People Power

“The only irreplaceable capital an organization possesses is the knowledge and abilities of its people. The productivity of that capital depends on how effectively people share their competence with those who can use it.” Andrew Carnegie

2005
For years we've heard that it's more important to be respected than liked. Yet study after study is proving conventional wisdom wrong --finding that the road to success is more often a series of popularity contests.

Research at Columbia University shows that jobs, pay raises and promotions are more apt to be awarded based on a worker's charisma than on academic background or professional qualifications.

Outplacement firm Challenger, Gray and Christmas found that hiring and firing decisions boil down to how well people are liked by their supervisors. "It's not enough just to do a good job; you have to be likeable in the eyes of your employer," says company president James Challenger.

The good news is likeability is a skill that can be learned. After two years and a quarter million pages of research, Tim Sanders, leadership coach at Yahoo! and author of "The Likeability Factor," has unlocked the secrets to having a magnetic personality.

"When people encounter you, they subconsciously ask themselves four questions that determine your likeability or "L-factor," Sanders explains. "First, they seek friendliness. Then, they ask themselves if you are relevant to them. Next, they ponder whether you have empathy for them. Finally, they ask themselves if you are 'real' -- that is, authentic and honest. If the answers to those four questions are affirmative, you receive a high likeability factor."

To up your "L-factor," Sanders offers four steps:

1. Be friendlier -- Your friendliness is a function of your ability to communicate openness and welcome to others. Make an effort to greet people cheerfully, smile often and adopt a friendly mindset that you communicate through positive body language and words.

2. Raise your relevance -- Your relevance has to do with your connection to others' interests, wants and needs. The more relevant you are, the more people like you. Relevance has three levels:
   a. Contact. The odds are, likeability will increase with "functional distance," such as sitting next to someone at a party or living nearby.
   b. Interests. Having common interests or experiences makes people feel
validated and generates a sense of community and personal respect.
c. **Value.** Relevance is strongest when the value you offer meets another
person's wants and needs. This produces positive attitudes in the
person's mind and contributes to your allure.

Find ways to connect with the interests and needs of others. Know what they're
passionate about outside of work. Be aware of their emotional needs and willing to
respond to them.

3. **Show empathy** -- Your empathy reflects your capacity to see things
from another person's point of view. When you connect with people's
feelings, and they believe you're "with them," it delivers a psychological hug. Ask
yourself, do you:

- Know how that person is feeling about his or her life situation these days?
- Understand what it must feel like to perform the person's tasks day
  after day -- be it caring for an elderly relative at home or managing a
  heavy workload?
- Share the same emotions about key issues?

By making yourself more emotionally available, your connection with people -- and your
likeability -- will grow dramatically.

4: **Keep it real** -- "Realness," or genuineness, is consistency between
your beliefs and actions. To be true to yourself and others, you need
to: 1) **Do what you want to be doing in life.** 2) **Live with purpose.**

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~