Leadership

Millionaire Tip Series

Steve Main

Double Diamond Press Reno, Nevada stevemain.com

Copyright

Leadership (Millionaire Tip Series)

Copyright © 2012, 2026 by Steve Main. All rights reserved.

Published by Double Diamond Press, Reno, Nevada. stevemain.com

Second edition, August 2026. Revised November 2026. First published 2012.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, whether electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written consent of the author. Unauthorized use is an infringement of the copyright laws of the United States of America.

Book Adaptation and Design by Victor Brodt

Printed in the United States of America

Contents

- Introduction
- Things to Watch For
- Leadership
- Employees Come First
- Reference
- About the Author
- Other Works
- Contact

Introduction

What is leadership? What does good leadership look like, and what kind of actions come from a good leader? What is the evidence of poor leadership?

I've been asked those four questions for most of my working life. I've also watched people answer them badly. Most answers start with a title. Somebody says a leader is the person who runs the department, signs the checks or owns the building.

That isn't leadership. That's furniture.

I've spent 40 years in the gym business and owned gyms since 1994. In that time I have promoted people who could not lead, and I have watched people lead who were never promoted. The difference had nothing to do with the organization chart. The difference was whether anyone was following.

This booklet is short on purpose. It belongs to the Millionaire Tip Series, and the series exists to put one idea in your hands in a single sitting. You won't find theory here. You'll find what I've used to run six clubs, and what I've watched fail every time I ignored it.

Here is what we will cover. We will define a leader by followers rather than by title. We will look at why people follow, and why fear is the weakest of the reasons. We will turn a vision into a plan, and a plan into goals, objectives and daily tasks. We will separate responsibility from fault, because they aren't the same thing. And we will settle the question of who comes first in your organization, which is the question most operators get backwards.

Read it once in a sitting. Then walk your own building and ask the honest question.

Is anyone actually following you?

Things to Watch For

Poor leadership rarely announces itself. It arrives as a list of small symptoms that the people inside the building stop noticing. Here is what to watch for, in yourself before anybody else.

The leader says it is not my fault. Fault and responsibility are not the same thing. A leader who reaches for fault has just taught everyone that excuses are acceptable here.

Credit runs up and blame runs down. The most effective leaders take responsibility without blaming, and give the credit for success to others. When you see that running the other direction, you are watching a boss protect himself.

People follow because they are afraid. Intimidation works right up until it does not. Followers who obey out of fear will leave the organization, or they will turn hostile the moment it is safe to do so. Any loss of power on the leader's part is when you find out.

Good people leave for the next offer. Some follow only because it is temporarily in their best interest. That is a rented following. It walks out with a better opportunity somewhere else.

Nobody can repeat the vision. If your people cannot say where the organization is going, there is nothing to buy into and nothing to hold them through a hard month.

There is a vision but no plan. A goal without a plan and a timeline is just a dream. A vision with no plan under it is the same failure in a bigger frame.

Goals carry no timeline. Without a timeline the organization works toward the goal forever. Procrastination fills every space you leave open.

Progress is never tracked. Followers lose hope and faith in the vision when nobody shows them movement. Silence gets read as failure.

Commitments slip. A leader who does not do what he said he would do cannot expect anybody else to. Then he projects expectations onto followers and is heard as a hypocrite.

The leader will not take a turn. If the leader will not clean the toilets when it is her turn, she is not leading by example. She is just the boss.

Tasks get treated as goals. Required tasks are requirements, not goals. When that line blurs, people start treating the daily work as optional. It is not.

Underperformance is left undiagnosed. When a rep misses his numbers, check your side first: the plan, the leads, the time and the tools. If those are sound, he is either choosing not to do the daily tasks or lacking the skill to do them. Each problem has a different answer, and guessing between them is a leadership failure.

The leader goes left and expects the team to go right.

That is pushing, not leading.

Leadership

Back in 2001, the Enron scandal sent a strong message about what is expected of leaders. That's now a quarter of a century ago, and the lesson hasn't aged a day. Those leaders couldn't duck responsibility for their company's failures. Leaders have great responsibility. They are responsible for success and failure. They must take responsibility for all actions under their authority. If a front desk employee in a health club is rude to a member, it might not be the club operator's fault, but it's the operator's responsibility. The operator or leader must address and rectify the situation. Many actions which occur in a health club might be unknown to the leader and aren't the leader's fault, but everything is the leader's responsibility. Fault and responsibility aren't the same. The most effective leaders take responsibility without blaming but give credit for success to others. A leader should

never say it's "not my fault" or make excuses. This will set an example of what is expected of others.

A leader is someone who has followers. People follow leaders for several reasons. Some people follow because of fear. They fear that the consequences of going against the leader could be detrimental to them. It could get them fired. The problem with leading through intimidation is that the followers will leave the organization or will become hostile toward the leader when it's safe. When the leader loses power, followers feel safe enough to start challenging the leader. When leading through intimidation, it's just a matter of time before the leader loses effectiveness.

Some people follow leaders because they believe it's temporarily in their best interest. Followers will choose a different leader when a better opportunity presents itself with another organization. A leader will be most effective if he or she paints a vision of hope and opportunity. Followers who buy into the vision will be on board for the long run.

Once the leader paints a vision that followers can get excited about, she must lay out a plan for the vision. Leading by example will demonstrate the leader's belief in the vision and be an example of what is expected of followers. Without leading by example, the leader will come across as just a boss. If the leader takes her turn cleaning the toilets, the followers will follow when it's their turn.

A leader must always do what he says he will do. Tasks which are the leader's responsibility must be completed on time. Leaders who don't keep their commitments can't expect followers to keep their commitments. A leader who keeps his commitments will increase production in the whole organization through leading by example. Leaders who always do what they say they will do earn respect and trust. If a leader always does what he says he will do, followers know they can take that to the bank. Followers will also feel confident and secure. Leaders who don't do what they have committed to will just be seen as hypocrites when they project expectations on followers. This will cause followers to doubt the vision and feel insecure.

Followers will lose hope and faith in the vision if progress isn't tracked. Progress is tracked through setting and achieving goals. As goals are achieved, followers will get more excited about the vision and positive energy will be spread throughout the organization. If a leader is consistently positive about the vision, that positive attitude will trickle down.

Leaders must help the organization and followers in setting goals. A goal nobody can reach isn't a goal. Set it high enough to stretch people and close enough that they can hit it. A goal without a plan and timeline is just a dream. Setting goals is a basis for evaluation. Goals should be a part of every business every day. Goals should be set at every level of a business. Goals must have timelines set for them or the organization will always be working toward the goal. It's easy for procrastination to set in without a timeline for every goal.

I'll use an example from the health club industry. This applies to all leadership positions. The club operator or leader's vision directs the goals. A goal's feasibility is tested by working backwards from the goal. If the goal is $30,000 in total new membership sales for the month, and the club sells thirty days a month, the objectives are built backward from there.

The first objective will be to gross a minimum of $1,000 in new membership sales per day. If the average dues membership is $39 for the first month with a $168 processing fee, that's $207 received for a dues membership. If the average paid-in-full membership is $400, then three dues memberships and one paid-in-full bring in $1,021 a day. That mix is the second objective. If the mix changes, the math changes, so track what kind of memberships you sell, not just how many. The feasibility of the goal is now coming into view. If a club has three sales reps working each day, we must then set tasks that will help achieve the objectives.

The first task for each sales rep is to set six appointments for each day. Additional tasks are added that will help each sales rep book six appointments each day. Each sales rep has six appointments for a club total of eighteen. This should yield a 40% show ratio on

appointments. That means about seven appointments show up for a tour of the club each day. Each sales rep should have at least a 60% closing ratio. This equates to about four memberships each day. Those are averages, not promises. Some days come in over and some under. The leader tracks the real numbers and fixes the plan when they fall short.

It's very important to emphasize that required tasks aren't goals or objectives. They are requirements. Each person in the organization, starting with the leader, chooses to complete their tasks every day. When the tasks are done at the required skill level, that's how the objectives and goals get hit.

If a sales rep isn't averaging six appointments per day with a 40% show ratio and a 60% close ratio, the leader checks his own side first. Is the target realistic? Are the leads there? Does the rep have the time and the tools to do the work? If the plan is sound, one of two things is usually occurring: a) the sales rep is choosing not to perform the daily required tasks, or b) he doesn't possess the required skill level to perform the tasks. If the rep is choosing not to, it's the leader's responsibility to motivate the rep by re-emphasizing the vision and the rep's future. If the rep is unable to perform the tasks, it's the leader's responsibility to lead the sales rep in increasing his skill level in the needed area. The leader must positively motivate and train the rep in order to increase the skill level of that person. If the rep continually chooses not to perform daily tasks, it can jeopardize the positive environment of the business and undermine the leader's authority.

The most important thing for a leader to remember is that leaders who perform to the level of their own expectations will earn respect and set a positive example. If a leader goes left but expects her followers to go right, that's pushing, not leading.

Employees Come First

Ask most operators who comes first and you will hear the customer. Ask again and you will hear profit. I've spent 40 years in the gym business, owning gyms since 1994, and my answer hasn't moved.

Employees come first, and they know it.

I have to be careful with that sentence, because it's easy to misread. I'm not saying employees set the direction. Direction belongs to the leader. The leader paints the vision, lays out the plan, and sets the goals, objectives and daily tasks that carry the plan. That isn't a committee function. A business steered by whoever spoke loudest this morning has no vision at all.

What I'm saying is that employees come first in protection.

Protection and direction are two different things, and confusing them is where operators go wrong. In direction, the leader is first and the staff follow. In protection, the staff are first and the leader stands in front of them. Those two live in the same building without contradiction. In practice they only work together.

Here is the test, and it usually happens in public.

A member is angry at the front desk. He is wrong, or mostly wrong, and he is loud about it. You walk over. What you do in the next ten seconds teaches your entire staff exactly what they are worth to you.

If you correct your employee in front of that member, you've told the whole building something permanent. You've told them that a stranger with a complaint outranks the person who shows up every morning at five. You won't have to say it twice. It will be repeated in the break room before the shift ends, and it will cost you good people, the ones you've and the ones you hope to hire.

Take the member aside. Handle it. If something unsafe or wrong has to stop right now, stop it, but don't humiliate your employee while you do it. Then talk to your employee in private, where correction is correction and not a public sacrifice.

A leader who protects his people ends up with people who protect the business.

There is an older instruction behind this than anything the club industry taught me. Colossians 4:1 tells masters to give their servants what is just and equal, knowing that they also have a

Master in heaven. Just and equal. Not just legal, and not just whatever the market will tolerate this quarter.

That verse isn't a wage policy. It's a standard of treatment. It reaches schedules, correction, credit for good work, and how you talk about a person when that person isn't in the room.

This sits directly on top of the first principle in this booklet. A leader is someone who has followers. Fear or self-interest will rent you followers for a while. Nobody stays loyal to a person who won't stand in front of them.

Customers matter. Profit matters. Neither one opens your building at five in the morning.

The people who do come first.

Reference

Main, S. (2026). Total Health Club Management (revised ed.). Reno, NV: Double Diamond Press.

About the Author

Steve Main has spent 40 years in the gym business and has owned gyms since 1994. He has successfully led consulting teams in multiple industries, ranging from service businesses to manufacturing.

Being the creator of multiple ongoing businesses, this entrepreneur speaks more from experience than opinion. He has a strong financial background. He founded Main Corp in October 1994 on a small $79,000 loan, and repaid that loan inside fourteen months, before the end of 1995. Parkway Athletic Club has six locations in northern Nevada. His companies own and run four of them, in South Reno, Downtown Reno, Sparks and Carson City; Fernley and Fallon are affiliated clubs. For years Main Corp also licensed the Fitness For $10 brand to independent operators, some of them outside the United States.

Steve Main is also a Winslow Certified Business Consultant. He holds a B.A. in Recreation Administration, an MBA with a concentration in finance, and the Accredited Asset Management Specialist designation through the College for Financial Planning. He is the author of Total Health Club Management, A God-Made Millionaire, Managing and Growing God's Resources, Stronger After 50 and A Goal Without a Plan Is Just a Dream. Club Success Magazine has also published his article "Leadership."

Other Works

- *Total Health Club Management*
- *A God-Made Millionaire*
- *Managing and Growing God's Resources*
- *Stronger After 50*
- *A Goal Without a Plan Is Just a Dream*

Contact

Join Steve Main and hear how he built his companies.

info@stevemain.com

(775) 400-1044

stevemain.com