

The 6 Critical Qualities of the World's Best Captains

What do the world's best captains and team leaders all have in common?

Being privileged to work with tens of thousands of the very best captains at our comprehensive Leadership Academies across the world, we get a very special, in-depth view into what makes them tick and what makes them so successful.

Based on over 30,000 in-depth 360-degree evaluations of captains from their coaches and teammates worldwide, we've discovered six critical qualities where coaches and athletes say the best leaders excel and ultimately differentiate themselves from the rest of the team. Not only can you use these six qualities to help your current captains become better leaders, you can also proactively use them when considering and ultimately selecting your team leaders who can do the very best job for you and your team. In reverse order, here are the Top 6 Critical Qualities of the Best Captains:

6. The Best Captains are the Hardest Workers

The best leaders are typically your team's hardest workers. They invest fully in whatever they do whether it is practice, weights, conditioning, video, community service, and most certainly, competitions. They know that their success as an individual and their credibility as a leader depends on earning it day after day with their exemplary work ethic.

You can't help but admire a person and leader who brings it a high level each and every day. Leaders choose to operate at the Committed and Compelled level on the Commitment Continuum - which garners the respect of their teammates and coaches - and encourages everyone to give their best effort as well.

Be sure your captains are one of your team's hardest workers. If they aren't, they probably won't have the full respect of your team and will surely dilute your team's work ethic and culture if you pick them as captains.

Are your captains your team's hardest workers?

5. The Best Captains Encourage their Teammates

The best leaders bring out the best in their teammates. Instead of being all about themselves, their stats, and their individual success, they consciously connect with their teammates to help take them to a higher level. They encourage them to work hard, build their confidence, and keep going when times are tough. They create a positive vibe around your team because they look to build on people's strengths rather than harping on their weaknesses. As Louisville men's basketball coach Rick Pitino says, they look to "inflate people rather than deflate people."

Be sure your captains are team players and connected with their teammates. If they aren't, the team will not respond well to their leadership.

How well do your captains reach out to and encourage their teammates?

4. The Best Captains are Honest and Trustworthy

Your best leaders keep it real. They are honest with coaches and teammates and earn their deep sense of trust. Because being trustworthy is one of the most important traits of a leader, the best captains work hard to earn and maintain their followers' trust and respect. They honor and follow through with their commitments so they are the most responsible and reliable people on the team. Further, teammates and coaches comfortably confide sensitive thoughts and feelings with them because they keep things private and confidential. They serve as true allies and advocates for the team.

Be sure your captains are worthy of your and your team's trust. If you or your athletes can't trust your team leaders, you won't respect and follow them.

Can you and your athletes trust your captains?

3. The Best Captains Respect Others

Along with honesty and trust, the best leaders are high character people. They treat their teammates, coaches, opponents, and officials with respect - even when they disagree with their decisions. They treat everyone they meet with the dignity they deserve - no matter what their role and place might be. Rather than talking down to teammates, they humbly see themselves on the same level as their peers. They seek to help, uplift, and serve their teammates rather than expecting their teammates to cater to them because of their leadership status.

Be sure your captains are high character people. If they don't respect others, your team won't respect them.

Do your leaders treat others with respect?

2. The Best Captains Care Passionately

The best leaders care passionately - about your team's success, about their teammates, and about your sport. They love the game and bring a palpable sense of passion to everything they do. They play your sport because they absolutely love it. They also desperately want what is best for the team and willingly make individual sacrifices for the good of the group. They are often the first ones in to practices and workouts and the last ones out because they invest so much in your program. They are definition of what it means to be "ALL IN"!

Be sure your captains are passionate about your team's success. If they aren't, your team will see right through them and not be willing to follow them.

Are your captains your team's most passionate players?

1. The Best Captains are Relentlessly Competitive and Compelled to Win

The number one trait that consistently comes through in the best leaders is that they are highly competitive people. Winning is a big priority for them and they invest the necessary time and energy to maximize the team's chances of winning. They bring an unmistakable sense of urgency to competitions as well as workouts because they are fully committed to and serious about success.

Your best leaders make the hustle plays, win the 50/50 balls, dive for loose balls, challenge their teammates to step up, and make your opponents bring their absolute best rather than giving an inch. Their competitive will sets the tone for the rest of the team and ups the

intensity of your workouts and certainly your games. They expect and demand a high standard from their coaches and teammates.

So when looking for team leaders, you definitely want those who are Relentless Competitors. You want those athletes who are Compelled to win and willing to do whatever it takes, within ethical bounds, to make it happen. At the same time, you must make sure that their competitiveness doesn't go overboard where they become obsessed and drive people away or over the edge. Or resort to unethical and illegal means to win.

Are your captains your strongest and fiercest competitors?

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