

## 8 Traits Of High-Performing Store Managers

By Doug Fleener

Retail leadership isn't just about how you treat your staff or work the floor. It's also about who you are and how you conduct yourself. Here are some of the common traits that high-performing store managers/leaders share. Do you see yourself?

- 1. They're always out front.** They don't push their team, they lead them. When they open a new store they make sure the new team sees them clean the bathroom. They are never above running the vacuum or cleaning windows. Most important, they unflinchingly meet whatever action is required of the staff in their interactions with customers.
- 2. They appreciate and respect their employees.** They have a real desire to see people on their team succeed. They know their employees dreams and goals and do what they can to help achieve them. They never lose sight of the fact that employees have a life outside of the store; they do what they can to help people balance work and life.
- 3. They always do what they say they will do.** If they tell a staff member they will check on something, they do it. If someone from the home office requests something, they do it. They understand that the most important thing they have to offer anyone is their word.
- 4. They know that their position gives them privileges but they never take advantage.** They work at least one night a week because they ask others to work nights. They work an occasional Sunday because others work on Sunday. They work in the backroom when it is slow on the floor and there is work that needs to be done.
- 5. They keep confidences.** What is said behind a closed door stays behind that door. They never gossip. They inherently know what should and shouldn't be shared with others. This is actually the Achilles heel of many managers.
- 6. They love what they do.** I have never, ever, met a high-performing manager who doesn't love what he or she does. They would probably be successful in whatever they chose to do, but they love retail and people.
- 7. They tell their manager and the executives the truth, not what they want to hear.** Others may do the same, but the high-performing managers have more credibility as they are doing what is asked of them. During my years at Bose, whenever I had a dilemma or needed to make a tough decision, I would seek out these managers to ask their opinion. It's funny how they sometimes got branded "favorites". I guess in reality it was true, they were my favorites because they were high-performing.

**8. Publicly they always support the company direction, even if they have initially disagreed with it.** They take the time to explain to their staff the “why” behind decisions. They never use words like “them” or “corporate.” They say “we” and “us”. They roll out both popular and unpopular company directives with the same enthusiasm. What I most respect about these managers is that in their stores they don’t just represent the company, they are the company.

So let me ask, are you a leader?

**About the author:** Doug Fleener is founder of the Dynamic Experiences Group. He is a veteran retailer with more than 25 years of hands-on retail experience with world-class retailers including Bose Corporation and The Sharper Image. He has also owned and operated his own specialty stores. His new book, *The Profitable Retailer: 56 surprisingly simple and effective lessons to boost your sales and profits* published by Acanthus Publishing is available at [www.theprofitableretailer.com](http://www.theprofitableretailer.com) or at Amazon.com.

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Fleener also shares his knowledge of experience based retailing in a series of custom key notes and workshops designed for stores, businesses, corporations, non-profits, and trade associations of all sizes. His casual style and quick wit make him not just a crowd pleaser but also an incredible motivator, encouraging people to take action and deliver extraordinary experiences to customers and employees alike. Learn more at [www.dougfleener.com](http://www.dougfleener.com).