complete their tasks. Teach and empower your employees to do their tasks, and you will be amazed at the manner in which they will respond.

Second, the **servant leader** will enable employees to work without micromanaging. The leader establishes a value system and a culture for the organization and assists the employees to accommodate to it. The servant leader knows the abilities, strengths and limitations of the employees and knows who needs directed, taught, coached or delegated. The employee who has high competence and high confidence is the one to whom work can be delegated. That person cannot be micromanaged. If she or he is, motivation and dedication is thwarted. It is necessary to constantly show and encourage employees how to interact with each other and with the organization’s clients. Sometimes, they fail. That is OK, but the leader must coach them and encourage them to increase their skill, knowledge and abilities—to grow in their positions and work as a close and cohesive team.

Third, the **servant leader** has a vision and a calling. We like to describe that in the mission statement. It becomes the goals of the organization. Everyone must know and recognize those goals and the action plans developed to reach them. I know many organizations whose employees do not have the slightest ideas as to what the goals and action plans are for the organization. When the entire team works together to meet established goals, it becomes a winning organization. Think of your favorite sports team. To be a winning team, each player must be efficient in his position and work hard together. How does that differ from a business organization---or does it?

Finally, the **servant leader** is willing to put others before his/her self-interests. It is the living out of the *“do unto others as you would have them do to you.”* Servant leaders need to serve their subordinates. They need to be able to consider their needs as important as the leader’s. Don’t misunderstand. Everyone does recognize the need for a hierarchy in leadership roles. A **servant leader** shows empathy toward his/her subordinates, loves them, cares for them, wants the best for and from them and assists their performance. This is a great example of a smoothly working team focused on accomplishing the vision and mission of the group, and it all comes about as a result of the **servant leadership** role.

About the author. Dr. Gene Gatty is a partner at Drs. Gatty, LLC, a business consulting firm, helping businesses add value-assets to their businesses. For the past thirty years Gene has been providing business leadership mentoring and solving HR employment issues. His past experiences include public school superintendence and classroom teaching. For more information about leadership mentoring or building a business to work brilliantly, visit www.strategicpeoplesolutions.com.