



Identity Insights

*Information and ideas about what's going on
beneath the surface of our lives*

The Identity Circle Viewsletter

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Want to lead? Make work personal

We're getting into the thick of it: determining who our next president will be. I am not a particularly political person. Frankly, I don't like politics much at all. It's messy, expedient, and partisan to a fault. That said, **the presidential race got me to thinking about leadership, generally, and what its future might be.** So, I decided to do some research to see what that "future" might actually look like -- and mean -- to current leaders and those aspiring to lead. Here's what unfolded ...

What I did

I tapped into various organizations that study leadership, intensively, write about it, extensively, and practice it, comprehensively -- nearly 20 of them, including The Center for Creative Leadership, Hay Group, *Fast Company* Magazine, PWC (PriceWaterhouseCoopers, and Google.

My aim? To **identify the most important attributes of the 'future leader,'** to see what the underlying theme was among all of these attributes, and to determine what that means for anyone who wants to be and be seen as a leader in the years ahead.

What I learned

No surprise, there were lots of attributes; I found 71 in all. Among them, however, there were 44 that spoke directly to the attitudes and behaviors future leaders would need to exhibit in order to be successful. In turn, those 44 attributes self-sorted into five major categories, or imperatives. They are:

* **Collaboration** -- the ability to work with "the many," not just "the few," and to do so with open arms and an open mind



Larry Ackerman

Founder and
President
The Identity Circle

"The personalization of work can become the 'new efficiency,' driving productivity and greater engagement."

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Want to get a handle
on your value-creating
potential?

* **Individuality** -- the ability to connect people with jobs, projects, and teams that are personally meaningful to them. Further, to know who *you* are as an individual (not just what you do: your title, function, role, etc.)

* **Authenticity** -- the ability to be fully yourself. To know your vulnerabilities as well as your strengths. To stay true to yourself in the face of uncertainty -- with others and within yourself.

* **Integrity** -- the ability to stand up for what you believe in, even in the face of possible ridicule. To say what you mean and mean what you say

* **Communication** -- the ability to listen deeply to what others think, believe and feel. To bring curiosity and empathy into conversations. In effect, to inspire trust and followership.

What I realized

Taken together, these five imperatives told me one thing above all: that **the future of leadership is about the personalization of work as the foundation for change.**

Yes, leadership is all about change; it's the central reality of our time. For better or for worse, *change 'R' us*. But how you foster it, navigate it, and deal with it, is entirely up to you.

Personalizing work simply makes sense. You're humanizing relationships, honoring the individual inside the employee, tapping into the whole person (beginning with you), motivating from the inside, out.

From what I learned through my research, I believe that **the personalization of work can become the 'new efficiency,'** driving productivity and potentially, greater employee engagement. I like that. It flips the traditional model of assembly line efficiency on its head, by celebrating the making of the individual rather than the making of the product.

With this in mind, let's "personalize" this conversation. Check out my blog at [Identity Beacon](#) and let me know what you think.



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A Read More feature of Identity Insights
Discover How To...

... *Be a 'servant leader'*

Speaking of leadership, here's a recent piece written by Howard Schultz, Starbuck's CEO, on the topic of servant leadership -- an idea that clearly speaks to future leaders. He writes: "*The values of servant leadership -- putting others first and leading from the heart -- need to emerge from every corner of American life.*" Read the [article](#). See if you have what it takes to be a servant leader.

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