# Here's How Google Knows in Less Than 5 Minutes if Someone Is a Great Leader

## After years of study, Google uses a few simple questions to identify the company's best leaders.

Great companies are built by great leaders. (That's why the [ability to identify and attract talented people](https://www.inc.com/jeff-haden/want-to-be-a-great-leader-become-a-great-identifier.html) is almost as critical as the ability to develop talented people.)

But since leadership is more art than science, how can you objectively determine if someone is a [great leader](https://www.inc.com/jeff-haden/want-to-be-a-great-leader-do-this-one-thing-first-most-bosses-do-the-opposite.html)?

That's a good question, one [Google](https://www.inc.com/justin-bariso/google-spent-years-studying-effective-teams-this-single-quality-contributed-most-to-their-success.html) has spent considerable time and effort trying to answer. It only makes sense that one of the most analytical companies in the world puts some of its analytical horsepower into determining how great teams are built and led.

Over time, the company identified the [key behaviors of its best team managers](https://www.inc.com/justin-bariso/google-spent-a-decade-researching-what-makes-a-great-boss-they-came-up-with-these-10-things.html). Then Google began asking team members to [answer the following questions](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdTeBHKoI3784y7xsT_-Mh2jhlbW1NXR5McNuhUiCzhGSCWMw/viewform) on a scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).

**Here are Google's leadership evaluation questions:**

1. My manager gives me actionable feedback that helps me improve my performance.
2. My manager does not "micromanage" (get involved in details that should be handled at other levels).
3. My manager shows consideration for me as a person.
4. The actions of my manager show that he/she values the perspective I bring to the team, even if it is different from his/her own.
5. My manager keeps the team focused on our priority results/deliverables.
6. My manager regularly shares relevant information from his/her manager and senior leaders.
7. My manager has had a meaningful discussion with me about career development in the past six months.
8. My manager communicates clear goals for our team.
9. My manager has the technical expertise (e.g., coding in Tech, selling in Global Business, accounting in Finance) required to effectively manage me.
10. I would recommend my manager to other Googlers.
11. I am satisfied with my manager's overall performance as a manager.

**Then Google employees are asked to complete two other questions:**

12. What would you recommend your manager keep doing?

13. What would you have your manager change?

Notice that only one question, No. 9, asks employees to rate their manager's hard skills.

**The Best Managers Are Those Who Help Their Teams Succeed**

The evaluation spends almost no time assessing a manager's knowledge, skill, and experience. All but one question focuses on soft skills: communication, feedback, coaching, teamwork, respect, and consideration.

What you know matters, but communicating, delegating, creating a sense of autonomy and purpose...that matters a lot more.

Granted, you could argue that possessing superb technical skills is less important for Google's team managers; after all, it's easier for Google to recruit and retain incredibly skilled people than it is for many companies.

But that argument misses the larger point. While most employees need some degree of training early on, the emphasis soon shifts from what they know to *how* they use their knowledge and skills.

For example, take question No. 2: "Does my team leader micromanage?" Just about every task has a best practice, so most leaders implement and enforce processes and procedures. For employees, though, engagement and satisfaction are largely based on autonomy and independence.

I care the most when it's "mine." I care the most when I feel I have the responsibility and authority not just to do what I'm told, but to do what is *right*.

Good leaders establish standards and guidelines and then give their employees the autonomy and independence to work the way they work best within those guidelines.

Good leaders allow their employees to turn "have to" into "want to," because that transforms a job into something much more meaningful: an outward expression of each person's unique skills, talents, and experiences.

Do that, and you can build a great team.