
A Successful Leader Fulfills Roles

The following was partially taken from the July / August, 1992 issue of the *Direct Line* publication:

According to a practical management newsletter, research indicates four basic requirements to be a successful leader:

1. The leader must be perceived as “**one of us.**” Members should see the leader as being the same kind of person they are, not an outsider.
2. The leader should be perceived as “**most of us.**” The leader should express and practice the norms and values of the group’s members.
3. The leader should be perceived as “**the best of us.**” The leader should be very capable, or at least better than the group’s members, in getting the group to carry out its tasks. The leader needn’t have more task expertise than each team member, but he should be clearly able to harness their expertise to obtain desired results.
4. The leader must “**fit the follower’s expectations.**” Leaders gain more respect and cooperation when they behave as the members *expect* their leaders to. Expectations vary, but they often include being fair and firm, as well as approachable and considerate.

As directors, how well do we fulfill these leadership characteristics? Do we do all we can to not be an outsider who “knows more than the guys on the risers?” If we approach our chapter meetings with the right attitude about our role and how we fit in with the guys on the risers, it will take us a long way to success. However, if we come in with the “all knowing” mentality, a wedge will be driven between you and the members of the chapter very quickly. Our approach to leadership and our relationship with the men is often more important than your musical knowledge.

That being said, as the director of your chapter, it is your responsibility to be very capable of “job.” If you are lucky enough to have a great music team, make sure you utilize each one to their fullest capacity. If you are not lucky enough to have skilled music team members, it is your job to get them the necessary training to become better musicians and teachers of barbershop. Effective leaders understand they cannot do it on their own. That is a true statement anywhere you go, but especially true in our world of barbershop chapters!

Perception is reality! You must conduct yourself as a leader all the time. Whether you are standing directly in front of your chapter or if you are singing tags at a convention without your chapter guys around, you are the leader of your chapter and must conduct yourself accordingly. This isn’t to suggest that you cannot be yourself. However, make sure you are aware that eyes are always watching. Be available for your men. Talk to them about non-barbershop activities in their lives. Be interested in what happens between Tuesday nights. Having the respect of your guys will make your job much easier. Lead with passion, heart, and direction and you will enjoy the results.