

ZERO TO PROVE · BUSINESS INSIGHTS GUIDE

10 Leadership Lessons

From Zero to Prove — practical leadership lessons drawn straight from our conversations with founders, CEOs and executives.

Compiled from real conversations with founders, CEOs and innovators on the Zero to Prove podcast.
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1 Choose great leaders over great companies

Early career growth accelerates fastest under people willing to bet on you before you've proven yourself — not necessarily at the most prestigious company. — *Bryan Gillette, Founder of Summiting Group*

2 Lead with values over ego

Genuine relationships, honesty and integrity compound over time into a culture people want to stay in, long after any single win or loss is forgotten. — *Steve Mosko, Former Chairman, Sony Pictures Television*

3 Know the real cost of always-on leadership

Leading a 1,000-plus person team teaches you where your energy actually goes — and that scaling a team well means protecting your own capacity, not just growing headcount. — *Al Lindsay, Former Head of Engineering for Alexa, Amazon*

4 Treat pessimism as a leadership liability

Leaders who back ambitious, uncertain ideas need to model optimism themselves — caution is useful, but pessimism forecloses the very possibilities a team needs to pursue. — *Terry Garcia, Former Chief Science & Exploration Officer, National Geographic*

5 Use allies and sponsors deliberately

Navigating male-dominated or unfamiliar industries is rarely done alone — building relationships with allies and sponsors is a leadership skill in its own right, not a shortcut. — *Rania Anderson, Founder, The Way Women Work*

6 Redefine success before someone else defines it for you

Leaders who wait for an external definition of success — a title, a valuation, a headline — end up chasing someone else's goals for their entire career. — *Bryan Gillette, Founder of Summiting Group*

7 Build trust as your core leadership asset

Executive search, legal counsel and technology leadership all depend on the same currency: long-term relationships built on trust, judgment and follow-through. — *Katie Shannon, Partner, Heidrick & Struggles*

8 Lead through uncertainty by acting on incomplete information

The best leaders don't wait for certainty before deciding — they treat every decision as the start of a feedback loop, adjusting quickly as new information arrives. — *Peter Mills, Former Partner, CMGI @Ventures*

9 Model the change you want in your organisation

Leaders who ask their teams to take risks or reinvent themselves need to have done it first — credibility comes from having walked away from something secure yourself. — *Terry Garcia, Founder, Exploration Ventures*

10 Lead with curiosity, not certainty

Curiosity — about people, about problems, about what's next — consistently outperforms rigid certainty as a leadership trait, especially through periods of change. — *Peter Allison, Safari Guide & Author*

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