Concepts of Leadership

I used to think that running an organization was equivalent to conducting a symphony orchestra. But I don't think that's quite it; it's more like jazz. There is more improvisation. — Warren Bennis

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Good leaders are made, not born. If you have the desire and willpower, you can become an effective leader. Good leaders develop through a never ending process of self-study, education, training, and experience (Jago, 1982). This guide will help you through the journey.

To inspire your workers into higher levels of teamwork, there are certain things you must **be, know,** and, **do.** These do not often come naturally, but are acquired through continual work and study. Good leaders are continually working and studying to improve their leadership skills; they are NOT resting on their past laurels.

Definitions of Leadership

"The meaning of a message is the change which it produces in the image." — Kenneth Boulding in *The Image: Knowledge in Life and Society*

Leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent.

Some other popular definitions of Leadership are:

A process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2007, p3).

The U.S. military has studied leadership in depth. One of their definitions is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish a mission (U.S. Army, 1983).

Leadership is inspiring others to pursue your vision within the parameters you set, to the extent that it becomes a shared effort, a shared vision, and a shared success (Zeitchik, 2012).

Leadership is a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal (Kruse, 2013).

Note that all the definitions have a couple of processes in common:

- A person influences others through social influence, not power, to get something accomplished (bosses use power to get things

done).

- o Leadership requires others, who are not necessarily direct-reports, to get something accomplished.
- o There is a need to accomplish something.

Leaders carry out this process by applying their leadership knowledge and skills. This is called *Process Leadership* (Jago, 1982). However, we know that we have traits that can influence our actions. This is called *Trait Leadership* (Jago, 1982), in that it was once common to believe that leaders were born rather than made. These two leadership types are shown in the chart below (Northouse, 2007, p5):
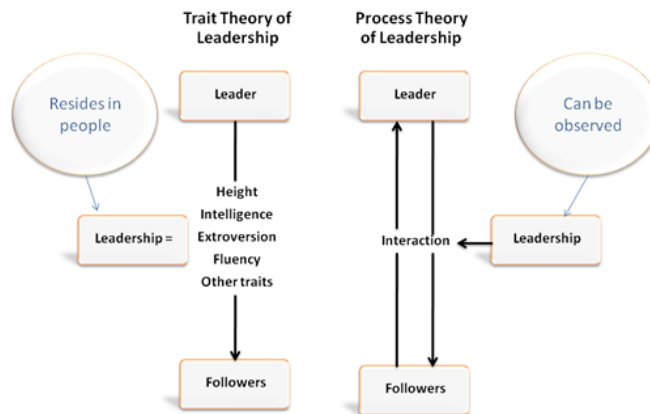
While leadership is learned, a leader's skills and knowledge can be influenced by his or hers attributes or traits, such as beliefs, values, ethics, and character. Knowledge and skills contribute directly to the *process* of leadership, while the other attributes give the leader certain characteristics that make him or her unique.

For example, a leader might have learned the skills in counseling others, but her traits will often play a great role in determining how she counsels. A person who has empathy will make a better counselor than a person who thinks the employees are simply there do accomplish her biddings.

Skills, knowledge, and attributes make the *Leader*, which is one of the *Factors of Leadership*.

Change begins with me

Start your journey

Factors of Leadership

There are four primary factors of leadership (U.S. Army, 1983):

Factors of Leadership

Situation

Communication

Follower   Leader

Leader

You must have an honest understanding of who you are, what you know, and what you can do. Also, note that it is the followers, not the leader or someone else who determines if the leader is successful. If they do not trust or lack confidence in their leader, then they will be uninspired. To be successful you have to convince your followers, not yourself or your superiors, that you are worthy of being followed.

Followers

Different people require different styles of leadership. For example, a new hire requires more supervision than an experienced

employee does. A person who lacks motivation requires a different approach than one with a high degree of motivation. You must know your people! The fundamental starting point is having a good understanding of human nature, such as needs, emotions, and motivation. You must come to know your employees' *be, know,* and *do* attributes.

Communication

You lead through two-way [communication]. Much of it is nonverbal. For instance, when you "set the example," that communicates to your people that you would not ask them to perform anything that you would not be willing to do. What and how you communicate either builds or harms the relationship between you and your followers.

Situation

All situations are different. What you do in one situation will not always work in another. You must use your judgment to decide the best course of action and the leadership style needed for each situation. For example, you may need to confront an employee for inappropriate behavior, but if the confrontation is too late or too early, too harsh or too weak, then the results may prove ineffective.

Also note that the *situation* normally has a greater effect on a leader's action than his or her traits. This is because while traits may have an impressive stability over a period of time, they have little consistency across situations (Mischel, 1968). This is why a number of leadership scholars think the *Process Theory of Leadership* is a more accurate than the *Trait Theory of Leadership*.

Various forces will affect these four factors. Examples of forces are:

- your relationship with your seniors
- the skills of your followers
- the informal leaders within your organization
- how your organization is organized

Bass' Theory of Leadership

Bass' theory of leadership states that there are three basic ways to explain how people become leaders (Stogdill, 1989; Bass, 1990). The first two explain the leadership development for a small number of people, while the third one is the dominant theory today. These theories are:

- Some personality traits may lead people naturally into leadership roles. This is the Trait Theory.
- 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.
- People can choose to become leaders. People can learn leadership skills. This is the Transformational or Process Leadership Theory. It is the most widely accepted theory today and the premise on which this leadership guide is based.

Management verses Leadership

While management and leadership have a great deal in common, such as working with people and accomplishing the goals of the organization, they do differ in their primary functions (Kotter, 1990):

Management's main function is to produce order and consistency through processes, such as planning, budgeting, organizing, staffing, and problem solving.

While **leadership's** main function is to produce movement and constructive or adaptive change through processes, such as establishing direction through visioning, aligning people, motivating, and inspiring.

For more information on the differences between management and leadership see the next chapter: The Four Pillars: Leadership, Management, Command, and Control

Boss or Leader?

Although your position as a manager, supervisor, lead, etc. gives you the authority to

accomplish certain tasks and objectives in the organization (called *Assigned Leadership*), this *power* does not make you a leader, it simply makes you a *boss*. Leadership differs in that it makes the followers *want* to achieve high goals (called *Emergent Leadership*), rather than simply ordering people around (Rowe, 2007). Thus, you get *Assigned Leadership* by your position and you display *Emergent Leadership* by influencing people to do great things.

Total Leadership

What makes a person want to follow a leader? People want to be guided by leaders they respect and who have a clear sense of direction. To gain respect, they must be ethical. A sense of direction is achieved by conveying a strong vision of the future.

When people are deciding if they respect you as a leader, they do not think about your attributes, rather, they observe what you *do* so that they can determine who you really *are.* They use this observation to tell if you are an honorable and trusted leader or a self-serving person who misuses authority to look good and get promoted.

Self-serving leaders are not as effective because their employees only obey them, not follow them. They succeed in many areas because they present a good image to their seniors… but at the expense of their workers.

Good leadership is honorable character and selfless service to your organization. In your employees' eyes, your leadership is everything you do that effects the organization's

objectives and their well-being.

The Two Most Important Keys to Effective Leadership

According to a study by the Hay Group, a global management consultancy, there are 75 key components of employee satisfaction (Lamb, McKee, 2004). They found that:

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

So in a nutshell — you must be trustworthy and you need to be able to communicate a vision of where the organization needs to go. The next section, *Principles of Leadership*, ties in closely with this key concept.

Principles of Leadership

To help you *be, know,* and *do,* follow these eleven principles of leadership (U.S. Army, 1983). The rest of the chapters in this [Leadership guide](#) expand on these principles and provide tools for implementing them:

1. **Know yourself and seek self-improvement** - In order to know yourself, you have to understand your *be, know,* and *do,* attributes. Seeking self-improvement means continually strengthening your attributes. This can be accomplished through self-study, formal classes, reflection, and interacting with others.

2. **Be technically proficient** - As a leader, you must know your job and have a solid familiarity with your employees' tasks.

3. **Seek responsibility and take responsibility for your actions** - Search for ways to guide your organization to new heights. And when things go wrong, as they often tend to do sooner or later — do not blame others. Analyze the situation, take corrective action, and move on to the next challenge.

4. **Make sound and timely decisions** - Use good problem solving, decision making, and planning tools.

5. **Set the example** - Be a good role model for your employees. They must not only hear what they are expected to do, but also see. *"We must become the change we want to see."* - Mahatma Gandhi

6. **Know your people and look out for their well-being** - Know human nature and the importance of sincerely caring for your workers.

7. **Keep your workers informed** - Know how to communicate with not only them, but also seniors and other key people.

8. **Develop a sense of responsibility in your workers** - Help to develop good character traits that will help them carry out their professional responsibilities.

9. **Ensure that tasks are understood, supervised, and accomplished** - Communication is the key to this responsibility.

10. [**Train**](#) **as a team** - Although many so called leaders

call their organization, department, section, etc. a team; they are not really teams... they are just a group of people doing their jobs.

11. **Use the full capabilities of your organization** - By developing a team spirit, you will be able to employ your organization, department, section, etc. to its fullest capabilities.

Attributes of Leadership: *BE, KNOW, and DO*

Respected leaders concentrate on Be, Know, and Do (U.S. Army, 1983):

- who they *are [**be**]* (such as beliefs and character)
- what they **know** (such as job, tasks, and human nature)
- what they **do** (such as implementing, motivating, and providing direction)

BE a professional. Examples: Be loyal to the organization, perform selfless service, take personal responsibility.

BE a professional who possess good character traits. Examples: honesty, competence, candor, commitment, integrity, courage, straightforwardness, imagination.

KNOW the four factors of leadership — follower, leader, communication, situation.

KNOW yourself. Examples: strengths and weakness of your character, knowledge, and skills.

KNOW human nature. Examples: human needs, emotions, and how people respond to stress.

KNOW your job. Examples: be proficient and be able to train others in their tasks.

KNOW your organization. Examples: where to go for help, its climate and culture, who the unofficial leaders are.

DO provide direction. Examples: goal setting, problem solving, decision making, planning.

DO implement. Examples: communicating,

coordinating, supervising, evaluating.

DO motivate. Examples: develop morale and *esprit de corps* in the organization, train, coach, counsel.

Environment

Every organization has a particular work environment, which dictates to a considerable degree how its leaders respond to problems and opportunities. This is brought about by its heritage of past leaders and its present leaders.

Goals, Values, and Concepts

Leaders exert influence on the environment via three types of actions:

1. The goals and performance standards they establish.
2. The values they establish for the organization.
3. The business and people concepts they establish.

Successful organizations have leaders who set high standards and goals across the entire spectrum, such as strategies, market leadership, plans, meetings and presentations, productivity, quality, and reliability.

Values reflect the concern the organization has for its employees, customers, investors, vendors, and surrounding community. These values define the manner in how business will be conducted.

Concepts define what products or services the organization will offer and the methods and processes for conducting business.

These goals, values, and concepts make up the organization's *personality* or how the organization is observed by both outsiders and insiders. This personality defines the roles, relationships, rewards, and rites that take place.

Roles and Relationships

Roles are the positions that are defined by a

set of expectations about behavior of any job incumbent. Each role has a set of tasks and responsibilities that may or may not be spelled out. Roles have a powerful effect on behavior for several reasons, to include money being paid for the performance of the role, there is prestige attached to a role, and a sense of accomplishment or challenge.

Relationships are determined by a role's tasks. While some tasks are performed alone, most are carried out in relationship with others. The tasks will determine who the role-holder is required to interact with, how often, and towards what end. Normally the greater the interaction, the greater the liking. This in turn leads to more frequent interactions. In human behavior — its hard to like someone whom we have no contact with, and we tend to seek out those we like. People tend to do what they are rewarded for, and friendship is a powerful reward. Many tasks and behaviors that are associated with a role are brought about by these relationships. That is, new tasks and behaviors are expected of the present role-holder because a strong relationship was developed in the past, by either that role-holder or by a prior role-holder.

Culture and Climate

Culture and climate are two distinct forces that dictate how to act within an organization: .

Each organization has its own distinctive culture. It is a combination of the founders, past leadership, current leadership, crises, events, history, and size (Newstrom, Davis, 1993). This results in *rites*: the routines, rituals, and the "way we do things." These rites impact individual behavior on what it takes to be in good standing (the norm) and directs the appropriate behavior for each circumstance.

The climate is the feel of the organization, the individual and shared perceptions and attitudes of the organization's members (Ivancevich, Konopaske, Matteson, 2007). On the other hand, culture is the deeply rooted nature of the organization that is a result of long-held formal and informal systems, rules,

traditions, and customs. This differs from climate, which is a short-term phenomenon created by the current leadership. Climate represents the beliefs about the "feel of the organization" by its members. This individual perception of the "feel of the organization" comes from what the people believe about the activities that occur in the organization. These activities influence both individual and team motivation and satisfaction, such as:

- How well does the leader clarify the priorities and goals of the organization? What is expected of us?
- What is the system of recognition, rewards, and punishments in the organization?
- How competent are the leaders?
- Are leaders free to make decisions?
- What will happen if I make a mistake?

Organizational climate is directly related to the leadership and management style of the leader, based on the values, attributes, skills, and actions, as well as the priorities of the leader. Compare this to "ethical climate" — the feel of the organization about the activities that have ethical content or those aspects of the work environment that constitute ethical behavior. The ethical climate is the feel about whether we do things right; or the feel of whether we behave the way we ought to behave. The behavior (character) of the leader is the most important factor that influences the climate.

On the other hand, culture is a long-term, complex phenomenon. Culture represents the shared expectations and self-image of the organization. The mature values that create tradition or the "way we do things here." Things are done differently in every organization. The collective vision and common folklore that define the institution are a reflection of culture. Individual leaders cannot easily create or change culture because culture is a part of the organization. Culture influences the characteristics of the climate by its effect on the actions and thought processes of the leader. But, everything you do as a leader will affect the climate of the organization.

For information on culture, see Long-Term Short-Term Orientation

The Process of Great Leadership

The road to great leadership that is common to successful leaders include (Kouzes, Posner, 1987):

- **Challenge the process** - First, find a process that you believe needs to be improved the most.
- **Inspire a shared vision** - 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 that it can be done.
- **Encourage the heart** - Share the glory with your followers' hearts, while keeping the pains within your own.

Next Steps

Go to the next chapter: Leading

Return to the main Leadership Site

Perform a Leadership Learning Activity:

- Leadership Self-Assessment Survey (short version)

- Leadership Self-Assessment Survey (long version)

- Culture and Climate activity

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Notes

Updated August 2, 2015. Created May 11, 1997.