

What Is Ingaged Leadership?

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Evan Hackel, CEO, Tortal Training and Ingage Consulting

It has been two years since I wrote my book *Ingaging Leadership: 23 Steps to Elevate Your Business*. Since then, a number of business leaders have told me they have been applying Ingaged Leadership, and achieving success and good results.

It is a great compliment for me to hear that my ideas are helping people become better leaders. Yet for me, the real excitement comes from knowing that my philosophy is helping organizations perform better. I am a great believer in the tonic of success, because when people work for successful organizations, they have much better lives. If I have played even a small role in making that happen, I am proud.

But let's take a few steps back and explore some basic questions about what Ingaged Leadership is, and how it works.

Why Is It Called Ingaged Leadership?

I chose to spell Ingaged Leadership with an "I," because it is all about Involvement - a very deep involvement on the part of everyone who contributes their efforts to help bring success to their organizations. So, the "I" stands for involvement - a deep, giving kind that is practiced by company leaders, managers, front-line employees, and everyone else who donates so much of his or her life and time to an organization.

What Are the Hallmarks of Ingaged Leadership?

Ingagement is a philosophy for leaders who believe that it is not enough to tell people what to do, but to involve their minds, creativity and even their emotions. Ingagement starts with a belief that . . .

When you align people, and create an organization where everyone works together in true partnership, that organization becomes vastly more successful.

In Ingaged companies, everyone's ideas, vision, and hard work are deeply valued. The company doesn't function from the top down. Decisions, commitment and belief in the company are present at all levels, in all people. It is part of what it means to work your first day on the job in a company, or to still be working there decades later.

What Kind of Leadership Style Does Ingagement Require?

Ingagement isn't a single action that leaders take just once. It is an ongoing, dynamic business practice that has the power to transform your organization, your people, you, and ultimately, your organizational success.

And everyone in a company can create Ingagement - company leaders, members of a top leadership team, middle managers, and people at all levels. Ingagement goes beyond the kind of management you will find in many companies today, where top executives and middle managers believe that effective leadership means giving instructions or offering incentives.

Ingagement is different. It offers a way of moving from good to great. Ingaged leaders trust people to participate actively in the creation and development of a strategic vision. They openly involve key stakeholders in an ongoing conversation about the organizational vision and how it can be put into action through planning, processes and follow-through.

What Are the Core Competencies of Engaged Leaders?

You develop Engaged leadership when, through your attitude and actions, you let people know that you are partnering with them as you create your company's purpose, and that you truly listen to them. If any part of Engaged Leadership can be called new and revolutionary, it is the way people listen to each other in Engaged organizations . . .

Engaged leaders cultivate the habit of listening for what other people are saying that is right, not what is wrong. They are continually listening for high-potential nuggets of wisdom in what other people are saying.

Other key traits of Engaged leaders include: a willingness to ask for help . . . an eagerness to build leadership teams that are made up of positive dissenters, not "yes people" . . . an openness to being proved wrong . . . a deep commitment to creating an organization where everyone is rewarded and shown how to succeed.

And authenticity is key to Engagement. When you listen sincerely, you cooperatively create plans and practices that are supported by everyone in your organization, are much more reality-based, and become vastly more energized than initiatives that have been developed only by at the top.

What Engaged Leadership Is Not . . .

To be very clear, Engagement doesn't mean operating a company as a complete democracy. In most organizations, it is still the role of senior management and the board to ultimately make the best decisions for an organization in the long term. Yet when people at all levels feel heard, they are more likely to support company plans, even if their own ideas might not have been utilized completely. When people know they have been heard, they are more likely to become invested in their work. They become more eager to continue to share ideas and to cooperate. As a result, the entire organization improves and grows.

About the Author

Evan Hackel, the creator of the Engaged Leadership concept, is a recognized business and franchise expert and consultant. Evan is also a professional speaker and author. Evan is Principal and Founder of Ingage Consulting, headquartered in Woburn, Massachusetts. A leader in the field of training as well, Evan serves as CEO of Tortal Training, a Charlotte North Carolina-based firm that specializes in developing and implementing interactive training solutions for companies in all sectors. To learn more about Ingage Consulting and Evan's book *Engaging Leadership*, visit Ingage.net. Follow [@ehackel](https://twitter.com/ehackel).

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