



# **How To Foster Creativity In The Workplace With John C. Maxwell's The 21 Irrefutable Laws Of Leadership**

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## Executive Summary

In order to foster creativity in a unionized and non-unionized workplace environment, we have recommended using John C. Maxwell's famous book, The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership. The 21 laws have been broken down and grouped into three important concepts, involvement, consistency and influence. By implementing these three main themes, managers can find positive change and creativity from employees within a workplace.

Firstly, the theme of involvement insists that leaders take more action in being involved in the daily operations of the workplace while also giving more power to their employees. Being more involved combines multiple minds and ideas that will foster creativity in the organization. A leader is one who partakes and includes themselves with their employees in order to get the job done collectively as a team. Whereas, the theme of consistency refers to building trust and ensuring the workplace is running smoothly at all times. Being consistent at work allows for effective communication across the board and provides for a more efficient and controlled environment. Finally, the theme of influence refers to managers who are able to uplift and lead their employees on the road to success. Managers who can influence their employees will see productivity and creativity being fostered when everyone shares the same goals and visions.

To summarize, following these key themes will add value and significant changes in a unionized and non-unionized workplace. Managers will see the success once implementing the 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership by John C. Maxwell.

## Introduction

Managers can foster creativity in a unionized and non-unionized workplace by using John C Maxwell's The 21 Laws of Leadership. We have grouped each law in three sub categories: Theme of Involvement, Theme of Consistency, and Theme of Influence. We have separated these themes into three groups because without a key theme, each law would not be possible. In this report, we will first go over what it is like for a manager to be working in a unionized and non-unionized workplace. Secondly, we will analyze each key theme and how it applies to a non-unionized and unionized workplace as well as how managers can foster creativity in a workplace environment. Lastly, we will summarize how all of these three themes work together to foster creativity in the workplace. The purpose of this report is to help managers and/or leaders of the workplace to bring in creativity by using the key themes; these themes will help their employees feel empowered and confident to share their ideas and foster creativity.

## What is it like for a Manager in a Union and Non-Union Workplace

The main difference between a workplace between unionized and non-unionized workplaces is the work culture (Anderson, 2018). When working in a union workplace, the employees have more say in terms of their work benefits, wages, hours, schedules, and promotions (Anderson, 2018). However, in a non-union workplace, the employer gets a say in the majority of the terms of employment. Since employees in a unionized workplace get more say, union workers get an average of \$200 more per week of work (Anderson, 2018). However, the downside is there are union fees each employee needs

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to pay. In addition, 90% of union members receive benefits compared to 70% of non union members (Anderson, 2018). Union members also tend to feel less trust and support from their employers compared to non- union members because union supervisors are less collaborative (Anderson, 2018). To simplify, a manager in a union workplace does not get much or any say and in a non- union workplace,

## **Theme of Involvement**

### Law of Addition

The Law of Addition states that “leaders should add value by serving others” (Maxwell, 2007). That leaders should get to know others in order to help them reach their own goals, therefore, listen, learn then lead (Maxwell, 2007). Examples of adding value to others in employees is having great compensation packages, managers having an open door policy to make it comfortable for all employees to be communicative. These small perks make have a generous impact on everyone's lives, Maxwell states, “the interaction between every leader and follower is a relationship, and all relationships either add to or subtract from a person’s life”. Maxwell states four guidelines for managers to follow when adding value to the workplace: truly value others, make yourself more valuable to others, know and relate to what others value and do things that god values (ie. respect others) (Maxwell, 2007). This law can benefit managers in both a union and non-union workplace; when employees are able to feel a relationship with their manager they feel more comfortable to share ideas and be themselves which ultimately fosters creativity in the workplace.

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## Law of the Solid Ground

The Law of Solid Ground discusses how trust is the foundation of leadership, to be a leader you must be trusted (Maxwell, 2007). Trust is the foundation of leadership and people can only trust you if your character consists of these three things: consistency, potential and respect (Maxwell, 2007). When a leader is consistent its followers know what to expect which helps build that solid ground. A leader that showcases their own potential and is always working on themselves, it helps motivate and inspire their followers. When a leader showcases respect you earn lasting loyalty, respect is the key to long term leadership. When you are in a unionized workplace you have gained trust and know there is transparency between management and employees; the solid ground is built through the collective agreement. In a non-union environment there may be lost in trust in management if employees are fighting to unionize or employees aren't performing to their potential. It is key for managers in a non-union workplace to build that solid ground with the three guidelines.

## Law of Connection

The Law of Connection showcases how “leaders touch a heart before they ask for a hand” (Maxwell, 2007). Leaders must have “personal authenticity, a relationship with their peers, applicability, mutual respect, belief in people and an in - depth meaning before they ask for help from other people” (Maxwell, 2007). They must have a sincere relationship with their peers (Maxwell, 2007). Leader can connect with their followers by: firstly connecting with yourself, communicating with openness and sincerity, knowing your followers and live your message (ie. practice what you preach) (Maxwell, 2007).

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No matter what kind of workplace you are in it is important to have a connection built between the manager and its employees, you may not fully get along, but a connection of trust needs to be there to be successful in the workplace.

### Law of the Inner Circle

The Law of the Inner Circle states that a “leaders potential is determined by those closest to them” (Maxwell, 2007). Their “potential value, positive value, personal value, production value and proven value is determined by who they surround themselves with” (Maxwell, 2007). If they are surrounding themselves with negative people and being lazy that is how they will be showcased to their followers (Maxwell, 2007). The key concept of this law is every leader needs a team for support. A leader may be talented but they cant be talented all alone (Maxwell, 2007). The biggest way to increase your impact is through other, having a talented team among you can help you reach new levels of success. In a non-unionized workplace this law may be easier to achieve since managers will be biased to who they select to be on their team. However, in a unionized workplace the collective agreement may already state which departments work together and the standardized job descriptions may lack to help find individuals with unique backgrounds.

### Law of Empowerment

The Law of Empowerment states “only secure leaders give power to others, only the greatest leader can give power away and credit to others” (Maxwell, 2007). Leaders have to be strong in their positioning and be able to watch someone grow and hand the power to them. In a non-union workplace this could be hard, since management won't

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have any guidelines and they can lead and direct however they want. In a unionized workplace management will have a set of guidelines they need to abide by and which will allow for easy handover of power in leadership. There are five ways that leaders and empower their followers; firstly, turn people loose, build them up and give them the resources to perform well in the job and let them loose, trust that they will succeed in their role (Maxwell, 2007). Secondly, help them reach their potential, always encourage your followers (Maxwell, 2007). Thirdly, raise them up, the more you raise your followers up the more you will go up as well (Maxwell, 2007). Fourthly, be willing to change, “effective leaders become change agents” (Maxwell, 2007). Lastly, develop a strong sense of self-worth, “if you don't believe in yourself you will be threatened by the success of others” (Maxwell, 2017). In a unionized workplace, promotions can take a while to receive since seniority take a role in the workplace, therefore, managers are less likely to take offence from the success in others. However, in a non-unionized workplace jealousy may occur with certain individuals are promoted over others which may cause drama in the workplace hence why it is key for all managers to follow the five guidelines.

### Law of Victory

The Law of Victory states “leaders find a way for the team to win by unity of vision, diversity of skills, a leader that is dedicated to victory and to raising players to their potential” (Maxwell, 2007). Ultimately this law is all about leaders possessing the desire to win in all situations and to do so they need a strong team. To achieve the law of victory leaders must; unite their vision with the rest of their team, have a diversity of

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skills on their team and have a leader that is dedicated to victory (Maxwell, 2007). In a non-unionized and unionized workplace you work in teams and for a leader to possess victory they must be able to motivate their team and unite as one. Leaders cannot be selfish, they must bring everyone together, foster the creativity and win.

## **Theme of Consistency**

### Law of Process

Law of Process is the first key element of being in the theme of consistency because leadership develops daily, not in a day (Maxwell, 2007). A process is something that needs to be continued and learned daily because everyday is a new day to learn. The process needs to be done consistently to create a nice flow in a workplace as a manager. This will allow employees to know there is a process in place at work. As John Maxwell said, how successful you become is dependent on your daily agenda and how much you are willing to invest in yourself (Ijiyemi, 2019). In order to foster creativity, you must be able to learn and grow daily. The law of process is similar to investing, you are not going to become a billionaire in one day (Ijiyemi, 2019). As a manager in a union or non- union workplace, the law of process is important because it provides consistency. Although there is a process in place for most union workplaces from the contract they sign at the beginning of employment, it is still important to have the law of process in place. With having this process in place, the manager will be able to foster creativity in the workplace. This leads us on to the Law of the Big Mo about how to keep the momentum going.

## Law of the Big Mo

Law of the Big Mo will be a manager's best friend because it makes the manager look better than they actually are (Ijiyemi, 2018). In order to develop the momentum, you must celebrate the small things and focus on what you and your team can do (Maxwell, 2007). Essentially, this shows the employees that even the smallest things count. No matter how big or small the win is, it is still a win and can encourage employees to continue on what they are doing. There are three ways a manager can create momentum in a workplace, accept that you are responsible to create momentum, model enthusiasm, and help your team experience a few wins (Ijiyemi, 2018). As a manager in a workplace, this is key to help your team grow. The moment you are depending on someone else to motivate you, your leadership is in trouble (Ijiyemi, 2018). If your followers do not feel your enthusiasm, they will not believe in what you do (Ijiyemi, 2018). Finally, if you are able to help your team win, this will boost their confidence and hopefully will achieve it again (Ijiyemi, 2018). Momentum is important to have in the workplace to promote creativity, both union and non-union because it keeps the employees motivated and engaged. Keeping employees engaged and motivated can be challenging. However celebrating little things and showing your employees you believe in what you do can make all the difference in the workplace. After getting the momentum going, prioritizing is next.

## Law of Priorities

A lot of times people who can't get things done, automatically assume they are bad at managing their time, however it is probably due to the Law of Priorities (Ijiyemi,

2019). The Pareto Principle can help a manager focus on what should be prioritized (Ijiyemi, 2019). If 20% of the most important tasks are done, you will get 80% return of your effort (Ijiyemi, 2019). This rule can help a manager decide what is more important and what needs to be prioritized first. Law of Priorities is based on the 3 R's; required, return and reward (Maxwell, 2007). The first R, required, is based on the question "What must I do that nobody else can do for me?" (Ijiyemi, 2019). If something is not required of you to do it, don't do it or delegate it to someone else who can do the work with just as much value as you (Ijiyemi, 2019). Don't waste your time doing something that can easily be done by anyone. Spend your time doing tasks only you as a leader can complete. The next R, return, is based on "Just because you can do something doesn't mean you should do it" (Ijiyemi, 2019). A leader should be doing what they excel at because this will allow them to become more productive and happier (Ijiyemi, 2019). However, just like the first R, required, if someone else is able to complete the task at 80%, the task should be delegated. If a leader is stuck at doing something they do not excel at, they will quickly become bored because they are getting nothing in return. The final R, reward, do something that you love and not something that just pays the bills (Ijiyemi, 2019). However, life is too short to be miserable everyday at work. Law of priorities is important for a manager at any workplace to foster creativity because this helps them get their work done in the most efficient way possible. After knowing what is important, you must sacrifice in order to become a successful leader.

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## The Law of Sacrifice

The Law of Sacrifice, a manager must be able to give up to go up (Maxwell, 2007). Today's society believes that no one needs to give up something in order to gain something at a greater value (McKay, 2018). For example, "lose weight without giving up your favourite foods!" (McKay, 2018). In reality you have to give up junk food in order to lose weight. Everything good comes after something small is given up on. For example, in a workplace one cannot expect to go straight to become the CEO of a company without having to start at the bottom. Everyone has to work their way up, nothing is just handed to you without having to sacrifice anything. To start practicing for the Law of Sacrifice, there are four things you can do, understand that life is a series of trades, start sacrificing more than others, the higher you go as a leader, the greater you sacrifice and learn to eat last (Ijyemi, 2018). Often times when a leader reaches the top, they have sacrificed their time, family, friends and many more in order to reach that. That could be working 80 hours a week and having no time with family and friends or even having going down a step and making less money to gain more experience to move up. The law of sacrifice helps a manager foster creativity by being humble and allowing your employees to win. More minds creates more creativity. This will now lead us to the law of timing to help a leader become successful.

## Law of Timing

Law of Timing requires the right action at the right time which will bring creativity to the workplace (Maxwell, 2007). When action is taken, it can lead to four different outcomes (Ijyemi, 2018). The first one, disaster, when a wrong action is taken at the

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wrong time (Ijiyemi, 2018). For example, you let go of an employee when the company is already short on staff and during peak season. This could lead to a massive problem at a workplace because the manager now needs to recruit, interview, hire, and retrain a new person. Second is resistance, when the right action is taken but at the wrong time (Ijiyemi, 2018). If your idea is right but it is done at the wrong time, the people you lead will become resistant (Ijiyemi, 2018). Next is simply a mistake, when the leader knows the right timing but performs the wrong action (Ijiyemi, 2018). Finally, success, when both the action and timing is done right (Ijiyemi, 2018). Timing is key to an organization because it can either make it super successful or bankrupt. A great leader knows how and when to take the right action. In a union workplace, actions usually are not taken because the employee and the employer has agreed on terms for the employment for a period of time. After that period of time is over, action can be taken. For example, the Translink strike that is happening right now is the perfect action at the perfect time. The workers have been off contract since the end of March 2019 but have not decided to strike until November 2019 (Boynton, 2019). It is the perfect timing because the public relies on public transit to get to work and school. It is also during the winter time, where it may snow and it is more difficult for the public to walk or bike to places. Students also have exams and are not able to reach most schools in Vancouver without a bus. The action is perfect because these Translink workers deserve better benefits from the way they are treated by the public. This action and timing will raise anger from the public and encourage the union to take action to agree to their terms. The law of timing helps foster

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creativity in the workplace because timing can lead to different results and learned results. The final one from the theme of Consistency is the Law of Explosive Growth.

### Law of Explosive Growth

Law of Explosive Growth focuses on developing leaders and not just yourself in order for the organization to achieve explosive growth (Ijiyemi, 2018). To achieve explosive growth, there are seven leadership mindset you must follow; Leaders who want explosive growth want to be succeeded, not needed, leaders develop in the top 20%, not the bottom 20%, focus on people's strengths, not their weaknesses, treating individuals differently, not the same, invest time in others, not just spend time with them, grow their organization by multiplication, not by addition, and leaders impact people beyond their reach, not only the people they touch are the seven leadership mindsets a leader should follow (Ijiyemi, 2018). A manager can not foster creativity in the workplace if they are focusing on only themselves. For example, in a retail store that pays commission, the manager will not make their bonuses if they do not help their employees grow and be able to reach their targets. If the manager helps develop each leader, they will automatically make more sales which will increase the managers quarterly bonuses. Law of explosive growth will be similar in both a union and non-union workplace because organization growth cannot be achieved by a single person, it needs to be done together. This is the final law that is related to being consistent.

## Theme of Influence

### Law of the Lid

The Law of the Lid states that “leadership ability determines a person’s level of effectiveness” (Maxwell, 2007). Naturally, if the leader is a level 5 out of 10 in leadership, then the cap for the company will be 5 out of 10. Essentially, this law limits one’s potential based on one’s ability to lead. Even if a leader’s subordinates have a higher level of leadership, the organization will still be limited to the level of the leader. As a manager in a unionized workplace it is important that your leadership ability is equal or higher to that of the union. If a manager has a lid that is lower than a union, it is likely that the union will takeover the workplace. It is important to note that management still runs the business and should not feel the need to ask the union before doing anything (McCown, 2018). For this reason the law of the lid states that in order to lead, the manager must have a higher level of leadership, thus promoting creativity in their role. This is different than management of a non-unionized workforce, where a manager only needs to have a higher lid than the individuals they are leading. If the manager has a higher lid than their employees, it will foster employee growth and creativity. This leads us into the next law about what leadership ability is and the law of influence.

### Law of Influence

The Law of Influence explains that “the true measure of leadership is influence, nothing more, nothing less” (Maxwell, 2007). Essentially, leaders are those who can influence their peers and guide them into the right direction of success. In order to be influential, one must be knowledgeable and have the strength to lead by example. An

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influencer does not necessarily have to be anyone in power but must be someone who is well respected and knows how to lead others in a positive way. In a non unionized workplace, being able to influence employees will provide for a better output in the business and lead to long term growth. “The bottom line for followers is what a leader is capable of. They want to know whether that person can lead the team to victory” (Maxwell, 2007). This fosters creativity within the workplace by having the ability to influence employees to believe in the same values as management. When everyone shares the same goals and values, the business wins. This can be said the same for a unionized environment. This ties into the next law, the law of navigation.

### Law of Navigation

The Law of Navigation says that “anyone can steer the ship. But it takes a leader to chart the course” (Maxwell, 2007). Maxwell illustrates a situation where you have two leaders, one who plans ahead taking into account multiple obstacles and past experience and one who does not. It was evident that the leader who did not plan had major setbacks and did not understand the situation enough to respond (Maxwell, 2007). Leaders must be able to first, determine a process, second, have the ability to navigate their way through the process, and lastly, get past any barriers (Maxwell, 2007). For a unionized workplace, managers must be able to plan tasks around the union and have the ability to navigate the collective agreement. For example, if a manager is confrontational to unions in navigating their process, it will have a negative effect on the business. Employees will have lower morale, unnecessary grievances, lack of trust, and end up costing the business more money (Rodney & Fargione, 2018).

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For this reason, a successful manager will have to know the process to get to their goal, how to navigate it, and how to face different barriers a union may bring. This differs from a non-unionized workforce, in which managers do not need to take into account a collective agreement. However, a manager must still follow the law of navigation if they want to successfully lead a company towards their goals efficiently.

### Law of Respect

The Law of Respect states that “people naturally follow leaders stronger than themselves” (Maxwell, 2007). By being able to form the respect of many, leaders can then influence others to follow in their footsteps. Having the respect of individuals is a great asset to have because it shows that people are impacted and influenced by the goals and achievements one has earned. As a manager, it is extremely important to have the respect of your employees, both in a union and a non unionized environment. This is a great example of fostering creativity within the workplace because you are making a difference by forming the respect of your fellow colleagues. Many employers do not care for the respect of others and can go through their work day expecting their employees to do their job without even trying to get to know them personally. By actually getting to know your employees, showing one's work ethic, and being more interactive in daily work activities, management can find employees more engaged in the workplace and thereby earning the respect of those who acknowledge it. “When leaders are respected and they ask for commitment, their people step up and sign up. They are ready to take risks, charge the hill, put in long hours, or do whatever else is necessary to get the job done” (Maxwell, 2007).

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## Law of Intuition

The Law of Intuition says that “leaders evaluate everything with a leadership bias” (Maxwell, 2007). What this means is that leaders can take a step back to assess, understand and know what needs to be done. This skill comes from experience and allows leaders to quickly adapt to any changes based on natural instinct. Being Intuitive means trusting your own gut and making the right decisions based on your own beliefs. “The law of intuition depends on so much more than just the facts. The law of intuition is based on facts plus instinct plus other intangible factors, such as employee morale, organizational momentum and relational dynamics” (Maxwell, 2007). To foster creativity in the workplace, a manager must evoke skills of intuition by trusting one's own feelings, being more engaged with others in the workplace, by being able to read others and sometimes, simply by just sitting back and watching others work. Being intuitive gives management the upper hand because managers are able to read what employees are feeling and in turn can adapt to these circumstances and fix any problems there may be. Not basing what others tell you and by trusting yourself, you become creative by following what you know is right. This can be said for both union and non union environment as it applies to managers in a general workplace.

## Law of Magnetism

Law of Magnetism states that “who you are is who you attract” (Maxwell, 2007). If a leader is strong and hardworking, that is exactly the type of person this leader will attract instead of the opposite. Leaders want to find people who are closely similar to them if not, someone who they can mold and develop to become like them.

Management can foster creativity by guiding and mentoring their employees to see what they see. “People do not go out looking for mediocre leaders to follow. People are attracted to talent and excellence, especially in their area of giftedness. They are most likely to follow someone who possess their kind of talent. Business people want to follow bosses with skills in building an organization and making a profit” (Maxwell, 2007). Finding others and attracting the type of employees who are similar to their managers will produce for a more positive outcome in the overall business. The only way creativity comes from this is by finding those who share the same goals and wants to implement these goals in the organization. Again, this applies to both union and non union environment. If employees do not share the same goals and values as management, there is no growth in the workplace. You need similar minds to contribute positively for the growth of the business. This leads us into the next similar law, the law of the picture.

### Law of the Picture

The Law of the Picture states that “people do what people see” (Maxwell, 2007). What is meant by this is that great leaders have a big influence on their peers and is able to help them become greater too. In regards to a union and non union workplace, managers must communicate the vision to their employees and give them a sense of why they are doing what they are doing. “Good leaders are always conscious of the fact that they are setting the example and others are going to do what they do, for better or for worse. In general the better the leaders’ actions, the better their people’s” (Maxwell, 2007). Managers in the workplace can foster creativity by being a good leader who

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paints a picture of what the vision is to their employees. Additionally, manager's must always include their employees in order to lead them into the pathway of success.

When making employees more aware of what the picture is, manager's can find their employees more engaged and eager to help out in making this picture come to life. As Maxwell states in *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* (2007), "Leaders are responsible for the performance of their people's progress, give them direction, and hold them accountable. And to improve the performance of the team, leaders must act as change agents". This also ties in to the next law, the Law of Buy-In.

### Law of Buy-In

The Law of Buy-In ensures leaders have the understanding that without a following for their vision, it will not be successful. It is important to remember that you will need people to follow you before you create a vision that will be accomplished (Maxwell, 2007). This will be the same for both union and non-union work environments. For a vision of a manager to employed, the manager must have followers that help support the vision and lead it to success. When thinking about your vision it does not matter how good your vision is, but if people are willing to follow you (Maxwell, 2007). This is the main reason why it really ties into the managers influence, the leader must be able to influence their peers so that they will do whatever they can to support their wishes. In both union and non-union workplaces, if the employees buy-in to the leader they will be more engaged with the leaders vision, thereby increasing their creativity through input. However, the future of a leader's influence will only be carried on by their legacy.

## Law of Legacy

The Law of Legacy is about how a leader develops their successor, a leader's influence is still valued if they are not there (Maxwell, 2007). A leader's influence is measured by the effect they have on their employees. The influence that you leave behind ensures that your vision will never be lost (Maxwell, 2007). It will always be carried forward by your peers long after you may be gone. This is important in both union and non-union workplaces, the only way a vision will be carried along is through the legacy left behind.

## Conclusion

To conclude, fostering creativity can be achieved in different ways depending on the workplace. Overall, the majority of the laws and themes discussed can be applied in both unionized and non-unionized workplaces. It is important for every leader and/or manager to be able to apply each theme to their employees at work. Managers should be able to get involved with what kind of work their employees are doing in order to build that ground of trust with them. Managers also need to build trust by being consistent with how they manage. For example, if managers are going to do check ins, they need to be consistent and more frequent to show that they care about what their employees are doing. Lastly, managers must be able to have an influence on who they manage. Individuals are likely to work by whom they are influenced by and managers need to set an example for them. With these three key themes, fostering creativity in the workplace will become an easier goal to achieve, employees will feel empowered, motivated, and respected.

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