

By Robin Roberts

Has this ever happened to you? You've just taken over as a divisional manager of a major company. You find the environment festering with ill will. A substantial number of employees have recently left, and several supervisors have been demoted. The staff must work in a climate fraught with distrust, disillusionment and disappointment. To make matters worse, you hear through the company grapevine that some staff perceive your style of management as intimidating.

You know you need to get all the staff on the same page and the division back on track, but you're not having much luck with your disgruntled crew, still stinging from the failures of the previous leadership. You decided to call for back-up.

Here's where a leadership coach comes in. Lisa Caswell is founder of Being a Better Leader, a Vancouver-based executive coaching company. One of the many exercises she has implemented for managers and staff is "360-degree feedback," a kind of performance review conducted by and for peers, staff and managers. The process can tell you a lot about yourself – and about how staff perceive your approach to management.

Working with a coach such as Caswell, you can become more self-aware, thereby developing a more open and communicative style toward your team. Of the many traits common to successful leaders, Caswell considers self-awareness to be one of the most valuable.

How do you know you're lacking self-awareness, or any other crucial leadership trait? Says Caswell, "Emotional intelligence is one of the domains that often gets missed in leadership development, but it's something executives need to [work on]." Here's how: "First of all, create the space for it. Make the time for self-reflection, to learn about yourself from others. Solicit feedback from

# What kind of a leader are you?

To head up your team, you'll need to look inside yourself first. A great coach can show you how

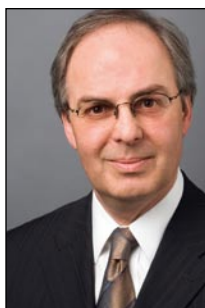


"Communication is really imperative because you need to be able to engage and inspire and influence, and the only way to do that is through communication. And it's not just the words you use"

– Lisa Caswell, founder,  
*Being a Better Leader*

## EXECUTIVE TRAINING

From Hay Group:  
Mark Jackson,  
managing director,  
and Sue Drinnan,  
certified executive  
coach and senior  
consultant.



your peers, as well as from those you lead and those you report to. On a personal level, try journaling (a kind of diary of your thoughts, perceptions, ideas, etc. that will allow you to see patterns in your behaviour), develop some rituals that allow you to do self-examination, such as yoga, listening to the self-talk, paying attention to that voice in your head. It's a valuable voice, but unfortunately, it's often negative. It's about accepting that that voice will always be there and how you can manage it."

How you perceive yourself as a leader is also where Hay Group, a global management consulting firm, will focus when it starts coaching you. Hay Group's Sue Drinnan, certified executive coach and senior consultant, and Mark Jackson, managing director, work at the company's Vancouver office.

"The leader's own perception is very important to understanding where this person's at," says Drinnan. "For example, if he feels he's very empathic, a generous and warm leader, then you ask his peers and his direct reports what they think. Those responses will really

### Hay Group's repertoire of leadership styles

1. Directive: The leader is very clear in what he wants and demands compliance. This trait is most effective in a crisis.
2. Visionary: The leader is able to inspire the team to contribute to the dream.
3. Affiliative: The leader creates harmony and boosts morale.
4. Participative: The leader is a good listener and a team player.
5. Coaching: The leader helps staff members identify their own strengths and weaknesses.
6. Pace-setting: With his high personal standards and drive to achieve, the leader gets big results from a competent team.

code for how self-aware this leader is." There are many leaders who are bang-on with what they believe they are, but there are also some leaders who are showing up very differently from how they think they are showing up. "It can be quite a shock," says Drinnan.

Good leaders don't implement just one style or trait, says Jackson. "They need to employ a repertoire, and they need to access those styles at the appropriate time. It's not as though one is always better than the other, although some [work best] more short-term than long-term. I oftentimes use a golfing analogy: A good golfer has good facility with all golf clubs he might use depending on the situation during the golf game. If you're only good at driving and not very good at putting, you will not have a very good score. You need skill and repertoire, and that's the same with leadership."

The effectiveness of your leadership style will depend on whether you're playing on a public or a private golf course, as it were. In other words, it will hang on your office's corporate culture.

"That will certainly influence the kinds of things that are valued, and that's the context and balance of those kinds of skills and capabilities; they are context-specific," says Jackson. "Certain environments may be more tolerant of certain behaviour than other environments."

Lisa Caswell sees it the other way around: "As a leader, it's up to you to develop that culture. You create the experience in which the people that you engage with can really be effective and thrive."

She does agree on the value of applying a particular style to the specific circumstances or person. This adaptable approach is known as situational leadership. "You lead one person differently from how you lead another," she says. "You need to be able to flex your style. My primary area of focus in leadership is really around communication: How do you lead if you're not communicating with yourself? This goes back to self-awareness, being confident in knowing that you're in the right place. Your role as a leader is not to have all the answers. You've got tremendous resources within your people. You need to leverage that, not only for the benefit of the organization but for the benefit of your people, so that they feel they're a part of something. People don't like to be left in the dark. Whether you're a small business leading a small number of people or a large organization leading 400 or 500 people, the principles are the same. Communication is really imperative because you need to be able to engage and inspire and influence, and the only way to do that is through communication. And it's not just the words you use." ■

**dp DIRECTED POTENTIAL**  
COACHING TRAINING HYPNOTHERAPY

**Performance**  
Break through self-limiting beliefs, and create a life anchored by self-confidence and aligned with purpose.  
Dian Patterson and her associates guide private practice and corporate clients to develop the skills they need to live more successful lives - however defined by the individual.

**Passion**  
An accredited coach and certified master hypnotherapist, Dian brings years of experience and a history of effecting positive outcomes in Emotional Intelligence coaching and training, personal leadership enhancement and career transition.

**Potential**  
Dian Patterson & Associates  
604-924-8094  
dp@directedpotential.org  
www.directedpotential.org

Your enhanced performance is my passion.