

Six ways to be a great team leader

Know yourself

Self-knowledge is the foundation for realistic self-confidence. Understanding your own strengths, motivations, stressors and blind spots will help you to become aware of when you're getting out of balance.

Be consistent. If people know that your behaviour is dependable, they will perform better than if you blow hot and cold or display unpredictable moods.

Know your team and treat people with respect

Get to know what matters to each of your team members. Assume they are capable human beings and treat them as you'd want to be treated yourself.

Learn to listen

You need to have a clear sense of direction, but you can't realistically have all the answers. Get input from your team – their experience will help. Pay attention to the quietest people – don't give all the ground to those who shout loudest. Value different viewpoints for the insights they bring.

Micro management around how to produce results can really stress people. They will think you don't trust them, and you'll stifle their resourcefulness.

Encourage learning

When the team is doing something new, or when something goes wrong, encourage people to find the learning so that next time they will do it better.

Praise in public, criticise constructively and in private

Catch people doing things right and be generous with authentic public thanks. If someone is not meeting your standards, talk to them privately. Don't criticise individuals in front of others.

Handle weak performance without delay

Little annoys people more than seeing others get away with poor performance, and having to carry extra weight themselves as a result. Train and support all team members to succeed.

Be clear about what standards you expect and what the consequences of under-performance are. Be prepared to follow through if underperformance persists. Get help from your HR specialist to make sure you act fairly and legally.