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"Leading from the Front vs. Leading from Above: Which Earns Greater Respect?"

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Sep 1 at 5:02pm

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Not long ago, Zomato's CEO, Deepinder Goyal, shocked many when he personally delivered orders for a day to understand ground realities, while at the same time, employees at several Indian unicorns like BYJU'S and OYO accused their leaders of being completely disconnected from frontline struggles. These contrasting stories highlight a classic OB puzzle: leaders who "walk the talk" often inspire loyalty and trust, but leaders who distance themselves may project authority and focus on strategy. So here's the question to spark debate: do employees respect a leader more when they act like "one of us," or when they maintain a clear distance as "the boss"

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willington l

4:52pm

Leaders who step into employees' shoes, like Goyal, often earn deeper trust because they show empathy and credibility. However, maintaining some distance can help leaders focus on vision and tough decisions. Ultimately, respect may depend on balance—employees value leaders who can connect with them while still steering the bigger picture.

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