

Insights: Publications

To Serve and To Lead

Best Lawyers

November 3, 2022

Written by **J. Henry Walker IV**

Effective teamwork is more important than ever in the modern law firm, and it's the almost oxymoronic named "servant leaders" who make it happen. Here's a primer.

The ability to work well as part of a team is an essential aspect of effective lawyering, whether within a firm; between firm, client and in-house counsel; or in situations that involve multiple firms. Indeed, the effectiveness of the team and its ability to function are often the key components in obtaining a successful result for the client. Often, the lawyers recognized in this publication are the leaders of legal teams. Promoting team synergy while encouraging the best from each member of the group—which is at the heart of “servant leadership”—is how lawyers pave the way to success for clients and colleagues alike.

The concept of servant leadership originated with ancient Eastern sages, while the term itself was popularized a half-century ago by Robert K. Greenleaf, an AT&T executive who became a management consultant and author. His work on servant leadership ignited a cultural transformation for many corporations and institutions.

Greenleaf insisted that the impulse to serve others must necessarily precede the ambition to lead them. The key test of authentic servant leadership, he said, is this: “Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?” Clearly, the servant leader has a tall task.

Related People



J. Henry Walker IV

t 404.815.6050

hwalker@ktslaw.com