

Leadership Energy, Edge & Execution: Guest Author Bob Cooper

The former CEO of General Electric Jack Welch often discusses what he believes are 5 critical leadership qualities. The following is a brief description of each one:

1. **Energy** – These leaders bring positive energy to their work; thrive on action and embrace change.
2. **Energize Others** – They help others to become energized.
3. **Edge** – They possess the ability and confidence to say yes or no, not maybe – especially involving tough decisions.
4. **Execute** – These leaders develop sound plans, and get the job done.
5. **Passion** – They are passionate about their work, and help others to feel passionate about their work as well.



Last evening I was watching the Miami Heat defeat the Indiana Pacers in the Eastern Conference Finals of the National Basketball Association. I was so impressed with Miami Heat guard and forward LeBron James. I kept thinking about the connection between Jack Welch's definition and what I was seeing in LeBron James. He brings tremendous **energy** the minute he steps on the court. Other players seem to **feed off of his energy** and go the extra mile to live up to LeBron's standards of excellence. When it's time to decide whether to pass or shoot the ball, he **rarely hesitates**. He **executes** consistently both on offense and defense. You can see how **passionate** he is about the game. He loves basketball and wants everyone on the team to share in the spot light.

We can't all be LeBron James. As discussed in a previous tip, the Gallup organization conducted research that showed that all of us have unique talents that we need to build into

sustainable strengths. Even if I could turn back the clock and be the same age as LeBron James, I could never be on the same court with him. However, each of us have our own court – that place where our talents can be used to make a difference in other's lives.

To what extent do you possess Jack Welch's 4 E's and 1 P? What do you need to do to "live" these everyday? It's important to look in the mirror and take an honest assessment. Ask for feedback from trusted advisors.

Leaders have a great responsibility. Great leaders develop others and serve as important mentors. Unfortunately, poor leaders often take solid talent and come up short. They will often blame the team. I wish I had a dollar for every time during an executive coaching session I hear – "Bob, if only he or she did this or that." I look the leader in the eye and ask –

"What are you doing to develop them to do this or that?"

The following are a few suggestions of how leaders can apply the lessons learned from Jack Welch and LeBron James:

Bring positive energy to your work.

When conditions change, make whatever adjustments are necessary and don't blame others. I have never heard LeBron James blame a referee for why his team lost. He is willing to look into the camera and say – "I need to do better."

When others see you energized, they become energized.

Do you see obstacles with a sense of doom and gloom or do you challenge yourself and others to rise to the occasion and win the game?

When asked your opinion on an important issue avoid saying “maybe.”

Fence sitters are just that – fence sitters. People may like you, but when it comes to respect you might have a problem.

Execute on critical priorities.

You and your team must execute on initiatives that drive the business. What are the outcomes? What difference did your team make? What are you and your team doing to earn and sustain the respect of others? Just getting things done is not the key to success. When LeBron James makes a basket during the second quarter it means something. However, that great pass or basket in the last few seconds wins championships. Can you handle the pressure? Great leaders develop teams that perform when the game is on the line – when what they do matters the most.

If you are not passionate about your work, how can you expect others to be?

People want to work with leaders who love what they do and are committed to winning. No one celebrates the runner-up, we

celebrate champions.

I believe the Miami Heat will win another NBA championship. If they don't, it will not be because LeBron James failed to live up to his great standards of excellence. You can't always guarantee a championship, but if you don't bring your "A" game, you have lost something even more important – your team.

I welcome any feedback that you might have relative to this tip. Please feel free to share examples of how you have applied some of these insights and the results you have attained. With your permission, I would like to share your examples with others to assist them with their professional development.

I thank you for your support and commitment to excellence.

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