

Leadership Qualities Checklist

We conducted research with approximately 4,000 people, asking them two questions:

1. What qualities in a leader would make you follow him/her?
2. What qualities would make you *not* want to follow the leader?

Although there were a wide range of answers given to both these questions, there were some common themes. In the table below we list the top 15 answers to each question, along with a percentage to indicate how often the answer occurred.



Qualities to follow	%age	Qualities not to follow	%age
honesty	12%	arrogance	22%
confidence	11%	dishonesty	13%
knowledgable	9%	selfishness	11%
intelligent	8%	ignorance	7%
ability	7%	rude	6%
listener	5%	bossy	5%
doing	5%	lying	5%
strong	5%	stupidity	4%
fairness	5%	(driven by) rules	3%
vision	5%	aggression	3%
respect	4%	dogmatic	3%
willingness	4%	indecisiveness	3%
compassion	4%	bullying	2%
people(-oriented)	4%	unwillingness	2%
takes (advice/criticism)	4%	controlling	2%

There are some hidden themes in these lists, particularly if leadership style is taken into account:

For example, there are some qualities where a simple association can be made with all leaders. The need for honesty - and avoidance of dishonesty - falls into this category (there might be some exceptions, e.g.: in times of war the ability to mislead the enemy might be counted as a leadership quality).

The association between confidence and leadership is more complicated, because there is a fine line between confidence (which appears in the positive qualities list) and arrogance (which appears in the negative list). The perception of arrogance can also be influenced by personality type differences: what appears as confidence to one personality type can appear as arrogance to another.

Some of these qualities can be associated with particular leadership styles. For example:

- A leader who is seen to be 'doing' things is probably using action-oriented leadership
- Vision is associated with visionary leadership
- Compassion is a characteristic that is most likely to be (indirectly) associated with participative leadership
- Although listening is a skill, a leader is more likely to be perceived as listening when there is a match between the personality type of the follower and the leadership style of the leader
- An executive leader who uses processes and 'rules', but is also 'strong', may be perceived as 'driven by rules' by someone who has a personality type that wants a very different type of leadership style



When looking at leadership qualities, therefore, you need to take account of the style being used by the leader and the types of behaviours or personalities in the group.

If you would like to assess your own leadership style and qualities, and compare it with the types of behaviours that are used in different types of industry or discipline, complete our [Leadership Questionnaire](#).

[Complete the leadership questionnaire now](#)