

EDITION: INTERNATIONAL U.S. MÉXICO ARABIC  
 TV: CNNI CNN en Español  
 Set edition preference

**CNN** 

SEARCH

POWERED BY Google

Home Video World U.S. Africa Asia Europe Latin America Middle East Business World Sport Entertainment Tech Travel iReport

Part of complete coverage on  
[Route to the top](#)

## Route to the Top



# Want to be a leader? Act like one

By **Dianna Booher**, Special to CNN  
February 7, 2012 -- Updated 1132 GMT (1932 HKT)

Twitter Share Email Save Print



Meryl Streep plays Margaret Thatcher in the movie "The Iron Lady "

### STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Dianna Booher explains key habits, skills, and characteristics of true leaders
- Commit to what you communicate, and follow through, says Booher
- "Delivering the goods attracts attention and demands respect," she adds

**Editor's note:** *Dianna Booher, an expert in executive communications, is the author of 45 books. Her latest books include "Creating Personal Presence: Look, Talk, Think, and Act Like a Leader" and "Communicate with Confidence, Revised and Expanded Edition." As CEO of Booher Consultants and as a keynote speaker, Dianna and her staff deliver speeches and training to increase effectiveness of communication and presentation skills.*

**(CNN)** -- You're doing all the obvious things: the right education, solid experience, a good mentor. But those in the C-Suite often confide that it's the subtle "polish" that takes the superstar to the next level of success.

Small differences can make a big impact. What affects others' perception of your ability to lead a project, a division, an organization, or a movement?

Consider the following habits, attitudes, skills, and characteristics of a leader to see how you measure up and then determine how you can step up:



Dianna Booher

### Act with integrity

Tell the truth. Practice the principles you preach. Be genuine and sincere. It takes just one inappropriate action or comment to uncover the counterfeit. And once credibility vanishes, regaining it becomes a monumental task. People want to see the real you -- the integrity behind your face, the actions behind your promises. In today's economic landscape, trust trumps both price and track record.

Read more: [Steve Jobs: How to lead with purpose](#)

PUT NEW INSIGHTS TO WORK WITH EXECUTIVE EDUCATION.

ROLL-OVER TO VIEW PROGRAMS

THINK BRAVELY

**Kellogg**  
School of Management

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Part of complete coverage on  
[Route to the Top](#)

### Doing business in India

February 3, 2012 -- Updated 1211 GMT (2011 HKT)



Doing business for the first time in India can be a bewildering experience. Here's how to avoid the mistakes that foreign businesses make.

### Opinion: Don't ignore race at work

January 31, 2012 -- Updated 1104 GMT (1904 HKT)



A business school professor writes about the risks of ignoring race in the workplace.

### What's your career superpower?

January 27, 2012 -- Updated 1502 GMT (2302 HKT)

**Listen like you mean it**

Stop whatever you're doing and look the speaker directly in the eye. Tilt your head slightly to one side. The literal message is, "I'm giving you an ear." Ask questions about what the speaker is saying to help clarify thoughts and to verify that you've heard correctly and have drawn the intended conclusions. Answer questions specifically rather than vaguely. Take action to demonstrate that you've heard.

Benjamin Disraeli was right when he observed, "Talk to a man about himself and he will listen for hours." The magic in this mix? He or she will think you are a remarkable person. Listening increases likeability, and likeability leads back to trust in you as a leader.

**In a marketplace of mealy mouthed moochers, doing what you say will absolutely astonish people.**

Ornith Kogen

**Commit to what you communicate**

Follow through. If you say you'll make an introduction to the potential new client, make the introduction. If you say you'll provide the reference, give the reference. If you say you'll fund the project, budget the money. Show up, own up, and straighten it up. In a marketplace of mealy mouthed moochers, doing what you say will absolutely astonish people.

**Be accountable for results**

Accountability implies risk and reward. You earn rewards for success; you accept penalties for failure. By the very nature of the risk-reward proposition, others' perception of your position and value increases.

You've heard it said that money is not the most important thing in life. But that's easier to believe when you have enough of it to cover your basic needs. Likewise, people measure competence in different ways, and "enough" competence or "enough" intelligence becomes a matter of degree. At some point, people pull you over the "enough" threshold and begin to judge your performance on degrees of results.

oods attracts attention and demands respect that others' perception of your leadership and executive

**ader know thyself**

**ationally by being approachable**

The combination of both competence and likeability characterizes outstanding leaders with personal presence. You may be credible and have others pick your brain and benefit from your work -- but choose not to be around you if they don't have to be. On the other hand, you may be a likeable, life-of-the-party sort whom everybody wants to hang out with. But people may not consider you credible in challenging times for critical information or competent performance.

The tagline "mover and shaker" comes from a metaphor -- a very visual component of a personality trait or habit. Not only do leaders move through many networks, work a lot of relationships, and shake their share of hands, they literally take the lead in approaching people. People with presence approach others confidently, act as host, make introductions, and connect others in the group. They approach and give attention to others.

Leaders put themselves on the frontline to serve. As a result, others feel their presence because of the attention they give -- not receive. People do pay attention to those with power to reward or punish them. But they enjoy being around those who are humble, willing to serve, and give them the proverbial time of day.

**Never whine**

**People with presence approach others confidently, act as host, make introductions, and connect others in the group.**

Dianna Beshir



Identifying a superpower -- that core strength that gives an edge in the workplace -- can be the key to taking your career to the next level.

**Is your boss a**

**psycho?**

January 20, 2012 -- Updated 1823 GMT (0223 HKT)



Think you suffer from a "psycho" boss? A small but growing body of global research suggests you might be right.

**Six tips for better brainstorming**

January 20, 2012 -- Updated 1858 GMT (0058 HKT)



Tired of brainstorm sessions that go nowhere? Three experts give us their tips on how to organize successful brainstorm.

**How to customize your career**

January 11, 2012 -- Updated 1846 GMT (0046 HKT)



You can customize your car and your phone -- why not your customize your career to better suit your needs?

**CEOs: Burning bright or burning out?**

November 23, 2011 -- Updated 0914 GMT (0914 HKT)



Research shows CEOs experience a dozen emotions during each week -- mostly negative. But there are ways to make them happier.

**Freedom key to workplace of the future**

November 19, 2011 -- Updated 0914 GMT (1714 HKT)



As the line between self-employed and employed is becoming blurred, the concept of the full time job may be the first thing to go.

**Making the first 100 days pay off**

November 14, 2011 -- Updated 1212 GMT (2012 HKT)



The first 100 days of a new job are the most important. You need to know how to maximize your impact in your new leadership role.

**Learning from Steve Jobs**

October 14, 2011 -- Updated 1615 GMT (0015 HKT)



Steve Jobs says a leader must "connect the dots" between what an employee does and why it matters to the organization.

[More](#)

**Most Popular »**

Today's five most popular stories

[Egyptians cancel meeting with U.S. lawmakers](#)

[Why Pinterest is 2012's hottest website](#)

[Gulf nations pull ambassadors from Syria](#)

[Official: Missing woman's husband blows up house to kill himself, 2 sons](#)

[Powell voicemail: 'I am not able to live without my sons'](#)

Constant complaining characterizes losers. The habit follows those who lack success and feel powerless to improve things for themselves. By their very act of whining, people are admitting that they lack the competence, character, communication skills, or commitment to improve things. Not a good message to send.

**Follow protocol in mixing business with pleasure**

Because of the heavy demands on their time, leaders blend their social and work lives, often building their personal relationships through business contacts, and vice versa. As the old saying goes, people do business with people they like. Be the liaison who brings people together over lunch, a golf game, committee work, or causes. Understand the rules of etiquette in each of these situations: introductions; timing and appropriateness of business topics; appropriate dress; who arrives first; who pays. It's these little things done right that shout "class."

Act with intention. Communicate with confidence. Lead with clarity.

The opinions expressed in this commentary are solely those of Charles Booher.

Twitter Share Email Save Print

More



Sponsored links

Exercise Your Brain Games You Didn't Know Existed to Fight Brain Decline and Aging.

[www.lumosity.com](http://www.lumosity.com)

Coaching made me broke

5 Critical Questions to ask before you start your own coach practice.

[TrainingtoBeALifeCoach.com](http://TrainingtoBeALifeCoach.com)

Sleep Apnea Treatment

Leading Provider of Apnea Relief; Watch Good Morning Texas Video!

[www.SnoringCenter.com/Dallas](http://www.SnoringCenter.com/Dallas)

**We recommend**

- [Victims of military rape need justice](#)
- [Rail's handling of TSA should be a model](#)
- [It took a scandal to get real campaign finance reform](#)
- [Why Romney is winning](#)
- [World must aid Syria's rebels](#)
- [Iran could lessen risk of war by negotiating](#)

**From around the web**

- [David Ignatius: Through back channel, Iran listens](#) (The Commercial Appeal)
- [12 Engaging Facebook Posts to Consider](#) (OPEK Forum)
- [The 'Take Care of Me' Society Is Wrecking the USA](#) (The Fiscal Times)
- [5 Companies In Danger of Going Bankrupt](#) (FORUM)
- [Let's Bomb the Falklands!](#) (The Avn)
- [G-String Wedding Dress Is Anything But Virginal](#) (The Six By CareMore)

[what's this]

**Sponsored links**

**Need Money for Travel?**

Join Google's Screenwise Panel and Get up to \$30 in Gift Cards! [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

Add New Comment



Real-time updating is enabled. (Pause)

Showing 10 comments

Sort by newest first



**Binky42**

Very valuable article. Yes, some of it sounds like common sense, but how many of us actually sit down and think about these things? I'm already in a great position, but I'm going to ask my husband, who is wanting to move up, to read this article...maybe even read a few of her books too.

1 hour ago 2 Likes

Like Reply



**crazypete**

Definitely read a few of her books. Pay full retail. There's one born every minute...

1 hour ago in reply to Binky42 1 Like

Like