

# Talk Like a Leader

## What Every Employee Needs to Hear

### Vision

**Message: "I have a vision for the organization."**

Key Communication Phrases:

- **Be Inspiring:** Here's what we can accomplish together.
- **Be Focused:** How does this fit with our vision or strategy?
- **Be Action-Oriented:** Here's what you can do and why you should do it.

### Competence

**Message: "I have the skills to carry out the vision."**

Key Communication Phrases:

- **Be Decisive:** No, and here's why.
- **Be Direct:** Who is going to own this?
- **Be Accountable:** That was my fault, and I accept full responsibility.
- **Be Probing:** Is there a better way? Why? How?

### Relationships

**Message: "I know and care about you."**

Key Communication Phrases:

- **Be Caring:** How are you?
- **Be Trustworthy:** You have my word.
- **Be Authentic:** I was wrong. I'm sorry.
- **Be Humble:** I don't know.

### Support

**Message: "I want to help you."**

Key Communication Phrases:

- **Be Supportive:** How can I help you?
- **Be Appreciative:** You're doing a great job. You are making a difference.
- **Be Constructive:** I have some feedback for you.
- **Be Thoughtful:** Let me think about that for a while.

### How to Engage Employees

- Show your passion—others won't be excited about achieving the vision if you aren't yourself.
- Use "we, us, together" and similar inclusive phrases.
- Describe the success of achieving the vision in terms of how it will benefit employees.

### How to Demonstrate Trust

- Tell the truth.
- Keep confidential information confidential.
- At the same time, don't be secretive.
- Hold yourself to the highest ethical standards.
- Use your words and actions to build others up.
- Show trust to earn trust.

### How to Apologize

- Don't delay and definitely don't cover up.
- Be sincere with your words, tone of voice, and body language.
- Be specific about what you're apologizing for.
- Stop and listen; allow the other person to respond.
- Find a way to make it right.
- Don't make the same mistake again.

### How to Praise Employees

- Praise immediately following event or behavior.
- Be sincere.
- Praise for something specific. Vague praise is perceived as less meaningful.
- Proactively look for employees' successes.
- Recognize and reward in a way that is meaningful to the recipient.
- Celebrate group accomplishments together.

### How to Give Constructive Feedback

- Be specific.
- Provide observations, not interpretations.
- Tell them what they should do, not merely what they shouldn't.
- Avoid the word "but."