

## **Common Mistakes Extraordinary Leaders Don't Make**

*By Chris Widener*

When people make a decision (either consciously or unconsciously) to follow your leadership, they do it primarily because of one of two things: Your Character or your Skills. They want to know if you are the kind of person they want to follow and if you have the skills to take them further. Yes, there are other variables but these are the bulk of the matter. This week we focus on the kind of skills that cause people to follow your leadership, specifically things that an Extraordinary Leader doesn't do!

**1. Not Riding Momentum** – To increase your leadership effectiveness, you want to learn to ride the momentum of the situation (the positive momentum of course!). When we begin to experience bad momentum we naturally try to stop it and that is good, but many people also have the tendency to try to stop the positive momentum as well. This comes from our basic desire to have things “under control.” Unfortunately, often when we try to control the situation, we actually stop the good that is happening. So let go of the reins and ride the momentum!

**2. Flaunting the Privilege of Leadership** – Leadership has its privileges, that is for sure. And rightly so! The entrepreneur who started the company ought to be paid well and reap the rewards for the risks that he or she took. Unfortunately, human nature is still such that people can resent the success and privileges of others, even if they worked hard for them. Therefore, an extraordinary leader will not be guilty of flaunting the privileges they have because this is likely to cause a backlash and can actually harm their ability to lead. Whenever possible share the privileges and rewards of leadership and your followers will love you all the more!

**3. Picking People Who Won't Threaten Them** – An Extraordinary Leader will always try to pick people who are better than them! Again, human nature is such that we think, “Wait, if I hire her, she'll have me out of a job in no time.” Then we pick someone of lesser quality, while our competitor hires the good one and surges ahead. No, pick the best! If they are better than you, you will grow together as a team

and you will still be the leader and people will respect you for your ability to pick – and lead – a winning team!

**4. Not Having a Second in Command Who Complements Them** – An ordinary leader picks someone who is like them so they can feel comfortable. An Extraordinary Leader picks someone who can do all the things that he or she can't; someone who can see things in ways that he or she can't. An Extraordinary Leader needs a right hand person who can compliment their skills and style. This way the old adage is proved true – two heads are better than one!

**5. Not Giving Power Away** – An ordinary leader wants to do as much as they can so they can be seen as a good, hard worker. They think that they lead by example in this. An Extraordinary Leader knows that they need to empower others to do the work and make the decisions if the organization is to grow and they are together going to make a difference. We must let others take leadership themselves, even if it means they fail at first. This way we multiply the organizational leadership and we go even further!

**6. Unable or Unwilling to Make Hard Decisions** – Leadership is a lot of decision making. Non-leaders don't like to make decisions because they operate from a subjective viewpoint. They aren't thinking about the overall health of the organization, they are thinking about who will get mad or who might lose their jobs. While we want to be sensitive to these things, the Extraordinary Leader understands that sometimes hard decisions have to be made for the sake of the organization – and they make them. Then they carry them out. John Maxwell says that decisions are like crying babies: both should be carried out quickly!

**7. Trying to Have No Casualties** – This may be the greatest leadership lesson I have ever learned. The Extraordinary Leader knows that anytime the organization will make ground, there will be casualties. In the movie *Gladiator*, the lieutenant comes to tell Maximus that the troops are not fully ready for battle. Maximus sees that the other side is about to move and if they don't move first, they will lose the war. The Lieutenant begins to say, "The casualties will be too great," but Maximus finishes the lieutenant's sentence so that instead he said, "The casualties will be 'acceptable.'" I realize now that

when my organization moved ahead tremendously a few years ago, the people who got in a huff about it were the casualties and that any time a group moves ahead, that will happen. We shouldn't look for or enjoy casualties, but understand they will assuredly come, and accept them. So move ahead!

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