



Clovis Unified School District

Doc Buchanan
Leadership Academy

LEAD LIKE A DUCK TO DEVELOP A TEAM OF LEADERS

BUSINESS, BUSINESS COACHING, COMMUNICATION, LEADERSHIP, LEADERSHIP COACHING

LEAD LIKE A DUCK



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Being a successful leader can be a life long journey into self-development.

Initially, success is measured through competence in the business basics. At some point, however, continued success is determined by your leadership skills and your ability to develop leaders. In today's work environment we need all team players to inspire others, think like a leader, and lead others in their sphere of influence even without formal authority.

What can you do to inspire others to lead?

You can start by realizing that your team is attuned to your every move and, at different stages, has more than likely considered if advancing fits with his or her needs, desires, and wants. If the curiosity and interest is present, the bigger question then may be if they have the time or knowledge to lead others. Perhaps they fear that leading a team or organization will not be compatible with preexisting, future or even greater priorities.

Sometimes being a leader gets harried and hectic. Other times, there are team trials, tribulations, and even turmoil as you strive for calm, collaboration, and community.

I don't want to minimize challenging times, as they are an essential piece of professional growth. The journey is full of peaks and valleys. One of the most helpful metaphors that I held on to during the early challenges I faced when building my team was the metaphor of a duck.

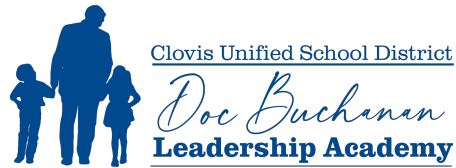
“Lead like a Duck” — and like a duck, my goal was to glide graciously across the water getting from point A to point B.

Of course, underneath the water the duck is paddling like heck to keep from drowning. As long as the duck does not stop paddling, the duck is moving ahead. Ducks require fast and continuous strokes — just like steady and swift motions keep your organization moving and making progress. With steady forward movement, eventually the duck (leader) does not even realize when it stops paddling so hard, because the journey begins to flow.

Here are four ways to lead like a duck and achieve success:

D – Display and Duplicate. *Display* an inviting image of a leader and do your job in a way others can *duplicate*.

Develop a system that enables you to remain on top of team needs and commitments, so you are prepared ahead of time. This is a simple process to duplicate. Each area of your business can be systemized. This makes it duplicatable.



U – Understand your team’s fears and concerns, especially during VUCA (volatile, uncertain, chaotic and ambiguous) times.

Help them distinguish between fact and fiction as they try on ideas and innovate. Inspire them to focus on what they can control and accept the things outside of their control.

C – Convey confidence in their leadership abilities. You will be able to see leadership qualities in your team that they may not always be able to see in themselves. Name these qualities and reflect what you observe. Your ability to identify the strengths of others will open up opportunities for your team to grow.

When you identify your team members’ strengths honestly and sincerely, you are helping them gain awareness of the leadership strengths they have to offer others. This will help them build belief in themselves and develop self-efficacy.

K – Kick into high gear and experience the thrill of team excellence. Leadership can become an energetic and challenging sport. Challenge your team members to strive for levels just above their reach and, as they master these benchmarks, regroup and collectively raise the bar again. Make a habit of pursuing progress while staying in a growth mindset and learning from mistakes. As they rise to new challenges and expand their capabilities, they will grow beyond what they thought possible.

Sometimes you have team members who do not want to advance or be individual star performers and that is okay. Remind your team members that their contributions do count toward team achievements.

As you lead like a DUCK, you are building a culture of excellence and creating an environment to inspire team members to be their best.

Remember that this process is typically not a steady march uphill or, in duck terms, a straight and smooth glide across the pond. There will be times when you and your team will falter and need to rebuild. Each rebuild makes you stronger and more resilient.

Follow the DUCK leadership principles and your team will take to the water, like a duck.

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