

# Leading My Team at Crocs

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Fall 2018 - Spring 2021

## Introduction

I was first hired at Crocs in September of 2018. I started as a sales associate and initially didn't go into that job with the mindset that I was going to stick around for more than a few months. I only wanted a short-term job intended to get some disposable income until I found a better and higher paying job while I was still in high school. However, pretty abruptly, a large number of the management and leadership team at that crocs location decided to leave. Going without a manager or assistant manager at the store, with very few employees, threw me into a position of leadership. I offered to step up and pick up a few more shifts and duties than I was assigned to and help train a new wave of employees who came in to replace the previous ones. I remained a sales associate for about a year, where in December of 2019 I was promoted to a team leader.

## Leadership before Crocs

Before my impromptu thrust into leadership at Crocs, I didn't have any other leadership experience. Aside from being a part of various group projects throughout high school, and *maybe* leading and guiding the group when needed, I was nearly always a follower. I grew up pretty shy, and never really spoke much, so making sure my voice was heard and making sure to lead others wasn't necessarily a strength going into my job at Crocs. Prior to my job there, I didn't really see the value or importance of being a leader and was perfectly okay with just being a follower and following directions.

## What I did at Crocs

While juggling 8 hours of school, followed by a 4-5 hour shift thereafter, I had to pick up duties around the store outside my designated position early

on. On limited staff and resources, I had to get creative in how to help run the store without formal leadership. We did have other team leads, employees who are a step above sales associates, but they didn't have too many tasks or organization that I didn't already do myself. I started making sure to the best of my team's and my ability to make sure the store was filled with product and showcased correctly. I brought myself forward as a leader by pushing and encouraging the team to keep up their work and do the work myself if needed, even if that meant staying later or doing things I normally wouldn't do. After we got a new manager to fill the vacancy, I did get to step back, but then in the winter of 2019, I got promoted to a team leader. After that, I was able to formally lead my team at Crocs. In the beginning, it was a quiet winter (who really buys Crocs in the winter?), but as the pandemic shut us down in early 2020, I was able to help the store as we moved to a new location in the mall. When we opened up in late May of 2020, in a new and improved store, I brought my leadership abilities accrued over the past year and a half with full force and enthusiasm to guide our store and a slew of new employees through the new rule changes and methodologies given the ongoing pandemic.

## **What did I learn?**

Since being a leader at Crocs and working in the customer service industry, I've learned that looking towards a leader is very beneficial to people, and it was even more beneficial to myself to be a leader. I also learned the importance of leading by doing. I often had difficulty in getting some of my coworkers to do the work needed, but if I demonstrated that I could do the task at hand, they soon followed suit. For example, during mid-May while we were transferring all the merchandise from the old store to the new store, a lot of the new employees had a tough time helping. They didn't know where things went or how to correctly display shoes, which was understandable. There are two things about leading I applied here. For one, understanding the other person's perspective. Coming onto a new team, especially most of the new employees being high school students with little to no experience, can be very intimidating. Coming on during a move even more so. The other thing was leading by example. There were a couple times where the new hires would need help with figuring out the order of colors in a certain section of the store.

I would come in, and show them how I would do it, and why I do it. Leading by doing is really important because it sets a good example for people watching, and shows them that it is a task you are willing to do too. Being a leader includes not being afraid to do work yourself, no matter how easy or hard the task is.

### **How can I further develop my leadership competency?**

During my time at MSU, I hope to expand my experiences in leadership. Whether that be leading a club or taking on a campus job, I want to diversify my portfolio and show that I can lead in different environments. From this job, I learned the importance of communication, working in a team, and most importantly, I learned to carry myself to a higher standard as a leader.