Common Sense Leadership

I recently had a conversation with a very fine boss who has had zero turnover for a number of years. I asked him, "What do you attribute this loyalty to?" He said the single most important reason his team is still with him is that he truly cares about each of them, and they sense that. He also said that this character trait cannot be taught, a boss either genuinely cares about others or she doesn't. It's in their DNA.

I've thought about that, and I can honestly say that it is not true. Many of my clients have worked hard at being "more present" with their colleagues and direct reports, showing more interest in what their colleagues think, and genuinely listening to learn. And, most importantly, they have received feedback that their efforts are well received. I believe practicing these principles has ingrained a very definite desire to demonstrate increased caring on their part.

Sure, we can get things done by command and control. But trust me, we will not have a winning organizational culture. Treating people such that they genuinely feel like teammates has a huge and positive impact on our leadership. I've seen it. People who feel supported are highly energized and loyal. They contribute ideas for improving productivity and increasing revenues. They are proud of their organization, and they truly care about how well we all serve our clients.

This is simply a common sense approach to being an effective leader.

This concept is important, and I particularly want to write about it because many, and I do mean many, people I hear from have issues with their bosses that could be mitigated by simple, common sense leadership. I often hear, "She doesn't help me with my career," "He isn't interested in my success," "She doesn't ask for my opinion or want feedback," "He doesn't share information; he hogs the credit," and the list of issues goes on.

Here are simple, common sense principles to follow.

1. Genuinely care about our people and demonstrate that.
2. Ask questions - What do you think? What's your advice? How can we improve? What feedback do you have?
3. Be out of our offices, having conversations with our people.
4. Listen to learn.
5. Know people's professional goals; they want to do well, help them.
6. Communicate clearly and often.

Of course, it is also important to pay people fairly, ideally pay them as well as we can. A caring attitude and fair pay show respect. This is how we build solid, high-performing teams and retain talent!

Yes, we all want to be good leaders, and yes, this is a common sense approach to leadership. Common sense leadership can really help us motivate our teams!

202.236.2800   john@johnkeysercoach.com   www.commonsenseleadership.com

About The Author

John Keyser is the founder and principal of Common Sense Leadership, www.commonsenseleadership.com. He works with executives helping them develop organizational cultures that will produce outstanding financial results year after year, and a striving for continuous improvement, theirs and their team's. His contact information is john@johnkeysercoach.com and 202-236-2800.