

Are You Flogging A Dead Horse?

Flogging a dead horse is a commonly used idiom in the UK. If someone is trying to convince someone else to do or feel something without any hope of succeeding, we say they're flogging a dead horse.

Rather than seeing a situation for what it is far too many individuals, businesses, public service and government organisations prefer to live in denial. Instead, it seems people just love to develop alternative strategies for flogging dead horses. Taken from various articles and blogs currently on the internet here are just a few suggestions:

- The horse isn't really dead, we just need a better whip
- It's not the horse it's the rider that's at fault
- Commission a study of how other companies ride their dead horses
- Reclassify the dead horse as "life challenged"
- Hire a top management consultancy to tell you that the horse is dead without telling you where to buy a new one or how much it might cost



- Improve pay, conditions and training to increase your dead horse's performance
- Produce a report that highlights the fact that dead horses incur fewer costs
- Rewrite the expected performance requirements for all life challenged equines
- Promote the dead horse to boardroom level or put it out to pasture while paying it a huge golden hoof-shake - sorry, that's just horse manure.

Strangely enough, those people who believe that the past is an accurate barometer of future events are the very same people who possess an alarming tendency towards flogging dead horses.

If it worked yesterday and it works today then it'll surely work tomorrow. It's this sort of linear thinking that gets horses killed in the first place.

These equine assassins tend to view the future as a predetermined event, waiting just over the horizon to happen.

Of course, the truth is very different.

For one thing, while most people would accept that we share a common reality, such as general social norms of behaviour, essentially we all see the world slightly differently.

And so it's easy to see how problems and misunderstandings can occur when one vision of the world clashes with another.

This is bad enough when just confined to the realm of our personal relationships, but can be absolutely disastrous in terms of business, religion and politics.

The ability to deny what is glaringly obvious, and do nothing, or support a position against all evidence to the contrary is a common human failing.

However, thankfully, learning organisations are springing up everywhere; challenging the status quo; adapting to rather than denying or avoiding critical situations and issues.

A learning organisation is one that learns and encourages learning among its people.

It promotes a continual exchange of information between employees hence creating a more knowledgeable workforce.

This produces a very flexible organisation where people will accept and adapt to new ideas and changes through a shared vision.

Perhaps, eventually, we'll all learn that when we discover we're riding a dead horse, the best strategy really is to dismount.



7 Personal Characteristics Of A Good Leader



How often have you heard the comment, "He or she is a born leader?"

There are certain characteristics found in some people that seem to naturally put them in a position where they're looked up to as a leader.

Whether in fact a person is born a leader or develops skills and abilities to become a leader is open for debate.

There are some clear characteristics that are found in good leaders. These qualities can be developed or may be naturally part of their personality.

1. A good leader has an exemplary character.

It is of utmost importance that a leader is trustworthy to lead others.

A leader needs to be trusted and be known to live their life with honesty and integrity.

A good leader "walks the talk" and in doing so earns the right to have responsibility for others.

True authority is born from respect for the good character and trustworthiness of the person who leads.

2. A good leader is enthusiastic about their work or cause and also about their role as leader.

People will respond more openly to a person of passion and dedication.

Leaders need to be able to be a source of inspiration, and be a motivator towards the required action or cause.

Although the responsibilities and roles of a leader may be different, the leader needs to be seen to be part of the team working towards the goal.

This kind of leader will not be afraid to roll up their sleeves and get dirty.

3. A good leader is confident. In order to lead and set direction a leader needs to appear confident as a person and in the leadership role.

Such a person inspires confidence in others and draws out the trust and best efforts of the team to complete the task well.

A leader who conveys confidence towards the proposed objective inspires the best effort from team members.

4. A leader also needs to function in an orderly and purposeful manner in situations of uncertainty.

People look to the leader during times of uncertainty and unfamiliarity and find reassurance and security when the leader portrays confidence and a positive demeanour.

5. Good leaders are tolerant of ambiguity and remain calm, composed and steadfast to the main purpose.

Storms, emotions, and crises come and go and a good leader takes these as part of the journey and keeps a cool head.



6. A good leader as well as keeping the main goal in focus is able to think analytically.

Not only does a good leader view a situation as a whole, but is able to break it down into sub parts for closer inspection.

Not only is the goal in view but a good leader can break it down into manageable steps and make progress towards it.

7. A good leader is committed to excellence.

Second best does not lead to success.

The good leader not only maintains high standards, but also is proactive in raising the bar in order to achieve excellence in all areas.

These seven personal characteristics are foundational to good leadership.

Some characteristics may be more naturally present in the personality of a leader.

However, each of these characteristics can also be developed and strengthened.

A good leader whether they naturally possess these qualities or not, will be diligent to consistently develop and strengthen them in their leadership role.



UK Business Advisors is a group of over 100 independent and experienced, professional business men and women offering practical business advice covering a range of skills covering all industry sectors and pillars of business:

Finance | Sales | Marketing | Operations | Resources | Management | Strategy

Telephone: 0333 444 8522 Email: info@ukba.co.uk Web: www.ukba.co.uk

Next month: Why Overcoming Objections Can Lose The Sale