

# Lessons in Leadership: Ernest Shackleton

## Hiring the Right Behaviors and Traits

- ▶ Your No.2 is your most important hire. Pick one who complements your management style, shows loyalty without being a yes-person, and has a talent for working with others.
- ▶ Hire those who share your vision. Someone who clashes with your personality or the corporate culture will hinder your work.
- ▶ Be a creative, unconventional interviewer if you seek creative, unconventional people. Go deeper than job experience and expertise. Ask questions that reveal a candidate's personality, values, and perspective on work and life.
- ▶ To weed out potential slackers, choose workers who show a willingness to tackle any job, and will take a turn at the unpopular tasks.
- ▶ Hire those with the talents and expertise you lack. Don't feel threatened by them. They will help you stay on the cutting edge and bring distinction to your school or department.
- ▶ Spell out clearly to new employees the exact duties and requirements of their jobs, and how they will be compensated. Many failed work relationships start with a lack of communication.
- ▶ To help your staff do top-notch work, give them the best equipment you can afford. Working with outdated, unreliable tools creates an unnecessary burden.

## Team Development

- ▶ Take the time to observe before acting, especially if you are new to the scene. Ensure that all changes are improvements. Don't make changes just for the sake of leaving your mark.
- ▶ Always keep the door open to your staff members and be generous with information that affects them. Well-informed employees are more eager and better prepared to participate.
- ▶ Where possible, have employees work together on certain tasks. It builds trust, respect, and even friendship.
- ▶ Be fair and impartial in meting out compensations, workloads, and punishments. Imbalances make everyone feel uncomfortable, even the favored.
- ▶ Lead by example. Chip in sometimes to help with the work you're having others do. It gives you the opportunity to set a high standard and shows your respect for the job.
- ▶ Have regular gatherings to build esprit de corps. These could be informal lunches that allow workers to speak freely. Or they could be special holiday or anniversary celebrations that let employees relate to each other as people rather than only as colleagues.

## Creating a Motivational Environment

In order to get the best from every individual, Shackleton:

- ▶ Have regular gatherings to build esprit de corps. These could be informal lunches that allow workers to speak freely. Or they could be special holiday or anniversary celebrations that let employees relate to each other as people rather than only as colleagues.

## Lessons in Leadership: Ernest Shackleton

- ▶ Let each crewmember put his personal stamp on his surroundings.
- ▶ Made sure each crewmember had challenging and meaningful work.
- ▶ Matched personality types with work responsibilities.
- ▶ Gave his crew constant feedback, praising their efforts and correcting their mistakes.
- ▶ Related to every person under him as a human being, not only as a worker.
- ▶ Held small celebrations that recognized the individual.
- ▶ Tolerated people's quirks and foibles. He didn't hesitate to pamper his crewmembers.

### Change Management and Getting a Group Through a Crisis

- ▶ When crisis strikes, immediately address your staff. Take charge of the situation, offer a plan of action, ask for support, and show absolute confidence in a positive outcome.
- ▶ Plan several options in detail. Get a grasp of the possible consequences of each, always keeping your eye on the big picture.
- ▶ Give your staff periodic reality checks. Over time, people tend to treat a crisis situation as business as usual and lose their focus.
- ▶ Keep malcontents close to you. Resist your instinct to avoid them, and instead try to win them over and gain their support.
- ▶ Defuse tension. In high-stress situations use humor to put people at ease and keep your staff busy.
- ▶ Let go of the past. Don't waste time or energy regretting past mistakes or fretting over what you can't change.
- ▶ Ask for advice and information from a variety of sources, but ultimately make decisions based on your own best judgment. Trust your instincts.
- ▶ Let all the people involved in the crisis participate in the solution.
- ▶ Give your staff plenty of time to get used to an unpopular decision.

### Staff Development

- ▶ Create a work environment comfortable enough to entice professionals to spend the greater part of their waking hours there. Allow for some personal preferences.
- ▶ Be generous with programs that promote the wellbeing of your staff. Healthy bodies and minds are more productive.
- ▶ Make sure each employee has challenging and important work. Even the lowest-ranking workers must feel they are making a valuable and appreciated contribution.
- ▶ Give consistent feedback on performance. Most workers feel they don't get nearly enough words of praise and encouragement.
- ▶ Strive for work relationships that have human as well as professional elements. Get to know as many employees as possible. Learn their interests so you can chat about something other than work.

## Lessons in Leadership: Ernest Shackleton

- ▶ Reward individuals as well as groups. Public acknowledgement of a job well done makes an employee feel appreciated.
- ▶ Be tolerant and set reasonable expectations. Occasional celebrations can have powerful effects, especially in high-stress situations.