In a 2015 study, Gallup identified four essential traits for successful leadership. In the first insight of this series, 

**Four Behaviors of Great Leadership**, I take a deep dive into these essential characteristics: 1. Regular meetings with employees, 2. Daily communication with team members, 3. Returning calls and emails in 24 hours, and 4. Setting clear goals and expectations with employees. The data shows leaders who demonstrate these behaviors are 17 times more likely to have engaged employees.

While behavior is important, I don’t think we can transform culture until we transform employee loyalty and engagement. We can’t transform employees until we transform leadership. So now that we’ve identified a few behaviors of good leadership, let’s look at the outcomes of adopting those behaviors. What happens if you are able to master those four characteristics? What’s in it for your employees?

**OUTCOMES OF GREAT LEADERSHIP**

In every employee engagement survey I have reviewed over the years, the top four opportunities for improvement (lowest scores on the survey) are:

- Trust in my supervisor
- My supervisor cares about me
- Communication from administration
- Employees feeling valued by leaders or organization

**1. TRUST.** One of the key ways we can create trust between leaders and employees is through communication: How often we communicate, how we communicate, and how we follow up post-communication. Every one of the four positive leadership traits tie to communication. When leaders communicate regularly, it demonstrates that leaders are being open and not withholding information. Regular communication shows transparency and transparency builds trust. When we return messages and calls within 24 hours, people feel like they can count on us. When we clearly define expectations and the goals associated with those expectations, we build trust. Also, as discussed in the first insight, using an objective evaluation system creates transparency as well as alignment between leaders.

**2. MY SUPERVISOR CARES ABOUT ME AS A PERSON.** Just as communication builds trust, getting to know employees better through rounding and frequent conversations demonstrates that you care about them as their leader. Rounding also helps identify any concerns so problems can be addressed quickly. Senior leaders are not exempt from rounding. Rounding should be role modeled from the top down, starting with the CEO to his or her direct reports.

**3. ADMINISTRATION COMMUNICATES EFFECTIVELY.** The frequency or amount of communication from senior leaders or top administrators isn’t always the issue. Barriers to effective communication happen when information isn’t cascaded correctly by managers or directors, or at times, when messages are not shared at all or in a timely manner. Then, when asked in a survey “How well does your administration team communicate with employees?” the answer is “usually” or “sometimes” instead of “always.” If administration is communicating information, it is essential that the next level leaders are relaying that information correctly, quickly and frequently. A well-executed tactic such as standardized shift huddles can help frontline leaders deliver consistent messages around organizational priorities.
4. STAFF FEELS VALUED. The final, and maybe most important outcome of leadership, relates to employees feeling valued. One of the ways we can demonstrate value as leaders is through frequent communication, as shared earlier in this insight series. Managing up a job well done during a shift huddle is one way to show employees that you value them, and it also reinforces desired behaviors that are appreciated and expected. Don’t forget the impact of a hand-written thank you note sent to the home of an employee or investing in the professional development of employees as two proven ways to ensure employees feel valued.

Each outcome connects to the ultimate goal of building a more engaged workforce. And, we now know that engaged workforces result in better clinical outcomes, lower turnover, and less medical errors.

I would love to hear what you are doing to model the four traits of great leadership and what outcomes you are seeing from your work. Please connect with me at Mark.Noon@StuderGroup.com.