

CHAPTER 19

LEADERSHIP

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1

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is not magnetic personality – that can come from charm and the ability to talk a good game. It is not making friends and influencing people – that is flattery.

LEADERSHIP IS ABOUT LIFTING A PERSON'S VISION TO HIGHER SIGHTS, THE RAISING OF A PERSON'S PERFORMANCE TO A HIGHER STANDARD AND THE BUILDING OF A PERSONALITY BEYOND ITS NORMAL LIMITATIONS.

This can only be done through choosing your staff well, knowing their personalities and motivations and managing and leading them appropriately. This is not easy – and more of an art than a science! But many of the issues involved are examined below.

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WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

A simple definition and easy answers do not exist in the area of leadership! There is no secret trick that you can learn and no secret trait that you can be born with. It is a complex subject and successful leadership necessitates a high degree of 'emotional intelligence' (for example, understanding psychology and individual motivations).

When it comes to developing the strength of leadership in an organisation, the question whether leaders are born or made is often debated. It is WSPA's view that leaders can be made, providing they have the necessary qualities to start with! Responsibility for leadership training and development within organisations resides with the management; but this should be carried out for each layer of management, including team leaders and volunteer organisers.

To develop leadership, the focus must be on the **four clusters of characteristics that successful and strong leaders have in common:**

- Vision, perspective and a clear understanding of the big picture
- The ability to organise and empower to achieve results
- Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to communicate, influence and work with others
- Personal motivation, energy and resilience to be consistently successful.

Leadership is a complex process by which a person influences others to accomplish a mission, task, or objective and directs the organisation in a way that makes it more cohesive. A person carries out this process by applying their leadership attributes: beliefs, values, ethics, character, knowledge and skills. Although your position as a manager, supervisor, team leader etc. gives you the authority to accomplish certain tasks and objectives in the organisation, this power does not make you a leader – it simply makes you the boss.

LEADERSHIP MAKES PEOPLE WANT TO ACHIEVE HIGH GOALS AND OBJECTIVES, WHILE BOSSES SIMPLY OBLIGE PEOPLE TO ACCOMPLISH A TASK OR OBJECTIVE.



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LEADERSHIP THEORIES

Leadership theory states that there are three basic ways to explain **how people become leaders**.

These theories are:

1. The **Trait Theory** affirms that some personality traits may lead people naturally into leadership roles.
2. The **Style Theory** affirms that some styles of leadership can be more successful than others.
3. The **Contingency Theory** takes account of other variations, for example, the nature of the task and the environment.

Each of these theories will be elaborated upon in the sections that follow.

Also, there is no doubt that people can choose to become leaders. People can learn leadership skills (providing they have the basic essentials!). This is the **Transformational Leadership Theory**. It is the most widely accepted theory today and the premise on which this chapter is based.

a) Trait Theory

Many studies have been carried out on the traits of successful leaders. The findings indicate that good leaders come from a variety of sources and traits for success differ according to situation. Only 5% of traits were similar throughout. These include:

- **Intelligence** – above average, but not genius. Good at solving complex and abstract problems
- **Initiative** – independence and inventiveness. Capacity to perceive need for action and urge to act
- **Self-assurance** – self-confidence, belief in competence and high aspirations
- **Helicopter factor** – the ability to rise above a problem and see it in relation to its environment.

The ability to see the big picture is vital. When the word vision is used it usually means that someone has an idea of what the future could look like and a plan to get there.

THE ONLY WAY TO INSPIRE STAFF TO STRIVE TO ACHIEVE YOUR VISION IS TO MAKE IT THEIR VISION TOO.

A successful leader needs clarity of thought (seeing the wood for the trees). To do this, you need to shift your attention from yourself and your own preoccupations, to what is going on around you (in the wider environment). If you sit in the building foyer of WSPA headquarters, for example, you can only see the underground car park. But if you sit in the top floor office by the window you can see for miles across London, viewing the London Eye and the River Thames and know exactly where the office fits into the London landscape!

Other traits identified include:

- Good health
- Above average height or well below it
- Coming from upper socio-economic classes.

Some studies have also mentioned enthusiasm, sociability, integrity, courage, imagination, decisiveness, determination, energy and faith.

b) Style Theory

The Style Theory assumes that employees will work better for leaders who employ certain styles of leadership. This follows the belief that one strong motivation for work (particularly true in NGOs) is self-actualisation – that is esteem, self-improvement etc.





Authoritarian (Task) Leader

High concern for production but low concern for people. People who get this rating are very task-orientated and are hard on their workers (autocratic). There is little or no allowance for cooperation or collaboration. Heavily task-orientated people are very strong on schedules and expect people to do what they are told without question or debate, and when things go wrong they tend to focus on who is to blame rather than concentrate on exactly what is wrong and how to prevent it. They are also intolerant of what they see as dissent (it may just be someone's creativity), so it is difficult for their subordinates to contribute or develop.

Team Leader

High concern for production and people. This type of leader leads by positive example. Team Leaders endeavour to foster a team environment in which all team members can reach their highest potential, both as team members and as people. They encourage the team to reach team goals as effectively as possible, while also working tirelessly to strengthen the bonds among the various members. They form and lead the most productive teams.

Country Club Leader

Low concern for production and high concern for people. These leaders use power to maintain discipline and to encourage the team to accomplish its goals. Conversely, they are almost incapable of employing the more punitive coercive and legitimate powers. This inability results from the leader's fear that using such powers could jeopardise his/her relationships with the team members.

Impoverished Leader

Low concern for production and for people. This person uses a 'delegate and disappear' management style. Since he/she is not committed to either task accomplishment or maintenance, the team is essentially allowed to do whatever it wishes and he/she prefers to be detached from the team process.

Ideal situation

The most desirable type of leader is the Team Leader. However, certain situations might call for one of the other three styles to be used at certain times. For example, by playing the Impoverished Leader, you allow your team to gain self-reliance. It may be necessary to be an Authoritarian Leader to instill a sense of discipline in an unmotivated worker. The style of leadership will need to be suitable to each individual and their stage of development, as well as coping with the distinct needs of mission-driven NGO staff.

Good leaders are able to move between styles, according to what a situation dictates.

Another theory, known as the **Path-Goal Theory**, defines the four main leadership styles as:

Directive: These leaders are controlling and clear about what they want team members to do. They do not appreciate arguments or suggestions from the team. This style suits new, inexperienced staff.

Coaching: A Coaching Leader has a more open style. He/she asks for suggestions and input, but still takes most of the decisions and guides staff closely. This style is appropriate for a developing team.

Supportive: These leaders encourage the team to take most decisions on a day-to-day basis. They monitor closely and provide support. This style suits an improving team, which still lacks confidence.

Delegating: A Delegating Leader allows the team to take its own decisions, within certain set boundaries. Delegating Leaders have a monitoring role and make themselves available to the team as needed. This style is excellent for skilled and experienced staff.

An effective manager has to be able to move between these leadership styles in order to ensure the most appropriate and motivational method is used for each member of staff and each task (e.g. a directive style may still be appropriate for an experienced and confident staff member if an entirely new task is given).

Research has shown that style alone is not the answer to effective leadership. The Contingency Theory explains:

c) Contingency Theory

Contingency Theories take more account of other variables in the leadership situation, such as the operating environment, the nature of the task, the work group and the position of the leader in the work group. This theory reflects the best-fit scenario, where the most appropriate style can be judged and applied, according to the environment, task, group or staff etc.

It is recognised that where the situation is favourable to the leader, then the supportive style works best. To be favourable to the leader, the following elements need to be present:

- The leader is liked and trusted by the group; and
- The task is well defined and laid down; and
- The power of the leader over the group is high (i.e. able to reward and punish).

The first was considered the most important amongst these.

The Contingency Theory also recognises that a crisis or important event may cause a person to rise to the occasion, which brings out extraordinary leadership qualities in an ordinary person (this is the 'Great Events Theory').



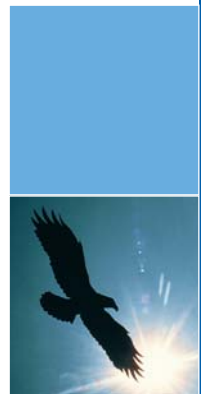
MOTIVATION

4

A Hay Group study examined 75 key components of employee satisfaction. They found that:

- Trust and confidence in top leadership was the single most reliable predictor of employee satisfaction in an organisation
- Effective communication by leadership in three critical areas was the key to winning organisational trust and confidence:
 - Helping employees understand the company's overall business strategy
 - Helping employees understand how they contribute to achieving key strategic objectives
 - Sharing information with employees on both how the company is doing and how an employee's own division is doing – relative to strategic objectives.

For a more detailed discussion on how to motivate your team, please refer to the separate chapter on 'Motivation'.



GREAT LEADERSHIP

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The road to great leadership shares five common elements:

- **Challenge the process** – First, find the process that you believe most needs to be improved.
- **Inspire a shared vision** – Next, share your vision in words that can be understood by your followers.
- **Enable others to act** – Give them the tools and methods to solve the problem.
- **Model the way** – When the process gets tough, get your hands dirty. A boss tells others what

to do... a leader shows it can be done.

- **Encourage the heart** – Share the glory with your followers' hearts, keep the pains in your heart.

Also remember that there is no such thing as 'can't do' – 'Can't do' is an alien concept to a real leader. Leaders get things done. They have commitment, persistence, determination and resilience. Couple all of that with creative problem-solving and you have a person around whom things happen. Indeed, things might even get shaken up when they're around. It isn't always comfortable being around a leader.

6

MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

There is a real difference between management and leadership. You do not need to be a leader to be able to manage other people. However, to be an outstanding manager, you do have to have some of those essential skills and qualities that are necessary in developing as a leader.

Even if you are a manager with no major aspirations of leadership, there will be people who will turn to you for leadership, whether you like it or not. Therefore, when looking for training to develop your skills, it might be a very good idea to look at leadership courses as well as management courses.

“OUR CHIEF WANT IS SOMEONE WHO WILL INSPIRE US TO BE WHAT WE KNOW WE COULD BE.”~ Ralph Waldo Emerson



FURTHER RESOURCES

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Websites

The Art and Science of Leadership

www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/leader.html

Leadership Now

www.leadershipnow.com/

Leadership Styles and Training

www.impactfactory.com/gate/leadership_skills_training/freegate_1159-9103-25758.html

Overview of Leadership in Organisations

www.mapnp.org/library/ldrship/ldrship.htm

Books

The 18 Challenges of Leadership: A Practical, Structured Way to Develop Your Leadership Talent

Shenaz Kelly-Rawat, Trevor Waldo

Publisher: FT Prentice Hall

ISBN: 0273688103

The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership

John C. Maxwell

Publisher: STL

ISBN: 0785270345

Encouraging the Heart: A Leader's Guide to Rewarding and Recognising Others

Jim Kouzes, Barry Posner

Publisher: Jossey Bass Wiley

ISBN: 0787964638

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable

Patrick Lencioni

Publisher: Jossey Bass Wiley

ISBN: 0787960756

The Leadership Challenge

Jim Kouzes, Barry Posner

Publisher: Jossey Bass Wiley

ISBN: 0787968331

The Leadership Challenge Workbook

James M. Kouzes, Barry Z. Posner

Publisher: Jossey Bass Wiley

ISBN: 0787968218

