

Colin Powell Leadership Principles

Summary: Colin Powell leadership is a very no nonsense approach to leadership, but at the same time very personable. He was a four star general and he did everything possible to break down his rank barriers to deal with the individual.

You Can't Make Everyone Happy

Colin Powell was not afraid to make people mad. Strong leaders intentionally do what they can to cause change. If you are worried about making everyone happy then action becomes difficult. Change is required to stay competitive.

Fearful people don't take initiative or responsibility. You have to shock them out of their complacency. Colin Powell believes in rewarding the best people and not coddling to the mediocre. People make the difference, not systems or plans or any other tool or strategy. Good people have the best ideas and are able to execute their plans.

Ideas Make A Big Difference

Ideas or lack of ideas can be the difference between success and failure. Any good military leader understands the importance taking serious the commander on the ground. The commander on the ground knows most about the current situation.

Communication is required for the effective sharing of ideas. Powell focused on equal communication with his subordinates. The goal is to build an open culture where people feel equal, where they are not intimidated by rank or title.

Manage Your Ego Properly

Leaders need a healthy ego or confidence. This idea is about change and innovation. It is always about learning new and better ways of doing things. If leaders are so cemented in their ways of doing things, they will not endure long-term.

Intentionally Push The Limit

High performers and great leaders have the attitude that if you have not been unequivocally told you can't do something and you think it will work then do it. Great leaders are not passive. Good leaders create an environment where people feel a duty and obligation to push the envelope.

Complacency Kills

Great leaders are militant about killing complacency. It is true that past successes build confidence. Past successes can also be your weakness. Success can cause delusion and arrogance. You can begin to think that your current success will never end or that it is

impossible to fall. Always ask why you do the things you do, what you are doing right, wrong and what can be improved.

Challenge The Authorities

The authorities can be wrong and make ill-advised decisions and give bad advice. Every follower has a duty to challenge the leader when he believes the leader is wrong.

People Are The Key

Colin Powell places a high priority on people and gives them a lot of responsibility to solve their own problems. He believes everyone has an important job, and he also has high expectations of his people. He realizes that jobs sometimes become obsolete and will try and cross train people when that happens. He doesn't tolerate loafing. Some feel they can get into a position and coast until retirement. Colin expects everyone especially in high positions to be active. He will push the high position loafers out of their position to give way for younger and more eager individuals.

Colin understands there is a difference when picking people based on their resume and their character. Resume's are only a small part of it. He knows you can train most people to do any job skill. Training someone to have high levels of character is not so easy. Skill sets become obsolete.

Pay Attention To Details

Details help you determine the best course of action and implement it in the best possible way. Paying attention to details does not give you the permission to fall into the analysis paralysis syndrome.

Conclusion: The principles of Colin Powell leadership are people directed and results driven. He cares about people and he also expects performance.

Reference: The Leadership Secrets of Colin Powell, by Oren Harari.

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