

August 4, 2003

COMMUNICATE

Talk the Talk

Rudy Giuliani. Mother Teresa. Colin Powell. Bill Veeck. Winston Churchill. While these people might seem to have little in common, they actually are quite alike – at least in their success as communicators, says consultant John Baldoni, author of *Great Communications Secrets of Great Leaders* (McGraw Hill, 2003). In his research Baldoni discovered several key communication traits among successful leaders.



First, great leaders value communication. They know that poor communication results in low morale, declining productivity and high turnover. They recognize that communicating is so inherent to a person's success that it sets up all other capacities of leadership, says Baldoni.

Second, great communicators have great conviction to do things for the good of the organization, says Baldoni. They demonstrate their beliefs through the repetition of key goals and messages. Great leaders don't assume that if they said it once people understood the message. "They have a willingness to be visible, to be seen and to say the same things again and again and again," he explains.

Third, great leaders listen. "That's the hardest part," Baldoni says. "We all have the capacity to listen, but we don't do it enough." If you make a habit of not listening to your team, you'll be out of the loop when problems occur. "If you're not hearing problems, you have a problem," says Baldoni. "Managers who succeed are those who are open and have an open-door policy," he explains.

Finally, great leaders use questions. "Churchill was a master at asking questions of his generals as a means of staying informed but also of informing them that he wanted progress on issues. Giuliani did the same throughout his public career, notably post 9/11," says Baldoni. There's an art to questioning, however. You want to make employees feel like they're imparting valuable information, not like they're being interrogated.

Communication is the foundation for relationships, for success and for leadership, stresses Baldoni. "It's not just a nice thing to do. It's how you get things done."

For more information, please click on <http://www.lc21.com/>.

[Back to Cover](#)