

12 Most Exalting Phrases Leaders Share with their Teams

By Sean Glaze

Leaders have a tremendous impact on their organization, because the phrases they share with their teams can either produce distrust and apathy or ignite passion and commitment. Everyone is a leader.

And what you say to the people that you work with will influence their work ethic and attitude. A strong leader will recognize this, and take advantage of every opportunity to be an encouraging and inspiring flame that his people want to be near and benefit from. Yes, HOW you deliver the words are a very important part of your communication... but these exalting phrases ensure that they are fully invested and feel themselves to be a valued and contributing part of something larger and more significant than themselves.

1. You were right about...

Great leaders are quick to praise productive decisions or ideas. It isn't about who is right, leadership is about deciding what is right. Instead of having to be the fountain of knowledge and wisdom for their organization, strong leadership acknowledges the contributions and comments that the people around them offer — and by doing so, you encourage future innovation and give other the gift of recognition.

2. I'm glad you are here

People don't want to be appreciated... they NEED it. Money may be the reason they took a job, but they will leave that job when they see a chance to get more recognition and feel more valued by their superiors and peers. The simple but powerful (and FREE) action of telling your people that you are glad that they are on YOUR team can be a much more impactful phrase than you might first assume. We all want to belong, and telling your team that you are proud to have them as part of the crew can work wonders.

3. I trust you

Some people want to lead by doing everything themselves. But the more you do, the less your people feel needed or competent to manage. Part of your job as leader is to delegate and give up responsibility to those who surround you. People usually live up to (or down to) the expectations we set for them. When you trust them with something important, instead of treating them like children, you inspire their loyalty and best efforts.

4. You earned it

Rewards are nice. Despite Daniel Pink's conclusions about the ineffectiveness of carrot and stick motivation, people do want to be rewarded occasionally for their efforts. The team you lead wants recognition — but only if it is sincere and valid. Saying this with only a weak reason to may undermine it's intended effect... but sharing a nice unexpected gift after a truly deserving performance can be incredibly powerful. What gets rewarded often gets repeated.

5. Let's have some fun

All work and no play makes jack a dull boy — and makes your workplace a dull environment. While productivity is important, it is the job of leadership to build a culture of smiles, enjoyment, and lighthearted fun. A day away from the office together, or a fun teambuilding event can do wonders for morale. You may be surprised to see how much productivity improves when you encourage people to have a little fun along the way.

6. I believe in you

People are like certain species of fish. Their growth is determined by the tank that you place them in. If you encourage them and consistently remind them of your faith in their judgment and abilities, they will grow into the person that you want them to be. Don't treat them as they are — help them to see the person that you see them becoming, and let your words paint a picture of the traits that you know they can achieve.



7. That is interesting

No matter how strong or impressive the employee, athlete, or coworker — at times he or she will say something that you either don't agree with or think is completely ridiculous. It is at times like those that you need this line. Let them know they have been heard. Let them feel that you are weighing their suggestion or comment. And let them feel comfortable and safe in offering ideas in the future by not criticizing them and killing the instinct to contribute.

8. How can I help?

The single most significant role of a leader is to give your people a job and then be a resource that is available, not hovering. If you do a good enough job of removing obstacle and allowing your people the time to work on what you have given them as a project or activity, you have been a good leader. Tell them what you want and then get out of the way — but use this phrase to let them know you are there as a supportive and helpful resource for them.

9. What do you think?

Asking for opinions is one of the wisest things a leader can do. Nobody is wise enough by themselves, and the message you send by asking for the input of your team is that they are intelligent and creative and valuable members of the project instead of just hourly employees and mindless drones. You don't have to take their advice most of the time — the simple act of asking them about their perspective, though, communicates your interest in getting other ideas and may even provide a surprising and valuable insight.

10. Come on in

Everyone has an opinion on open-door policies. Just because you leave your door open does not mean that your team feels comfortable entering the room and sitting down to discuss things with you. A great leader connects enough with his team that people feel safe sharing their situation and ideas and challenges. When you share this phrase with sincerity, and are truly interested in having a conversation and building relationships and understanding, the loyalty and commitment your people feel toward you grow exponentially.

11. Thank you for...

If you are a leader, people are going to work seeking to please you. Your team wants to feel validated and appreciated for their efforts — especially when things are tough. Sharing a short thank you can be powerful — but I would encourage you to NEVER share a simple thank you. Always share a SPECIFIC thank you. Let them know exactly what it is they did that you appreciate, and the more detailed your thanks, the more likely it is they will really feel like you noticed their efforts.

12. Have a great day!

Attitude reflects leadership. Strong leaders accept that their people often take a cue from and are at the very least influenced by the team leader's attitude each day. Greet your team every opportunity you have, and share a smile and a positive comment to remind them that things are good. Encourage a positive attitude and perception of things by being an example of positivity and optimism. If you are determined to make it a great day, that attitude will filter down to everyone in the organization. Your team wants to be inspired. No matter how gruff or self-sufficient they may seem, every one of the people on your team remember moments in their lives when someone said something to them that mattered.

You can add another moment to that list of memories if you make it a point to take advantage of opportunities to share these 12 phrases with your team. They don't cost you anything extra, other than a bit of thoughtful consideration for those that surround you — but their impact can be tremendous.

And once is never enough. Motivation doesn't last forever. Zig Ziglar says it's a lot like showering in that respect... that's why he recommends it often!

