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The Personal Attributes of Leaders

The athletics director is the head coach of a team – a master teacher and leader who has the ability to organize and inspire a group of people to achieve common goals. The athletics department team will vary in size with regard to numbers of employees, size of budget and age of student-athletes (middle school, high school and college programs). The goals of the team will vary according to the competitive level of the program and its related definition of success. However, every effective athletics director is a highly organized person who is committed to bringing the best out of his or her players and pursuing the highest level of program excellence within each philosophical context.

Leadership is a complex composite of commendable personal attributes and ways of acting that result in employees and student-athletes believing in the leader's judgment and direction and wanting to execute or fulfill the leader's assignments and expectations. Is there such a thing as a person being "a natural" leader, like a natural athlete or a gifted artist or musician whose talent appears to come easily? To an extent, the answer is yes. Leadership qualities come more easily to some rather than others. However, all of the following personal attributes of a good leader can be developed by intent.

Personal Attributes of Leaders

Skilled Communicator. Able to clearly explain tasks and inspire others with varying backgrounds and perspectives.

Confidence. Poise, clear thinking under pressure, conviction in the course being set, and decisiveness are characteristics that earn the respect and loyalty of others.

Fairness. Treats people fairly, makes decisions consistent with clearly expressed standards of right and wrong. When handling disputes, the leader's resolution engenders a feeling of justice, equal treatment and evenhandedness.

Generosity. A 'giver' rather than 'taker'; a giver of time, knowledge and caring.

Honesty. Truthful and openly self-critical with regard to acknowledging own errors.

Humility. Modest about his or her abilities and always respectful of others.

Mastery. Makes decisions and demonstrates a high personal commitment to acquisition of knowledge, skill mastery and thoughtful action.

Passion. Performs work and play and approaches every task with passion and enthusiasm.

Optimism. Believes that everyone has something important to contribute to the success of the organization; creates an environment that is positive, hopeful and buoyant – a place of working, playing and human interaction that employees and student-athletes enjoy and value.

Selflessness. Puts the needs, interests and wishes of others before his or her own self interest. When the leader asks someone to do something, that person knows that what is being asked is for the larger good or good of another.

Trustworthy. Builds trust and confidence by acting in team member's best interest and not revealing confidential information.

-- Donna Lopiano, Ph.D., President, Sports Management Resources

Topics

Leadership

Philosophy/Vision/Mission/Goals

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