

The Leadership Behaviors That Nurture Collaboration

By using organizational network analysis (ONA) to identify leaders who are good at nurturing collaboration and interviewing them and the people they work with, we found 27 behaviors that build trust, instill purpose, and generate energy.

10 TRUST-BUILDING BEHAVIORS

- I make others want to turn to me for transparent, credible expertise.
- I acknowledge areas in which I am not an expert.
- I create rich interactions at key points in projects.
- I actively encourage others to critique and improve my ideas.
- I offer time, resources, information, referrals, insights, and other assistance before I ask for help and without expectation of benefit.
- I connect with people off-task, seeking to understand their backgrounds, interests, and aspirations.
- I consistently communicate my values and priorities.
- I do what I say I am going to do and follow through on commitments I make to people.
- I am committed to principles and goals that are larger than my own self-interests.
- I keep confidential or revealing information to myself.

11 PURPOSE-INSTILLING BEHAVIORS

- I help people clarify and pursue meaningful career objectives.
- I help structure work to align with others' career aspirations.
- I establish the importance of work (the "why") before the tactics for accomplishing it (the "what" or the "how").
- I cocreate solutions and diffuse ownership early.
- I encourage people to be attuned to and synchronized with the demands their colleagues face.
- I show appreciation for others' work.
- I encourage fun in work.
- I reframe negative interactions to focus on work worth doing.
- I encourage people to find purpose by helping others.
- I coach people to collaborate at a certain pace and in cycles that allow them to work at their best.
- I encourage people to find purpose in their work through networks inside and outside the organization.

6 ENERGY-GENERATING BEHAVIORS

- In meetings and one-on-one conversations, I engage others in realistic possibilities that capture their imaginations and hearts.
- I am typically fully engaged in meetings and one-on-one conversations, and show my interest in others and their ideas.
- I create room for others to be a meaningful part of conversations and make sure they see how their efforts will contribute to an evolving plan.
- When I disagree with someone's plan or a course of action, I do so in a way that focuses attention on the issue at hand and not the individual.
- I use humor — often at my own expense — to lighten tense moments or remove unnecessary status or politics from interactions.
- I maintain an effective balance between pushing toward a goal and welcoming new ideas that can improve the project or the process for reaching a goal.

Source: "A Noble Purpose Alone Won't Transform Your Company,"
By Rob Cross et al., *MIT Sloan Management Review*, December 2019
sloanreview.mit.edu/x/61207