

# Leadership advice

From Sir Alex Ferguson

Portfolio  
... because everyone's different...



Few leaders have proven as successful in their field as Sir Alex Ferguson. Over the last 20 years he has transformed Manchester United Football Club from perennial underachievers into one of the consistently top teams in Europe.

Recently Sir Alex made a surprise visit to Ashton on Mersey School in Salford, Manchester United's educational partners.

During an address to staff and pupils, Ferguson outlined his guide to effective leadership.

"Distinguish between control and power," he said. "Getting things done is important, but you want to gain respect, not instil fear."

"Delegate so you can observe what is going on around you. Trust others to do their jobs, whilst standing back to consider the quality of what is being done and the direction in which things are going."

Although Sir Alex insisted that an effective leader doesn't change as a result of external criticism, he did suggest that defeat should be analysed.

"Consider what might be learnt from setbacks in order to improve, but never make panicky responses," he advised. "When making important and difficult decisions be decisive and if you believe in what you are doing, stick to your guns."

Finally the Manchester United chief urged leaders to look after themselves and to remember small things, like people's first names.

"Watch your diet, sleeping hours and how you present yourself to people," he concluded. "Try to make all staff feel like an important part of the team."

These principles have been the foundation of Ferguson's success over the years.

But are the ways of one of the most successful football managers of all time relevant to the business of leading in other environments?

How effectively are you applying these principles – and can you learn from the Premier League?

- ✓ Gain respect, not fear
- ✓ Delegate and observe
- ✓ Analyse defeat in order to improve
- ✓ Be decisive and stand your ground
- ✓ Remember small things, like names
- ✓ Take care of yourself
- ✓ Make all staff feel part of the team