



UNIT I: Group/ Organizational Leadership Skills

Module 1: The Leader Within You

In exploring the leadership qualities within ourselves, we're thinking about personal abilities — mental and physical. We think about knowledge, skills, time and energy, even attitude and enthusiasm. We think of building leadership capacity, which involves enhancing our abilities, learning to transfer skills from one situation to another, and devoting time to reflection and development of a personal leadership philosophy.

There are varied definitions of leadership. Examples include:

1. The process of using influence to help a group achieve its goals.
2. The beliefs individuals have about what makes effective leaders.
3. The qualities, behaviors, skills and knowledge of people regarded as effective leaders.
4. An influence relationship to help a group achieve mutual goals.

The Challenge of Leadership

As we are all aware, we are living in a time of rapid change. There have always been changes taking place in our society, but the different thing today seems to be the rate of change. It happens so fast that we sometimes feel we can hardly keep up.

This rapid change also leads to feelings of uncertainty. Traditions and customary ways of doing things are threatened. Fear of the unknown sometimes creates a resistance to change. We don't quite know how to proceed.

Apathy or doing nothing is one way this resistance to change is illustrated. Individuals and families are so busy trying to manage their own personal activities that they don't make time for the broader community. They do not realize that group or community action is often the best way to address these new issues.

As you begin to explore "the leader within you," think about ways it may be appropriate for you to revise elements of your style, your priorities, your beliefs and your habits. In particular, ask yourself:

- Am I paying enough attention to the subjective aspects of leadership—including the values, culture and tone in my organization?
- Am I doing all I can to bring out the best in others? Am I valuing and respecting their differences and motivating and inspiring them?
- Am I "walking my talk" and modeling the values I believe in?
- What other leadership actions should I be adding? How am I balancing my focus on results vs. people? My commitment to career vs. my personal life?¹

Today's challenge is to ask:

- Do I share in leadership roles?
- Am I developing my ability to work with others as a team leader and member?
- Am I a lifelong learner, instead of thinking I already know all there is to know?

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Citizen Leadership

Citizen leaders are people in the community who are concerned about the quality of life in their community. They assume responsibility for the public good and see a need to act together for the common good of the community. Citizen leaders take ownership of the problems and opportunities that exist in the community and hold themselves accountable for seeing that action is taken. In other words, they don't want "experts" or politicians to solve the problems for them.^{1,2}

Citizen leaders work with others in the community to identify opportunities or problems. They help others articulate a common purpose and set goals and objectives. They also assume that there are differences in the way people regard the opportunity or problem, i.e., different values of the people, different experiences, different viewpoints.^{1,3} Citizen leaders help people connect their differences to the common purpose which brought them together. In other words, the citizen leader helps people see how their differences can be used to solve problems rather than be a point of conflict. Citizen leaders also acknowledge that problem-solving requires a commitment of time. They realize that people must *gain* as well as *contribute* to the problem-solving process. Leaders also help people find their role in the process and affirm the developmental nature of the relationship.

Consider the Following Trends in Leadership:

Ask yourself, "How do I think about leadership and myself as a leader?" Each one of us has a wide range of skills, interests and abilities which we use in our daily lives—at home with our family—on the job—and in our communities. Some tasks are more meaningful and enjoyable to us than others.

When you are thinking about moving into a leadership position, or a more active role as a group member, think about these questions:

1. What skills do I have to offer?
2. What would I like to learn more about?
3. What is it that I don't like to do?
4. What do I want to do, but am hesitant about?

Think about what motivates you, gets you excited, and makes you feel successful in your leadership roles.

Motivation

Motivating yourself and others is a fundamental leadership ability. Motivation starts from within. As leaders, we make important contributions when we find incentives for ourselves, and when we create an environment which makes it possible for other people to motivate themselves.

As you consider your leadership philosophy and style, ask what can I contribute to my organizations and community — either on or off the job? We need to figure out how to release the leader within and get ourselves up and moving. Motivation is a complex topic. Internal motivation comes from within a person. Understanding and supporting the motivation of the individual group member is vital. Your own enthusiasm and commitment are also crucial to success.

Leaders and managers of groups can provide incentives and set the stage for people to become motivated. Sources of motivation are often divided into five categories.

People who are motivated by the desire for:

ACHIEVEMENT: strive for success in accomplishments, a high level of involvement. They are “do’ers” and like getting projects done.

POWER: aim for having impact or influence in dealing with other people and/or project results, such as fundraisers or working with politicians.

AFFILIATION: like being with others, enjoy mutual friendship, and want to belong to a group. Don’t give them tasks in which they work alone. They like to plan celebrations and social events.

RECOGNITION: desire recognition for work performed and are concerned about status and visibility in the group or community. They enjoy working with the media and making public appearances, and appreciate receiving certificates and having their name in the paper.

ALTRUISM: prefer doing things for the general good or public interest. They enjoy working with other groups who have shared values and goals. They feel a need to pay back something to society.

Many people are motivated by several of these categories. At different stages in your life, one area may be more important than others.



Empowerment

In much of the work that we do—whether for pay or as a volunteer—a group of people with different types of interests and expertise is involved. So, part of leadership includes empowering others.

Empowerment is not just one of today’s buzzwords. In the leadership context, it summarizes some important trends and principles for leadership in today’s society.

For example, it means:

- Getting away from the idea of one leader who has all the answers and who can tell everybody what to do.
- Acknowledging the capability and desirability of different people to influence decisions.
- Accepting the need for and benefits of personal, organizational and community change.
- Accessing information and other resources.
- Transferring power, or enlarging the power base and understanding of all stakeholders; giving and accepting power and responsibility.
- Thinking of power as energy, or the influence or ability to get things done. It is not seen as something negative or coercive.
- Sharing knowledge and interests, as well as a vision and goals.⁴

If the individuals in the leadership roles can foster an environment where everyone can contribute their expertise and leadership skills, then motivation, energy and enthusiasm will follow. A critical part of such an environment is the willingness to *delegate* meaningful tasks—not just gopher or busy work. To delegate means sharing and getting an agreement or commitment from others to accept the job, not just assigning something in a dictatorial way.

This involves a shift from doing and controlling, to an attitude or philosophy of empowering and enabling, and the confidence to share credit as well as work.

Applying Your Leadership Skills

What we are really talking about now is the concept of citizen leadership. So much of good leadership is just being a good citizen, leading by example, and genuinely caring for other people and their concerns. Think about following these seven steps to become a better citizen—thus adding value to your leadership potential:

1. **BE A TEAM PLAYER**—Actively work with others to “get things done.”
2. **BE COURTEOUS**—Consult others before decisions are made.
3. **ACT CONSTRUCTIVELY**—Have a positive attitude and be open to new ideas.
4. **BE A GOOD SPORT**—Don’t take yourself too seriously, and don’t get overly concerned if things don’t go the way you think they should.
5. **BE CONSCIENTIOUS**—Be punctual, responsible and don’t procrastinate.
6. **CELEBRATE THE SUCCESS OF OTHERS**—Compliment others on their accomplishments. As a result, they will likely do the same for you. Share the credit of accomplishments.
7. **BELIEVE IN FAIRNESS**—Treat others in an honest, straightforward manner, and don’t adopt a double standard.⁵

Viewing the leadership behavior of all members of a group, rather than the authoritative position of one, means seeing leadership as a more complex and subtle

phenomenon that it is often taken to be. Leadership demands within a group—even within the same meeting—may be quite fluid. A group that utilizes the broad range of leadership skills within its membership is a productive, viable organization.

When we define leadership as the process of working with a group to achieve mutual goals, we see that leadership is not possessed by any one individual as exclusive property. Leadership is the group's property.⁶ Group members seek a sense of belonging, participation in making the rules they will be governed by. They want reachable goals, meaningful and challenging responsibilities. They want to be kept informed, to see progress, to feel confident in their leadership. Any individual may assume, acquire or be elected to the leadership position. However, as the situation or group goals change, the requirements of the leadership role may also change. When this happens, another member of the group may better possess the skills and abilities needed—and should become the next leader.

Summary

A broad base of leadership is vital to organizations and communities. There are organizations devoted to almost every purpose imaginable.

Communities of all sizes work to sustain themselves and their residents. Each group must have skilled leadership if it is to achieve its goals with a minimum of wasted effort. There are countless opportunities for leadership. There is great need for shared or participative leadership, which also results in more effective followers—individuals who are committed to the active and substantive involvement essential to attaining group goals. There is a leader within everyone.

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