

THE  
**LEADER'S**  
POCKET GUIDE



**101**

**INDISPENSABLE  
TOOLS, TIPS, AND  
TECHNIQUES  
FOR ANY SITUATION**

**JOHN BALDONI**

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# 1. | How to Know Yourself Better



## Think About...

How you might get more in tune with yourself.

Spend at least a few minutes every day reflecting on how the day went. What went well and what would you like to have done better?

Be mindful of feedback and make a point of thanking people who offer it.

**Self-Knowledge = Insight + Practice**

# 5. | Add to Your Leadership Brand



## Think About...

How others regard you and what you do.

Leadership depends upon perception. It should reflect your inner character. But it will not unless you put your character into gear and lead by example.

Think of an example of how you showed others what it means to lead by example. What did it say about your values?

Think of three more examples of situations in which you could live your values and lead by example.

**Leadership Brand =  
Authenticity + Connectivity**

# 8. | Making the Choice *Not* to Manage



## Think About...

How you make certain that the “buck stops with you” on decisions you have made.

How do you accept consequences for your actions?

Think of a time when someone in authority did not accept consequences for his or her actions. What effect did that have on the organization? What would you have done differently?

Taking responsibility begins with accepting the responsibility to manage and lead in the first place. Are you ready to take on that responsibility?

**Accountability = Responsibility +  
Consequence**

# 11. | Three Ways to Regenerate Hope



## Think About...

Ways you have developed your confidence to lead.

Consider a time when your lack of confidence may have hurt you. What happened and why? What will you do differently?

Give an example of an action you took that helped you develop your self-confidence.

How do you convey your confidence to others?

**Self-Confidence =  
Accomplishment + Conviction**

# 13. | Four Ways to Lead with Presence



## Think About...

Ways you put your leadership presence into action.

Are you giving people reasons to believe in your leadership?

What have you done lately to demonstrate your faith in others?

What have you done to ensure that others believe in you?

**Leadership Presence =  
Authenticity + "Right Stuff"**

# 14. | Build Your Resilience



## Think About...

How you demonstrate resilience and perseverance.

Where will you find energy to persevere? How will you keep yourself motivated to pursue a difficult objective?

How long do you allow yourself to review the past and what do you do to prepare for the next challenge?

Do you engage in activities that allow you to remain resilient and roll with the punches?

**Resilience = Perseverance + Practice**

# 16. | Get People to Believe in Themselves



## Think About...

Ways that you exhibit “no excuses” leadership.

Think of a specific instance in which you refused to give an excuse and instead focused on doing the job right. What did you learn about yourself?

How can you best convey that you believe in others? What actions can you take to parlay that into gaining followers? Do you engage in these activities?

What is one thing you can do to demonstrate that you have confidence in another individual?

**Responsibility =  
Ownership + Commitment**

# 18. | Level with Yourself



## Think About...

How you would like to be perceived by others.

Think of a specific instance in which you acknowledged your fears but maintained your composure. What did you learn from the experience?

What can you do to keep yourself focused on positive outcomes?

What is one thing you can do now to translate your personal convictions into actions in order to help others succeed?

**Mirror Image = Honesty + Candor**

# 19. | What Are You Doing to Add Value?



## Think About...

How you can “reengineer” the value you bring to your team.

How can you acquire new skills to improve your competencies?

What obstacles are hindering your own success and the success of your team?

What will you do differently to ensure that you keep adding value to your team?

**Value = Competence + Adaptability**

# 20. | Friends, Family, Health



## Think About...

What you are doing for yourself to ensure that you maintain healthy relationships with your friends and family.

Consider one thing more you should be doing with your family to ensure that you are part of their lives.

List two things you do regularly to stay connected to friends.

**Holistic Leadership =  
Work + Others + Self**

# SELF

## Self-Assessment

*Consider the following statements and rate your level of agreement with them on a 1–5 scale with 1 being weakest and 5 being strongest.*

- \_\_\_ I express my true character through my actions.
- \_\_\_ It is important to cultivate a strong sense of leadership presence.
- \_\_\_ I limit my priorities so that I can focus on what is important.
- \_\_\_ Self-improvement begins with self-awareness.
- \_\_\_ When I am wrong I admit my mistakes and seek to correct them.
- \_\_\_ I hold myself accountable for my actions even when it hurts to do so.
- \_\_\_ Humility is something that is necessary to create strong followership.
- \_\_\_ I recognize that I need to continue to develop my leadership skills every day.
- \_\_\_ I make time to reflect on my performance every day.
- \_\_\_ When you choose to lead others you must accept the consequences for what happens next.

\_\_\_ **TOTAL SCORE**

+++

50      Perfect (and impossible)

49–30    Keep working

<30      Give yourself credit for being honest

# 21. | Put Integrity and Humility into Your Ego



## Think About...

Ways your ego has affected how others perceive you.

Note ways your ego has helped you achieve your goals.

Consider ways your ego has gotten in the way of effective teamwork.

What can you do differently to ensure that you balance ego with teamwork?

**Ego = Ambition + Humility**

# 22. | Show Your Colleagues How to Think Critically



## Think About...

Ways you employ your critical thinking skills.

Consider an opportunity to apply your critical reasoning skills to a team project.

How can you better organize your thoughts to reflect on them?

Have you challenged all of your assumptions?

**Leadership Thinking =  
Reason + Situation**

# 24. | Use a Task List to Manage



## Think About...

The difference between a leader's checklist, which is focused on big-picture, strategic issues, and a manager's task list, which is focused on operational priorities. Both are essential to organizational effectiveness.

What action steps would you put on your checklist to ensure that you lead more effectively?

What action steps would you put on your task list to ensure that you manage more appropriately?

Consider "addition by subtraction" alternatives. That is, what tasks can you eliminate in order to help the team focus on key priorities?

**Leader's Checklist =  
Purpose + Priorities + Tasks**

# 27. | Stop Spinning Wheels



## Think About...

How you can demonstrate ownership of the situation and its problems.

What steps can you take to ensure that your team concentrates on what is important rather than what distracts? How can you help team members maintain proper focus?

What actions should you take to make work meaningful for yourself and others?

What can you do to eliminate “make work” tasks in order to help your team focus on “what must be done” tasks that are critical to the success of the mission?

**Priority = Goal + Meaning + Work**

# 28. | Act with the Big Picture in Mind



## Think About...

How you can act for the good of the team in order to help the organization succeed.

What ideas do you have that you would like to take to your boss?

How will you present these ideas to your boss?

**Success = Idea + Action  
Boss's Support**

# 30. | You Can't Say "Not My Job"!



## Think About...

Ways you can set the right example by accepting new challenges and remaining open to listening to others.

Consider how you can lead others to compromise by demonstrating that you are willing to assume greater levels of responsibility so the team can succeed.

Think of an opportunity when people on the team failed to compromise. What happened and why? What could you do differently?

How can you set the right example for your team by undertaking a challenge no one else wants to do?

**Compromise = Team Cooperation**

# 32. | Practice Defending Yourself the Right Way



## Think About...

Ways you can argue your case without losing your composure.

Consider times when you have lost your temper in a business situation. How did others react? How did you feel? What could you have done differently?

What steps will you take before going into a meeting where disagreements may occur to allow yourself to remain cool and collected?

How will you make your business case so that you demonstrate that you are in control of the situation?

**Composure > Words + Temper**

# 34. | How to Influence Your Colleagues



## Think About...

Things you do to instill a sense of positivism in the workplace. Positivism depends upon your actions and your point of view.

What specific actions do you take to let people know that you are willing to provide help if asked?

How can you turn around negative thoughts and attitudes in your group?

How will you show people that you appreciate their contributions?

**Positivism = People + Possibilities**

# 36. | Help Your Team Avoid Burnout



## Think About...

Ways that demonstrate that you are a good team member.

Where could you use improvement? Why is it important that you address this concern?

Provide a specific example of how you pitched in and helped the team succeed.

What are ways you guard yourself and your team against burnout? How do you provide relief for burnout? What specific steps will you take?

How can effective teamwork contribute to a healthy outlook? What can you do to help the team keep the highs and lows in proper perspective?

**Teamwork = Purpose + People**

# 38. | Optimize Team Success



## Think About...

Ways you demonstrate that improved performance is an attainable objective for your team.

What should you do more of to help your team?

What should you do less of to help your team succeed?

How can you teach your team that collaboration is critical to team success? What example can you set so that others understand more readily?

**Performance = People + Collaboration**

# 41. | Get Your Team to Play Smart Together



## Think About...

Ways you demonstrate that you support your teammates individually and collectively.

Consider how you have helped a teammate solve a work problem. What did you do? What was his or her reaction? What did you learn?

Why is it important for individuals to commit to team goals? How can you help individuals understand the value they bring to the team?

What can you do to ensure that every teammate's ego gets to shine at least once?

**People + Purpose > Problems**

# 43. | There Is a Positive Side of Conflict



## Think About...

Situations in which conflict was healthy, and why the conflict helped the team to succeed.

Think of a time when you wished you had received honest feedback but did not receive it. How would it have helped?

Consider why “straight talk” about the issues is better than “happy talk” about nothing.

What happens when individuals are afraid to confront issues that may harm team effectiveness? What can you do to ensure that this does not happen?

**Solution = Conflict + Collaboration**

# 44. | Take Charge of Change



## Think About...

Times when you have felt rolled over by change because you failed to realize it was coming.

What did you learn from the experience? What could you have done differently?

Can you find ways to assert ownership over change to benefit yourself and your team? Why is this important?

**Self + Control  $\geq$  Change**

# 46. | Three Ways Strong Leaders Put the Team First



## Think About...

Situations in which you have been the one to initiate compromise.

What role does compromise play in your organization now?

What did you learn from working with others to compromise? What did you learn when you failed to compromise?

What examples can you find in your own life in which compromise led to successful outcomes?

What can you do to teach others the value of compromise?

**Compromise = Win + Sacrifice**

# 48. | Turn Small Talk into Smart Talk



## Think About...

How you connect with your colleagues in ways that affirm their value to you.

Give an example of a time when you were able to provide a perspective on an issue that others may not have considered. What happened? What did you learn from the experience?

Give an example of a situation in which you made small talk with your bosses that helped you connect more authentically.

Consider developing a few talking points about what you do for the organization that you can use next time you meet a senior executive.

**Perspective = Me + You  
Reality**

# 50. | How to Sell an Idea to Your Boss



## Think About...

Actions you have taken to demonstrate to your bosses that you are a big-picture thinker.

Consider examples of situations in which you have seen people lead without a title. What was the reaction of others?

Give an example of a time when you persuaded your boss (or your boss's boss) to support one of your ideas or initiatives.

What project do you have in mind that you would like to pitch to your boss? How will you broach the topic? What will be your business case?

**Leading Up = Thinking Like a Boss**

# 52. | How to Cure Yourself of Hubris



## Think About...

Ways you can avoid taking yourself too seriously and why that will be important when it comes to leading others.

Think about a time when you let your ego get in the way of making the right decision. What happened? What would you do differently now?

What is one thing you can do to avoid appearing to be arrogant?

What behaviors can you show to demonstrate that you are approachable and welcome alternative points of view?

**Hubris = Ego – Humility**

# 53. | Coach Your Colleagues



## Think About...

How to put peer coaching into practice.

- **Observe**—watch what your colleague is doing
- **Dialogue**—discuss what you observe
- **Question**—ask questions
- **Suggest**—offer your ideas for improvement
- **Challenge**—challenge your colleague to develop her own solutions and methods

**Coaching = Investment in Others**

# COLLEAGUES

## Self-Assessment

*Consider the following statements and rate your level of agreement with them on a 1–5 scale with 1 being weakest and 5 being strongest.*

- \_\_\_ My colleagues want to work with me.
- \_\_\_ My colleagues say that I know how to collaborate with others even when it means putting aside my own ideas.
- \_\_\_ My colleagues look to me for clear directions.
- \_\_\_ My colleagues would say that I help them do their jobs better.
- \_\_\_ My colleagues say I look to lead my boss and my peers.
- \_\_\_ My colleagues believe in my expertise and trust me to be correct on the technical issues.
- \_\_\_ My colleagues view me as someone who knows how to bring out the best in others.
- \_\_\_ My colleagues regard me as a go-to person to get things done right.
- \_\_\_ My colleagues say that I am one who puts the interest of the team before my own interests.
- \_\_\_ My colleagues know where I stand on the issues and while they may not always agree with me, they respect my position.

\_\_\_ **TOTAL SCORE**

+++

50 Perfect (and impossible)

49–30 Keep working

<30 Give yourself credit for being honest

# 55. | Make Your Leadership Relevant



## Think About...

The ways purpose provides focus, direction, and goals to employees and teams.

Have you ever been a member of a purpose-driven team? How did it feel? Can such an experience be replicated? If so, how?

What one thing can you do personally to instill purpose in others?

How can you use your next off-site to think about ways you can engage the power of purpose to help your organization focus on achieving intended results?

**Purpose = Vision + Mission  
Values**

# 57. | How to Ask Good Questions



## Think About...

Ways you can demonstrate authenticity in the workplace.

Give an example of how your authenticity enabled you to connect more effectively with your team.

What questions can you ask to make it safe for people to speak about their challenges at work?

Consider behaviors you can employ to demonstrate that you are the right leader for your organization.

**Authenticity = Authority + Accessibility**

# 59. | Visit Employees Where They Work



## Think About...

How you can connect more authentically with your people one-on-one.

In what ways can you make it safe for direct reports to bring work-related problems to you?

What can you do to make time to visit people where they work?

How can you make time for people to visit your office?

**Connection = You + Employee  
Location**

# 61. | Make Your Off-Site More Engaging



## Think About...

Ways you can improve the level of employee engagement in your workplace.

Consider specific actions you should take to improve engagement in your own team.

What steps can you take to make your next off-site more meaningful for attendees? Consider activities that bring people together to solve common problems.

Identify senior leaders you wish to come to your next off-site. What will you have them speak about, and how will you ensure that they have time to listen to what your people have to say?

**Engagement = Purpose + Commitment**

# 62. | Avoid Micromanaging Anything



## Think About...

Ways you can delegate authority and responsibility to others.

Consider a specific action you can take to become a more effective delegator. What responsibilities will you delegate and why will you do it?

What tasks do you think you can help your team do more effectively? How much time should you spend on such tasks?

How will **you** keep yourself motivated in order to keep your team focused on the right issues at the right time?

**Delegation = Authority + Responsibility**

# 64. | Questions for Leaders Facing Long Odds



## Think About...

What it takes to eliminate conflict on your team so that people can focus on issues rather than personalities.

Consider ways you can encourage people to collaborate more effectively.

What questions will you ask yourself when you are facing long odds? What will the answers tell you about yourself and the people on your team?

How will you keep your team motivated when working on demanding projects?

**Perseverance = Truth + Determination**

# 66. | **Wield Power Gracefully When Making Decisions**



## **Think About...**

How leaders should apply their power to achieve positive aims.

What is the link between urgency and power? In other words, do leaders sometimes overplay urgency simply because they have the power to do so? How will you avoid doing that?

Consider ways you can eliminate tasks to give people time to focus on what is important.

Consider a time when you used your authority and the outcome was not positive. What went wrong and what did you learn from the experience?

**Power = Purposeful Authority**

# 69. | Hire for Character and Integrity



## Think About...

Ways you demonstrate that actions speak louder than words when it comes to showing concern for employees and stakeholders.

Consider how you evaluate your job candidates. What are the three most important things you look for in a potential new employee?

Why are these factors important to you and your organization?

What are you doing to ensure that these factors are considered?

**Character = Integrity + Action**

# 72. | Step Back to Lead



## Think About...

Ways you can improve execution in the context of your organizational mission.

Ask yourself how you can link individual contributions to the fulfillment of the organizational mission.

Consider two specific actions that you must take to improve execution in your organization.

What can you do to ensure that your people have the time and resources they need to do their jobs right?

**Execution = Attention + Diligence  
Work**

# 75. | Lead Like a Salesperson



## Think About...

Actions you must take to ensure that people know that you value them as contributors who are vital to the success of the organization.

Consider how you “connect the dots” between what an employee does and how the organization performs.

How can you enable direct reports to take the lead on specific projects? What will you do to support their efforts?

What specific actions can you take to generate enthusiasm about the work?

**Commitment = Engagement +  
Enthusiasm**

# 76. | Five Ways to Connect with Those Who Can't Stand You



## Think About...

How you can communicate your point of view in ways that demonstrate your open-mindedness.

**Connection = Open Mind + Willing Spirit**

# 79. | Develop a Crisis Plan



## Think About...

How you will ensure that when crisis strikes you will be in charge.

What is the first step you will take in developing a crisis plan? Who will you enlist to help you?

What steps will you take personally to ensure that you maintain your equilibrium and remain calm in the face of adversity? Is there an individual you know who has experienced such difficulties from whom you can learn? What questions will you ask this person?

How will you regenerate enthusiasm in the workplace after the crisis recedes? What will you do first? What expectations do you have for success?

**Preparation = Foresight + Planning  
Practicality**

# 81. | When Speaking in Front of a Hostile Audience



## Think About...

How you can develop a key message that sums up your leadership point of view.

Consider a time when you went off message because you lost your cool. What was the reaction of others? What will you do differently?

Think of ways you can maintain self-control when others are losing theirs.

Give an example of how you will dispel gloom and refocus on opportunities.

**Composure = Calmness + Control**

# 83. | Build Common Cause



## Think About...

How you will demonstrate that collaboration is important to organizational success.

Consider a time when you stood up for principle. What happened? How did others react? Would you do it again and why?

Give an example of how you will communicate common cause throughout your organization.

What steps will you take to ensure that everyone knows the mission and their role in fulfilling it?

**Common Cause =  
Purpose + Engagement**

# 84. | Defuse Discord



## Think About...

Ways that you will emphasize that you value open and honest dialogue with your direct reports.

How will you ensure that when tensions rise you focus on the root cause rather than its symptoms?

Consider why it is important that you remain above the fray when tensions rise.

Give an example of how you will welcome feedback from others.

**Honest Dialogue = Candor + Truth**

# 85. | Right a Wrong



## Think About...

Ways you can create a work climate in which people can admit mistakes and make amends.

How will you make it safe for people to raise concerns when they feel they have been wronged?

Consider a time when you made amends for a mistake you made at work. What was the reaction of others? What did you learn from the experience?

**Apology = Acknowledgment + Amends**

# 87. | Buck Up the Team



## Think About...

What you can do to spread confidence throughout your organization.

Think of a time you spent coaching an employee. What did you do to help the employee succeed?

What will you do next time your team fails to meet an agreed-upon objective? What will you do to correct them? What will you do to cheer them on?

Give an example of how you will demonstrate that individual contributions add up to team success.

**Team Success = Collaboration +  
Commitment**

# 89. | Lead with Compassion



## Think About...

Why it is necessary for employees to be passionate about their work.

How should a leader encourage a sense of pride in the workplace?

Give an example of how you demonstrated compassion for an employee.

Why is it appropriate to balance passion for work with compassion for people? What happens when that occurs? Why? And what can we learn from it?

**Approachability = Passion/Compassion**

# 90. | How You Can Add More Value to Your Organization



## Think About...

Ways you can add value to your organization.

Give an example of how you reconsidered your activities in ways that led you to do things differently. How did you learn to think more strategically? How did you learn to delegate tasks to others?

Consider ways you can learn from colleagues inside and outside your business. What specific questions will you ask them about gaining a new perspective on your role within your organization?

**Leadership Balance =  
Stability + Flexibility**

# 91. | Are Your Employees Listening?



## Think About...

Ways you can improve communication in your workplace.

What steps will you take to ensure messages are heard? How will you check for understanding?

What can you do to ensure that you set the right example when it comes to listening more attentively?

**Communication  $\cong$  Team Effort**

# 92. | Four Ways to Reverse a Decision



## Think About...

How you might reverse a decision in order to adjust to changing circumstances.

Consider a time when your organization reversed a major decision. What were the consequences? What did you learn from the experience?

What steps can you take to minimize the risks when a decision must be reversed? What will you tell your stakeholders—specifically customers and employees?

How will you ensure that the organization benefits when a decision is reversed?

**Decision = Consequence**

# 94. | Let Your Face Show You Are in Charge



## Think About...

Ways you use your communications to keep people up-to-date and informed on important issues.

Consider what you will do when you may have information that because of reasons of corporate confidentiality you cannot disclose. How will you handle the situation?

When you are permitted to discuss what you had previously been told to keep in confidence, what will you do first? How will you maintain the trust of your employees?

Give an example of a situation in which you projected an image of being composed and in control of your emotions. How did others react? What did you learn from the experience?

**Transparency = Openness + Trust**

# 96. | Tell Your Story with Impact



## Think About...

Ways you can use stories to celebrate the achievements of individuals and teams within your organization.

What key messages can you reinforce by telling effective stories?

Identify sources of inspiration for good stories. These sources may be inside your company or outside of your company. Consider why they inspire you.

Develop a story that you would like to tell a friend about the good things employees in your organization do.

**Story = Purpose + Narrative + Honesty**

# 98. | How to Inspire Others



## Think About...

Ways to derive inspiration from the work you do and the work your team does.

Why is it important to be realistic when addressing inspiration? What happens if you are not grounded in reality?

What is the connection between inspiration and improvement? How can you link the two so people feel more confident in their own abilities?

What specific actions will you take to inspire your people? When will you begin?

**Inspiration =  
Purpose + Intended Outcome**

# 99. | When It's Time to Hang It Up



## Think About...

Knowing when it will be time for you to quit what you are doing now and move on to something else.

How is your management now enabling people to succeed?

How is your leadership focusing people on key challenges that lie ahead?

How do you know you are the right person to lead your team forward now?

**Decision to Step Aside  $\cong$   
Organizational Need**

# 101. | Six Words to Lead By



## Think About...

Ways you are developing your legacy at work.

Consider ways you make time for yourself outside of the workplace. What do you do that enriches your life? How can you make more time for this source of enrichment?

Give an example of how you would like to be remembered by your colleagues.

Write a six-word memoir that sums up your leadership legacy.

$$\text{Legacy} = \frac{\text{Contribution}}{\text{Time}}$$

# ORGANIZATION

## Self-Assessment

*Consider the following statements and rate your level of agreement with them on a 1–5 scale with 1 being weakest and 5 being strongest.*

\_\_\_\_\_ The team knows that it is my job to set expectations and follow through on them.

\_\_\_\_\_ The team knows where I stand on the issues.

\_\_\_\_\_ The team members look to me to explain their roles in fulfilling our mission.

\_\_\_\_\_ The team believes that I have what it takes to help people do their jobs better.

\_\_\_\_\_ The team members say that I have their best interests at heart.

\_\_\_\_\_ The team members believe that my job is to help them succeed as individuals and as a team.

\_\_\_\_\_ The team members acknowledge my leadership when they bring their problems to me.

\_\_\_\_\_ The team trusts me to make tough decisions.

\_\_\_\_\_ The team feels comfortable in raising alternative views in my presence.

\_\_\_\_\_ The team recognizes that I am one who tries to do what is best for the organization.

\_\_\_\_\_ **TOTAL SCORE**

+++

50      Perfect (and impossible)

49–30    Keep working

<30      Give yourself credit for being honest