

5 Investment Strategies for Leadership Equity

When you walk into a leadership opportunity, you go with a little bit of equity by virtue of your position and the inevitable honeymoon period during which those you lead will let you get by with just a bit more than they will a decade later, but you have to be very careful with that equity. Every decision you make, and every risk you lead your organization to take will require an investment of some of your leadership equity (the trust people place in you).

Make good decisions – your equity grows. Make poor ones, you lose and it's nearly impossible to lead when you're bankrupt of influence. As a Pastor put it whom I was recently listening to, "Choose the right color carpet today, the congregation may let you relocate them tomorrow."

So how do you handle the equity you have?

Risk It, Don't Horde It

Jesus told a parable about three investors, one of whom buried his lent wealth instead of risking it – he got in big trouble! The two who earned a return were entrusted with greater opportunities. You can't walk by faith without taking risks.

Calculate, then Calculate Again

I used to apologize for making decisions slowly. I don't anymore because I remember my grandfather's great carpentry wisdom, "Measure once, cut twice; measure twice, cut once." When you think you've prayed it through and thought of all the possible outcomes, think it through one more time. In short: take risks, but don't do anything dumb.

When You Decide, Decide Fully

Remember in the movies when they would ask, "which wire should I cut?" The bomb squad expert never says, "Well, I'm kinda thinkin' the red one, but I'm not so sure, let's give it a shot." If you are leading in the right direction, lead with confidence and strength, otherwise stay put, but don't balk. There's always a penalty for balking.

Always Be Personally Invested

Don't ask those you lead to take risks in situations where you don't have to do so. Put something on the line. Make it personal.

Don't Be Afraid of the Words "I Was Wrong."

Those are tough to say, but sometimes we have to back up and ask forgiveness. Never proceed with a terrible decision if it becomes evident you should have led otherwise. Instead, use the recovery as a time to demonstrate strength the best you can.

Respect people who trust you. It takes a lot for people to trust you, so treat their trust like precious porcelain. It's part of being a good shepherd.

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