



Olumuyiwa Akinrole Oludayo



The 10 Practices of Leadership

muyiwaoludayo.com

There are many postulations as to what a leader should do. Many of which place both realistic and unrealistic expectations on the leader. In this article, I identify ten pivots where leadership effectiveness and success revolves: Lay the Tracks, Empower the Team, Articulate the Vision, Deliver Results, Evaluate Outcomes, Reward Performance, Support Worthy Causes, Harness Resources, Inspire Greatness and Promote Values.

These focal points are not listed chronologically but they represent the core practices of a leader's engagement in taking on the responsibility of influencing others towards the realisation of a shared and mutually beneficial end.

1. **Lay the Tracks.** The path to corporate and personal success oftentimes are rough and unpredictable. The person who sits in a role of a leader is faced with the challenge of helping to navigate through these rough and uncertain path to achieve the aspirations of the organization and the people that work within. To lay the track suggests that the leader show the way by walking the path and not directing others to do same without taking part in the process. To lay the path is to champion a worthy cause that others will find inspiring enough to follow and commit themselves to. To lay the track is simply about being exemplary for others to emulate. Leaders that lay the track leave clues for followers to tread upon. Leaders that lay the track provide guide for their followers to reference as they take personal decisions in their respect engagements. In laying the tracks, the leader is conscientious, ensuring that what he leaves behind as clues is easy to imitate, replicate and duplicate. The responsibility of a leader in laying the tracks is to set the people and the organization in a position that is enabling for them to realise their aspirations.



2. Empower the Team. The legitimacy of the leader is what enables him to give authority to others to perform their function. No matter how ideal and realistic a suggestion may be for an organization, it is the responsibility of the leader to permit its integration in the system. The leader certifies that an individual is qualified to execute a task on behalf of the organization by virtue of the authorisation given to him. In empowering the team, the leader improves the capacity of his followers. He opens them up to new opportunities that increases their confidence level on the job. In empowering the team, the leader makes his teammates responsible for the outcome of their engagements. In delegation, he makes them accountable for their actions. The leader ensures that his teammates take full advantage of their rights and privileges that hitherto might have been dormant and inactive. In empowering the team, the leader removes stumbling blocks in the path of his followers. Where the stumbling block is unmovable, he influences their perspective to see it as a stepping stone. The freedom to express potential is evident in an empowered team.



3. Articulate the Vision: Communication is an essential part of leadership success. The leader must show coherence in all of his expressions. He cannot afford to be ambiguous in detailing expectations towards the pursuit of a share interest. The leader must know how to navigate through complex situations without further worsening the situation by virtue of his incomprehensible nature. The leader has a responsibility to express things that are lucid, cogent and vivid. He must be able to point his followers to things that are tangible and not ephemeral. He must know that it is often not what he says to others that matter rather it is what they hear within them. He must ensure that his intended meaning aligns with their perceived meaning otherwise they cannot be enlisted to achieve joint success. The expressions of the leader must be illuminating enough to provide guide in times of doubts and uncertainty. In every communication the leader has within our outside the organization, he must be persuasive in order to get a buy-in from his teammates. His choice of words must be carefully crafted as he is expected to be sensitive to his internal and external customers. The communication pattern of the leader is expected to be meaningful; one that directs others to the pursuit of a worthy cause. It must also be compelling enough to encourage others to stick on with great excitement as to what the future can deliver.



4. **Deliver Results:** This point doesn't make the leader the sole producer of results, rather, it makes him responsible for galvanising every contributing part of the system to deliver according to their abilities. To deliver results means that the leader must achieve targets, realise goals, fulfil obligations and attain heights amongst many others. In delivering results, the leader must embrace the principle of cause and effect, noting that results are simply the consequences of deliberate and intentional actions. In delivering results, the leader is living up to the expectation of his appointment. The leader must position himself as a rallying point for answers, solutions, inspiration and the needed direction for corporate success. The buck stops at his feet when it comes to showing the ability to realise targets and meet obligations. No matter what the leader does, all his actions must culminate in outcomes that are mutually beneficial to all those that have invested their time, energy and resources in pursuit of worthy ideals that promotes the quality of life and the dignity of humanity.



5. Evaluate Outcomes: All outcomes require a honest and unbiased assessment. Every result needs to be measured by its contribution to the overall goal. This is one major responsibility of the leader. No matter how good a result might be, it may not hold much value to the pressing needs of the hour for the organization. No matter how harrowing an outcome might be, it may not have caused colossal damage to the brand as it may have appeared on its first assessment. Every evaluation seeks to find out the extent of contribution every input of the organization has had to the obvious outcomes. Outcomes are signs of effectiveness of inputs towards the realisation of goals. An evaluation is deemed necessary because it helps to determine the significance of an engaged approach to achieving results. Leaders must do this from a strategic viewpoint considering all contributing units within the organization. In performing this appraisal, the leader must employ methodical approaches such that arbitrariness will be reduced or eliminated. Evaluation of outcomes leaves the leader with the burden of investigating her investments.



6. Reward Performance: It is the leaders responsibility to assign tasks to his followers as well as set standards of performance for which their efforts and results will be appraised. Following an evaluation, an outcome should be deserving of a recompense where it meets the valued contribution of the organization. The leader must pay attention to the contributions of his teammates in a bid to know who is worth recognising for their stellar performance and contribution to the organization. A reward is a good avenue for reinforcing values and virtues that the leader wants permeated within the organization. Rewards here doesn't necessarily refer to positive outcomes, it also covers those individuals whose performance is below the expected outcome. Such individuals must get the stick as a reward for their abysmal conduct. There are several ways to reward performance, least of which is a simple recognition of effort before others of a good job done. Improvements are enhanced by rewards and poor performances find inspiration to turn out greater results during the next appraisal window.



7. Support Worthy Causes: There are noble causes requiring the endorsement of the leader. Every leader must be able to identify within their sphere of influence opportunities to do good work besides one that is primarily centred on making money. Worthy causes are special undertakings by individuals that seeks to promote a principle or influence a practice. It is the leaders responsibility to know which cause(s) can be supported. In providing support for worthy causes, leaders must look away from themselves as fountains of solutions to desired societal or organizational problems. They must focus on the people around them in order to champion and advocate for the things they are orchestrating. In providing support, leaders need not be constrained to material assistance. There are many other ways to throw your weight behind an activity or a programme that you consider worthy. Look for ways to connect your people to opportunities that enhances their chances of success in the endeavours. You can use your platform to amplify their plans, programmes and initiatives. To support a worthy cause will demand that a leader look to any of the following: underwriting or subsidising the cost of a project, defending a cause by lending a voice to its objectives, and give approvals for the execution of a project among many others.



8. Harness Resources: One vital responsibility of leaders is to know how to coordinate the strength within their spheres of influence. There are numerous personal and organizational resources at the disposal of the leader. The leader must know how to gather, manage, and multiply these resources to produce goods and services that will impact humanity and increase the quality of life. Leaders must know how to leverage on the credentials of the people within their network. They should know how to employ and deploy the unique attributes of the people around them by engaging them in duties that are a perfect fit for their personality. Leaders must identify the supply of multiple skills distributed along conceptual, technical and human relation skills that can be exploited to deliver valuable services to others. Every leader that needs to deliver results must capture the knowledge of the people in the social or corporate community. Leaders need to draw on the experience of those within their network to show possibilities of internal realities. In a corporate setting, the leader must know how to ensure proper engagement of people. The leader must see people as creators, innovators, and disruptors. The people have what it takes to initiate, innovate and replicate valuable things. Every leader must know how to generate, keep, and multiply their financial resources. The ability to spot opportunities that have commercial value is a focal point of leadership expression in the corporate world.



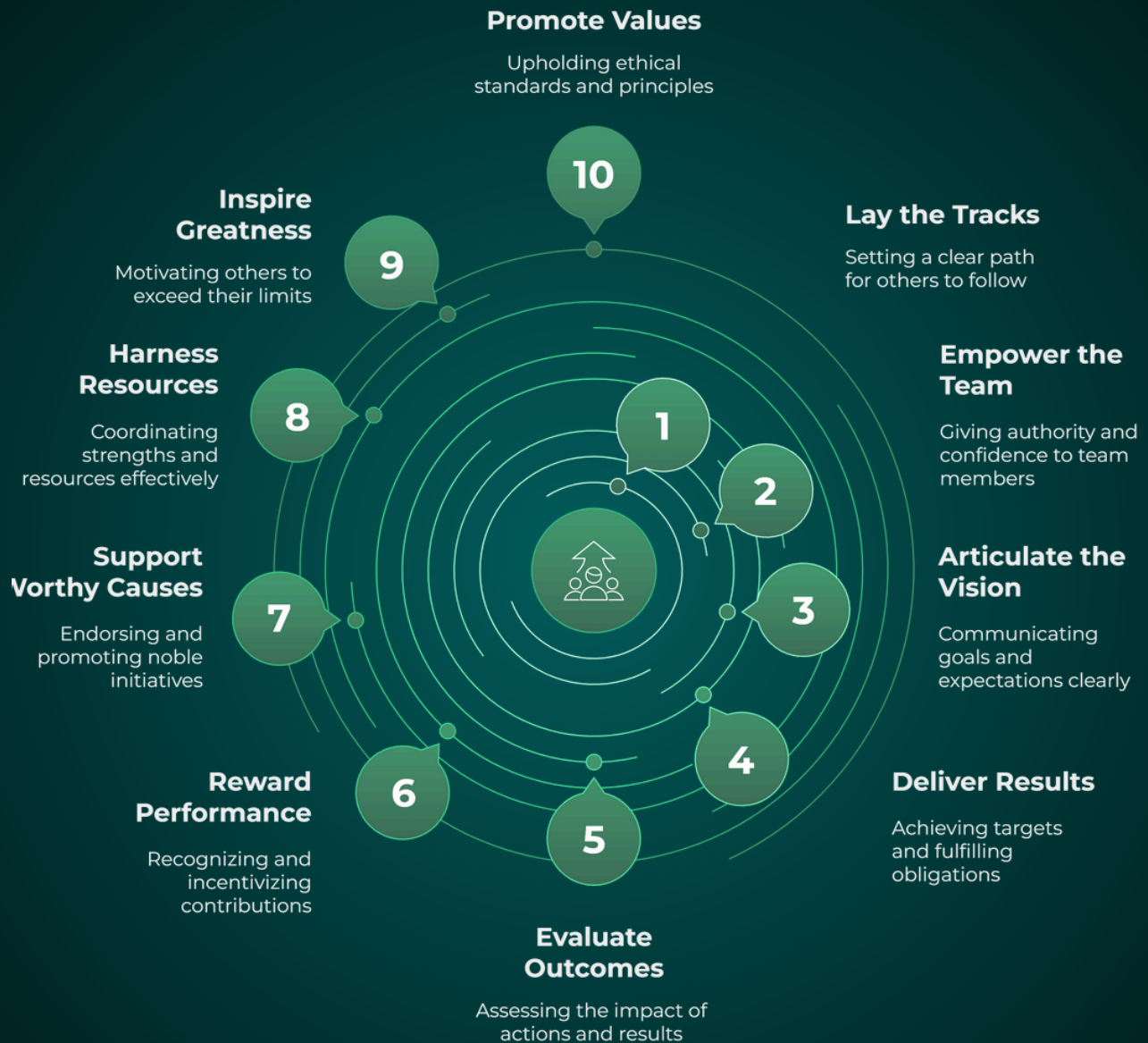
9. **Inspire Greatness:** Every leader has got to acknowledge the seed of greatness in those around them. We all have got something that makes us unique and reputable. There is an air of brilliance and genius in the things we can do. Many people are still ignorant of the fact that they have got value which others are seeking to experience. Situations and circumstances have forced many people to ignore majesty of their capacity. It is the responsibility of the leader to stimulate others to go beyond their limits in performance of great feats. Great leaders are motivators; they know how to encourage others to make progress in spite of the mess their lives have been through. They take responsibility to ensure progress does not cut short the assurance of success. They incentivise their team so they can put in more effort and release themselves to a worthy project. They know how to move people from the obscurity of mediocrity to the discovery of mastery. They are like cheerleaders, telling others to explore opportunities, create new approaches, initiate novel patterns, improve processes, replicate successful designs, and terminate limiting beliefs. Any leader that will be successful must always act as a prompter, letting others know the time to make moves that will yield great outcomes. They must serve as the triggers to the release of potential. They look for ways to induce others to do noteworthy things. Anyone that will take on leadership roles must be ready and willing to awaken the giant in those around them. There is some element of latent grandeur and magnificence in every human and it takes a leader to ensure that what one is oblivious of must become obvious to all.



10. **Promote Values:** The enduring work of any leader is anchored on values. Many are the dilemma that a leader faces but his principles will guide him in making right decisions. The assessment of opportunities is conducted through the prism of values. Leaders must shun moral relativism and situational ethics. They must be active supporters of a set of fundamental beliefs that influence action and disposition. Leaders know that without values, priorities cannot be well set. The absence of values culminates in the inability of people to ascertain what is important to the cause that they are part of. Every meaningful leader must support and actively encourage the development of a guiding philosophy that helps the team to determine valid pursuits. Values influence investments of personal and corporate resources. It is the leaders responsibility to help further the progress of things that are good, desirable, and noteworthy. The leader must be the champion and chief advocate of the acceptable standards for conduct.



Essential Leadership Practices



Final Word

The principles and laws of effective leadership find expression in these practice areas. These are the expectations of leadership. They constitute the tasks every leader is under obligation to perform while in alignment with identified principles and established laws.





Profile for Dr. Olumuyiwa Akinrole Oludayo

Dr. Olumuyiwa Akinrole Oludayo is a transformative leader and consultant with a distinguished career across higher education, human resource management, and organisational development. His professional journey reflects an enduring commitment to influencing impactful change and advancing practices that drive growth and excellence at both individual and organisational levels.

With a strong foundation in academia, Dr. Oludayo has contributed extensively to higher education as a Member of Faculty for Human Resource Management, guiding the next generation of professionals and leaders. His roles as Dean of Students, Registrar, and Director of the African Leadership Development Centre have enabled him to influence institutional leadership and capacity-building across Africa, crafting learning environments that are centred on holistic development and resilience.

As a Research Fellow with the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria, Dr. Oludayo has made notable contributions to HR practice in Nigeria. His publications and development of frameworks have significantly shaped best practices within the industry, equipping HR professionals with contextually relevant strategies that address both contemporary and emerging challenges.

Organisations that engage Dr. Oludayo's consulting expertise benefit from a wealth of experience and a bespoke approach to people management. Through his work, he has supported a diverse range of organisations in optimising their talent strategies, enhancing leadership capacity, and creating resilient teams. His consulting work is marked by a commitment to solutions that are analytically robust and deeply aligned with an organisation's unique culture and objectives.

By partnering with Dr. Oludayo, organisations gain access to innovative approaches to talent development and organisational effectiveness. His strategic guidance encourages a culture of resilience, adaptability, and continuous improvement. His proven ability to integrate strategic insight with a people-centred approach makes him an invaluable asset for organisations striving for sustainable growth and a competitive edge.

In bridging the realms of academia, research, and practical consulting, Dr. Oludayo offers a holistic perspective that is both visionary and results-driven. His contributions go beyond enhancing performance; they cultivate lasting organisational value, enabling businesses to thrive through a stronger, more cohesive approach to human capital management.

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