

# IDENTIFYING + MENTORING FUTURE PRINCIPLED LEADERS

PRINCIPLED LEADERSHIP TOOLKIT



## Introduction

Business leaders can be so busy that they can't find time to think about the future. But time or not, the future is coming! As your business changes and grows, you'll need more leaders to manage for success.

To maintain the ethical standards you've fostered, you want to choose future leaders who will honor your values. In this Toolkit, you'll learn how to identify those with principled leadership potential and how to mentor those individuals to take on new challenges. That way, when the time comes to add to change the leadership roster, your new principled leaders will be ready.

**WE MAKE A LIVING BY  
WHAT WE GET, WE MAKE  
A LIFE BY WHAT WE GIVE**

Winston Churchill

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# FUTURE LEADERSHIP FLOWCHART

Choosing future leaders doesn't require a top human resources team or a formal mentoring program...you simply need a company culture that **values principled leaders**. The following steps will help find and develop your company's upcoming superstars.



**1. IDENTIFY FUTURE LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL.**

**2. MENTOR AND DEVELOP FUTURE LEADERS.**

**3. PROMOTE FROM WITHIN.**

**THE FUNCTION OF LEADERSHIP IS TO  
PRODUCE MORE LEADERS**

Ralph Nader



## FINDING PRINCIPLED LEADERS

You may think you know your strongest and most ethical leadership prospects, but take time to double-check your initial choices. This list will help you work through different profiles to find real potential

### 1. Who has leadership skills?

Many people have excellent job skills, but that doesn't necessarily mean that they have leadership abilities. The "Peter Principle" states that most people are promoted their level of incompetence. In other words, companies promote people based on their job performance on into "higher level" positions for which they have no talent. Being good at a job does not necessarily mean being good at managing others doing that job. Instead, look for leadership potential, including:

- Ambition to grow and improve.
- Capacity to take and apply constructive feedback.
- Ability to communicate and influence people.
- Willingness to help others succeed.
- Confidence to make well-informed decisions.
- Talent for team-building.

## 2. Who promotes the greater good?

While it is satisfying to help someone build their career, it can be frustrating to identify a potential manager only to have them leave the company. You can ask people about their interest, but actions speak louder than words. Look for those who contribute to the good of the entire organization. Rather than watching those who focus only with the tasks at hand, seek out employees who share and implement ideas to improve systems or safety or efficiency. These workers show a larger commitment to the organization.

## 3. Who stands up for what's right?

Whether it's with customers or colleagues, who in your company is willing to take a stand on important issues? Instead of going with the flow, a leader is willing to take a risk on making a necessary change.

## 4. Who has a history of leadership?

Look at job performance in your company, but also look at the prospect's history. Did they rise to leadership roles elsewhere? How did they do in those jobs? Do they lead volunteer efforts or other outside activities? This type of history can show both talent and interest in leadership.

## 5. Who is adaptable?

When circumstances change suddenly, who is able to keep it together and change gears quickly? Leadership requires flexibility, and employees who stay positive and productive on shifting ground are potential future leaders.

## MENTORING TECHNIQUES

Once you have identified possible principled leaders for the future, take the following steps to develop their potential.

- **Schedule Recurring Meetings**

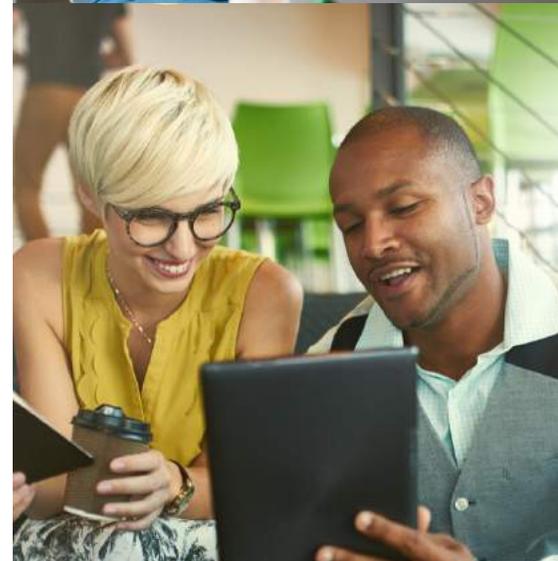
Mentoring requires frequent contact over a long period. An easy way to work with a mentee is to set a recurring meeting. Maybe it's lunch once a week, or a morning session every other Wednesday. Try to make the schedule stick so that you have consistent time to work together.

- **Ask "What would you do?"**

One useful technique is to describe a problem that needs to be solved and ask what the mentee would do. This could be a pending situation, something from the news, or even a hypothetical. The response may not take into account all potential consequences, allowing the mentor to ask follow up questions. This will help the mentee expand consideration of stakeholders and follow-on effects.

- **Challenge & Coach**

As the mentorship relationship grows, give the mentee some projects that will stretch their abilities. Don't give detailed instructions; instead, let them figure it out with only minor coaching from you.



## MENTORING TECHNIQUES

- **Let them make mistakes.**

While the mentor coaches the mentee, not all mistakes can or should be avoided. Mistakes are critical lessons. If you give a mentee a project, give them some room to try different things and see what works. If the mentee makes a mistake, use it as a learning opportunity. Why didn't it work? What would you do differently next time? How can you remedy the mistake now?

- **Build ethical resolve.**

The entire mentorship should be grounded in ethical principles. Work with the mentee to understand the company's values. Why did the company pick them? How do the organization's policies and practices reflect its values? Does the mentee see any inconsistencies or opportunities in the company's ethical stance? As the mentee works on projects, talk specifically about the ethical components and outcomes from that work.

The mentor should **model ethical decision-making** and build that capacity in the mentee. If the mentee will be a leader in your company, after all, they need to **understand and apply the fundamental principles** on which you built the business.



# PROMOTING FROM WITHIN



If you've worked with a mentee for a long time, you may wonder when you know that person is ready for the next step. Here are signs that your potential leader is ready to step up.

# PROMOTING FROM WITHIN: WHO'S READY?

## 1. Focusing on values.

When mentoring a principled leader, you'll want to see demonstrated and almost automatic application of ethics to each decision. When your mentee routinely takes ethical principles into consideration, they've developed "moral muscles" that are ready to carry them forward.

## 2. Asking for new challenges.

If your mentee no longer waits for projects, but asks for (or even suggests) new initiatives that fit well with business goals, consider moving them forward. You don't want to wait so long that the mentee into whom you have invested so much looks for a new challenge elsewhere.

## 3. Showing commitment to the organization.

When your mentee talks about working for the good of the team, the betterment of co-workers, and the success of the organization rather than about their next career goal, that shows a commitment to your company that is worth investing in.

## 4. Earning respect.

When your mentee takes on new challenges with a variety of co-workers, notice how others view them. Does your mentee receive respect from both managers and co-workers? Is the mentee seen as an asset to the organization? Do people ask for their opinion? High regard from others can show readiness to move up.

## 5. Punching above their weight.

Look at the work that your potential leader takes on. If they are already doing higher-level work than their job calls for, it's time to put their position in line with their output and abilities.

## 6. Believing in the mission.

If a mentee shows a strong belief in the mission of the company -- its methods, its values, its products and services -- then it could be time to bring that level of conviction into the light. You can pay people to work for you, but you can't pay them to love the organization. Finding that is a rare gift.