

## The careerist

# 'People expect consistency across words and deeds'

How to command more respect

**Being respected is part of being a successful manager. But how do you gain the respect of your colleagues?**

**Is there a template for being respected?**

The best way to start is to be the better part of who you are. "You have to be authentic," says Gareth Jones, a visiting professor at IE Business School in Madrid. "People expect consistency across words and deeds. If they spot a gap between what you say and what you do then you've had it as a leader."

You should also be comfortable with where you come from. "When a lot of people become successful, they try to acquire a different kind of cultural capital and appear something they're not. You can change your future but not your past - and trying to do this will make you look like a bit of a fraud."

**Do I have to be liked?**

"A lot of people still confuse being liked with being respected," says David Pendleton, a founder of Edgumbe Group, the organisational psychologists. "But it is much more important to be trusted. Respect and trust are pretty interchangeable. It's important not to be disliked but if you are consistent, you can be respected without being liked."

**What other attributes are useful?**

It is difficult to respect the incompetent. "Being good at something helps to demonstrate your legitimacy," says Prof Jones. "In a knowledge business, you are likely to have very clever people

working for you so what you're good at might be winning resources for those people."

But being competent and knowledgeable is not enough: people need to be able to rely on you. "Follow through on your promises," says Mr Pendleton. "A lot of people overcommit and under-deliver. It is far better to do the reverse."

**What about my relationships with others?**

"It might seem obvious, but follow the golden rule and treat others as you would like to be treated," says Michael Crom, chief learning officer at Dale Carnegie Training. "If you treat others with respect, they will respect you. Be genuinely interested in the people you work with and make an effort to get to know them."

He adds that you should help others in their careers. "Inspire people and remove barriers to their success. If you help them to succeed, they'll want you to succeed. You'll be propelled up the ladder."

But, says Mr Pendleton, sometimes you will need the courage to take unpopular positions: "If these are consistent with who you are, people will respect you for it."

**What if I feel insufficiently respected?**

"There is no easy, direct line to it. Changing poor perceptions takes time and repetition," says Mr Pendleton.

However, there are people who are naturally disrespectful. "Don't be thin-skinned and fragile," he adds. "But if it is a real issue, tackle it head on."

Rhymer Rigby