

Background:

Subcategories	Codes	Stories	Insights
Context	Education		Dual Bachelor studies with CHG (M2). Bachelor in Germany and Master's degree abroad (M4). Dual bachelor international business (M6). Bachelor in economic science (M5). Studies, Trainee at a different company (M7).
	Entry to CHG	I was working as an amateur at a Robinson club and met the former CEO of CHG-MERIDIAN there. He was on holiday and his little daughters fell in love with me (as little girls fall in love with every amateur), so he approached me and told me that our jobs have many similarities. He is also approached by many people daily with questions and those people need to be kept happy and motivated. I really liked that analogy. And a couple of months later I applied at CHG-MERIDIAN (M6).	Traineeship in Sales (M2). Traineeship in Sales (M4). Prior to CHG, I was working for 3 other employers. Since six years now, I am working for CHG. It was initially planned that I lead the Sales office in Bielefeld, what I did for several months but now I am responsible for the sales regions south and south-west (M1). 2 years as executive assistant (M5). acquisition through CEO of CHG (M7).
	First stages at CHG	In the second year of my trainee program, I had a stay abroad in Mexico that sharpened the rest of my career. I saw a lot of potential in the Mexican market and expressed my desire internally for going back to Mexico and start to use this potential (M3).	8 years in the company, various stages among others key account manager (M2). Typical CHG career path, meaning two years account manager, team leader and then taking the chance to become a leader (M4). Account Manager, then Regional Manager, now EVP (M6). typical career path at CHG, 2 years Sales Department, 2 years Sales Development and since 2019 a leadership position in Sweden (M5). regional manager for 2 years at CHG, then becoming leader in 2019 (M7). The participants have grown up at CHG, advantage that they know the structure and the company very well (I2).
Actions	Initiative	As long as I can remember, I've been someone who takes things in hand. I like to take the first step, initiate things and go down paths that might mean risk for others (M5).	Collectable debt, my personal initiative and the clear communication about my goals in the company were key factors for why he got into a leader position (M2). The perceived motivation and showing that he is willing to go the extra mile and always available gave him the edge for getting the position (M4).
	Communication of goals	The perceived motivation and showing that I am willing to go the extra mile and always being available gave me the edge for getting the position (M4).	I was communicating my wish regularly to my superior (M4). No one could start more arrogant than me, on my second day I already told everyone I will be CEO (M6).
	Career goal	As a manager you do not have to be a specialist, you just need to know where and who can provide the information (network). This demand on managers has changed absolutely. In the past, managers were selected more on the basis of competence (I2).	Leader as career goal (M2). Leadership was always a career goal. I appreciate self-sufficient working and responsibility in my job (M4).
	Motivation for leadership	I always had an internal motivation and drive for leadership. I remember a situation during my first seminar at CHG, where I was asked which job you would take for one day if you could choose. Without any doubt, I was answering that I would choose to be CEO since it is my desire to be in the management board one day (M3). In addition, especially in today's world, young talents are more willing to leave the company. So of course we also want to retain good employees by giving perspectives. We want to strengthen trust in the talents and reward performance in the end (I1).	Shaping, like to take responsibility (M2). In my time as key account manager, I liked the most to have responsibility (M4). I really enjoy working with teams and being part of a team and grinding our team to success. The success comes with a strong team (M1). Becoming a leader was always one of my goals, no matter where or how (M5). Working with people, developing the company further, participating in increasing the companies' success, supporting the development of talents, having responsibility (M7). Younger generations certainly approaches things differently than seasoned managers, so I guess young can learn from old and vice versa (I2). important for a company to show career paths within the company, also to motivate and retain employees, to show perspectives for other employees & to increase attractiveness as an employer (I2). We as a company want to maintain a certain freshness in management. The older and more employees are in management, this freshness, drive and dedication might be lost. It may be that these employees rest on their work and the extra will for extraordinary things suffer (M1).
	Shaping		Desire to actively shape the organization and participate in the process of the company's future development (M2).
	Situational adaption	I just had just bought a house in Stuttgart when I go the opportunity to become Regional Manager in Frankfurt. Although it did not fit at all, I was in to doubt: I was taking this chance (M2). I always practice to take the perspective of the company and not stay only in my micro perspective (M3).	Willingness and readiness to move also in unsuitable private circumstances (M2). He made his way with us as a trainee and went abroad. He had the courage to believe in himself, to take risks and has been remembered as an outstanding person. Although one could have waited a little longer, the opportunity was then taken (I2).
	Flexibility	He started with us as a trainee and went abroad. He had the courage to believe in himself, to take risks and realize the opportunity he was given. Although one could have waited a little longer to promote him, the company also realized the opportunity and the risk he was taking, so he got the chance to become Vice President (I2).	Without showing flexibility and commitment, I would not be here today. I had to move twice for my career, and when I got offered the Regional Manager position, I just had bought a house with my family, and then I had to move again. You have to make sacrifices if you want to progress your career (M2). I was very flexible regarding my work location, I believe that was a major factor for why I was chosen (M5). Your participants are particularly agile and know where they can get support (I2).

Challenges:

Categories	Subcategories	Codes	Stories	Insights
Internal competition	Context	Internal competition	I was confronted mainly in the beginning of their career with internal criticism and doubts because of my young age. There were people questioning why I have been chosen before more experienced colleagues who were interested in getting the same leader position (M3).	Surprised that more people applied for the desired role who were older and had more experience, but didn't get the job (M4). Also other colleagues from the team applied for the same position, it was interesting to talk about it with them in retrospect (M6).
		Uncomfortable situations	In the application phase for the leadership position, I remember that we were more applicants. Especially one colleague who was way older and more experienced was applying, accompanied by high expectations from his side. After the application, in the selecting process, it was very uncomfortable for both of us to interact with each other. We avoided this topic and decided to not talk at all until we got to know who was becoming the job. The next confrontation was a meeting about his performance review where I was placed as his subordinate. In retrospect, I would seek a debate with him on an earlier stage to prevent the rise of uncomfortable feelings (M4).	Many uncomfortable situations within the application process for the leading position due to putting my suitability for the leadership role in question (M3).
	Actions	Confidence	When being invited for seminars where leaders of different companies were present, I felt like an intern. In the middle of experienced and older leaders, it was hard at the beginning to leave a confident impression (M3).	I am self-confident and know about my abilities. I don't have any doubts that my self-confidence was a supporting factor for me to position myself as a leader (M4).
		Performance	I always try to stand out from the crowd and other internal competitors by delivering more than expected (M3).	I am willing to go the extra mile and to perform on the highest possible level (M7).
		Company's trust in leader		I felt honoured and I was happy that CHG realized my career goal on an early stage (M4). The companies support also for failures is essential for a leaders development (M1)
Acceptance	Context	External acceptance	When being invited for seminars where leaders of different companies were present, I felt like an intern. In the middle of experienced and older leaders, it was not so simple to give a confident impression (M3).	Getting accepted from outside customers, other leaders and suppliers was a challenge for me (M2)
		Internal acceptance	In my first Jour-fix meeting as a leader, it was a formative experience to meet a colleague who previously got to know him as trainee. Compared to meeting completely new colleagues, it was perceived as more demanding to position oneself in front of someone who has known you. It required special effort from both sides to become familiar with this situation. In order to prepare, I have taken an education course. Even from today's perspective, I remember these remarkable experiences in a positive way (M2).	Youngest colleague in the team, facing other colleagues with more work experience and higher in age. Fear of being accepted as new leader (M2). Getting acceptance as a major challenge. Challenge of acceptance due to young age and previous relations on a friendship basis (M4). When I took the step from a team member to be a leader, I recognized that the people around me were also giving special attention to my language, I started to choose expressions rather formal than colloquial, was thinking twice about jokes to ensure the seriousness, meaning I had to change my style of communication (M5). Subordinates trying to test out the limits in first target negotiations, to see how far they can go. It is important to clearly show the limits. Gaining acceptance (especially needed when being of younger age) by making added value of his decisions visible. Additional knowledge is the easiest way to show added value. However several colleagues have a higher professional competence. Trying to even out little experience by asking former colleagues working on his level about their stories and experiences and seeks for continuous informational exchange (M1).
		Expectations	I was seeking the exchange to my supervisor with the direct question for what they exactly expect from me (M4). When I enter a room as the youngest person, still feel that people tend underestimate me. But I got used to it and with the time, I like the situation more and more. Being underestimated is a good starting point to impress others and to turn low expectations in recognition (M7). Everyone has individual expectations and wishes for how to be led. I perceived that as extremely challenging with retrospect to the little time you have to figure out the individual characters (M7).	I had the feeling that the expectations towards me were too high (M5). I was not sure what people expect from me (M3). I had to learn that age is a factor that influences people's expectations. Because of my young age, I was asked to convince my environment of my skills (M7). Looking back, I would allow myself more time to grow into the leader position. I felt a lot of pressure on my shoulders, that was mainly caused by myself (M7).
	Actions	Performance	When I started as a leader there was the perception "here comes the guy who doesn't have experience except being an amateur and being at chg for 3 years". I was able to change that perception quickly through my performance and I felt my credits with the team increasing. It was very memorable when they at one point started to come to me for advice and questions (M6).	Acceptance and respect wasn't an issue for me when I took over the new role. Through my performance over the last two years (I was the best salesperson in Mexico two years in a row and acquired many big German clients located in Mexico), the other employees saw first-hand what I am capable of. Even several colleagues approached me and said that Mexico would need someone like me. Someone with ambition, energy and also with the connections to Germany because of the many decisions that are made at the headquarters in Weingarten. So during the application process, I already felt the trust of the Mexican team. I noticed that they wanted me. I tried to convince the employees who did not want me with 100% commitment and support (M3). I am not a big fan of getting acceptance by fear and strict rules. Rather, I want to show additional value through my leadership and get acceptance from that (M1). I believe the question of acceptance is mirrored in the leadership style. So when employees see that you are not a patriarch but leading collective, they tend to accept you easier (M5).
		Preparation	Since I don't have a lot of experience, I try to even this lack out by acquiring experience from other leaders who I ask for their obstacles and key learnings (M1).	"Luck favours the prepared" I compensate the little experience with proper preparation, Of course, when holding year-end meetings several times, you get a routine, However, in early stages, I felt that preparation was required (M4).
		Training		As a method to prepare I chose to take courses about leadership (M2). I attended the course "From a colleague to a leader" after I knew that I will get a leadership position (M2)
Cultural challenge	Context	Cultural differences	Mexicans are in general very emotional when it comes to discussing. That is why in most situations I give the problem one night of sleep to neutralize the environment. If on the next day, it is still a present topic, I initiate direct and transparent communication. That sometimes means that I have to spend time on the problem myself and initiate a meeting in my office with the concerned parties (M3).	I did not expect that I would face such big cultural differences here in Sweden. It is a major part of my work to handle these differences and to build bridges between our working cultures (M5).
		Empathy	Especially in a new cultural environment, I perceived that empathy was demanded in order to connect with the employees and in order to build a bond between us as a team (M5).	I take time for employees and try to see their point of view. Especially when the culture is new, this is a challenge (M5).
		Consistency	Especially in a new cultural environment, a leader should aim to behave transparent and understandable to prevent confusion. I believe that consistency in acting is important to generate sustainability and to gain trust and acceptance (M5).	Behaving consistently, transparent and understandable takes sometimes the wind out of the critic's sails (M1).

	Actions	Perseverance	It happens to me very often that I explain something more than once to a team mate. Even though we agreed yesterday to go left, he goes to the right today. At first, I simply did not understand why this happened. I guess it can be referred back to differences in culture and working mentality between Germany and Sweden. I need a lot of perseverance to keep my motivation and enthusiasm about a task when I have to explain the same thing several times (M5).	Perseverance and keeping the enthusiasm when explaining the same thing several times was crucial in order to bring my employees on board and to improve the quality of our service (M5).
Time allocation	Context	Internal conflicts	I remember a day when I had a lot on the table. I didn't know where my head was at or where to start. The day did not go according to plan, because at noon an employee came to talk to me and asked me for advice. It was a disagreement with another teammate that I thought was very important to clarify. Although this had a negative impact on my daily planning in the short term, it was worth taking the time to clarify internal conflicts (M6).	I did not expect that a leader is mainly busy to handle internal topics and personal concerns of team members (M4).
		Constant availability	I practice a constant availability for my employees. They have my phone number and I communicate to them that it is possible to reach out to me whenever they feel the need (M1).	
		Inefficiency	Taking time to cope and manage internal conflicts sometimes effected my own time schedule negatively and I felt some pressure to get my own work done. I did not expect this previously, that leaders spend so much time on others' matters (M2).	Can be challenging and time consuming to spend time on personal issues of subordinates but it is important to establish long-lasting connections to people (M1); Underestimated the time loss due to handling topics of the employees. Leads to inefficiency of own topics (M4)
	Actions	Empathy	Empathy, social and emotional intelligence will be even more important in the future. I believe that a leader also needs a certain interest to deal with different characters, people and natures of problems (M7).	I also see it as challenge to adapt individually to every employee (M1);
		Patience	At the beginning you think that things can change and influence something quickly. Give you some time and be patient with yourself, that is what I needed to learn (M5).	
	Context	Respect	respect is a natural matter for me. I want every employee to feel recognized and fully respected in his or her personal being (M2).	I fully respect everyone's individuality (M5).
	Actions	Humour	M5: " A big portion of humour in the everyday life helps me a lot to turn disappointment's for me in a motivating spirit for my team."	

Team practices:

Categories	Subcategories	Codes	Stories	Insights
Team captain	Context	Team spirit	From my point of view, a successful leader is comparable to a team captain in soccer who is on the field with his team, pushing and motivating his teammates to give 100%. But he can also score a goal himself if needed and can defend if things go bad to avoid conceiving a goal. That is in contrast to the coach standing on the side line telling the team what to do and blaming them if they fail (M1).	As a leader, I don't want to shape alone, I want to shape together with my team and communicate it like this (M2). Formulation and communication of common goal to involve subordinates and win them over. Important to create trust in leader when he shows that he is part of the team and wants to achieve the goals with them (M1). I lead collegial and collective, I am not a patriarch who is leading top-down (M5). From my point of view, the participants have an extraordinary commitment from their team. I think, pursuing a common goal together with the team and having a contending mentality were major factors for why the leaders succeeded in bringing everyone on board (I2).
		trust in employees	He encouraged me to start my master's degree, as I did. That worked just as well, because of his support and tolerance/ flexibility for my attendance times (RBS1).	Actions should be thoughtful and not spontaneous, applying pressure on employees risks the trust-relationship (M1).
	Actions	team development	He hired me in the south-west region as "Technical Sales" for new customer acquisition, although this special role did not exist before (RBS1).	I see it as a big difference from my position before that the success does not only depend on my performance but rather on how my team performs (M3). long-term thinking not resting on what you have, always striving for improvement (I2).
		social activities	My team is enthusiastic about the same topics and spends a lot of time together besides work, some even go on vacation together. We also host and participate in many events together, for example after work drinks. Spending time together besides work connects employees, creates trust within the team and sets the foundation for good collaboration (M4).	
		collaboration	I find the humanity of the young managers particularly outstanding. They manage to bear a great responsibility and still be so close to the business and the employee. You are clearly perceived as a manager, but also as a buddy with whom you can go through thick and thin (I1). Lasting and continuous action is worth much more than one-time, outstanding actions. (I1)	My team values the most that he actually contributes to the tasks himself. By communicating the "pulling on the same rope" approach and letting everyone participate, he feels to increase his acceptance and fosters cohesion (M2); I practice a "Now more than ever" mentality to give motivation back to difficult situations and generate good outcomes (M3); I think the tendency is stronger to collectivism, it is not only the leader who is responsible and taking decisions solely (M7). I can see that in teamwork. The trust is completely there. Everyone knows how far they can go and the team's perception goes beyond the manager as a sparring partner. I have a customer situation in mind, in which it is of course special when the manager sits at the table and you can brainstorm together - that is active support (I1).
Leading by example	Actions	neutral/ equal treatment	Nevertheless we are a sales team in our region, every salesperson is fighting for deals and customers on his/her own and there are sometimes overlaps in acquisitions where two Account Managers target the same customer. I had several of those conflicts during the past years, and Sven always solved those conflicts with the right balance and the needed fairness. Even though some decisions were against me, they were always comprehensible and done in a correct and transparent manner (RBS3).	I often think back to my time as animateur and I treat everyone the same, from CEO to assistant, no matter the context (M6). I treat my employees to 100 percent neutral. I am aware that unequal treatment can cause conflicts and unnecessary disharmony (M3). The participants were characterized by being fair to people but also showing clear limits. Although you can honestly say what you think, you can still have a coffee at noon - that was my perception (I2).
		motivation of leader	I constantly try to induce a development of my team and I try to motivate by spreading positive energy and creating a positive atmosphere. But what my team values even more is the fact that I follow the "pulling on the same rope" approach (M2).	I spread motivation and a positive mindset, I want to lead with positive feelings, negative topics are handled professional. I am particularly suitable for being a leader due to my high motivation and the willingness to go the extra mile (M4).
Decision-making	Actions	involvement	I see it as a future challenge for leaders to balance clear guidance and generating an environment where controversy opinions are encouraged (M7).	I put emphasis on open, direct and transparent communication with a high involvement, I am eager to transfer the feeling of inclusion and "being picked-up" (M4); I practice the involvement from both sides, meaning that I also benefit from participating professional client visits in order to stay informed about the market (M3). controversy view, find right balance between involvement and authority and between collaboration and solution-driven decision making (M1).
		flat hierarchies		I have the impression that leadership with pressure "paralyzes" people and inhibits them to display their potential (M2).
Network	Context	leader as intermedate	I once got the compliment from a subordinate saying: You often get very specific questions and you are the only boss I have known who says: "I have no idea". I cannot know everything but it is crucial for me to know who knows the answer and be able to connect my employee with that person. Quick phone calls often really help here to get fast answers (M6).	I want to give my team a voice also within the company. I want to ensure an information flow to other departments and the Headquarters (M4).
	Actions	network (external and internal)	If one of my team members has a complex deal I help to connect to other departments for example treasury or legal, or even involve our CFO if it is necessary to have him in a client meeting. This gives security to the Account Managers and we are usually able to find the best solution together (M4). He has brought a focus on the right customers in the region (top addresses in focus customer lists). As a result, the projects we (including myself) are now doing are exactly the right ones (customer size, potential, etc.). Furthermore, we talk directly (not through partners) to the customers and can position CHG and our strengths very well (RBS1).	I think it is very important to support someone's back also in front of clients (M3). The participants stand out especially in the following points: Getting advice, giving information, maintaining network, always accessible for employees (I2). from the south-west region has consciously supported other regions several times, e.g. by deciding to have the cooperation with Telekom set up by one person (me) (RBS1).

Individual practices:

Categories	Subcategories	Codes	Stories	Insights
Sparring partner	Context	Motivation of employee	Since we have many new employees, and some of them are new to sales, they first need to acquire a portfolio. And here of course there are regular set-backs. And here it is the same as with professional soccer players, if they lose three games in a row, but they were the better team on the field, they get frustrated and need to be motivated. That is the same in our team and it is my job to do so (M4).	My leader stands out by being a 'coach' who gives me a supportive feeling when I'm on the right track but also helps me find the right ways in difficult situations. This doesn't happen from a hierarchical position but rather from a dialogue and discussion on the same level (RBS3).
		Success for the team	Their special support and proximity for the team as a sparring partner (e.g. in customer meetings, joint Telco's, support in the preparation of offers) also grew out of the hierarchical structure of CHG (from team leader to regional manager etc.) (I2); We had a deal where the client was to drop-out, since the buying agent revised our offer and found that buying equipment would be cheaper for the client. Just reducing the price of our current offer would have left us with an unprofitable deal. Through intensive collaboration and the coaching from Sven, we found an intelligent way to restructure the deal, making it attractive for the customer and profitable for us - and that was without Sven being at the customer with me (RBS3).	Being a sparring partner for the team was answered when asked what they needed from the leader in order to be successful (M2).
	Actions	Leading by example	I don't only want to be the motivating guy and showing my team the way to go, I want to go the way with them and pull forward with them (M2).	I also see myself as a role model who should lead by example. I am convinced that I am living my culture myself. I also think it makes me authentic as an empowering force when I stand behind my decisions and consistently practice leading by example (M5).
		Presence	With presence in the office, I try to show availability to my team and I also try to lower the barrier for reaching out to me directly (M5).	I always have an open ear for my employees, even though I might have other tasks on my schedule. But I try to be present in the office and visible (M1)
Individual leadership	Context	Situational differences	When I studied for 4 years besides working, it was great to have a leader who understood the situation and gave me the best possible support (RBS2).	Leadership has to be done on individual level, since every employee has different expectations on how to be led and what he needs as support from the leader. Strict rules or guidelines are not effective. If the employees see individual involvement the leader gains acceptance and trust (M1); Situational differences due to new hires (some are starting their first job, some are first time in sales), therefore many different topics and internal things that need to be handled (M4); Every employee has different strengths and weaknesses, I try to find them and from there to improve the strengths and decrease the weaknesses of each employee (M6) ; Even if someone doesn't react as expected. Some are very good at finding this balance. Balance between announcements, clear opinions and yet a certain social sensitivity, turned towards the employees. Courage to assert oneself (I2).
		Actions	Active listening	Listening and giving mental support require a lot of time and sometimes causes time pressure for me to get my other job obligations done (M4).
			Empathy	Showing understanding for different characters, personalities, generations and approaches is key regarding bringing everybody on board (M7).
	Autonomy	Context	Freedom in decisions and work	I believe it is a future trend to give more freedom to employees. I experienced the opposite in another company where every job had a detailed description. Employees were not challenged to look outside the box - this was not the way I wanted to work (M5).
Actions			Empowerment	You cannot empower someone by holding hands, you have to let him do mistakes and create an environment where he dares to do mistakes in order to learn from it (M2).
		Trust		Crucial to trust your employees and give them freedom to work independently, since leader is not at the office at all times either. No supervision or checking calendar's (M4)
Involvement	Context	Active participation	If it is desired, I join my employees at customer meetings. It is often asked from employees that are new in the company or new to sales, and I am always willing to show them my support and assistance. I am convinced that actively participating in those meetings make them more secure in the future (M3).	A leader has to be like an individual coach who supports you actively and reliable but who also withdraws when the employee needs space for development. I offer support to employees by joining their meetings with the customer. Especially for younger colleagues, I see this as education measure (M4). It's important to have a leader who supports in strategic topics but is also available and responsive for personal issues, and my leader does both (RBS2).
		Actions	Networking	If I cannot answer an employee's technical question, I try to refer them to someone else who can help them further. A network is essential and very helpful for this. In the past, a good network has saved me a lot of work and time (M6).
	Presence		Especially when cultural differences are given, showing presence is an important factor also to give guidance to employees. It is a soft way for how to control and supervise employees (M5).	For me, visibility and presence are essential factors, showing the willingness to achieve more (M7).
Solution-driven	Context		If someone approaches me, I take every concern seriously and try my best to contribute to a solution right away. Everyone in my team has the possibility to contact me and I prioritize their concerns. I try to empty my email inbox every evening (M3).	Drive for innovation: Our young management team in particular never ceases to question and improve what already exists, to bring in new ideas, to do things in a completely different way. Willingness to implement: strength, network and persuasiveness are elementary, especially for our young managers manage to get their employees involved and get others excited about a topic. They and their team form a small community. Another aspects that differentiates these leaders is their courage and the will to take risks in order to come to decisions that are off-track. There have been many cases where this courage has been rewarded (I1).
		Actions	Connecting	If I cannot answer an employee's technical question, I try to refer them to someone else who can help them further. A network is essential and very helpful for this. In the past, a good network has saved me a lot of work and time (M6).
Feedback	Context	Giving Feedback	I see a need to give feedback to my employees. I am convinced that this also has a motivating effect and that employees appreciate their own contribution (M2).	Employees wish for a leader who is a coach and gives regular feedback (M2).
		Asking for Feedback	Building up on the feedback I got, I identified empathy as a personal area of improvement. I am aware of his weakness and tries to improve it by taking courses that provide supportive tools and recommendations for practical actions (M7). When you have people around you who are honest about their opinions, criticise and question their tasks and eager to give you feedback, you have the best perspective for development. But if you ask for feedback, you also have to be aware of setbacks or criticism (M2).	Dual continuous feedback process: Actively requesting impressions, opinions and criticism from supervisors in the annual review session and during the year from employees (M2). I clarify mutual expectations to build a common ground and common understanding of each other's positions. Especially the employee's input is assessed as valuable where he seeks especially for reflections about his leadership and some wishes (M4). I ask my team actively whether they think if it is necessary that I join their meetings. I rely on their assessment (M3).

Self practices:

Subcategories	Codes	Stories	Insights
Context	Authenticity	A leader should stay authentic in the way he is and should also show his character. So for example wearing sneakers to a suit is totally ok (M2).	Need for authenticity to be a good leader (M4). Authenticity is crucial, many others play a role while being a leader. Some try to be cool and more approachable. In the long run that doesn't work (M6). A leader should have the willingness to open up and to be readable (M7).
Actions	Self-reflection	I think what I do different is that I let my team be part of my personality to a greater extent than other leaders. I am open and share also private matters. I am not scared to show who I am and I like to have this personal connection to my team (M7). I encourage myself to leave the comfort zone (M7).	Thinking what I need in the future to become an even better leader, reflect about what I did (M2). It is important to reflect if I really want to become a leader and if I have that intrinsic motivation. If someone is not authentic and "plays a role", it is hard to build a connection to your team. I recommend to self-reflect about your own skills and whether they fit the role of a leader. Many salespersons for instance are great at their job but would not be good leaders (M1). A leader has to know what he is standing for and which values he represents (M7).
	Seeking input	Building up on the feedback I got, I identified empathy as a personal area of improvement. I am aware of his weakness and tries to improve it by taking courses that provide supportive tools and recommendations for practical actions (M2).	Admitting weaknesses and identifying areas of improvement. In order to improve my lacking empathy, I try to build patterns for situations that give me guidance for an adequate behaviour (M2). Our young management team in particular has a certain thinking for innovation. They never cease to question, challenge, and improve what already exists, to bring in new ideas and to sometimes do things in a completely different way (I1).
	Tolerance for mistakes	I believe that making mistakes, falling down and getting up again is much easier as a young manager. Reasons could be that the environment might be more tolerant and understanding for them or their general nature to be more open. I perceive that constructive, hard feedback is rather accepted from younger leaders in comparison to older leaders who often fear to lose their face (I2).	Emphasize on a learning-by-doing approach, an environment where small mistakes are not judged. As it is especially vital for the leader that there is a tolerance for his mistakes, it should also be practiced in the team. Failing should not be judged (M1).
	Being humble	I try not to act as the smartest guy in the room, I don't have to explain a CIO at the customer how his IT structure works or I don't want to tell a guy who has been in sales for 20 years how to do his job. (M6). One of my guiding principles is be humble and careful for the stupidity of others (M7). Being humble is a big strength. As a leader, you should also be able to withdraw yourself from the stage and let the others shine (M7).	Just because I am always driving in the highest gear does not mean that everyone has the same ambition. It was a developing process to learn how I can accept and handle these differences in attitude (M7).
	Disarming behaviour	Once, an employee told me, that I would have been her first boss so far who has honestly admitted lack of knowledge. She was remembering one incident, when I could not help her directly. I was surprised that she remembered the whole story and me saying "I have absolutely no clue about this (M6).	Professional knowledge is required but is not the key element of a leader (there will always be people who have more specific knowledge). It is rather important to have soft skills and the ability to communicate/break down the common goal to the individual employee and having good connections to get help and information from others if needed (M1). I absolutely encourage other opinions and discussions. I welcome other points of views and see critical thoughts as beneficial (M7). My general mentality is that I am also willing to learn from others (M7).