

## Leadership Today

The most important thing you do is LEAD your people. Every productive activity on your daily agenda is leadership, regardless of what you call it. You manage, advise, teach, decide, and direct. The list goes on but it's all leading.

The most valuable commodity of any great organization is the quality of good people. They deserve the most inspired caring leadership you can provide.

Leaders seize the opportunity and use it properly to attain excellence.

A critical factor in the exercise of leadership is the adaptability of the person in charge. Whenever any of the variables change, the necessarily "right" style must change. The leader must then adjust his or her approach. The style that worked yesterday may not work tomorrow--but the leader will adapt. It takes time for a new leader to identify the "right" style of leadership. By the time that leader discovers the correct approach he or she may have damaged his or her credibility. The leader may then have established a pattern of behavior that will stick with him or her for the rest of their lives.

Another component of good leadership is caring. Good leaders care about and take of their people. They help them deal with stress that arise both from the job and from external sources. Leaders never let the pressure of their job interfere with taking care of their people.

What your members of your team or organization say is important. Without exception every group complains to some degree. But this is not always bad. Quality of leadership must be assessed by looking at where the irritants lie. If discussions generally dwell on internal issues within the team or organization, leadership might need improvement. If they focus instead on internal issues at a higher level such as company or corporate headquarters, there is a chance your people are satisfied with your leadership.

Equally important in the assessment of leadership is how participants interact in sensing sessions. This is commonly seen as an indicator of morale--how they feel about themselves. It is also a broad indicator of how they feel about their organization.

Cooperative groups generally come from good environment. They talk about anything. At times they even complain but they also frequently recommend solutions. The tone and body language of these group suggest that they are basically satisfied with their leadership. The willingness to recommend improvements suggest confidence in their leaders to listen to opinions and to act on recommendations.

Vocal, hostile groups generally come from poor environments. These groups use sensing sessions to vent their frustrations. They don't sense that their leaders understand or care enough about them to deal with their problems. In most cases, these groups see their leaders adding more to their burden than they take away.

Reticent groups also generally come from poor environments. They hesitate to say anything. These groups demonstrate the resignation that sets in when they feel no one cares about their problems. Alternatively, they may represent teams that work under repressive leadership that is intolerant to "whiners" or threatens retribution for complaining.

A good senior leader can do things to overcome poor leadership below them. The converse is not true . Even the most inspired junior leaders cannot compensate for the "wrong" style imposed upon them and their team from above.

So far we've dealt with selection of leadership style, based on individual and organizational variables. Another way to look at leadership is to consider how it is used. We will explore the leader's selection of the "right" approach to running an organization in my next edition on leadership.

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### About the Author

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