

The Leadership Secrets of Santa Claus

How to get big things done in your “workshop” ... all year long

by Eric Harvey, David Cottrell, and Al Lucia at *The Walk The Talk Company*

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Adventures in Leadership Discussion

Santa’s eight strategies

1. Build a wonderful workshop
2. Choose your reindeer wisely
3. Make a list and check it twice
4. Listen to the elves
5. Get beyond the red wagons
6. Share the milk and cookies
7. Find out who’s naughty and nice
8. Be good for goodness sake

Build a wonderful workshop

- Make the mission the main thing
- Focus on your people, as well as your purpose
- Let values be your guide

Choose your reindeer wisely

- Hire tough so you can manage easily
- Promote the right ones ... for the right reasons
- Go for the diversity advantage

Make a list and check it twice

- Plan your work
- Work your plan
- Make the most of what you have

Listen to the elves

- Open your ears to participation
- Pay attention to how you’re perceived
- Walk a while in their shoes

Get beyond the red wagons

- Help everyone accept the reality of change
- Remember: the customer is really in charge
- Teach “the business” of the business

Share the milk and cookies

- Help them see the difference they make
- Do right by those who do right
- Expand the reinforcement possibilities

Find out who's naughty and nice

- Confront performance problems...early
- Coach “the majority in the middle”
- Don't forget “the super stars”

Be good for goodness sake

- Set the example
- Establish guidelines and accountability
- Remember that everything counts

Is Santa Claus real?

- To survive and prosper, you and your organization must achieve “big things” throughout the year
- You can't get those big things done without effective leadership

Discussion questions

- ✓ Why do we expect so much (the impossible) from our leaders?
- ✓ Build Workshop: determine what kind of leader you want to be; what if your vision of leader conflicts with your follower's idea of leader?
- ✓ Build Workshop: everyday behavior of everyone makes the mission happen; can each specific job contribute to mission?
- ✓ Listen to the Elves: teach elves what you do as leader so feedback has some bearing on mission, values, and your leadership?
- ✓ Beyond Red Wagons: teach “the business” of the business, cross train, swap team members — what to do if managers of different areas have “circled their wagons” to cope with excessive workload? Must change or progress or team work come from the leaders' leader? What's as elf to do?
- ✓ Milk and Cookies: recognition is everyone's responsibility; how come peer-to-peer recognition often doesn't mean as much as recognition from a leader?
- ✓ Naughty and Nice: avoid rewarding superior performance with more work or messy situations; middle leaders have authority to answer to, too. How to juggle requests and demands from above and below?
- ✓ Goodness Sake: follow all rules and procedures; treat everyone with dignity; always tell the truth; never break a promise or commitment; build superior quality into everything; continually give best effort; consistently take a stand for what is right — that's a lot of expectation placed on a leader. A less than perfect leader might want to include an apology in their repertoire; claiming responsibility for mistakes and failures go a long way to build trust and respect among followers.

*Follow these “secrets,” and big things are near.
Effective leadership to all, and to all a good year!*

Sarah Faszholz