

Productive Leaders

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Leading Employees to Think Like Owners



Leadership is unlocking people's potential to become better.
– Bill Bradley

Do your team members behave as though they own the company? They should.

You make decisions based on what you believe is good for the organization, your employees, and your bottom line. When employees think like owners, they make decisions based on what they believe is right for the organization rather than focusing on their own personal gain.

When employees are *not* actively engaged because they are not a stakeholder, they occasionally lack interest in the overall goals and vision of the organization. This is commonly referred to as the "Principle-Agent Problem." Michael Jensen of [Harvard Business School](#) and William Meckling of the University of Rochester published a [paper](#) in 1976 outlining the problems that occur when employees consider themselves merely agents of an organization instead of stakeholders. This observation led to more studies about how employees view their roles.

Employees are agents of the principle (the company or organization) who hired them, but the problem occurs when employees are more concerned with their personal interests than the goals of the employer. The Principle-Agent Problem explains why the owner of a store picks up the trash in front of his store while his employees don't.

As an owner, you need to have a strategy for long-term success and growth. Owners need to see the big picture. In order to do this, they need a clear vision for the future and meaningful goals to make that vision a reality.

How do you know when your employees think like an owner?

1. They don't watch the clock.
2. They come up with new ideas and creative solutions.
3. They look for the most efficient ways to complete projects.
4. They think about how to grow long term.
5. They think about how they can contribute even more to the organization.
6. They are wonderful with customers and clients.
7. They cultivate relationships that strengthen the business.
8. They represent the organization with pride.
9. They enjoy brainstorming sessions.
10. They brag about the organization to others.
11. They keep their boss informed.
12. They consider both positive and negative consequences.

Employees who invest 100% of their time and focus at work think like owners. They are reliable and consistent. They do what they need to do to make the organization flourish. When your talent thinks like a stakeholder, they will willingly invest 100%.

Are you managing followers who think like employees or mentoring leaders who think like owners?

What do you think? I'd love your thoughts!!! [Please comment here.](#)

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Mary C. Kelly



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