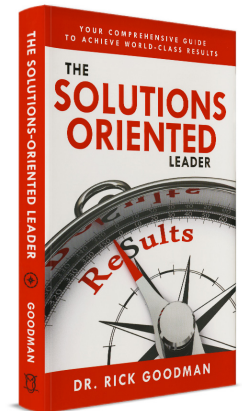


The Solutions Oriented Leader

Your Comprehensive Guide to Achieve World-Class Results

by **Dr. Rick Goodman**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

As a business leader, you have plenty of tools at your disposal to communicate with employees. These tools allow you to talk to employees and get your point across. But how hard is it to sync your message with their needs - to actually engage them in their work as something collaborative, communal, and team-oriented? This is one of the most significant challenges that today's business leaders face.

Dr. Rick Goodman made it his mission to discover what made high performers successful. He spent two years traveling around the world, spending time with top leaders, CEOs, and entrepreneurs who had been responsible for creating and developing multi-million-dollar businesses with great leaders who had built outstanding teams and retained employees for years. In *The Solutions Oriented Leader: Your Comprehensive Guide to Achieve World-Class Results*, Goodman shares the wisdom he gained on that journey and gives readers the 'secret sauce' to transform teams into rockstars.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Seven traits of truly inspiring leaders.
- Six changes you may need to make to your leadership style today.
- How to hire smart to assemble your dream team.
- What hurdles impact employee retention.
- The five habits of engaging leaders.

Success Begins with You

The success of your team ultimately begins with you. Understanding this principle is the starting point for developing excellent team members. In the workplace, we tend to define ourselves according to job titles and descriptions. Our title establishes what we do, what we're in charge of, what our responsibilities are, and what is outside of our obligation. It lets us know when we are fulfilling our obligations and, perhaps, when we are truly going the extra mile. One common denominator of successful leaders is that they all exceed their job descriptions.

Real leadership means understanding your job description, and the job descriptions of everyone on your team - but it also means not being *bound* by those descriptions. Effective leaders do anything and everything they can do to elevate their team members to a place where they can succeed, and they ensure that everyone is working together toward meeting the team's goals. Leaders must really know their team members in order to tap into potential beyond job titles and descriptions. Leaders should also get to know their own strengths and weaknesses. An earnest assessment and appraisal of yourself allows you to know where to be hands-on and where to delegate. Leaders who do that separate themselves from the pack and quickly develop followers.

Going through a self-inventory will help you determine if you have the hallmarks of what it takes to be truly inspirational. There are seven traits of inspiring leaders that improve employee retention, maximize productivity, and increase the happiness quotient we can have in our business. Take stock of yourself and use these points to determine how inspiring a leader you are:

1. Perfecting a sense of purpose beyond your own success. Leaders measure their own success by the success of others. They see it as their mission and purpose to help their team members thrive.
2. Approachable. Team members should feel comfortable approaching you with questions, concerns, and feedback. If you're intimidating rather than approachable, that's a problem.
3. Open-minded. Great leaders are open to whatever works, even if it's not their own idea. Actively court solutions and suggestions from your team members and implement the ones that you think will work.
4. Candid and constructive. Inspiring leaders give the

gift of feedback. If your team members actually accept your constructive feedback and make changes to their performance, that shows that they know you're trying to help them improve.

5. Treating your employees with equality. Favoritism and inspiration do not work together. If your employees feel like you prefer some over others, that ultimately reflects badly on your leadership style.
6. Being grateful. Inspiring leaders are thankful for the efforts of their team and they are not afraid to say so.
7. Focus on your team. Inspiring leaders are happy to give credit to team members rather than giving all the credit to themselves.

Follow the Leader

Nobody likes following a boss, but everyone loves to follow the leader! The decision you make about being a boss or a leader will affect everything you do from your communication to your outcomes. Let's take a look at the difference between a boss and a leader so that you can make an educated decision on which path you want to follow.

Leaders actually lead while bosses rule, govern, and dictate. Leaders listen, want to hear from their team members, and have them engage in the decision-making process. Bosses are not known for their openness towards collaboration. Leaders empower others by guiding team members and instilling them with confidence. Bosses on the other hand, may throw their employees into a project without much training or support. Leaders do not use intimidation as a tool for managing team members, but bosses don't know better than to leverage fear. Bosses think of themselves as above other employees who work for them. Leaders work with their team.

If you've made the decision to become a better leader, there are six changes you may need to make to your leadership style today that will point you in the direction you want to go:

1. Learn to listen rather than bark orders. Instead of commanding, call your team together for a discussion. Work together toward a solution, and then move forward.
2. Find tools for motivating your employees rather than scaring them. Provide metrics and data to your team members, showing them the impact they make.
3. Step away from micromanagement. Don't control

Give credit where credit is due, and make sure your employees know that you notice and appreciate their hard work.

your team members. Just provide them with some basic guidance. Share a goal and guidance and let them take it from there.

4. Make sure your feedback is constructive. Constructive feedback addresses problems, improves performance, empowers people, and ultimately yields better results.
5. Delegate. You have to trust your team members to tackle projects on their own. Take something that is on your plate and give it to an employee.
6. Be generous in your praise. Give credit where credit is due, and make sure your employees know that you notice and appreciate their hard work.

Hiring Smart

Assembling your dream team means paying attention to the folks who interview with you and ensuring that you're hiring not just on the basis of their skills or their resume accomplishments, but also on the basis of how they fit into your team and complement your other players. Here are a few tips for hiring smart:

- Hire for a specific set of tasks, responsibilities, and functions, not generalities. Make sure you can identify how all those tasks support the overall vision and mission of your team.
- You don't build a good team by hiring a group of people who all act and think like each other. Hire people whose perspectives and skill sets complement each other.
- Pay attention to personality. An applicant may have all the skills you need but he or she won't mesh well with the other team members. A clash of personalities could prove disruptive to the team dynamic.
- Solicit input from your team. Ask them what skills are needed in the office and what personality traits to look for in a new player.
- Communicate your team's purpose and vision during

the interview process. Make sure the applicant is enthusiastic about it.

- Involve select team members in the hiring process. They can gauge the chemistry between new and existing employees.

Employee Retention

Leaders, employers, and HR representatives pour countless hours into each employee - grooming them, training them, investing in them, making them into integral members of the team. Sometimes, just when you turn an employee into a rockstar, that employee jumps ship. Of course, you probably do what you can to enhance employee retention but the hurdles to retention are numerous.

The first big hurdle to retention is bringing on the wrong employees in the first place. Team building starts with the hiring process. If you're recruiting employees who are a bad fit, don't be surprised when they don't stick around for the long haul.

Employees who get hired then quickly realize they have no clear way to advance in the company in another hurdle to retention. Talk to team members regularly about their career goals and be open with them about possible avenues for advancing within the company. Also, invest in training to make sure your employees know you care about their development.

The third hurdle to retention is lack of proper communications. Employees like to know that they have an open dialogue with the leader, or at the very least the HR manager. It's important that you keep those channels open.

Often the biggest hurdle to retention is money and benefits. Although you want to provide your employees with enticing benefits and competitive salaries, sometimes the budget just doesn't allow for it. That's when you have to get creative by offering cost-effective benefits like flexible scheduling, work-from-home options, and professional development events.

Engagement in the Workplace

Employee engagement is the measure of how emotionally committed your employees are to the team. Employee engagement plays a definite role in your bottom line and has a major impact on productivity, retention, morale, innovation, communications, and recruitment. When employees are engaged, they believe they are really a part of the organization and that you have invested in them as integral members of the team. Some of the fundamental hallmarks of employee engagement include: soliciting employee feedback, genuinely listening to them, ensuring they are clear in the vision of the company, and showing that you want them around for the long haul - something you can do by providing opportunities for professional training and development.

This factor of development is key. Employees need to know that they have opportunities to grow, to broaden their horizons, to deepen their skillsets. When there's no room for growth, employees feel stagnant and ultimately, leave the team.

Employee engagement doesn't actually start with your employees. It starts with you, the leader - with the example you set, the culture you build, and the commitment you make to inspire your team members. If you want to boost engagement, put some effort into these practical, real-world steps:

- **Align the Workforce:** It falls to you to cultivate a clear sense of mission and to make plain how every project, task, and employee contributes to that mission.
- **Empower the Managers:** Those that you interact with daily are the ones you need to invest in first. Provide them with direction in house they can listen,

set clear expectations, and deliver feedback that is truly constructive.

- **Emphasize Fairness:** In everything you do - from resource allocation to how you make sales - make sure you're being fair. Playing favorites leads to disenfranchised employees.
- **Create Leaders:** Invest in promising talent and encourage them in leadership development. Help them develop skills of engagement and motivating others.
- **Measure!** As the solutions-oriented leader, one of your most important responsibilities is measuring results. Use surveys and other employee feedback programs to benchmark your progress.

If you are feeling more like a boss and less like a leader, change is possible. By focusing on becoming a solutions-oriented leader you will develop specific traits that lead to consistent success. If you follow these proven-successful principles, you will begin to develop your dream team that will gladly follow you, their leader.



Dr. Rick Goodman is one of the most sought-after leadership and engagement experts today. His keynote presentations and workshops have produced transformational results leading to highly engaged employees, increased productivity, and higher profits. Dr. Rick is also a successful entrepreneur who walks his talk and shares his winning philosophies with his audiences. He has built several extremely successful multimillion-dollar businesses and uses those experiences to provide solutions for his clients and audiences throughout the world.

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