



10 Leadership Resolutions for a Successful New Year

By The Center for Creative Leadership

If recent years have shown us anything, it's that we cannot predict what's on the horizon. But as we look back on the past year and ahead to the next, it's a safe bet that change and uncertainty will continue to be major themes — along with the growing challenges of the hybrid workplace and the ongoing need for more equitable, diverse, and inclusive organizations.

It's also safe to assume that good leadership will be critical for success. So with that in mind, here are 10 leadership resolutions that we recommend you consider making for the coming year.

Leadership Resolutions for Leading Yourself

1. Notice how you talk to yourself.

Research shows that self-talk is powerful, whether you're speaking out loud, thinking in your head, or just jotting things down in a journal.

In fact, constructive self-talk is positively related to increased creativity and leadership skill, along with decreased job strain. Negative self-talk, on the other hand, can become habitual and lead to faulty decision-making, increased anxiety, and high levels of stress and rumination that ultimately lead to burnout.

In short, your words matter, even if you're the only one who hears them! So, resolve to show yourself a bit more compassion.

2. Reflect on how you see the world.

Your identity makes you who you are, and it affects how you see the world. As humans, we unconsciously categorize ourselves and others into groups along social identity lines. Understanding this can help you become a more self-aware, effective, and equitable leader.

Start by understanding the various nuances and aspects of identity — both your own and others' — to learn how it shapes your perspective, to recognize unintended bias, and to take actions to cultivate greater equity, diversity, and inclusion. Resolve to spend some time learning more about the concept of social identity and reflecting on how it affects you and the way you work with others.

3. Hone your virtual communications.

Even though virtual communications have become the norm, and we've all gotten used to video and audio meetings, it can still feel uncomfortable or tiring to communicate only through screens. We muddle our way through awkward screen-sharing, hastily written chat messages, and "Zoom fatigue."

Put your best virtual foot forward in the new year and create a stronger feeling of connectedness between you and others: Resolve to strengthen the quality of your virtual communications with colleagues and be more thoughtful about crafting a virtual persona that works for you.

Leadership Resolutions If You're Leading Others

4. Adjust your leadership style for today's workplace.

Few workplaces function the same way they did before the pandemic. Whether your team is in the office, working remotely, or doing some sort of a hybrid mix, consider how you might adjust your leadership style to meet these changes.

Leading in today's work context requires sensitivity, adaptability to change, and an openness to experimentation. We've identified 5 steps to help you succeed in this new and changing environment:

Acknowledge what's changed.

Foster empathy, equity, and inclusion.

Cultivate the mindsets of learning agility and resilience.

Pay close attention to direction, alignment, and commitment (DAC).

Focus on boundary spanning — within your team and across the organization.

Resolve to model for your team the behaviors you want to see. When they watch you recalibrate, adapt, and embrace change with an agile and collaborative mindset, they'll likely do the same — no matter where they are.

5. Support your employees in their development.

Professional development is important for everyone on your team. And our research has found that the primary predictor of the success of leadership development

programs is the degree to which participants' bosses support them. So, how can you support your people's growth?

Resolve to implement the following:

Set the stage for any learning opportunities by discussing with your direct reports their goals, areas they should focus on, and how they can get the most out of each development opportunity.

Give them permission to focus their attention on a training by allowing them to disengage fully from normal responsibilities.

Find out what support they'll need when the intensive part of their program is done.

Follow up after a development experience by meeting with your team members to discuss what they learned, how they'll apply it, and what you can do to continue supporting them.

6. Keep your team on track.

Give your team a fresh start by getting back to basics. As a group, set aside time to review, refresh, or recreate your team charter, a document that defines your team's overall objectives, resources, and constraints.

This gives everyone on the team the same basic understanding of why the team exists, where each person fits into it, and how the team will accomplish its objectives. Once you've created the charter, you can periodically review — and update — it to continue to help the team stay aligned and collaborate together more effectively.

Leadership Resolutions If You're Leading an Organization

7. Improve retention by paying attention to employee engagement at every level.

Employee engagement and retention have become more important than ever. You can boost them both by paying attention to the 4 key factors that drive employee engagement. Resolve to monitor each level closely:

Leader engagement: Frontline managers typically lead the biggest population of workers at most organizations — yet many frontline leaders lack critical skills, and as a result, those they manage feel uninspired, unempowered, and unhappy. Support and develop these managers to build greater trust and loyalty across your entire workforce.

Job engagement: Engage employees by showing them how their job matters. Connect their daily responsibilities to the goals and outcomes of the business of the organization, and give them flexibility and autonomy to get the job done — especially when they're working remotely.

Team engagement: A team's success often depends upon how well team members work together and how much they trust each other. Work to create an environment where team members can count on each other and feel safe expressing their opinions.

Organizational engagement: Employees who feel supported by and connected to their organizations are more likely to stay engaged — and less likely to leave. Provide opportunities for employee growth and development to increase engagement at the organizational level.

8. Create a psychologically safe workplace.

How do you foster trust, creativity, collaboration, and innovation in an organization and get people to leverage their full potential? By creating safe spaces to take risks at work — the foundation of psychological safety.

Resolve to create more psychological safety by helping your employees feel trusted and respected by taking any of the following actions:

Make psychological safety an explicit priority.

Facilitate everyone speaking up.

Establish norms for how failure is handled.

Create space for new ideas.

Embrace productive conflict.

9. Reflect on your organization's diversity statement.

It's likely that your organization has created or updated a public statement about diversity and inclusion in recent years. Review this statement. Does it match your level of commitment? Is your organization's approach to supporting diversity and inclusion truly meaningful and substantial, or merely cosmetic?

Resolve to help your organization move the needle toward more committed actions and real change by crafting a meaningful statement, following through on it, and measuring the progress going forward.

10. Invest in equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Fostering equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) is imperative for building thriving organizations and attracting and retaining talent for the opportunities of the future.

Your people need new ways to think about and talk about diversity. Your leaders need new skills to enable equity and inclusion in the workplace. And your organization needs scalable ways to ensure that your EDI initiatives avoid common mistakes and are both solid and sustainable.

Use our REAL™ framework to help your people understand the dynamics of EDI within your particular organization — and identify specific actions they can take to drive progress.

Reveal relevant opportunities. Using a curious and open mindset, start investigating the context in which EDI plays out for individuals, teams, and your entire organization.

Elevate equity. Make it a priority for every individual and group to have access to the resources and opportunities they require to reach their full potential.

Activate diversity. Acknowledge and celebrate differences within your organization.

Lead inclusively. Envision and enact new ways of leading that allow everyone in your organization to participate authentically.

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