



PETRA PEOPLE

5 WEEKLY SELF-ASSESSMENT TIPS TO IMPROVE
YOUR LEADERSHIP SKILLS



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LIFE LESSONS for BUSINESS OWNERS

EFFECTIVE SELF-ASSESSMENT DEPENDS ON REGULARLY ASKING AND ANSWERING TOUGH QUESTIONS

Effective business leaders excel at self-assessment — regularly setting aside time to get honest with themselves by mapping out their strengths and weaknesses and finding ways to improve.

It's not easy to look in the mirror and objectively answer tough questions about how you're performing as a leader. But it's essential to your personal and professional development to take a break and reflect on your actions, attitudes and achievements. A weekly self-assessment is a great tool to gauge progress and challenge yourself to get better.

As a business coach and business owner, I'm always searching for ways to help my team and member companies improve and grow. Sometimes that means creating a new idea out of one or more existing ones. Entrepreneur and author David Murray calls it "borrowing brilliance," and I agree. For example, business consultant Chris Hallberg created a checklist for a weekly self-assessment, which inspired me to do the same. This ensures I'm focusing on important things and checking in with myself weekly, which keeps me on track.

Here are five self-assessment tips that will help you become a better business leader:

1. LISTEN MORE, TALK LESS

In my sessions with leaders, I preach the importance of listening – and I'm not talking about holding eye contact and waiting for a space to interject. Real listening means letting team members steer conversations. Leaders who listen absorb feedback and take in details that help them craft mindful responses. Any true self-assessment isn't complete if it's missing a listening skills check-up.

Research by Zenger Folkman found that leaders who listen well are "significantly more effective" than those who don't. Listening also allows you to form a stronger bond and build genuine trust with team members, which, in turn, inspires them to do more and greater work.

When a leader listens, team members learn they can talk about any issues they might have, whether it's about the team itself, larger company matters or even personal issues, which may be affecting their performance. When team members trust you and believe that there will not be any negative repercussions, there can be real communication in the workplace, which will improve morale, company culture and productivity. So make sure to encourage input early and often – and listen.

2. DON'T HOLD YOUR TEAM BACK

There are two surefire ways to destroy the individual motivation among team members: One is micro-managing and the other is being so hands-off that team members don't know what to do when problems arise. Business leaders need to find a balance between the two. Know how to give your team the freedom they need to become empowered and motivated, but stay involved so you can provide the necessary guidance if and when team members get discouraged.

Daily huddles, usually 10-15 minutes first thing in the morning, are great opportunities for your organization to gather to share "what's up" for the day, set priorities and share any needs they might have with the broader team. It's also a time for you as a leader to check-in with team members to discuss anything you're doing that is inhibiting their progress. The huddles will help you identify opportunities to become a better leader and avoid minor (or maybe major) train wrecks down the track. The daily huddle also prevents needless emails and sets the stage for more detailed meetings with team members in the future.

3. DON'T AVOID DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

Business leaders know initiating a difficult conversation can be a challenge, but they also know it's part of their job. Punting is not an option. Not every conversation should be held immediately, but if it's important to your business and team members you will have to tackle it eventually — and sooner is better than later.

Having a difficult conversation can be stressful, even panic-inducing, for many leaders, especially the ones who tell me they "focus on the future, not the past!" Before you have a difficult talk, take a moment to think about why you respect your colleagues and team members. Consider why they deserve to hear from you and why building a relationship with each of them will yield positive results. Express your gratitude to your team member first. Then have the talk. Afterward, as part of your self-assessment check-up, make sure you treated your team member fairly and with respect.

4. SELF-ASSESSMENT MEANS ADMITTING MISTAKES

Great leaders should never be afraid to apologize because mistakes are inevitable. If you make an error, own it to yourself, admit it to the people involved, and apologize. And apologizing means more than saying, "I'm sorry." Be specific about what you regret, and explain what you will do to not make the same mistake again in the future.

If you get emotional, that's fine – it can even be a good thing. When team members witness you being vulnerable and showing humility, they'll realize you're more than just a "boss" — you're a human being just like them. Once you've admitted your mistake and apologized, it's time to discuss what to do next. You may be surprised at how your team responds.

Great leaders are humble and take responsibility for their actions. They let team members know they don't always have the right answers and acknowledge areas they need to improve. This combination of humility and self-awareness enables leaders to move past their fears and weaknesses and to ensure they are effective.

5. DISCOVER AND DEVELOP FUTURE LEADERS

You may have all the talent, drive and big ideas in the world, but understand this: You can't go it alone. You have to surround yourself with people who have passion and skills outside of your comfort zone. If you let people do what they do well, you'll have more time to do what YOU do best.

Developing team members is also crucial because not everyone has the skills and personality traits to be a successful leader. Research by Gallup found that 82 percent of the time companies fail to select the right team member for a leadership role. The same report noted that 10 percent of your team will have the talent to manage.

Business leaders should do everything possible to help team members excel. All the support and effort sets the stage so when team members are ready to move into a leadership role, they are well prepared to lead and engage colleagues and clients.

If a self-assessment check-in is new to you, take time to fit it into your schedule. The time spent is worth it because you will improve self-awareness, build stronger relationships with your team members and help you grow as a leader.

This article originally appeared in BOSS Magazine.

THE PETRA EXPERIENCE

The Petra Experience is like a Mental Marathon of focused effort to create a specific set of priorities and a planned process to achieve them... as a team.

Looking to change your business life - forever?

The daily grind of growing a business is tough... it doesn't have to be that way. We work from our own business experiences while focusing on your business – as coach and an accountability partner. We implement the Petra Process in a way that ensures it “sticks” then we stay engaged to keep you on your path to success and less frustration. We don't want this to be just another thing you start – then it gets ignored and finally dies... let's stop that cycle in your business. The Petra Program 'clarifies' what is most important to be done – by whom, by when – **AND** creates an accountability structure to ensure **IT GETS DONE.**

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