

Commonalities Among the Ten Leaders

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Lifehacker (Douglas, 2017, 2018) was doing a series of “How I Work.” The project included interviewing leaders from various career professions. All the interviewees are leaders in their respective fields. Common traits, characters, and personalities ran through the individuals as they spoke about their typical workday, how they managed their workloads, what worked and what didn’t for them, but also what were the essential tools and staffs to execute a productive operation and efficient workplace. They discussed their passion beyond their work life, looking to make meaningful impact and difference in other people’s lives. Leaders wanted to shape the culture of their work environment to have a balance between work and play.

Leaders are working toward the common goal to create solutions for our existing problems. Many problem solvers feel it could have been done better or to add additional improvements to the existing format. Leaders love to start off their schedules at the crack of dawn, Tony Xu, co-founder of DoorDash (Douglas, 12/27/17), works best in the morning, analyzes the hardest problems first and tries to wrap up or finishes off his day early for a good night sleep. Like Lisa Lucas (Douglas, 1/31/18), sleeping is one of her favorite time; it is the key to have sufficient rest and energy needed to run the next day. They have to be alert, aware of their surroundings and focus at meetings to evaluate all possible options before committing.

In addition, open workspace office is the preferred design layout, an accessible format for the team to communicate with each member and to bounce ideas from one to another. Katia Beauchamp, co-founder of Birchbox (Bradley 6/7/17) states her ideal workspace is sitting and working along with the whole team in an open setup. Many interviewees claimed to focus better on these arrangements, where the laptop and mobile are the must-have gadgets. Many beautiful tools are out there, picking the right one depends on the individual preferences.

The reliance on others to fully implement the long-term goal, whether it will be a team or critical individual players. Pro Skier Grete Eliassen (Douglas 2/21/18), sees her husband as her partner in crime, both of them must be involved in getting the project complete. The team is the universal answer to the question that the interviewer was asking about who they relied on to make their activities and operations run smoothly. Doron Weber (Douglas, 3/14/18) stated his assistant knows him better than he knows himself. All leaders are capable of stepping away or taking a leave since they have the key personnel to run the business in their absences.

Executives are always busy with a full day of meetings; having organizational skill is a must to keep on top of their daily workloads to ensure all have to be covered in the allocated timeframe, making sure overruns do not occur since they have other obligations. Like vlogger Anna Akana (Douglas, 2/28/18), I can't live without Google Calendar. I'm obsessed with organization and color coordination. Google Calendar seems to be the preferred platform to organize their activities and to do list.

Vlogger Anna Akana (Douglas, 2/28/18) has also tried all styles of organizing that is known to her including bulleting diary and vision boards. If leaders tend to be on the weaker side of this skill, they can find a key person to keep them on track. They need to recognize and own up that these are not their strengths, but it is okay to ask others to assist them to make these arrangements.

Secondly, critical thinking skill is found among the leaders, always creating strategies, finding alternative approaches and journaling to keep track of their thoughts or creative ideas. Some prefer to use digital method to record it, while others work well with the old fashioned paper and pen as mentioned by Mari Takahashi, a game host, "As easy as it is to rely on digital

forms, I find journaling, brainstorming, and creating lists to work better for me when it's analog" (Douglas, 4/25/18). Others can't function without the whiteboard or fill their notebook journals tagged with a stack of colorful post-it notes.

All leaders use a reminder chart to ensure they are on top of their schedules and have a running list of what open items need to be completed. They either keep a to-do list electronically or prefer to use the old-fashioned way of pen and paper to keep up with the follow ups. Some even use an app to organize the list of importance, and others prefer to cross each item on the list in their journal notebooks as each is completed or take marginal notes for reminders.

Leaders are crying out for the need to have a moment of relaxation after a week of heavy workloads and dealing with numerous phone conferences and in-person meetings. Ma, co-founder of Zola, the wedding planner e-commerce site, states "It's just as important to set aside time for yourself" (Douglas, 3/21/18). He needs to step away from what he is currently working on, taking a break to reenergize, having to come back all refresh and ready for the next challenge. Meditation is the preferred method of relaxation among the leaders. Katia Beauchamp (Bradley 6/7/17) steps away from time to time to have a moment of meditation; afterward, she feels refresh and ready to work again. A few others have found comfort in socializing with others.

As with all, there are moments in life when people feel frustrated and confined; people tend to approach in different ways to find comfort. Charlie Deets (Douglas, 3/7/18) ends his day when he feels when his productivity gets too low, decides to head home and spends time with his loved ones. The family is the key for many who need someone to openly discuss or vent

out, walking away from what they are currently doing and provide a form of distraction to keep them in line. Others find comfort in their pets who they considered as part of their family. We all tend to manage stress a little differently and use various ways to cope.

Many executives are willing to share their knowledge with others and to rely on others for help to successfully complete their missions. An individual is limited to what it's capable of handling. The key is to delegate the responsibility to others and to trust others with their judgments to perform the best they can do for the team. Charlie Deets, a product designer for WhatsApp, (Douglas, 3/7/18) wants to listen to the whole storyline before starting to ask questions, better not to rush in judgment. Also, CEO John Suh (Douglas, 2/14/18), gives us excellent advice to listen to others who we do not agree with. A great listener and an excellent communicator are the essential skills of leadership.

Successful leaders start off the road with roughness; only when they hit a low point, they realize the need to reorganize and to motivate their team to charge forward and to never give up. Every path is different; climbing through these peaks, conquering every step of the way and working as a team to figure out the group's strengths and weaknesses. Most importantly is to create roles for each that fits well for the individual and to complete the project as one and giving credit to others when due.

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