

People at all stages in life, from students to senior managers, have often asked me what it takes to be a successful leader. I've had the good fortune to work with and observe some great and not so great leaders during the past 25 years and it's taught me what works " and what doesn't. Truly great leaders have something in common: they all have CHOPS, five characteristics that I consistently see in people who lead highly successful organizations and teams that reach their potential. These are the qualities I look for when I hire, promote, or expand responsibility. Woman, man, sports, business, military, community, not-for-profit, at work, at home, at play " if you've got CHOPS, you're on the fast track.

Communications:

Clear, concise, compelling vision, clearly communicated to all. Constructive " defines future and desired behaviors vs. what not to do. Brings out the best in people. Energetic, passionate, motivating. Listens. Creates bridges and relationships.

Honesty:

Honest with self and with others. Courage to speak the truth. Walks the talk. Character. Integrity. Honor. Fair and consistent. Assumes innocence, but isn't naïve. Accepts responsibility for actions and non-actions.

Organized:

Focused on results, not activities. Begins with the end in mind. Discipline to stay on plan. Keeps team focused. Eliminates non-value-added work ("to-don't" list).

Persistence:

Finish what you start. Love what you do. Strong work ethic. Passion. Focus on success measures, not trivia or distractions. Disciplined. Focus on the customer. A will to succeed. A determination that *all* will succeed.

Selflessness:

Teamwork. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Yields to the brand. What's best for the customers? What's best for your people? Recognizes contributions of others. Shares success. Values Diversity. Dedicated to balance " Family, Work, and Community.

Kevin E. Dunn
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