

Dr. Chaz Austin

Career Packaging & Marketing

Dr. Chaz's Tips on How to Lead and Manage People

I hold a Doctorate in Organizational Leadership from Pepperdine University. I have built and led teams. Unfortunately, I've also had far too many bosses during my career who had no clue about how to empower people.

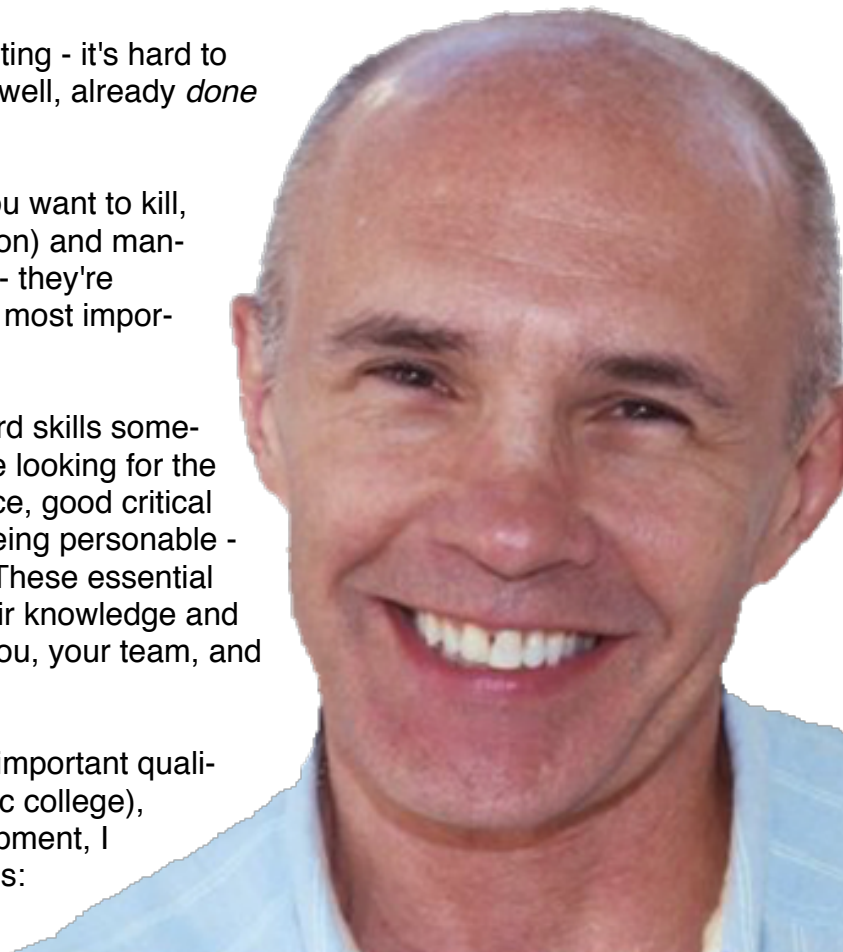
Leading and managing is a little like parenting - it's hard to teach people how to do it unless they've - well, already *done* it. But I've done it.

There are two kinds of bosses: the kind you want to kill, and the kind you'd kill *for*. Leadership (vision) and management (execution) are not about theory - they're about how to deal with and empower your most important asset - your people.

1. Hire great people. In addition to the hard skills someone needs in order to do the job, you're looking for the things that cannot be taught: intelligence, good critical thinking skills, a willingness to learn, being personable - and someone you can get along with. These essential character qualities - combined with their knowledge and experience - will make them win with you, your team, and your customers.

2. Create a job description. Put the most important qualities at the top. In my last job (at a music college), where I was Director of Career Development, I looked for three things in job candidates: experience in the music industry, higher education, and career training. You may not get everything you want.

Get *most* of it, and then train people in the rest. I was happy to get two out of three - and *did* - in each of the people I hired. Because of their personal qualities (see #1), it was easy to train them in what they lacked.



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3. Have your team be involved in the process of hiring new people. Don't play "boss" by forcing your choice on others. Your employees will have to live with this new person. If they didn't have any say in bringing them on board, you'll be injecting a virus into your environment. Viruses get rejected by the host.
4. *Train* your people. One of the dysfunctional characteristics of American business is that companies don't train people - they just throw them into work without mentoring, without even showing them where the land mines are buried. People want to do well. Guide them in understanding how to navigate the culture of your organization. The most important thing a new employee can learn is "how things work around here."
5. Everyone's different. Treat all your employees as individuals. What motivates one person may not necessarily motivate another.
6. Acknowledge your people. I thank my employees every day before they leave work. I know they do good work, but I want them to know I recognize and appreciate their efforts. And be authentic about it - people can smell a phony.
7. Show your appreciation - reward them in tangible ways, too: lunches, drinks after work, birthday and work anniversary celebrations, raises, bonuses, days off, etc. Trips to conferences and conventions are a great perk - everyone needs to get out of the office occasionally, no matter how good a work environment you've created.
8. Don't take yourself - or the job - too seriously. Unless you work in an E.R., no one is going to die. Have some perspective - and a sense humor - about your work environment. Send everyone home (including yourself) at the end of the day to have a life. The problems will still be there in the morning. I promise.
9. Your job is to handle problems, to be the calm center of the storm when they arise - which is constantly. See #8 when the problems start bothering you.
10. I hold a Doctorate in Organizational Leadership, and all theories of leadership and management can be reduced to four words: Don't Be An Asshole. Don't play "boss" and lord your position over your team. No need to be abusive - show some restraint.

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11. Always check your team's body language. It never lies. Ever notice how there are 12-Step Programs for alcoholism, drug dependency, gambling addiction, etc. - but none for workaholism? Companies encourage overwork - don't *you* do that. People tend to work too hard and too much, and their bodies rebel and then they get sick. Part of your job is to monitor your team's well-being. Encourage them to maintain balance in their lives. They'll often be harder on themselves than you could ever be. Be kind to them - and train them how to be kind to themselves.
12. You hired great people - *leave them alone to do their jobs*. Encourage their ideas. They're "on the ground," the infantry, so to speak, while you're somewhat removed from the day-to-day. They see things you don't (and vice versa). Be humble: they'll have ideas for improving process and workflow that would never have occurred to you. Embrace their ideas. Tweak those ideas as needed, but make it okay for them to suggest the outrageous.
13. The mantra needs to be: "How little work can we do?" (in other words, how efficiently can we use our time?). Let your team be responsible for the process (how things are done). You focus on quantifiable results. Work with your team to set goals they can accomplish - and win.

The role of a leader is that of a Gardener:

I create a safe environment for my team, and I protect and nurture that environment so they can grow and flourish.

If you like what you've read and need help with your team, click here to visit my website at CHAZAUSTIN.COM

Thanks!

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