

COM 315 Communication in Groups and Organizations

Leadership Traits

Below is a list of 48 skills, traits, or characteristics various scholars have suggested are necessary to be a “effective leader.” This is not an exhaustive list; many other studies conducted by art, business, communication, education, industry, military science, philosophy, political science, psychology, science, sociology, and therapy scholars have suggested different lists. The list below is a synthesis of those qualities that appear most often across disciplines.

How many of these skills do you currently have at a well honed level, at a moderately sharpened stage, at a minimally competent strength, or in need of serious development? The next paragraph discusses some of the ways your professor knows from experience, has been informed by previous students, and that are shown by research to be useful ways to increase your personal leadership skills.

Join campus and community organizations. Membership – and eventual leadership – in such groups offer direct contact experience with follower/leader observation and experience. Being overtly aware of and taking notes relevant to observed leadership – positive and negative – offers you a reservoir of useful ideas to emulate or to avoid when your turn to lead, evaluate others’ leadership, and/or to influence future leader choices. The following courses on campus have been consistently been reported to be of use in developing leadership skills; ECO 100 Contemporary Economics [this class offers students astute and needed awareness of personal issues requisite for leaders]; BUS 109 Principles of Accounting I [this course offers future leaders the basics needed for budgetary understanding]; BUS 24 Management Information Systems [this course is a gateway to coping with large volumes of data which leaders often have to cope with]; ENG 315 Professional Writing [this course sharpens report writing skills – report writing is vastly different than is creative writing]; FRE 211 French for Professionals [this course offers students with a year of college French an opportunity to work with language skills, interpersonal interaction, and practical written French skills]; PHI 321 Introduction to Ethics [this course offers insights into values, introspection, and varied methods of inquiry]; REC 122 Leadership Training in Recreation [this class helps develop physical, mental, and emotional leadership through cognitive and motor skill development]; COM 301 Mediated Persuasion [this course offers students practice in persuasion – a skill leaders must possess – as well as showing ways to protect ourselves from unscrupulous persuasion in advertising, politics, and social sources]; COM 302 Gender Issues in Communication [this course makes students aware of physiological, anatomical, hormonal, societal, and emotional gender differences; how one can change, and ways gender can get in the way; and COM 327 Public Relations [this course gives students experience in and offers awareness of how public relations works.

The courses listed above make excellent elective choices for the student who is striving to improve their leadership repertoire; they are advised to consider some of these classes to add to their list.

honesty	stamina	endurance	coordination skills
gracefulness	flexibility	adaptability	negotiating skills
openness	tactful	intelligence	physically attractive
empathy	patience	good timing	good listener
daring	good memory	high energy	motivator
aggressive	assertive	good humor	consistency
informal	sensitive	compassionate	good networker
inspirational	detail person	neatness	relationship builder
self confident	trusting	clear articulator	manages conflict
problem solver	careful planner	supportive	harmonizer
considerate	collaborative	encourager	compromiser
tension reliever	information seeker	information supplier	cohesion builder