

TEACHING EMPLOYEES TO LEAD & CRITICALLY THINK: AN ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY

If performed correctly, being an organizational administrator is often a challenging job. You are at the top of the hierarchy of command. Your every administrative verbalization and behavior is witnessed by employees as evidence of knowing (or not knowing) administrative leadership concepts and principles and the ability to think critically. You are not just a known “leader” as an administrator—you are an *example* of a critical thinker with specific leadership abilities, a guide to overall organizational perfection, and, therefore, a *teacher of expected employee leadership and critical thinking behaviors*. This means a successful administrator, *also*, holds individual subordinate employees accountable for learning and performance of appropriate leadership and critical thinking practices that are a significant part of each employee’s job description. Because this administrative role is the highest on the hierarchy of administrative responsibility, the title is intended to express the importance of determining administrative decision(s) and guidance of others in how to learn to lead, think, and make leadership decisions through critical thinking that will help preserve organizational standards. The significance of this administrative role oozes with prominence and power—as it is *where the buck stops!*- *and “coolness” in demeanor under intimidation and “fire” exists!*

Lest the meaning of leadership in the administrative role be overlooked on behalf of an employee: Leadership and critical thinking provide the guiding and influencing of others toward a common vision or goal that supports and enhances the organizational standards—the definition, purpose, philosophy, policies, rules, regulations, long-term goals, short-term objectives, and required/necessary procedures that give direction to the sustaining of the organization’s foundation.

THE ADMINISTRATOR AS TEACHER

The administrative role has a covert expectation of personal administrative behavior regarding teaching. The administrative teacher (administrator) assists employees in how to perform appropriate leadership and critical thinking decisions related to their job description responsibilities. Supposedly, a person is hired to perform a job description set forth and approved by the administrator and has some known ability to acquire and perform their assigned role---and some leadership abilities and critical thinking skills related to that role. The ability to lead others (or willingness to learn leadership and critical thinking decisions and behaviors relative to an employee’s job description) is a significant part of every employee’s job success. I will also add-- There is nothing more satisfying for an administrator than to have an employee smart enough in leadership and critical thinking abilities to assess situations accurately, do comparative thinking, and verbally rationalize behaviors that sustain and promote the standards of the organization! Therefore, this is just one significant reason to hire capable employees with either leadership and critical thinking abilities or (at the very least) the willingness to learn leadership and critical thinking behaviors as a significant part of every job description!

Therefore, this supposition exists:

IN ADDITION TO PERSONALLY LEADING ALL ORGANIZATIONAL EMPLOYEES, AN ORGANIZATIONAL ADMINISTRATOR IS EXPECTED TO NOT ONLY BE AN OVERT AND RECOGNIZED LEADER AND CRITICAL THINKER BY EXAMPLE BUT TO TEACH IN CREATIVE WAYS THESE SKILLS TO EMPLOYEES. REQUIRING LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS AND CRITICAL THINKING THOUGHTS BY EMPLOYEES REQUIRES THE ADMINISTRATOR TO PERSONALLY EXHIBIT APPROPRIATE AND CLEAR THINKING, CORRECTNESS IN DECISION-MAKING AND INTELLIGENCE RELATED TO ADMINISTRATIVE JOB REQUIREMENTS. IN OTHER WORDS, THE ADMINISTRATOR MUST SHOW CREATIVITY AND INTELLECTUAL (INTELLIGENCE) IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE ROLE AS AN EXAMPLE OF UTMOST CREATIVE ABILITY TO CHALLENGE EMPLOYEES THROUGH CREATIVE TEACHING TECHNIQUES THAT POSITIVELY ENCOURAGE LEADERSHIP AND CRITICAL THINKING IN EMPLOYEES.

METHODS OF CREATIVE EMPLOYEE TEACHING OF LEADERSHIP AND CRITICAL THINKING BY ORGANIZATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS

1. Be the perfect example, as an administrator, of all behaviors related to the administrative role--e.g., the job description states the cognitive expectations, psychomotor abilities, and required attitude.
2. All job descriptions are to include at least one (and hopefully more) statement(s) of expected employee leadership and critical thinking behavior(s).
3. Discuss leadership and critical thinking concepts with the employee(s).
4. When conversing with each employee, refer occasionally and responsibly to their selected "leadership and critical thinking job description expectation(s)" by giving praise for meeting a specific leadership requirement(s) or need for improvement in specific job description leadership or critical thinking requirements.
5. Have a specific recurring time frame for which each job description is orally and privately reviewed, evaluated as to specific leadership and critical thinking performance, and updated job description with the employee's appropriate suggested/needed leadership and critical thinking changes or responsibilities.
6. Encourage conversations with employees that require the employee to provide evidence of critical thinking for their specific leadership decision(s) and how their leadership decision(s) improve the adherence to the standards of the organization.
7. As an administrator, attend various employee group sessions or meetings (invited or uninvited). This encourages positive employee group leadership consistency and provides an administrative legitimate venue for assessing employee leadership adequacy and a legitimate opportunity to offer constructive suggestions/recommendations for improved leadership that could increase future productivity.
8. As an administrator, provide more than one acceptable choice when providing options of behavior or decision(s). Listen carefully to the rationale of the preferred choice by the employee. Does the reasoning of the employee support the standards of the organization? If not, state the related standard(s) of the organization and encourage a restating by the employee of the reasoning for the employee's choice. Have the employee verbally restate

the reasoning to emphasize and to be administratively reassured of the employee's understanding and reasoning related to the best choice.

9. Encourage employee and administrative recognition for positive leadership behavior(s) and require critical thinking by employees before decisions or changes are allowed.
10. As outlined in the job description, require specific employees to do a presentation(s) on topics related to their expertise and as it relates to their specific organizational job description or share examples of their successes as leaders in their respective job assignments/job descriptions.
11. If an employee is responsible for an outcome per job description and it has not occurred, ask the employee to consider what leadership process and critical thinking skills for him/herself might have been more appropriate and would most likely have resulted in an appropriate and positive outcome.
12. Identify a "leader of the month" by giving an example of a superb employee decision or behavior.
13. Encourage an exceptional employee in leadership and critical thinking skills to lead group discussions.
14. As an administrative gesture, personally hand-write a thank-you note to employees who exhibit superb leadership or critical thinking skills that promote the standards of the organization.

The most positive influences of employee leadership and critical thinking enhancement are often personal praise, recognition, and money. BUT THE INFLUENCER OF POSITIVE LEADERSHIP AND CRITICAL THINKING IS DIFFERENT WITH ALL EMPLOYEES! As an astute administrator, learn each employee's influence.

THE ADMINISTRATOR IS EXPECTED TO BE GENTLE, CREATIVE, AND SUPPORTIVE IN TEACHING OF LEADERSHIP AND THE REQUIREMENT OF CRITICAL THINKING EFFORTS AND BEHAVIORS. SUCH PROFOUND AND CREATIVE TEACHING EFFORTS BY AN ADMINISTRATOR ARE A TELLING SIGN OF ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALISM!

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Reference: Job Descriptions article located on the author's website at leadershippoweronline.com