

eBook

WHAT MAKES AN INSPIRING LEADER?

Professional insights from
the top EX influencers



INSPIRING WORKPLACES

THE ENGAGEMENT 101

Introduction

In a world marked by constant change, evolving challenges, and unprecedented uncertainties, the need for inspirational leadership has never been more critical.

Inspiring leaders have the remarkable ability to rally their teams, steer organizations through turbulent waters, and catalyze transformative change. They are the guiding lights, the pillars of strength, and the driving forces behind the triumphs of teams and organizations alike.

But what sets these exceptional leaders apart from the rest?

In this eBook, we explore the fundamental traits that lie at the heart of inspiring leadership.

These traits have the power to transform ordinary individuals into extraordinary leaders who leave a lasting legacy.

We asked our Top Engagement 101 influencers...

**What are the two key traits
of an Inspiring Leader?**

A word cloud featuring various terms related to leadership, learning, and interpersonal skills. The words are arranged in a roughly circular shape, with 'role modelling' and 'empathy' being the largest and most central. Other prominent words include 'learners', 'inspire', 'vulnerability', 'authenticity', 'listen', and 'visionary'. The colors of the words range from orange and blue to green and black.

learners
compassion
love people
inspire
agility and adaptability
seeing the best in others
recognising not the smartest person
comms
vulnerability
emotional intelligence
trust
servant
role modelling
share knowledge and skills
empathy
servant leaders
leaders
authenticity
do-ers
taking risks
curiosity
listen
appreciation
visionary



INSPIRING WORKPLACES

THE ENGAGEMENT 101



Faroshia Bergraaf-Ashley

Executive Coach | Trainer |

Management Consultant

EmoWorks

- **Emotional Intelligence**
- **Vulnerability**

The ability to deal with your own emotions and those of others wisely is an essential trait in today's leadership.

Vulnerability allows leaders to connect and inspire because they are approachable and believable.



INSPIRING WORKPLACES

THE ENGAGEMENT 101



Ulrika Brunner

Chief Executive Officer - Asia

Inspire Group

- **Leading by example – it is obvious what this leader stands for and that you can count on them to show up 100%, one hundred percent of the time.**
- **They love people. Yes – really, I mean it, and deeply.**

When I hear a question like this, it helps me to stop, breathe and reflect. Who do I think is an Inspiring Leader? Perry Timms, James McCulloch, Charles Brewer and Rangam Bir are the first four people who pop up in my mind.

Perry is incredibly smart, kind, and brilliant. And he shows up that way 100% of the time. I know because we have a deep WhatsApp bond through which he moves and inspires me, and he has this effect on many people across the globe. His deep commitment to others and their development and well-being is never wavering.

James McCulloch is a rock. His ability to always be super prepared for any situation or challenging conversation, is an inspiration to me and helps me challenge myself in how I show up. His stamina and resilience have blown me on several occasions. He's a trailblazer.

Charles Brewer has a monumental task transforming POS Malaysia and still manages to keep the framing of the job simple with a clear commitment to the people and the sustainability goals he believes in. The clarity of his communication and how he shows up enrolls everyone around him.

Rangam Bir operates in the financial service industry and still manages to have a warm approach to people. That's not normal, at least not in my experience. At the same time, he has razor sharp clarity on the goals that need to be achieved and is fully committed to developing change programmes collectively with his team. Again, not something we often see in Asia.



INSPIRING WORKPLACES

THE ENGAGEMENT 101



Debra Corey

Chief Pay it Forward Officer

DebCo HR LTD

- **Appreciation**
- **Ability to look and listen**

The first trait is the ability to use appreciation as a tool to help their employees feel valued for their actions, behaviors and contributions. Often managers think of appreciation as an extra, something nice to do if and when they have the time, or to sprinkle on sparingly as an extra bonus. Managers need to make this a part of their mindset and routine in order to truly make a difference and impact on their people and the business. For as poet Maya Angelo said, "People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them feel."

And if an inspirational quote is not enough, appreciation has been proven to be one of the most effective tools a manager has, from driving stronger business results, to improving morale, to improving relationships with their manager. And for this reason, this trait of giving the gift of appreciation can make a significant difference on how our people both feel and act.

The next trait is the ability to look and listen, doing so in a multi-sensory and multi-directional way. Often managers get so caught up in the operational side of their job that they don't take the time to look and listen for the constant cues our employees are sending, ones that help us know how they feel, what their challenges are, and what support and encouragement they need from us as managers. Once we are on the alert for them, we can find them everywhere, in their big and small actions, and even the subtle ones that together help us understand what they need and want. This trait will change the picture and sound from fuzzy to clear, enabling managers to take the actions that are required for their people and business to survive and thrive.



INSPIRING WORKPLACES

THE ENGAGEMENT 101



Gifty Enright

**CEO, Author, Keynote Speaker
Coach**

BUSINESSSCOPE CONSULTANCY LTD

- **Visionary**
- **Effective communicator**

They need to be a visionary leader who can inspire employees with their compelling vision, have an appetite for innovation and set a clear direction to achieve that vision.

They need effective communication skills that will help them connect with their team, build trust and inspire them to achieve their best.



INSPIRING WORKPLACES

THE ENGAGEMENT 101



Gregory F Simpson

**Managing Director, Employee
Experience**

Agent In Engagement

- **Empathy**
- **Compassion**

The two key traits of inspiring leaders are empathy and compassion. These qualities go beyond traditional leadership skills and are essential in building meaningful relationships with employees, creating a positive work culture, and driving organizational success.

Empathy is the ability to understand and relate to the emotions, experiences, and perspectives of others. Inspiring leaders demonstrate empathy by understanding their employees' unique needs and challenges and showing genuine care and concern for their well-being. By empathizing with employees, leaders can build trust, foster positive relationships, and create a supportive environment where employees feel valued and understood.

Compassion is the act of showing kindness and understanding towards others, particularly in difficult times. Inspiring leaders exhibit compassion by listening to employees and taking action to support them when they face challenges or setbacks. This can involve offering encouragement, providing resources or assistance, and showing flexibility and understanding in accommodating employees' personal or professional needs.

Empathy and compassion are two key traits of inspiring leaders. These qualities enable leaders to connect with employees on a deeper level, create a supportive work culture, and inspire employees to achieve their best performance. Leaders who demonstrate empathy and compassion can positively impact the morale, motivation, and success of their team and organization as a whole.



INSPIRING WORKPLACES

THE ENGAGEMENT 101



Francesca Gino

**Professor of Business
Administration**

Harvard Business School

- **Authenticity**
- **Empathy**

Authentic leaders are transparent, genuine, and consistent in their words and actions. They are not afraid to admit their mistakes and take responsibility for their decisions.

Empathetic leaders are able to understand and connect with the emotions and experiences of their employees. They actively listen and seek to understand different perspectives, which fosters trust and respect among team members.

These traits are crucial in creating a positive and inspiring workplace culture. Ok, I'll add a third: CURIOSITY. Because... why not? it is critically important in a world that keeps on changing.

**Inspiring Leaders Awards.
For people that positively
impact their organisation**

[Download the entry pack](#)





INSPIRING WORKPLACES

THE ENGAGEMENT 101



Lance Haun

Vice President, Market Insights

The Starr Conspiracy

- **Good listener**
- **Good doer**

Leaders who truly listen well are rare because traditional leadership development didn't put an emphasis on it until recently.

Great leaders are always talking to people, engaging in open conversation, and listening to feedback with a sense of purpose. But listening alone isn't enough.

Leaders also have to be able to act and inspire others to act with them, not for them. Too many leaders hide behind a large slate of meetings instead of doing real work.

So, listen first and then act.



INSPIRING WORKPLACES

THE ENGAGEMENT 101



David Kasperson

Co-Author, Trust & Inspire: How Truly Great Leaders Unleash Greatness in Others, Director of Speed of Trust Speaking & Business Development

Franklin Covey

- **Inspiring**
- **Trusting**

I'll offer three—and I invite you to validate this with your own experience. Think of an Inspiring Leader in your life or career. Someone who believed in you, and you knew it. They saw and communicated potential in you that perhaps you hadn't seen in yourself. This leader likely did 3 things:

First, what they modeled was inspiring. Not just their actions, or what they did, but who they were. They demonstrated the right combination of things like humility & courage, empathy & performance.

Second, they were trusting. I don't just mean that they had confidence in you, or even that you felt they believed you to be trustworthy. Many leaders, if asked "Do you trust your people?" will say "Of course I do!" and most mean it. But often we'll confuse the feeling of confidence, or trust in someone for actually giving them trust. Extending trust to them in meaningful ways, where there's risk, but also real growth. Few things are as inspiring as a real extension of trust.

Third they were inspiring, not because they were charismatic, or had done something extraordinary, but because they connected with you. They helped you connect better to yourself, cultivating a sense of caring, and belonging. That connection draws out our best.

Model, Trust, Inspire. My guess is that the leader you thought of had strength in all 3 areas. The most inspiring leaders do all 3 of these things as a matter of course.



INSPIRING WORKPLACES

THE ENGAGEMENT 101



Garry Lace
Co-Founder
Storians

- **Humble**
- **Lifelong learner**

Perhaps a good way to answer this is to mention the two things that I'm focussing on in my own journey towards becoming a better leader.

The first is to constantly remind myself that I'm never the smartest person in the room, which is almost always the case for me!

And the second is that we are all lifelong learners. I judge my day partly on whether I've learned something new.

Great leaders are always learning.



INSPIRING WORKPLACES

THE ENGAGEMENT 101



Gethin Nadin

Chief Innovation Officer

Benefex

- **Share knowledge and skills**
- **Empathy and vulnerability**

They share their knowledge and skills widely and generously.

An inspiring leader is still a member of a team and must remember that the success of their team relies on their contribution as much as everyone else's.

When we lift each other up, invest time and effort in others at work, we are ensuring our teams and organisation is in the best place they can be.

Secondly, the most inspiring leaders value and extol empathy and vulnerability – two key leadership traits.

They take an active interest in the lives of their people and commit to understanding them and their drivers in life to ensure they get the best support and the employee experience they need.



INSPIRING WORKPLACES

THE ENGAGEMENT 101



Sasil Pir

Founder and Board Member

SESIL PIR Consulting

- **Authenticity**
- **Growth orientation**

Authenticity - by which I mean, one's ability to assess self traits neutrally, hold healthy self-esteem to know and accept who they are as a whole (with all aspects of their being).

Growth orientation - by which I mean, one's active search for gaining more self-awareness, learning new skills, seeking higher wisdom.

A group of people at a social event, with a woman in the foreground smiling and holding a glass. The image is dimmed to serve as a background for text.

The **Inspiring Workplaces
Awards. Recognizing people-
first organizations across the
globe.**

[Download the entry_pack](#)



INSPIRING WORKPLACES

THE ENGAGEMENT 101



Eugenio Pirri

Chief Executive Officer

Dorchester Collection

- **Authenticity**
- **Risk taker**

1. A person who displays and lives what they say and owns the role they have – all parts.
2. Someone who is willing to take risks and take people on the journey with them so they also achieve their aspirations.



INSPIRING WORKPLACES

THE ENGAGEMENT 101



Stephanie Ryter

Creative Culture Leader

Arity

- **Seeing the best in others**
- **Giving others the opportunity to shine**

When I think about what it takes to be an inspiring leader, I think about my late father. He was not just my father, he was also my mentor, and my soccer coach when I was younger. To me, an inspiring leader is someone who sees the best in others and gives others the opportunity to shine. My father modeled these principles for the soccer teams he led . He was always positive and looked at each player to understand their underlying strengths and improvement areas. He knew the right position to place individuals out on the field so they could use their best abilities to shine. Parents and other players on the team were often surprised to see how much growth can happen when giving someone the opportunity and trust to be their best selves. He had the ability to see the individual's potential before they saw it themselves . My father gave players the courage to learn along the way and surpass their own expectations. He made a profound impact on every player he coached.

These leadership traits I saw in my father can be applied in the workplace , and I find myself following in his footsteps every day. As a manager and leader, it's important to give my team opportunities to leverage their strengths and build their confidence. We are here to help others shine, and at the end of the day, that makes the coach in all of us feel proud



INSPIRING WORKPLACES

THE ENGAGEMENT 101



Marcel Schwantes

**Keynote Speaker and Leadership
Coach**

- **Servant leader**
- **Selflessness**

Inspiring leaders are Servant Leaders. What I have witnessed in my own practice developing servant leaders is that such leaders don't want the attention; they shine the spotlight on their workers and share their power to benefit the people under their care.

When placed in the privileged role of a leader, the best of them realize that leadership is about meeting the needs of people. In turn, they go against the age-old protocol of most top-down, command-and-control management styles: putting profits ahead of people.

In bottom-up servant leadership cultures, such leaders demonstrate selflessness in action by putting followers' interests ahead of their own. This is no small feat, but doing so leads to an unprecedented competitive advantage.



INSPIRING WORKPLACES

THE ENGAGEMENT 101



Dan Sodergren

Keynote and TedxTalk speaker on the future of work. Expert / guest on national TV / radio and podcasts

- **Empathy**
- **Adaptability**

An Inspiring Leader is someone who embodies empathy and adaptability. Empathy is crucial for understanding the needs, emotions, and perspectives of employees. It allows leaders to connect with their teams on a deeper level, fostering trust, loyalty, and a sense of belonging. By demonstrating empathy, leaders can create a supportive environment where employees feel valued and motivated to give their best. Of course, you can help by using tools like [Your FLOCK](#) - the employee survey platform especially when you have a hybrid workforce. But you need to WANT to do this as well and this is often with an understanding of empathy.

Adaptability is another essential trait, which is one of the 9 core motivations you can discover for your teams using [Your FLOCK](#). Given the rapid pace of change and uncertainty in today's world. Inspiring Leaders must be agile, open to new ideas, and willing to pivot when necessary. They should embrace a growth mindset and foster a culture of continuous learning, encouraging their teams to develop new skills and stay ahead of the curve. By being empathetic and adaptable, Inspiring Leaders can navigate the challenges of the future of work and create a thriving, resilient organization.



INSPIRING WORKPLACES

THE ENGAGEMENT 101



Perry Timms

Founder and Chief Energy Officer

People & Transformational HR Ltd

- **Visionary**
- **Role model**

A compelling vision that is in the interests of everyone who is a part of your enterprise; and being a genuine role model - being your best self and having no delusions of grandeur, and having an openness and supportive nature above all else.



INSPIRING WORKPLACES

THE ENGAGEMENT 101



Sean Trainor

Founding Partner

SalientKSA

- **Empathy**
- **Vulnerability**

Leaders who exhibit empathy and vulnerability are more likely to inspire their teams. They demonstrate a deep understanding of the human condition while striving to improve working conditions. Relating to team members on a human level is crucial for building trust and fostering a collaborative environment. Leaders who acknowledge their own vulnerabilities also show their team that it's okay to be imperfect and that mistakes are part of the learning process.

JOIN THE INSPIRE HUB

A forum for you to learn, grow & connect with each other directly

JOIN FOR FREE

After years of being connected by a shared purpose 'to change the world through the world of work', you now can...

- Connect directly without the need of us
- Find out each others' names
- Put faces to those names & get to know one another
- Inspire one another
- Ask questions
- Share ideas
- Solve problems
- Get early access to events and content.

JOIN THE INSPIRE HUB COMMUNITY

**IW INSPIRING
WORKPLACES**

THANKS TO OUR 2023 PARTNERS



**Inspiring Leaders Awards.
For people that positively
impact their organisation**

[Download the entry_pack](#)

