

## 5M Leadership Check-Up

### A Daily Check-Up To Prevent Employees From Checking Out

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Ok, for starters, this piece is **not** entitled the 5 a.m. Leadership Check-Up. Though it does certainly deserve the same directed attention your alarm clock receives when it announces the 5 a.m. hour. Instead, this article identifies five areas a leader needs to inventory – daily.

The odds are that you already have a daily (almost mindless) routine you rely upon to get yourself ready for the challenges of the day. To that routine, it might be wise to add some intentionality, mindfulness, and direction. Perhaps the incorporation of a checklist, a leadership checklist, if you will, would propel you and your associates to the peak of your performance and preserve your position there.

Your success is a moving target; to think otherwise is to assume that your commission as a leader is to be exercised and fulfilled in a static, stagnant, and predictable environment. For most of us, that is far from the reality in which we live and work.

In order to keep pace with the speed and complexity of your role, you will need to conduct a daily check-up, what I refer to as a 5M Leadership Check-Up. Not only will this check-up help to ensure you stay focused, it will ensure that your priorities remain front of mind.

Here are the elements of your 5M Leadership Check-Up:

**Mission:** Why do we exist? Being clear on the mission is critical to actualizing the mission. Asking, “Why do we exist,” forces all activities and decisions through the sieve of relevance and utility. Does this action move us closer to accomplishing our goals? Is this decision in accordance with our reason for existence? Such a focus creates a mission-centric orientation, which in turn facilitates easy alignment and buy-in. If you understand the mission as the “why,” it then is easy to grasp the following - a dominant why, produces a doable how.

**Mood:** The mood of the organization must be constantly monitored. Much like the hypothalamus monitors overall body temperatures, you must frequently monitor the overall mood of your team. If the mood falls out of optimal range, you must not only address the change but seek to reverse the change. This is particularly true when the mood moves toward melancholy, lethargy, and the like. In effect you are the mood alchemist. Your motivation is similar to that of the hypothalamus, to minimize the threat of dysfunction and demise. And every little shift from the norm matters. For example with every 1.8° F increase in the body’s core temper, vital chemical reaction rates are derailed by as much as 10 percent. Even slight changes in the mood of your team are to be noted and addressed. When the team is in the mood, great things can be accomplished.

**Momentum:** Celebrating the momentum of progress helps to generate even more momentum toward the goal. Help your team to celebrate where they have come from and not to become disenchanted by how far they have yet to go. It always takes a train a while to get moving, but once it does, it becomes unstoppable. Celebrating momentum helps to turn your team into a perpetual motion generator.

**Medals:** How will you recognize the efforts and accomplishments of your team today? Napoleon Bonaparte is credited with saying, “Once I learned that men were willing to die for a medal, I knew I could conquer the world.”

Before you rush out to your local Army/Navy surplus store, remember “medals” can be physical as well as non-physical. Express your appreciation often, and in the most genuine way possible, and watch how your team rallies around even the toughest challenges. There are few things in the workplace as impactful as an expression of appreciation from a leader you respect. “Medals” help to engender loyalty, spike motivation, and foster team pride.

**Mentoring:** This factor is paramount to the long term development and viability of the organization. If you aren’t mentoring you aren’t leading. We have a responsibility to contribute, directly, to the refinement and enhancement of the leadership pipeline. Daily, you must impart bits and pieces of wisdom via formal and informal networks, as well as, direct and indirect interactions. The leader who fails to mentor others will rarely be honored or remembered in history.

Mission, Mood, Momentum, Medals, and Mentoring – The 5M Leadership Check-Up. This check-up is guaranteed to make you a more focused and effective leader in the areas that most directly impact organizational success. Your 5M Leadership Check-Up will help prevent your direct reports from checking out.

It may not be a bad idea to get this check-up squared away first thing in the morning – every morning, before you get too busy. Maybe even at 5 a.m.

**Leadership Lesson:** Mission. Mood. Momentum. Medals. Mentoring. The 5M Leadership Check-Up is a proactive and strategic approach for building effective workplace relationships, while increasing productivity and profitability. Keeping these five elements front of mind will help leaders stay laser focused, fully engaged, and highly productive. Perform your 5M Leadership Check-Up daily to ensure your success, and the success of the team, is on track and on target.

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