

When people are asked to become more assertive, this usually carries negative connotations, such as being aggressive, pushy or annoying.

It's quite the opposite, in fact, and is an essential skill for anybody who's aim is to get things agreed and done promptly whilst maintaining strong relationships with their peers.

How can you become a more assertive leader? What traits and characteristics are essential in achieving this?

Being assertive is putting your own view across whilst, at the same time, respecting the views and beliefs of others. Let's look at the following areas where you can become a more assertive leader.

## **The first thing to think about is how you deliver feedback.**

Delivering regular feedback is an essential trait for all leaders, and when delivered incorrectly can have damaging, long lasting effects. Giving someone supportive, constructive feedback allows you to give your opinion in a clear and precise manner without causing any harm to the feelings of the recipient. This will allow you to manage your time and energy more effectively as well as your relationships and resources.

As opposed to using phrases starting with "I thought your performance was shocking last period..." or "You failed in this department last month...", try something like "So you just missed out last period on your target, that's disappointing however if we can train you to manage your time more effectively, you should be able to easily exceed it next month."

## **Secondly you have to consider the language that you use.**

We previously mentioned how being assertive is putting your view across whilst respecting others – so it is essential you use empathetic language whilst maintaining balance.

For example, "I understand you've been having a few issues with Steve, however the deadline for your project is next Tuesday – let's sit down and come up with a solution to get this completed." Start sentences with "I" and emphasise the word "you" any time you use it.

## **Finally you must always use good judgement when making key decisions.**

You can improve your judgement during decision making by gathering the key facts, carefully analysing these facts and by gaining the views and insights of others in your team.

Part of being assertive is to be forceful with your own view – so in order for you to gain respect amongst your team, this view and opinion must be well educated and well rounded.

If you are consistently assertive whilst airing opinions and points of view that are inaccurate and not very well educated, you will lose both your clout and integrity as a leader.

So to become a more assertive leader, consider the three essentials:

**Number one, think about how you deliver feedback** and the long term implications that it has.

**Number two, consider the actual language that you use**, the key is to be balanced and not come across as aggressive with your words.

**And number three, use good judgement when making key decisions** to ensure you don't lose your influence and integrity as a leader.