



Understanding Leadership

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Understand the management challenge and the new functions of management.
- ✓ Discover how you can prepare for and embrace the forces of change.
- ✓ Identify ways to get you and your workspace organized and get a jump on the next crisis.

Understanding Leadership

About Leadership

There are several very strong models for leadership which have been developed after many years of study, and with the help of many companies and their leaders. (See the recommended reading list at the back of this manual for more information.) All of these models share some things in common that we can certainly learn from in our own quest to become the best leaders that we can be. Whether you have “leader” in your job title or you are a leader without a team, developing the characteristics of strong leaders will help you in your work.

First, let’s explore what kind of a leader that you are. In the work done by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard on the Situational Leadership II® model, they recognize four leadership styles that tend to resonate with us. As you read about the different styles, think about where your comfort zone is.

Director’s Style

Someone with a director’s style does well with new employees, who seem to easily respond to being told what is expected, having processes and procedures outlined for them, and having someone they can report to or ask questions of regularly. The director’s style is defined by a high emphasis on directing tasks and being able to account for results.

Coach’s Style

Coaches are able to blend supporting people and directing tasks. This is available to a leader when employees understand what is expected, but need some range of support in order to take independent steps and make things happen. A coach’s style has a high degree of involvement in directing tasks, with an equally high emphasis on supporting people.

Supporter’s Style

This style encourages people to come up with solutions and solve problems on their own. It provides them with the support they need in terms of tools and resources. The supporting style shows a low degree of directing tasks and a high emphasis on supporting people.

Delegator’s Style

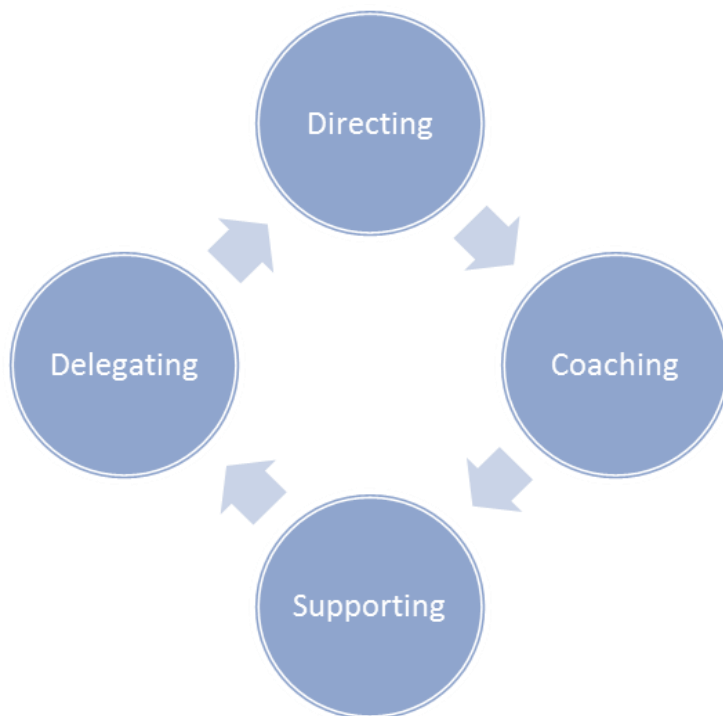
Delegating means that the delegator holds responsibility for results, but that the work is done by others. We delegate to individuals who have high levels of related skill and the experience it takes to locate their resources and tools. Then they can report to the delegator at defined intervals. This style is one with a low emphasis on directing tasks, and an equally low emphasis on providing people support.

Understanding Your Comfort Zone

We all have a comfort and ease with one style, but there are times when staff performance, our own confidence, or a crisis demands that we behave differently.

When new people join the team, they understandably will need a level of **direction** that can be quite high and will leave little time for supporting people. As they gain skill and confidence, the leader can progress to a **coaching** style where they are still directing tasks but also able to offer additional support. As the employee makes progress, the leader provides more support and less hands-on direction until the direct report has the ability to accept delegated tasks.

This process can be cyclical. For example, a team that you can easily delegate to might go through a significant change or have a new system being implemented. You might have to start again with directing behavior before moving on to coaching, supporting, and then a return to delegating.



We also might encounter structures that do not allow us to delegate, which can be a tough job for someone who is a capable and effective delegator.

Managing Performance

When you consider different aspects of leadership, you can learn from the insights of global business leaders and research in order to make your own foray into leadership as effective as

possible. One of the areas that many leaders struggle with is **performance management**. We are very good at identifying the things that people do wrong (or the gaps in their performance), but we may not be as good at recognizing their success. For example, if you complete a project and 90% of the work is exceptional, a typical leader will ask why you missed the other 10%.

Instead of looking for gaps and managing performance from a negative perspective, think of our job as leaders as one to help people do more and do better. Empowerment means that leaders make sure that people have what they need to do their work, while still being accountable for what they do. Often, leaders will congratulate themselves when things are going well, and then look for people and outside factors to blame when things are going wrong. This is unfortunate, and a sign of how our egos can stop us from being truly effective.

In Jim Collins' bestseller *Good to Great*, he talks about humility in leaders. Humility allows a leader to realize that it's not about him or her; leadership is about making sure that people have what they need in order to do their best work. Humility is best demonstrated by action – and not the self-serving kind of actions either! Humility is doing what needs to be done without fanfare. It's not demonstrated by updating social networking sites and bragging about the things that you have done.

Servant Leadership

Robert Greenleaf first used the term **servant leadership** in 1970, although the principles have been in use for more than two thousand years. Servant leaders are those who can see a larger picture, and make a commitment to serve their own people. In a traditional organization, employees respond to what their boss needs. Servant leaders, however, know that their role is to help people reach their goals, and they keep the bigger picture in mind. Rather than wanting their own needs met, servant leaders want to make a difference for others, and the outcome is the impact that this approach has on the organization.

While servant leadership has a long history, standard business practice has been to focus on results in terms of profit and put “bosses” in positions of authority and accountability. Servant leadership, however, is about heart. When leaders pay attention to what their people need and engage their hearts as well as their minds, they are able to get a level of commitment that is much higher than in traditionally led organizations. The results can be measured in terms of profit, but also in terms of employee engagement and commitment.

Are you called to lead?

What do you love about leadership?

What challenges do you have?

If your organization is not exemplifying servant leadership now, what do you think would have to change for it to become a serving organization?

Onboarding and Orientation

Here is one of our favorite success stories.

Ann started a management job a couple of years ago where the welcome was remarkable. Her team had a banner saying “Welcome!” hung up, and there was a vase with daisies on her desk. Her

new cell phone was there, all ready to go. Her computer was set up with all the applications she needed. Her new boss even took her out for lunch and answered all her questions, and provided her with insight on the company's culture. Ann was captivated by the place, and felt very good about her decision to accept the job.

But this is not the way many people start a new job. Can you relate to any of these stories?

- No one knew the person was starting on Monday because the boss was off on vacation and had not made any arrangements.
- New members of a road crew showed up and there was no safety gear for them.
- A sales representative started a new job with no computer access, business cards, computer, or phone.
- An organization assigned a buddy for a new staff member to show him the ropes. No one thought of the fact that the buddy doesn't start work until an hour after the new employee was told to.
- A receptionist starts in a veterinary office on Monday. On Wednesday, someone tells her that each Thursday she'll be working from noon to 8:00 p.m. instead of the day shift she was hired for.
- No one has been assigned to show a new employee around the building, which is set up like a labyrinth. Where do they go to the washroom, store their lunch, or report to their supervisor?

These may seem like some extreme examples, but they have all actually happened to people that we know. Imagine how Ann felt on her first day of that job, in contrast to the people in the other examples.

If you are the leader that the new person works for, it is your responsibility to make sure that your new team member is welcomed, and that they feel that they made the right choice in accepting the job offer. Balance your need to get started with the pace that this person can take in what is new: avoid an information dump or negative comments about the orientation process or the company. Your role is to engage the heads and hearts of new people, and to realize the benefits of the decision you made to hire them.

Five Practices

Introduction

James Kouzes and Barry Posner are two other well-known researchers who have done a tremendous amount of work on leadership, and their findings complement Peter Senge's work.

They have identified five practices they feel should be a part of every leader's skill set.

- Challenge the process
- Inspire a shared vision
- Enable other to act
- Model the way
- Encourage the heart of employees

Let's take a quick look at what these mean to us.

Practices One, Two, and Three

Challenge the process.

Leaders venture out. Leaders don't sit idly by waiting for fate to smile upon them. They seek and accept challenge. Leaders are pioneers who are willing to step out into the unknown. They are willing to take risks, innovate, and experiment to find new and better ways of doing things.

But leaders need not always be the creators or originators of new or different products, services, or processes. These innovations tend to come from customers, vendors, people in the labs, and people on the front lines. The leader's contribution is in recognizing the good ideas, supporting innovation, and challenging the system to get new processes adopted. They know that they are taking a risk, but they proceed anyway. They learn from their failures as well as from their successes.

Inspire a shared vision.

Leaders have absolute and total personal belief in their dreams, but in some ways, leaders live their lives backwards. They can see pictures in their mind's eye even before the end is in sight.

Yet if a vision is only seen by the leader, it can't create an organized movement, or a significant change in a company. A person who doesn't have followers is not a leader, and people do not follow until they can accept a vision as their own. Leadership is a dialogue, not a monologue. (Sound familiar? This was the idea behind shared vision in the work by Peter Senge.)

Enable others to act.

Leadership is a team effort. Leaders know that nobody does their best if they feel weak, incompetent, or alienated; they know that those who are expected to produce results must feel a sense of ownership.

Leaders enable others to act not by hoarding the power they have, but by giving it away. When people have discretion, authority, and information, they are likely to use these resources and their energies to produce extraordinary results. Leadership is a relationship founded on trust and

confidence. Without trust and confidence, people don't take risks. Without risks, there's no change. Without change, organizations die.

Think of a time when you felt especially powerful as a result of something a manager said or did. Specifically, what did the manager do or say? Aside from empowered, how did you feel?

Think of a time when you felt powerless as a result of something a manager said or did. What specifically did he or she do? How did these actions make you feel?

Image Identification

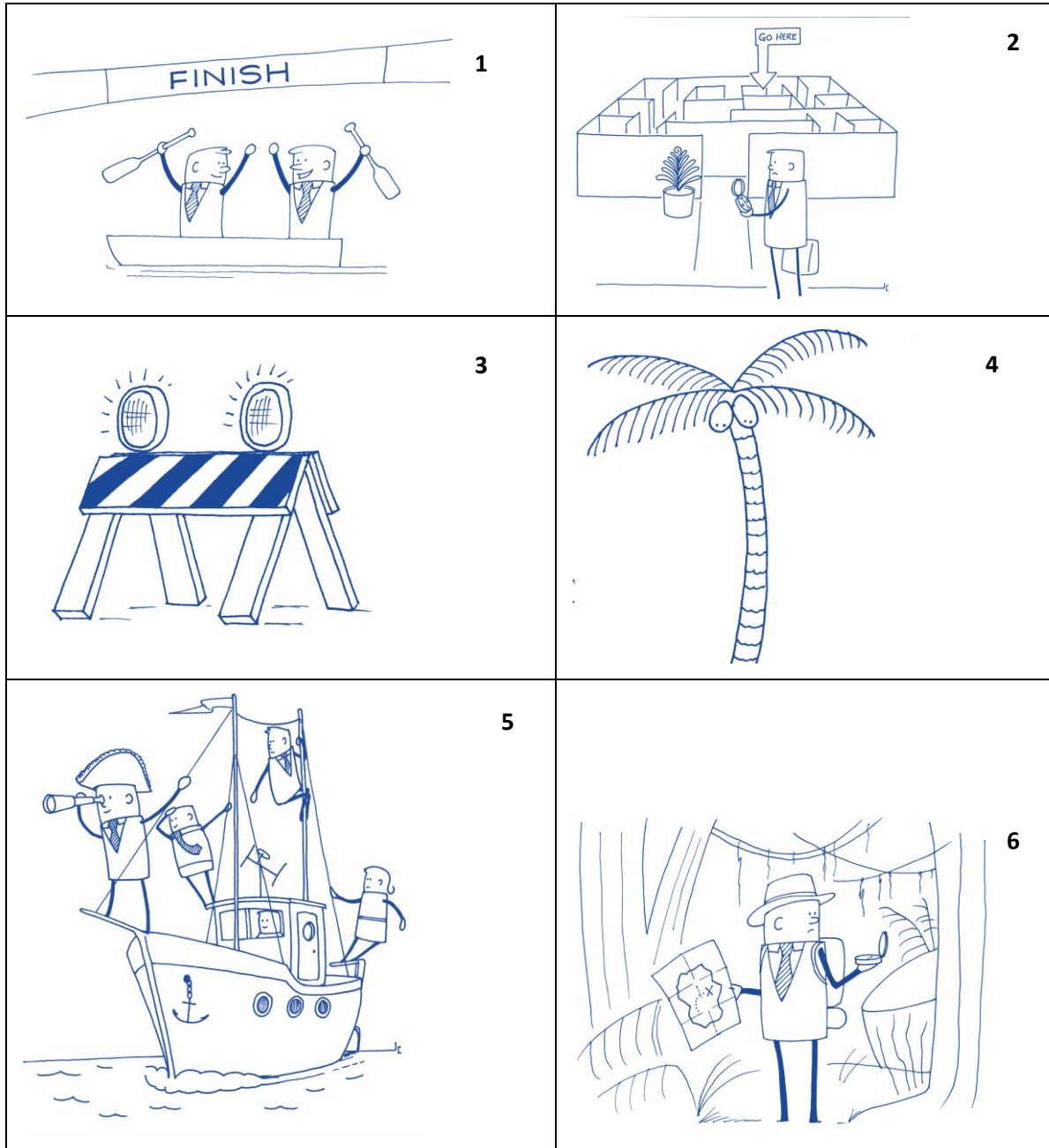


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Practices Four and Five

Model the way.

Leaders go first. Never ask your team to do something you are not willing to do. You set an example and build commitment through simple daily acts that create progress and momentum.

Leaders stand up for their beliefs, so you'd better have some beliefs to stand up for. Your deeds are far more important than your words. Leaders need operational plans. They must steer projects along a purposeful course, measure performance, give feedback, meet budgets and schedules, and take corrective action.

Encourage the heart.

Of all the leadership practices, encouraging the heart is the hardest to plan. Why? For one thing, you don't know in advance what people will do that merits recognition. For another, you want your recognitions and celebrations to be spontaneous, genuine, and heartfelt. Too much planning can make recognition feel routine or forced.

To get started on encouraging the heart through effective recognition, here are two possible commitments for you to accept.

- One person I'll recognize in the coming week: _____
 - Why: _____
 - How: _____
- One celebration I'll hold in the next month: _____
 - Why: _____
 - How: _____

Practices in Practice

Activity	Practice Number(s)
Communicate often. Make sure communication runs both ways.	
Be aware of changing environment.	
Make sure everyone understands the end results & their role & and how they will benefit.	
Plot a procedure. Break it down into its parts.	
Ask for help from others.	
Constantly evaluate current products and procedures.	
Reserve judgment until you have the facts & but be willing to come to decisions.	
Give employees projects for which they can take responsibility.	
Lead and direct the process, but make it an "us" collaboration.	
Measure your deliverables.	
Create a collaborative basic plan for growth.	

Activity	Practice Number(s)
Demonstrate integrity in your own actions.	
Recognize individuals the way they want to be recognized.	
Trust and provide visible evidence that you do.	
Celebrate success together.	
Make sure others see what's in it for them; how they will benefit.	
Help others understand why they must innovate and be competitive, viable, and marketable.	
Share how you see the business/organization in 10 years.	
Benchmark and find out how "X" is doing it.	
Explore risks. Be willing to take small risks to innovate.	
Do a SWOT analysis.	
Provide people with both opportunities and resources.	
Develop effective strategies for resolving conflict.	
Really delegate. Live with mistakes and learn from them.	
Be visible and accessible.	
Set reasonable short term goals.	
Demonstrate random acts of kindness.	
Celebrate and post external accomplishments.	
Recognize strengths and recognize victories over challenges.	
Find ways to recognize teams: verbally, in writing, and with tokens of appreciation.	

Building Trust

The Cycle of Trust and Performance

Trust may very well be one of the most important determiners of employer-employee relationships. Research has determined that if employees trust their managers, they are much more likely to be open in their communication. High trust on the part of a manager stimulates high worker performance, which in turn reinforces trust and thus becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. This makes a constructive cycle of trust between the employee and employer.

However, in a destructive cycle, low trust on the part of the supervisor/manager contributes to low worker performance, which then reinforces a manager's low trust.

To improve trust, either the manager or the employee can initiate a break from the destructive cycle. Using the reciprocal nature of relationships as justification, a manager can react to a low-producing employee by giving back more trust and responsibility, hoping to motivate better performance. Or the employee can react to low trust with increased productivity, hoping to persuade the manager that he or she is deserving of trust.

Although there is an element of risk in these methods, the destructive cycle will continue until one or the other does something to break it.

Trust Exercise

Many authorities on leadership, communication, and management assert that a trusting relationship is basic to leadership effectiveness. On the scale below enter data at three points on it to indicate the degree to which:

- You trust your employees (M)
- You trust your boss (B)
- You believe your employees trust you (E)

Here is a sample of a completed rating:



Here is the scale that you are to use:

