

TOP 10 TIPS: Effective Leadership – Transitioning

by Robert Sirman, Director, Canada Council for the Arts

1. **Know yourself.** Understand your strengths and weaknesses. Leaders are self-reflective, and don't make promises they can't keep.
2. **Don't be afraid to ask others for help.** No one has all the answers. Reach out and expand the knowledge base available to solve problems.
3. **Invest in others.** Leaders win loyalty through their generosity to others. Give and you will get.
4. **Recruit people around you who are smarter than you are.** A chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Forge the strongest possible team.
5. **Learn how to run effective meetings.** Find out what you have to do before, during, and after meetings to become an effective chair and/or contributor.
6. **Be prepared.** Winging it is for the birds. Don't risk compromising your credibility and authority by entering a situation without appropriate research and advance preparation.
7. **Maintain a professional tone in all written communication.** Assume that every e-mail, memorandum, and letter you write will become part of the public record. In an age of transparency and access to information, this may very well turn out to be the case.
8. **Stay positive.** People turn to leaders for inspiration and a reason to believe. Give them the positive energy they need to keep going, no matter what.
9. **Dream big.** Leaders are people who raise the bar. Keep your vision moving forward, and think creatively.
10. **It's not about you.** Everyone wants to be liked, but there is little worse than being described as "a nice person but an ineffectual leader." Forget your ego, and get the job done. People will admire you all the more for it.