

## People Are Job 1

As a leader if you are not devoting your time to people issues, you're missing the big picture. Amy Lyman, author of *The Trustworthy Leader*, was once asked what could you do if you only had five minutes a day to devote to people issues? It is a stunning question on its face but reveals something deeper.

Lyman explained that "leading is a full-time job. If you want to be a successful leader, you need to devote all of your time to people issues....Five minutes a day—or even five minutes an hour—is the wrong approach." The problem is we tend to separate our "work" from the "people" issues; respond to people issues when asked to, but focus our intellectual talents on the mechanics of the specific tasks in front of us.

Lyman makes the point that **people are integral to our ability in every single area in our organizations** and if we do not include consideration of people in every aspect of our work, then we are doing ourselves and our organizations a great disservice. Yet it is not uncommon to find leaders who see people as the problem—the distraction—that takes them away from their work. Our work is people.

Trustworthy leaders...understand the complexity of bringing together a group of human beings to pursue extraordinary accomplishments. They are masters at guiding, directing, encouraging, and challenging people to contribute their best, in part because they ask the same of themselves. Trustworthy leaders know that their relationships with other throughout the organization are key to their success—however success is measured.

Lyman identifies six elements that both influence how a leader acts and reflect how that person thinks about being a leader:

- **Feels Honored**—Sense of honor and gratitude for being asked to lead and acknowledging the responsibility that comes with it.
- **Inclusive**—Promotes the inclusion of every person into the larger community of the organization.
- **Ability to Value and Engage Followers**—Pay attention to followers and learn from them, support their contributions and connect with them beyond their work roles.
- **Openly Shares Information**—Employees contributions will be magnified to the degree that they have access to useful information.
- **Develops Others**—Help employees to learn, grow, and discover their talents. It's part of who they are because they think about others more than themselves.
- **Ability to Move through Uncertainty to pursue Opportunities**—The skillful weighing of risks and rewards attached to the opportunities available is one of the most important actions that leaders can take on.

When employees see their leader act with honor, feel included, choose to follow, have access to information they can use, and are supported in their development, they will support their leader's efforts to try novel approaches and find the best way forward.

Trustworthy leaders succeed in the marketplace because their trustworthiness provides them with two key competitive advantages: first, they benefit from the cooperation of employees with each other, across departments, and throughout the organization as a whole; and second they engender a deep, strong commitment among employees to the long-term success of the company, its mission, and its vision as expressed by the leader.

Read more from Michael [here](#).