

Confidence and Composure—Critical for Effective Leadership

By Donna Rawady

As leaders, when we possess and demonstrate confidence and composure, others are more likely to trust, engage and follow. Though there are physical aspects (posture and body language, strength of voice and presentation, effective written communications) that demonstrate confidence, the most significant factor is our own belief in the direction we're providing.

It's not uncommon to have our confidence shaken. We may become overwhelmed with the responsibilities associated with making crucial decisions and creating strategies that carry risk, even when the risk is well-measured. However, as leaders, we have a responsibility to navigate through uncertainties in order to confidently and promptly come to a decision, communicate the goal and guide others toward it. We can do this through our own resources, knowledge and experience and/or collaboratively through the resources, knowledge and experience of others.

Also crucial is our ability to maintain composure in tough situations. A cool and confident demeanor helps to minimize anxiety in others. There are special circumstances that may call for a genuine and appropriate level of emotion. But in general, our ability to remain calm and focus on the business impact maximizes the influence we have on morale and employee effectiveness.

Being self-aware is especially important in difficult circumstances. When we're aware of ourselves becoming emotional, we may be able to shift our vantage point to calmly consider all available data and parties. Ultimately, our ability to calmly respond versus emotionally react will generate more opportunities to engage others instead of alienating them.

Though maintaining confidence and composure isn't always easy, the ability to demonstrate both, in any situation, creates invaluable opportunities to have a significant and positive impact as a leader, coach, facilitator and role model.

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