

RYP Quarterly

Your team is watching – the “1%ers” is what builds a leader’s credibility

Leadership Version

The 1% edge: how small daily actions build high performance and leadership credibility



RYP QUARTERLY

In leadership, it's not the grand gestures or glossy strategic plans that set credible leaders apart; it's the 1%ers. The tiny, almost invisible actions done consistently. The handwritten note that says 'thank you'. The early morning phone call to check on someone. The moment of honest feedback instead of polite silence. These aren't listed as Leader KPIs, but they build credibility, trust, and performance (the core ingredients of effective leadership).

For leaders of small teams, the 1%ers matter. Why? Because in small teams, everything's magnified. Reputation is local, feedback is direct, and visibility is high. There's no hiding behind an org chart or an executive desk. Leadership is personal.

LEADING HIGH PERFORMANCE ISN'T JUST STRATEGY, IT'S ABOUT SIGNALS (leadership symbolism).

The corporate world is obsessed with frameworks, measures, data, and jargon. But high performance is always signalled way before it's ever structured. What do high-performing leaders do differently from mediocre leaders?

- They follow through, always. If they say they'll call, they call. If they promise to look into something, they do it. Inconsistent leaders destroy momentum. Consistent follow-through, even on small things, signal's reliability. It builds momentum.
- They show up early, stay engaged, and don't check out. Whether it's a 7am toolbox meeting or a late-night debrief after a crisis, they are physically and mentally present. It shows they care. A Leaders enthusiasm and commitment becomes contagious.
- They take notes. It sounds minor, but a leader writing something down shows they value what's being said. It builds psychological safety through active listening. People will feel seen and heard, and that is what drives better contributions over time.
- They learn names. And not just of the top performers or high-profile team members. They know the names of ordinary people, the cleaner, reception staff, local workers, casuals, long time suppliers. It is about respect, and respect matters more than rank.
- They listen without interrupting. Talking over someone is often seen as drive. In small teams, it's arrogance. Good leaders know when to shut up and let others talk. The 1% act of listening builds credibility and connection.

In any team, you're not just a leader between 9 and 5, you're visible all the time. At the footy. In the supermarket. At school pickup. In the car park. Every interaction matters because word travels faster than a press release. Credibility is your currency. It buys you trust, influence, and room to lead. Without it, you're just another person with a title. People don't trust titles, they trust actions. Consistent, visible, human actions are the 1%ers that builds credibility.

The 1%ers are a leaders only real strategy

THE COMPOUNDING POWER OF 1% ACTIONS.

James Clear, author of Atomic Habits, popularised the idea that tiny gains compound over time. Improve just 1% a day and by the end of a year, you're 37 times better.

The same principle applies to leadership credibility. Every time you do what you said you'd do, every time you remember a detail someone shared with you, every time you handle a tough conversation with empathy, you bank leadership credibility. It compounds.

But the reverse is also true. Miss a small opportunity to acknowledge someone's effort. Be consistently ten minutes late for meetings without explanation. Make a joke that lands poorly and then don't address it. That credibility leaks. People may not call it out, but they feel it. And in any team, feelings become facts fast.

FOUR THINGS LEADERS CAN DO TO BUILD THEIR 1%ERS:

1. **Audit your 1%ers.** What small actions do you consistently do that build trust? What do you let slide? Link your little things into your personal habits, rituals and routines. Like shaking someone's hand every time you meet them, looking people in the eye, asking how people are who are doing it tough, using people's names on greeting. These are important 1%ers. Check what your own leadership modus operandi actions are. Are they consistent, personal, and authentic?
2. **Choose three micro 1% actions to adopt.** Maybe it's reply to all texts within 24 hours, or showing up 5 minutes early to every meeting, or asking one personal question in every conversation you have with someone, or walking around and saying hi to all staff at the start of each working day, or calling in on a customer or colleague on the way to or home from work just to check in. Key is to identify the simple 1%ers that will build your leadership credibility and personal brand.
3. **Commit for 100 days.** Track them. Hold yourself to them. These aren't soft skills, they're hard habits, rituals and routines. These become the mechanism and methodology of how any leader builds their credibility bank. The World is full of leaders who were merely in charge for a while, and once they lose their title, they vanish and are forgotten. Credibility builds over time. Consistency and reliability are what builds leadership trust. These can only be achieved via the 1%ers adopted by a leader.
4. **Invite the gift of feedback.** Ask people what they notice, and what they value. You'll be surprised at how your 1%ers can influence people's perceptions. People are not fools. They pick up very quickly when a leader is being genuine and authentic, or not.

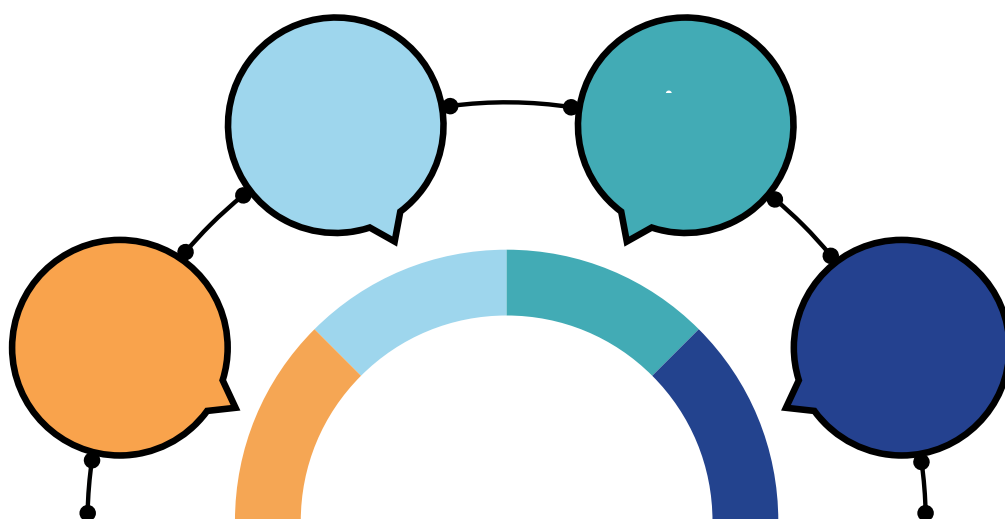
In any team environment, leadership is personal, visible, and trust dependent. High performance isn't built on big plans but small, consistent actions. The 1%ers. They build your credibility brick by brick, day by day. And here's the kicker, when you model those micro-actions, others start to copy. You raise the standard, silently. That's culture change. That's leadership. The small 1% acts, done consistently, build credibility. Especially when the team's watching.

Leadership Lesson:

Credible leadership is earned by the little things a leader does consistently over an extended period of time, not an ad hoc approach when a leader has the time or remembers to do them. A leaders reputation is built on the actions and behaviours they consistently demonstrate, and role model, in good and difficult times.

Facta Non-Verba – Deeds Not Words

David Stewart (B Ed, Grad Dip Sports Science, Master's Business Leadership) David is the Founder & Principal of RYP International – A Team Development Advisory Practice. He has worked globally with organisations, their leaders, and teams to develop their capability and culture to maximise performance.



David Stewart is the Principal of RYP International and has been an international thought leader in Team Culture and High Performance for over 30 Years. He has a Masters in Business Leadership, a Bachelor of Education and a Graduate Diploma in Sports Science. You can contact him via

Email: dstewart@rypinternational

www.rypinternational.com