

The Leadership Challenge

Adapted from: *The Leadership Challenge*, Kouzes and Posner

Challenging the Processing

Leaders are pioneers—people who are willing to step out into the unknown. They're willing to take risks, to innovate and experiment in order to find new and better ways of doing things. But leaders need not always be the creator or originators of new products, services, or processes. In fact, it's just as likely that they are not. Product and service innovations tend to come from people on the front lines, while process innovations tend to come from the people doing the work.

The leader's primary contribution is in the recognition of good ideas, the support of those ideas, and the willingness to challenge the system in order to improve the organization. Leaders know well that experimentation, innovation, and change all involve risk and failure, but they proceed anyway.

1. Search out challenging opportunities to change, grow, innovate and improve.
2. Experiment, take risks and learn from the accompanying mistakes.

Sigma Chi Takeaways:

- being open to new ideas makes you open your eyes to strategic opportunities—be an active listener and really consider other brothers' view points and opinions (fight the “it can't be done for this list of reasons” voice in your head)
- SEEK OUT and LISTEN to ideas from brothers in the chapter... i.e. who better to ask about improvements in the pledge program than the brothers that just completed it?

Inspiring a Shared Vision

Leaders inspire a shared vision. They gaze across the horizon of time, imaging the attractive opportunities that are in store when they and their constituents arrive at a distant destination. They imagine an exciting, highly attractive future for their organization and have dreams of what could be. Their vision of the future pulls them forward.

It is also important that leaders cannot command commitment, only inspire it. You must understand your constituents, knowing their dreams, their hopes, their aspirations, their visions, their needs and have their interests at heart. Only then will you be able to enlist their support. You can't ignite the flame of passion in other if you don't express enthusiasm for the compelling vision of their group. Leaders communicate their passion through vivid language and an expressive style. People are inspired by the passion they see in others.

- Envision an uplifting and ennobling future.
- Enlist other in a common vision by appealing to their values, interests, hopes and dreams

Sigma Chi Takeaways:

- You were elected to be Consul because your brothers saw your passion for the fraternity, their interests and the potential of your chapter, act accordingly. Focus on that shared vision and strategically build your chapter's path to success.

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- The brothers who follow you will be a reflection of you... if you lose the passion or “burn-out” then your chapter is going to suffer

Enabling Others to Act

Leadership is a team effort. Exemplary leaders enlist the support and assistance of all those who must make the project work. This sense of teamwork goes beyond a few officers; it must include every brother who has a stake in the vision. Leaders must involve, in some way, all those who must live with the results, and must make it possible for others to do good work. Leaders know that no one does his or her best work when feeling weak, incompetent, or alienated; they know that those who are expected to produce the results must feel a sense of ownership. When people have more discretion, more authority, and more information, they're much more likely to use their energies to produce extraordinary results.

Leadership is a relationship, founded on trust and confidence. Without trust and confidence, people don't take risks. Without risks, there is no change. Without change, organizations and movements die.

- Foster collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and building trust
- Strengthen people by giving power away, providing choice, developing competence, assigning critical tasks, and offering visible support

Sigma Chi Takeaways:

- Your success will be largely determined by your ability to leverage the talents and passions of the brothers in your chapter i.e. empower the officers of your chapter to make decisions, be accountable for those decisions, implement their ideas, etc...

Modeling the Way

Titles are granted, but it's your behavior that wins you respect. Leaders go first. They set an example and build commitment through simple, daily acts that create progress and momentum. Leaders model the way through personal example and dedicated execution.

To model effectively, leaders must first be clear about their guiding principles. Leaders are supposed to stand up for their beliefs, so they better have some beliefs to stand up for. And eloquent speeches about common values aren't nearly enough. Leaders' deeds are far more important than their words and must be consistent with them. Leaders don't just talk the talk. They walk the walk.

- Set the example by behaving in ways that are consistent with shared values
- Achieve small wins that promote consistent progress and build commitment

Sigma Chi Takeaways:

- There should not be a single job in your chapter that you are not willing to do, and know that the only way you communicate that to your brothers is through action.
- If you break the chapter rules or fraternity values even once then you have empowered your brothers to break them at will.

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Encouraging the Heart

Anything worth achieving requires long hours and hard work. Brothers in your chapter will become tired, frustrated, discouraged, and tempted to give up. Effective leaders encourage the heart of their constituents to carry on and persevere. They do this through genuine acts of caring. People respond positively to encouragement and compassion.

Encouragement can come in the form of dramatic gestures or simple actions. But success boils down to a leader's ability to show people that they can win and then encouraging them to continue winning. It's how leaders visibly and behaviorally link rewards with performance, and effective leaders make sure people benefit when behavior is aligned with cherished values.

- Recognize individual contributions to the success of every project
- Celebrate team accomplishments regularly

Sigma Chi Takeaways:

- Making significant changes at your chapter is going to be difficult and require a lot of work; it is a greater task than one brother can tackle. Be aware of individual accomplishments that push your chapter closer to its goals and reward those brothers.

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