



5 Ways to Develop Leadership Skills:

1. **Be patient with yourself.** The process of becoming an effective manager and leader takes time and can be a real challenge. People used to achieving goals through their own efforts can be demanding and impatient with others, tempted to just do everything themselves. When I first became a manager, I had to teach myself to slow down, pay attention to others and be more nurturing with employees. I continue to work on those skills.

2. **Be patient with others.** It's been a process for me to move from a hands-on doer to a manager and leader of other people. I've made plenty of mistakes, so it's important that I give the people who work for me room to try things and to fail. But I make sure they know that I expect them to come to me if they run into a problem, so I can help solve it.

3. **Accept your personal style.** Even if you don't happen to be an introvert like me, you might also benefit from some of the techniques I've used to work through particularly challenging business duties:

a. Know the purpose. Being clear about the business reasons underlying your need to expand

Advice to small business owners on how to be a leader

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your comfort zone can be a motivator. That's how I summoned the courage to keep knocking on doors in our company's early days, and face my first TV reporter's microphone.

b. Set a time limit and do the worst first. For tasks I found especially difficult, such as making cold calls, I would set a daily numeric or time goal. Also, I'd get the toughest jobs done early in the day.

c. Do your research. Being well prepared helps me feel more at ease about doing something uncomfortable. I tend to be a numbers person, so I make sure to get the data and details I need in advance of making a speech or statement.

4. **Manage your way.** It took me some time to figure out my management style. I wasn't a commanding or charismatic person; what seemed most natural was to lead by example; in essence, to take a teaching approach. I'd say to my team, "I'm going to show you exactly how I do it. I'm going to stand right beside you and we're going to do it together."

5. **Be willing to grow.** Be humble enough to acknowledge your weaknesses and open to doing the work to strengthen them. Consider how the people around you might be able to teach you something. Observe and listen to others. Notice what works, and what doesn't.

Angie's List started out as a one-person shop and employs more than 1,300 people today and serves more than 2 million paid households. Hicks bases her advice on personal experience as well as on experiences shared with her from other business leaders.

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