

5 Steps to Crafting Your Leadership Philosophy

Having a clearly defined leadership philosophy is important because stepping up as a leader in your organization is both a privilege and a responsibility, and the risks and consequences of failed leadership are amplified. Your leadership philosophy is meant to guide your decisions around how you lead others.

Use the table below to come up with your own leadership philosophy and align your actions with your beliefs. Invite feedback as you develop your statement, laminate it, put it on your wall, share it with others as appropriate, update it occasionally, and let it serve as a filter as you deal with major leadership challenges or decisions.

1 Reflect on past leadership experiences.

What exemplary leaders or leadership practices have you observed or experienced that made a positive difference for you and for the organization?

How did those strong leaders go about making a positive difference? How did they deal with challenges along the way?

What was the added value of having strong leadership in place?

What are the impacts of weak, ineffective, or damaging leadership? How does it look and feel?

2 Determine your mission and purpose.

What do you hope will be the main impacts of your leadership for individuals and the organization?

How will your contribution as a leader support the effectiveness and well-being of the individuals you lead and the organization's ability to achieve its mission?

3 Set expectations for yourself and your team.

What's your leadership style?

What do you expect in terms of communication, collaboration, and feedback?

How will you keep yourself and your team accountable?

What are your performance expectations for your team?

What is your work ethic like? What work-related behaviours will you expect from others?

4 Identify your core values and character traits.

What are the core values and character traits that you intend to consistently demonstrate as you carry out your work and interact with people?

5 Set your own goals.

What are your personal goals for the coming year?

What support will you receive in your efforts to develop as a leader? E.g., further training, coaching, mentoring, reading, etc.

What do you hope others will say about you one year from now if asked about the quality of the leadership you provide and how you are doing?