

# Leadership is a Lot Like a Train, and All Leaders Are Conductors

**Have you ever thought that leadership is a lot like a train?** Here's how leadership and growth expert Kirk Dando thinks of it:

The cars sitting on the tracks are loaded with different but valuable cargo (like team members: They're all different but collectively valuable); they have a destination (the vision, measurable goals and expected time frames for arrival at the goals); and they have a route to follow (the mission and strategic plan). But they do not have a way of getting anywhere on their own. They have to hook up to the engine (the leader).

Have you ever watched how a bunch of railcars (the team) form a working train? It all begins with the engine (leader). The engine switches itself to the same track as the car (team member) it's going to pick up; then it backs up to the car, makes contact and connects. Then it repeats the process until it has all the cars and starts heading toward its destination, sometimes picking up more cars along the way.

Likewise, all leaders are conductors, steering their organizational "trains" onward, upward and ever forward with knowledge, experience, confidence and enthusiasm—and, above all else, passion and a sure and steady hand.

It may be your first day on the job at your first organization, or your thousand and first day on the job and your tenth organization, but the **warning signs**—and potential train wrecks—are all the same.

**Your job as "conductor" is to steer your organization in the right direction.** No organization is immune to failure, just as no train is wreck-proof. Some pitfalls can be avoided because of your organization's lack of size. Others you encounter because of your organization's size—as your organization grows, unfamiliar circumstances breed new challenges. Regardless of how experienced you are as a leader or how big or small your organization, every one of these **warning signs** is indicative of something we normally celebrate: **success!**

Why are these the [12 Warning Signs of Success](#)? The answer is simple: **If you don't heed them, the very things that cause your success can also cause your demise.** They can appear at any and all stages of leadership development and organizational growth.

Dando groups the signs under the three key challenges of any growth-oriented organization, namely:

- **Leadership**
- **Culture**
- **Performance**

All 3 are central to your organization's success. **Do you see any of these warning signs in your organization?**

>> [Download Kirk Dando's 12 Warning Signs of Success here](#)