

9 Leadership Practices to Leave in 2021

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As a leader in your business, what is one leadership practice you're leaving behind in 2021?

Here is what 9 thought-leaders had to say:

- Leave Over-Communication
- Leave Internal Project Calls to the Pro
- Leave Inauthenticity
- Leave Annual Performance Reviews
- Leave the Past
- Leave Constant Management
- Leave Micromanagement Behavior
- Leave Destructive Criticism
- Leave Perfectionism
- Leave Over-Communication



In 2021, our company was still getting used to a hybrid model, and we really wanted to make sure that communication didn't suffer. When you're still finding your footing with a model as complex as hybrid work, the tendency can emerge to communicate with your team far more frequently than before to ensure everyone is on the same page and that team cohesion doesn't suffer. It's not the worst thing in the world, but it can lead to over-communication that is inefficient and eats time and energy. Now that we're more comfortable with our workplace model, I know that as a leader I can focus more on engaged, efficient communication as we head into 2022.

Stephen Light, Nolah Mattress

Leave Internal Project Calls to the Pros

Leading an analytics consultancy, I used to plan all the internal project calls far in advance. Over time, I noticed that the planning responsibility is better left to the colleagues that work on the projects. They are high-performing individuals, and rigid call times forced them to break down their work into milestones which do not always correspond best with their development stages.

We have piloted a system of establishing a suggested call frequency and letting developers book progress calls when they see fit. As it not only allowed them to assume greater responsibility but also saved us a lot of time, we are now abandoning inflexible call schedules.

Michael Sena, SENACEA

Leave Inauthenticity

As a leader, you must show up as your complete self – the good, the bad, the admirable, the ugly. While never been an inauthentic leader before, I will certainly lean more into vulnerability, empathy, and deep understanding as a best practice to motivate and elevate our entire team.

Sentari Minor, evolvedMD

Leave Annual Performance Reviews

I've learned that giving feedback to employees needs to happen much more frequently, and once a year simply isn't going to cut it. This is why my company is ditching the outdated system of annual performance reviews in favor of a more mentorship-style approach to employee development.

Our goal is to give feedback as frequently as possible to keep workers agile and engaged. Not only will this lead to quicker and more tangible improvements in their performance; it will help solidify relationships between managers and their direct reports.

Johannes Larsson, JohannesLarsson.com

Leave the Past

2021 is behind us, and let's leave it that way. While the past can predict future performance, it can also leave us stuck. One common leadership practice is setting goals from the current state. This can leave a lot of missed opportunities on the table and company growth stagnant. The phrase "We have always done it this way" is another dangerous mindset that stifles innovation. The new year will bring innovation, new processes, and new growth. We will not be looking in the rearview mirror.

Jenn Christie, Markitors

Leave Constant Management

I hope I am leaving behind the idea that employees need to be "managed" constantly. With any organization, it's important for leadership to understand their company culture and treat employees like the adults they are. If you create an environment where people can communicate openly about what they're working on, then everyone wins!

Matt Miller, embroker.com

Leave Micromanagement Behavior

2021 has been a year of mixed emotions but there were some crucial realizations for the taking as a business leader. As a business leader of a small company with big ambitions, I have always liked to be involved in everything, keep giving uncalled suggestions and closely monitor everything. However, I did not realize that from the perspective of my employees, that would rather seem like annoying micromanagement behavior. This realization came to me when one of our former employees stated in her exit interview that she was uncomfortable working for an organization that subscribes to a micromanagement style of leadership.

I had some introspection to do when I learned this and I put myself in the shoes of my employees. Obviously, for them, micromanagement would have come across as an act of distrust and lack of creative freedom. I do not want that to be a feature of my business because, on a personal level, even I would dislike micromanagement. So, I am going to leave this behind in 2021

Jessica Robinson, Speaking Nerd

Leave Destructive Criticism

An outdated leadership practice that I will be leaving behind in 2021 is the use of destructive criticism. There are many examples of high-functioning companies with leaders who use constructive

criticism to shape their organization, but there are also plenty of research studies that show how destructive criticism can set someone up for failure.

As a leader, it's important to make sure my team knows what they are doing right as well as what they are doing wrong.

Becky Moore, GlobalGrasshopper

Leave Perfectionism

It's been my astrological excuse for decades. I've striven for perfection in myself and those who've worked for me and now realize that it comes out of fear and wanting to control too much.

Reading Brené Brown has helped me to realize that being a "daring leader" means showing my vulnerable side and not feeling like a failure when a mistake occurs.

Wanting to be "perfect" is also a way that women leaders cope so that nobody can find fault in them being in a leadership role. But, the best leaders show they're human and fallible.

For 2022, I'll be doing my best, but not pushing for perfection!