

# Have you walked into a Leadership Vacuum?

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Leadership vacuums can occur in many situations – crises and disaster scenarios are often given as examples – and you can inadvertently walk straight into one when taking on a new leadership role. This is particularly true if it has taken time to appoint you or the previous leaders were somewhat ineffective.

Here are some ideas to help you navigate a vacuum of leadership.

## Be Present:

Gently establish your leadership through presence. Presence is always important in leadership but even more so in a new role and in a vacuum. Be gentle but be present. Let your team see you and begin to understand that you are there and consistently so. You normally don't need to go blasting in – a mistake I have made – as this can cause upset and potentially alienate you from your new team from you. Instead take your time but consistently give support through your presence.

## Role Model:

Through your presence, ensure you role model the behaviours that you want to see. Where there has been a vacuum of leadership different sometimes unhelpful behaviours have evolved and will need to be shifted. The best way to begin this process is to demonstrate your expectations through your own behaviour.

## Nurture:

Start by listening to your team and understanding where they are, individually and collectively, and asking the questions to ensure you have clarity. Release judgements or a need to conclude too soon. Taking time to understand their needs and individual situations, concern and anxieties will mean you nurture positive relationships where you become a supportive leader that they can rely on. Building these relationships on solid, honest and open foundations will enable you to respond to your team's needs through that understanding.

## Achieve:

Set milestones with your new team – some simple and easy to achieve, some more stretching – so they know where you are headed based on what they need to bring them together. My new role keenness has led me to overawe a new team by setting out too much of a vision and too many targets early on. I feel now it is crucial to get them achieving and making more simple wins. This can create an early or renewed sense of momentum and impact.

These simple ideas have helped me to step into and through different leadership vacuums and build the foundations for successful teams. By using them as a touchpoint to support your values I hope that they enable you to progress from a vacuum to a team where you can build your own dynamic leadership. As always, have clarity and keep it simple.