

THE 7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERS

Become the Executive Leader that delivers business and personal transformation

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Based on Stephen R. Covey's "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People"



"The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" by Stephen R. Covey is an international best-selling business and self-improvement book. It has sold over 25 million copies worldwide and sits atop many incredibly successful people's all-time favorites.

By now, hopefully you've had the chance to read the book but here's quick list of the 7 Habits; be proactive, begin with the end in mind, put first things first, think win/win, seek first to understand, then to be understood, synergize, and sharpen the saw.

This is generally great advice for all people but what about those in Executive Leadership positions? As an executive, the success of the organization ultimately rests on your shoulders. How can you foster an environment where people love to work and achieve incredible things in the process? How do you balance creating a culture of high accountability and respect for people at the same time? This paper shares some of the practices of the world's most effective leaders as discovered by the Impruver team so that you too can amplify your impact.

Highly Effective Habit #1: Take Personal Responsibility for Your Organization's Performance



It's the nature of humans and most other animals to mimic the behaviors of others, especially those in leadership positions. Therefore, people are more likely to do as you do than they are to do what you say. In fact, the best leaders don't need to say much at all. When you take personal responsibility for the results of your organization, you subconsciously inspire others to do the same. This is especially true when the organization's performance fails to meet your expectation. Taking responsibility often means making changes to the system(s) that you own, within which others operate.

Highly Effective Habit #2: Set 1 Wildly Important Goal for Your Organization at a Time



At the highest level, there should be one clear goal that the team is shooting for. Can you imagine a basketball team trying to play together but each player is shooting for a different hoop with one ball? Meanwhile the other team has one hoop? It would be total chaos. Unfortunately, many companies are led exactly this way. This happens when leaders set multiple goals. Sure, on great teams, each player has a distinctive role but collectively, they are crystal clear on the 1 goal and how to score. Besides, a person only needs one goal at a time to drive purposeful action. Adding more creates unnecessary complexity and leads to stagnation. Once one Wildly Important Goals is achieved, set another immediately.

Highly Effective Habit #3: Establish a Next Target and Measure of Success for your Organization



The moment we create a 50-point plan to reach our goals is the moment of least knowledge and understanding that we'll have for the rest of our lives. Mike Tyson famously quoted that "everyone has a plan until they get punched in the face!" Here's an idea, scrap the plan and create the next target condition based on the best knowledge you have at the time. Then iterate or try a series of improvements that bring you closer and closer to the target. Measure your progress along the way. This is the scientific approach to leadership and doesn't require you to start the journey by making a thousand assumptions, which you'll have to defend later. Encourage your team to do the same. Once one Target is reached, set another immediately.

Highly Effective Habit #4: Empower Your Team to Craft Their Own Commitments to the Organization's Success



People will work harder to bring their own ideas to life than they will for the ideas of others, even their boss. Once you have created a target and measure of success for yourself as a leader, challenge your team members to create their own targets and measures of success in alignment with yours. Of course, you hold the power to veto or help mold their proposals into something more fitting, but it should be their own. They will feel empowered to achieve better results and more in control of their own destiny.

Highly Effective Habit #5: Coach Team Members Regularly to Foster Autonomous Growth



People generally don't enjoy being told what to do unless they are completely stuck and fresh out of ideas. In fact, people are often insulted by leaders who dictate action. It's more respectful to ask your team members how they understand the challenges they face and what they will try next to make progress. As a leader, you don't need to have all the answers, but you definitely need to set priority, gain commitment to action, and ensure effective follow-through regularly. A weekly, if not daily, cadence has proven to be highly effective.

Highly Effective Habit #6: Enable Cross-function Engagement Within Your Team



Not only can productive team dynamics bring a range of perspective and expertise to decisions than any individual can foster for themselves, but they can also provide a level of accountability for follow-through than a leader can offer to direct reports. When people commit to action in a team setting, they're not just committing to the leader, they're also committing to each other. Furthermore, they're also signaling their intentions which enables others to provide help as appropriate.

Highly Effective Habit #7: Continuously Improve Yourself for the Benefit of the Organization



A culture of Continuous Improvement starts with you. Someone has to be the first person on the dance floor. People have misunderstood Kaizen to mean Continuous Improvement of processes. If you look at the deeper meaning of Kaizen, it is to continuously discipline and improve yourself for the greater good of the community. The CI journey starts within. As with the first habit, people are more likely to follow what you do than what you say. Therefore, "implementing" a CI culture means practicing CI yourself. This could be as simple as improving one thing about yourself or your area of ownership each week and be prepared to do more if needed.

The primary role of an executive leader is the execution of the organization's strategy. Likewise, the effect of a leader on an organization is immeasurable. Financial and other business results only tell a small part of the story. The most effective leaders create a flywheel effect on the organization's culture that remains active long after the leader has moved on. The reason we follow people is because we believe they can lead us to a higher station in life. Great leaders require a lot from us, but they leave us fuller and better off than we would have been without them. Conversely, poor leaders leave us depleted and lost. They extract and waste all the richness we bring to the world, leaving us having to rebuild what was already great. Poor leaders have a high degree of dependency and thus demand dependency from their followers. Great leaders are not just independent, they have matured to a state of interdependence. This allows them to respect the autonomy of those around them while working collaboratively to drive transformation more effectively.

This document covered the 7 Habits of Highly Effective Transformational Leaders. Great leadership is more fun with the right tools. Visit impruver.com to learn more about how Impruver's software solution helps you drive organizational transformation.