

# SIGMALeader

360 Leadership Assessment



Leadership Series

Great Leaders  
Have Integrity



## GREAT LEADERS HAVE INTEGRITY

“ The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionably Integrity. Without it, no real success is possible.

— George Bernard Shaw

It should come as no surprise to learn that people do not want to follow someone they cannot trust. Unfortunately, lapses in leader integrity have become such a commonplace occurrence that the media frequently reports on organizations whose leadership has gone awry. Research shows that individuals who lack integrity are more likely to engage in unethical, or counterproductive behaviors at work<sup>1</sup>. These behaviors, stemming from a lack of leader integrity, can amount to catastrophic losses for an organization and must *be avoided at all costs*.

Accordingly, it is paramount that leaders within an organization conduct themselves with integrity to facilitate the success of their organization. Integrity has, in general, been linked to increased performance in the workplace<sup>1</sup>. Leader integrity is important to the workplace to facilitate both day-to-day operations and the overall functioning of an organization. A leader who acts with integrity is more likely to make ethical decisions, stick to their commitments, and make decisions with their consequences in mind. Moreover, when employees believe their leaders conduct themselves with integrity and make ethical, moral decisions, they are more likely to follow suit and act with integrity in the workplace as well, ultimately benefitting the company<sup>2</sup>.

In assessing how much integrity you have, ask yourself the following questions:

- Are you accountable for your behavior and the decisions you make?
- Do you always make good on your commitments?
- Do you own up to your own mistakes?
- Do you behave in such a way that is aligned with a set of ethical principles?

### Improve Your Integrity

**Look:** It is important to keep an eye out for unethical and counterproductive behavior at work. As a leader, it is your responsibility to make sure that you, *and* your co-workers and followers, act with integrity in the workplace. Helping to reign in unethical decision making and counterproductive behavior at work will benefit everyone in the long run.

**Listen:** It is important to be aware of what is going on around you at work. Although employees are encouraged to communicate their thoughts and concerns to management, this doesn't always happen. Keeping an ear to the ground and being aware of what employees may *really* think about what is going on in the workplace may help you inform your decisions. Moreover, paying close attention when someone is speaking to you will also help you be perceived as a genuine leader, who cares and acts with integrity.

**Learn:** In an ideal situation, we have all the information we need to make a well-informed decision. Unfortunately, that is not always the case. Spending some time to dig deep and do your own research on a topic or issue that has come up at work can help you uncover new information that may be relevant to you. This will help you make a more well-informed decision that you can stand behind as being an honest and ethical decision.

## Start Doing These 3 Things Now to Act With More Integrity

The following steps can help you act with more integrity in the workplace:

1. **Be open and honest with your co-workers.** Did you make a mistake? Did something go wrong during the execution of a project plan? Talk about it, don't try to pretend it didn't happen. Taking responsibilities for errors you make in the workplace will help generate trust and encourage direct reports to be more open about errors they make. Openly discussing problems and how they happened, how to solve them, and how to prevent them from happening in the future will facilitate performance around the office. Furthermore, this improved respect and understanding you will develop with your co-workers will also improve the way your organization performs moving forward.
2. **Make decisions that are best for the greater good, not just those that serve you or the organizations' interests.** "For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction" – Sir Isaac Newton. It may not always be easy, but it is important to maintain perspective when making management decisions at work. Decisions have consequences and impact people both in and outside of the organization. It is important to keep your code of ethics and morals in mind when making decisions at work and to do so with integrity as to not make decisions that could cause serious harm to people within, or external to, the organization. "The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few" – Spock.
3. **Honor your commitments.** Part of acting with integrity in the workplace is making good on your commitments. Be they meetings, promises to co-workers, or promises to management. If you commit to doing something, stick to your promise. Others will see how you act with integrity and be encouraged to follow suit.

## Resources



[Live Life with Integrity](#)



[Developing leaders](#)



Develop your integrity by taking advantage of SIGMA's coaching services.

Contact SIGMA for coaching on developing your skills as a leader.

SIGMA Assessment Systems, Inc.

Email: [support@SigmaHR.com](mailto:support@SigmaHR.com)

Call: 800-265-1285

## References

<sup>1</sup>Johnson, M. K., Rowatt, W. C., & Petrini, L. (2011). A new trait on the market: Honesty–Humility as a unique predictor of job performance ratings. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 50(6), 857-862.

<sup>2</sup>Peterson, D. (2004). Perceived leader integrity and ethical intentions of subordinates. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 25(1), 7 – 23.