



Becoming a Leader

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Introduction

Contrary to what many might believe, a title alone does not make someone a leader and those without a designated *leader* title can and do make a difference in the lives of others every day. Further, not all leaders reside at the top of an organizational structure. Many provide effective leadership from middle management and even front-line positions. The word *leader* usually calls to mind someone at the head of a pack, a group, or a company.

A leader is a person who influences a group of people toward the achievement of a goal. Leaders come in all sizes, shapes, and dispositions. What they share in common, however, are several characteristics and skills:

- A clear guiding vision
- Passion
- Integrity
- Trust
- Curiosity
- Calculated risk taking

With these skills, they serve as models for emulation and inspire others to follow them.

In our knowledge-intensive world of ceaseless innovation and change, every pharmacist must be attuned to the challenges of providing healthcare and actively communicating the important role pharmacists play in providing optimal patient care. Pharmacists must continually be working and studying to improve their skills in order to direct the future of the profession. It is imperative that every pharmacist be a leader in order to influence optimal medication therapy for patients by building a reputation of integrity and accountability, working on strong communication skills, and focusing on relationships with patients and healthcare providers.

Becoming a leader takes a good deal of dedication and time. It is not learned overnight; it is an ongoing process. As professionals, we must strive to learn something new every day, be successful in sharing our knowledge to promote quality patient care, and promote our value to the patient and organization in an ongoing manner. This includes expanding our horizons—internally by developing our leadership skills and externally by identifying leadership opportunities within our organization and community—and recognizing and taking advantage of the skills and talents of those around us.

Although there are numerous topics related to becoming a leader, we have chosen to discuss the following:

1. Varying your leadership style
2. Mentorship
3. Seizing growth opportunities
4. Negotiation
5. Prioritization