



# 7 STEPS TO BEING A GREAT TEAM LEADER

How to create clarity, inspire  
action and build trust

# 1. LEAD WITH CONTEXT, NOT CONTROL



**When teams don't understand the why, they get stuck in what. Great leaders empower by giving direction, not micromanaging.**

- **Explain the purpose, not just the task – When people understand the “why,” they’ll find better ways to do the “how.”**
- **Share visibility into the bigger picture – Don’t hoard strategic insights. Even junior team members make better decisions when they know where the company is headed.**
- **Trust people to find their own rhythm – Control might feel safe, but context builds ownership.**

## **Thing to do:**

- **In your next team huddle, take 3 minutes to explain why the project matters in the broader business context. Watch how that clarity shifts engagement.**



## 2. SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS (AND REPEAT THEM OFTEN)



Clarity is kindness. People flounder not because they lack talent but because expectations are vague, shifting, or unwritten.

Be clear about outcomes, not activities – Focus on results, not rigid processes.

Write it down – A shared doc beats assumptions every time.

Repeat yourself generously – What's obvious to you isn't always obvious to others.



Thing to do:

Create a simple “What Success Looks Like” checklist for your team’s current project. Share it in writing.

### 3. LEARN EACH PERSON'S MOTIVATION



**Great leaders don't lead teams.  
They lead individuals.**

- **Some chase recognition. Some crave mastery. Some want flexibility.**
- **Don't assume. Ask: "What does winning look like for you?"**
- **Tune your style to each person's inner drive not just their job title.**

**Thing to do:**

- **Block 30 minutes with each team member this month. Ask 3 questions:**
  - **What energizes you at work?**
  - **What drains you?**
  - **What would you love to work on next?**



# 4. BE VISIBLE IN THE TRENCHES



Credibility isn't built in PowerPoints it's built in moments where you show up.

- Join a sales call. Review code. Sit in on customer feedback.
- Roll up your sleeves not to “do the work” for them, but to show that you care.
- People don't want perfect leaders. They want present ones.

## Thing to do:

- Show up unannounced to one moment this week your team wouldn't expect you in just to observe, cheer, or help.



## **People crave feedback but fear it too because it's often delivered poorly.**

Make feedback frequent, not dramatic.

Separate performance from identity. Feedback is about the work, not the person.

Lead with questions

- “What do you think worked here?”
- “If you could do it again, what would you change?”



## **Thing to do:**

Start using a “3x3” format with your team: 3 things that worked well, 3 things to improve. Keep it short, consistent, and focused on growth.

# **5. GIVE FEEDBACK THAT BUILDS, NOT BREAKS**



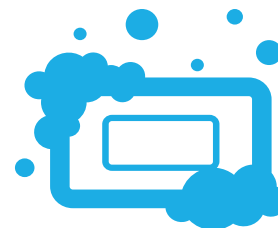
**Leadership is caught, not taught. People copy what you do, not what you say.**

Want transparency? Be transparent.

Expect accountability? Own your mistakes.

Want urgency? Show urgency without panic.

A team's tone often mirrors the leader's energy.



**Thing to do:**

This week, share one mistake you made and what you learned from it in your team group or huddle. Set the tone that vulnerability is strength.

## 6. MODEL THE BEHAVIORS YOU EXPECT

# 7. PROTECT THE CULTURE, NOT JUST THE DEADLINES



Culture isn't foosball tables or mission statements. It's what your team feels is safe and normal.

- Interrupt toxic behavior early and visibly.
- Celebrate collaboration, not just heroics.
- Encourage recovery, not just hustle. Burnout doesn't scale.

Thing to do:

- In your next team check-in, ask: "What's one thing we're doing that makes this a great place to work and one thing we should stop?"
- You'll be amazed what they say if they feel safe enough to say it.



# FINAL THOUGHT



Being a great team leader isn't about having all the answers. It's about creating the environment where the right questions can be asked, and where people feel safe to grow, fail, and win together.



Great leadership starts in the everyday. And it's available to anyone willing to show up not just as a boss, but as a builder of people.