



**IT'S THE
ACTIONS
THAT
MAKE IT HAPPEN**

WHAT ARE YOUR LEADERSHIP ACTIONS?

Be clear on what actions you need to take to bring your leadership to life.

You have to work hard on the “What” and “How”.

If we accept that at a high level there are three core objectives that will drive effective frontline leadership, we're off to a good start.

Of course, as important as having objectives is, it takes action to make things happen. To quote from a recent Simon Sinek dose of inspiration:

Words may inspire but only action creates change.

So let's look at some of the key actions frontline leaders should consider to bring their leadership to life. The actions and behaviours below are just some of those offered up by participants in workshops I have run over the past decade. Consider these in the context of the three-high level frontline leadership objectives:

1. ONE ON ONE RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACH TEAM MEMBER

Each of your team members is different. They may look a lot like each other and have similar roles and responsibilities, but don't take these similarities for granted, we are all very much individuals. Accordingly, leaders must regard each as an individual, respect their differences (and similarities) and work to understand

their strengths, weaknesses, capabilities, ambitions, motivation ... the list goes on. Bottom line is that as a frontline leader you must take the time to understand everyone on your team, who they are and what's important to them.

There are many ongoing activities a frontline leader should consider in the development of relationships with individual team members, and they can vary depending on your business and their specific roles and responsibilities. They include:

Observations

It's difficult, if not impossible, to effectively contribute to someone's development if you haven't observed them doing what they do. Imagine how difficult it would be to coach a tennis player, swimmer, golfer or any sportsperson if the coach didn't have firsthand knowledge of current performance. How would the coach know what they are doing well, what they need to work on, how to give specific feedback and advice on the finer points of their performance?

It's not fundamentally any different in business. Frontline leaders need to have a very clear understanding of how their team

members are doing what they do. Observing your team members in the game is essential.

Feedback

Feedback is a tool of continuous learning and is one of the best ways to support team members and help them in their performance. Feedback highlighting strengths contributes to a sense of confidence while constructive feedback on areas of improvement can (and should) be an opportunity to build buy-in from a team member on how they can positively grow their performance.

Consistent, timely, balanced, specific feedback is a must.

One on one conversations

Not surprisingly, having frequent interaction with people is a big factor in building relationships. Taking the time to check in with individual team members, deliver passing comments and specific feedback and generally staying connected on a person-to-person level helps your team members gain a better understanding of who you are and, importantly, what your expectations of each other are.

There are a range of topics and opportunities for one on one conversations, including performance conversations, which you need to consider as may be appropriate for your business and your team.

Coaching

To be an effective frontline leader in business you need to coach your people. It's a critical leadership competency. Coaching encourages learning and is how we equip our people with the tools, skills, and knowledge they need to be successful in their roles. In your role as a leader it's coaching that deals with team member development, growth, and performance. Coaching isn't training, it's about sharing information and supporting your team members in developing their own knowledge and skills.

Team members perform better when positively coached, as opposed to being constantly evaluated. Coaching creates an environment where team members feel supported and valued.

As a frontline leader, you need to understand what effective coaching is in the context of your business and your team, develop your skillset accordingly and put a disciplined coaching routine in place. Effective coaching is a combination of in-the-moment coaching combined with the right frequency of scheduled observation-based coaching sessions. Develop a coaching rhythm and continuously evolve it.

2. CONSISTENT ROLE MODELLING

A good start point when putting actions to the concept of role modelling is to think about how you can be the person you want your team members to be. You could be

excused for thinking *Monkey See, Monkey Do* is a little harsh, but combined with *Walk the Talk* they are two simple statements that make a point.

For things to change first I must change

Your every action and behaviour impacts and influences those you lead – and everyone else you encounter for that matter. As a frontline leader, you should be acutely aware of the messages you send by your actions and behaviours. What you do and how you do it says a lot about you, how you think about things and what's important to you. This can be a scary realisation for some people...

Some of the actions you should think about:

- How you react under pressure
- How you react to critical incidents
- The language you use
- How you refer to and talk about your customers
- How you refer to and talk about other members of staff – your team, management and peers
- How you give feedback
- How you seek and respond to feedback
- How you prioritise your activity
- How you apportion your discretionary time in your role
- Your punctuality
- Your appearance
- Your body language and mannerisms

3. EFFECTIVE TEAM DYNAMIC

A cohesive team dynamic is essential to drive performance. Bringing your team together on a regular basis for a variety of activities is important to ensure communication across your team is fluid

and that team members appreciate that the world (in their role, in your business) is bigger than them alone. It's an opportunity to share best practice, understand what everyone else is doing and understand how they fit and sit within the team.

Some examples of team activity that we see as best practice in most business environments:

- Team meetings
- Sales meetings
- Day starts – also known as huddles, kick starts, daily start-ups
- Focus sessions
- Product or practice presentations
- Themed morning teas
- Friday drinks or otherwise culturally accepted social get togethers

Of course, these leadership actions and behaviours are just some of those we see as effective in businesses of all sizes that we work with, across many industry sectors. While there are variations of these, and of course other activities leaders undertake that are specific to their relative businesses, it's the focus on **what** you do and **how** you do it effectively and consistently that will bring your leadership to life.

Remember, its action that drives results.

Have you considered what specific actions you should be taking to ensure you are bringing your leadership to life? What key **actions and behaviours** would you add to this list?

Interested to see comments and I invite your feedback.

About the author

Greg Zimbulis has an extensive background in business development, leadership, and management across a broad range of industries. As a senior behavioural change specialist and consultant for the past twelve years, Greg works as project director, business consultant, facilitator, coach and mentor with a wide range of organisations at all levels from frontline teams to C-level executives.

Greg works with leaders and their teams on all things that Bring Leadership to life.

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