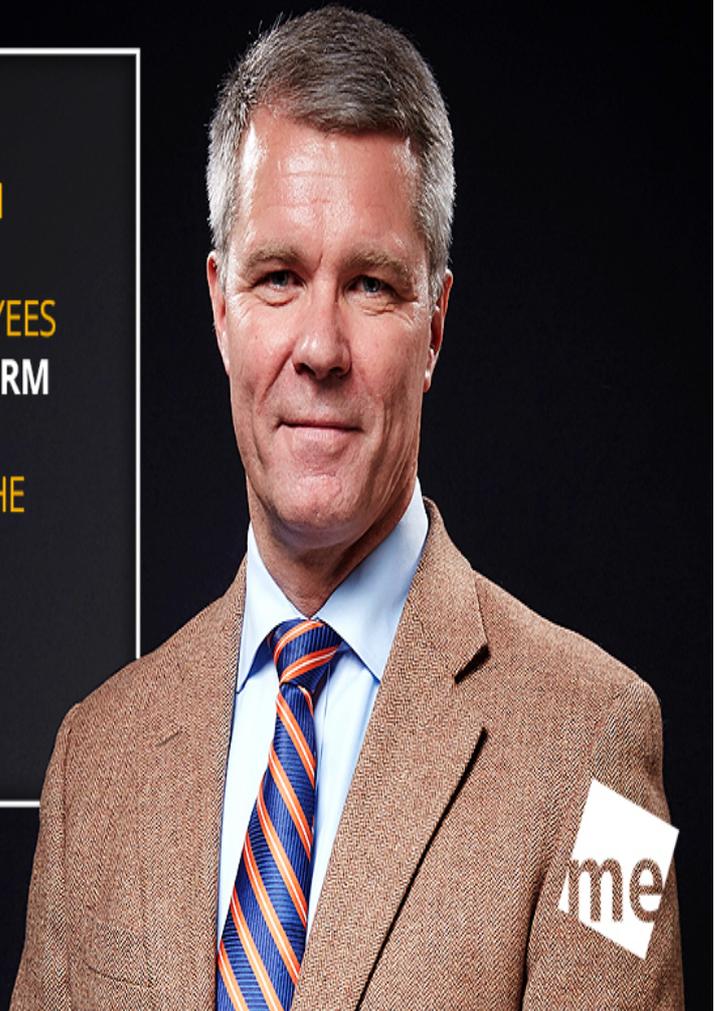


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AS A LEADER, ALWAYS POSITION YOURSELF WHERE IT'S MOST DANGEROUS FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES AND COMPANY. YOUR LONG-TERM INVESTMENT AS A LEADER IS TO ALWAYS BE THERE WHERE IT'S THE TOUGHEST. BE COURAGEOUS!

Kim Kristensen



Asked what people should expect in his presentation, former Danish military officer and current Royal Danish Court Master of Ceremonies **Kim Kristensen** said, “To be challenged on a personal level and to come away with a tried-and-tested recipe for world-class leadership.”

As a pre-event challenge, he’s asking leaders to ask themselves these two questions:

1. Do I love my employees?
2. How many of them will follow me out into a rain of bullets when it comes down to it?”

LEAD YOUR TROOPS

“There are just too many leaders who are not aware of how important leading from the front is,” observes the former military leader. Although the corporate setup is not at all like the military, in terms of leadership, companies can learn a lot from it, “It’s a must for a military leader to walk in front and say, ‘Follow me!’” Outside of it, many leaders are walking behind the employees and are content in just playing the “process leader” role.

Being a veteran of war in the Balkans and Afghanistan, as well as a witness to the war in Iraq and others around the world, Kristensen knows that it’s normal for troops or staff to sometimes be scared, “These are perfect opportunities to show leadership. Your people need to see you in action outside of your comfort zone.”

They say war and travel change a person, and Kristensen has been to a lot, “I have worked and spent time with more than a hundred local and international companies, over 150 diplomats in France and high-ranking officials from over 30 countries, and have therefore also witnessed numerous world-class leadership examples outside the military world.”

He believes that the lessons and insights he gained from all of those experiences are applicable to all sorts of enterprise, from corporate to sport, even all the way to the Royal House, “I’m a strong advocate of the Eight Principles of High-Performance Leadership as presented in my book “Follow me”.”

LOVE YOUR EMPLOYEES

“Love Your Employees” is the most challenging of the Eight Principles according to Kristensen, “Leaders who don’t care for and love their employees can’t set up the right conditions for their employees to follow them – especially in frustrating, chaotic, and dramatic times.” Whatever the leader’s reasons are for being indifferent or distant from the employees, appearing vulnerable shouldn’t be one of them, “You really just have to make your employees feel that you’ll be there for them. They’re not expecting perfection. They know that you’re also flesh and blood and not a machine. So, don’t be afraid to be your authentic self.”

EMBRACE DIVERSITY

Universities were invented to create unity in diversity, and it’s not any different in companies. He recommends diversity – to the widest extent as possible, “Having prima donnas, anti-authoritarian, and generally challenging employees around is actually necessary for an organization to win.” A high-quality leader creates an innovative, creative, and curious environment where he is challenged – every day, “When I was a young leader, I often found challenging employees irritating and annoying, but now I see that their type is what makes professional and high-quality plans and executions possible.”

What Kristensen said to watch out for are employees who just say, “Yes Sir”, are generally non-committal, and never ask provocative questions, “These might be very negative signs.” So, it’s never negative to have pro-active employees, “This, I also had to learn the hard way as a leader: listening twice and talking once gives you a remarkable insight into different cultures, which could be beneficial to your plans and strategy. Caring Compassion respecting age, gender, cultural background, behavior is a great longtime leadership investment.”

TRUST YOUR PEOPLE

Methodologies that are too rigid, control, and measurements on a constant basis are business killers, according to Kristensen. Instead, “Have faith in your employees and the leaders beneath you, and let them work independently. Trust is the keyword!”

It’s essential for a leader to set the proper frames and conditions for employees to excel, especially in the age of digitalization and disruption, “You have to love chaos! He’s also a

believer in the solutions coming along as you're moving forward, "I love having leaders around me who take 3 x 80% decisions instead of waiting for the 1 x 100% solution. You have to be agile, flexible, and fast in today's environment. If you wait for that 100% perfect solution, you'll be run over by competitors."

TRAIN THE NEXT GENERATION

Just like everyone, Kristensen also dreams of fresh air, security, and inspiration for the world. Being an optimist, he believes those are possible in a few years' time. "I'm working in a 'Think-Tank' with 25 of Denmark's high performing talents. They are 18 – 25 years old and they give me strong reasons to believe that the future generation will work hard in creating a meaningful life – privately and commercially. They want to work hard for meaningful and valuable gains for society. It's up to us elders to give them the foundation and they will find the solutions for all of us. Don't be afraid and just have trust in the youth. Again, for them to succeed, put them in the most diverse environment as possible. Give them the freedom to act!"

If leadership can be simplified, Kristensen said it boils down to being visible and being yourself. "Be together with your employees. Don't stay in the office all day long, instead, take a cup of coffee and walk down the machine room, for example, and then show true interest in the process. Remember; artificial leaders will not be followed."

MORE FROM THE EXPERT

Book Recommendation:

- *The Servant* by James C. Hunter

Interviews:

- [Kim Kristensen Wants to Know if You're Leading from the Front](#)
- [Kim Kristensen on the Characteristics of a Very Good Leader](#)
- [Kim Kristensen on the Greatest Challenge a Leader Faces](#)

Kim Kristensen, the Royal Danish Court's current Master of Ceremonies, is one of the world's best speakers on personal leadership and development. A former colonel, he was also voted Leader of the Year in 2009, and his book "Follow Me" was Denmark's best leadership book for 2015. He was a top speaker at the StrategyForum CEO, Finland, in 2015.

This year, Management Events is proud to have Kim back to talk about high performance leadership and "Follow Me – Leading from the Front".