

# Leadership 101



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## A Brief Interview With Dr. Robert Hogan

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**L**eadership is one of the most important topics in the social, behavioral, and organizational sciences. When good leadership prevails, organizations and people prosper. Bad leadership is almost always accompanied by inevitable bankruptcies, corporate corruption, and business disasters. Yet, according to Dr. Robert Hogan, the keys to effective leadership are still largely misunderstood. In the following interview, Hogan, answers several common questions regarding effective leadership.

### **What is leadership?**

Leadership is *not* being in charge; many people who are in charge of teams and organizations are either lucky or are good politicians and have no talent for leadership. Leadership should be defined as the ability to build and maintain a high-performing team that bests the competition. In turn, leadership should be evaluated in relation to the performance of the team.

## **Leadership should be defined in terms of the ability to build and maintain a high-performing team, and evaluated in terms of the performance of the team.**

### **What influences good leadership?**

Being able to evaluate the talents of the team members to be sure the right people are on the team, the wrong people are off the team, and the right people are in the right positions. Good leadership also involved developing a good strategy for the team, so that it can outperform the competition.

### **How can we measure corporate leadership?**

The best way to measure leadership in corporations is in terms of the performance of the team or unit of which the leader is in charge. The second best way to measure leadership is to ask the members of the team to evaluate the performance of their leader. Subordinates' evaluations of leaders are a good proxy or substitute for measures of overall team performance.

### **How can we identify and grow corporate leaders?**

The wrong way to identify leaders is to ask the senior people which junior leaders they like. The typical high potential program is more about politics than talent. The quickest, most cost effective and most objective way to identify and grow leaders is by using a systematic assessment process. Well-validated assessments can be used to identify leadership potential and to give

the potential leaders feedback regarding their strengths and developmental needs.

### **Are men better leaders than women?**

Men are not better leaders than women. There are as many incompetent male leaders as there are incompetent female leaders. When women are good, they are just as good as men; when they are bad, they are just as bad as men.

### **Is there any shift in managing younger leaders? Are their values different from their bosses?**

Good values are good for business; bad values are bad for business. Some older people have good values, some have bad values. Some younger people have good values, some have bad values. Working hard and wanting to do a good job is important for young people and older people. Everyone, young and old, needs to understand customer service. Integrity is as important for younger people as it is for older people. Being a good colleague and good team player is as important for younger workers as it is for older workers. The strange haircuts, tattoos, and clothing styles that young people prefer are irrelevant to job performance.

### **What is leadership failure?**

If a leader gets fired, that is failure. If the team performs poorly, that is failure. If the team members hate their leader and refuse to work for him/her, that is failure. If the team has high rates of absenteeism, turnover, and accidents, and low levels of productivity and morale, and poor ratings for customer service, that is failure.

### **What causes leadership failure?**

Leadership failure results from a leader being unable to build and maintain a high performing team. This is usually

because the leader: (a) is untrustworthy; (b) makes bad decisions; (c) lacks competence in and knowledge of the business; (d) has no vision for the team. Leaders who lie, steal, cheat, play favorites, bully their subordinates, and are unable to control their emotions are usually seen as untrustworthy, the most important factor contributing to leadership failure.

### **Can leadership failure be prevented?**

The best way to prevent leadership failure is to promote people into leadership positions who have some talent for leadership in the first place. The best way to evaluate leadership potential is to ask people who have worked for the person in question. The most cost-effective, quickest, and most objective way to evaluate leadership potential is with well validated psychological assessments.

## **Well-validated assessments can be used to identify leadership potential and to give the potential leaders feedback regarding their strengths and developmental needs.**

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*Dr. Robert Hogan, founder of Hogan Assessment Systems, is recognized as an international authority on personality assessment, leadership, and organizational effectiveness. He has authored more than 300 journal articles, chapters and books, and is widely credited with demonstrating how personality factors influence organizational effectiveness.*