

# **SUSTAINING LEADERSHIP SUCCESS**

## **GOAL**

To identify basic leadership approaches, structures, and behaviors indicative and supportive of leadership success.

## **FORWARD**

It is a challenge to fully understand and appreciate some complicated leadership models. Regardless of any intended new leadership creativity, there are simple, common-sense, and basic leadership approaches and theories that, when applied and followed faithfully, provide the stabilizing forces and foundation of a thriving organization.

The following leadership information and theories “set the stage” for the basic theoretical understanding and successful fulfillment of leadership approaches and behaviors within an organization.

## **LEADERSHIP APPROACHES**

### **Autocratic Leadership:**

Pros: This leadership approach is known as a “top-down management” style. Decisions and powerful decision-

making are made by a single leader. The autocratic leader holds absolute and centralized power while making all leadership decisions independently without associate employees providing suggestions or input. Autocracy is most useful (and needed) in crisis/emergency situations and the organization's successful existence of immature organizational associates. Decision-making is usually fast, precise, and demanding.

Cons: The leader must pay very close attention to associate behaviors and outcomes. Creativity and innovation are not important and usually stifled.

### **Democratic Leadership:**

Pros: This leadership approach is sometimes referred to as "participative leadership" or "shared decision-making." It fosters open communication, collaboration, and engaging with others. Involvement and the sharing of ideas and values with other associates are encouraged. The support of diversity and shared values can result in creative expression and new innovations that result in building trust. The diverse input boosts morale and increases trust between organizational associates. The leader (in most instances) is a facilitator and coach that results in the building of job satisfaction, teamwork, trust, and the boosting of morale. Final decisions often rest with the leader.

Cons: This approach is slow in producing appropriate and accurate decisions. In an emergency, decisions may be too slow to respond to an urgent situation.

### **Laissez-Faire Leadership:**

Pros: This leadership approach is a “hands-off” style where leaders provide minimal supervision. It is the opposite of “micromanaging” by a leader. The management style is supportive of highly skilled employees (instead of a leader) who can and are willing to make organizational decisions, set goals, and solve problems. The result is faster decision-making, resulting in a better or worse outcome.

Cons: It is the most ineffective style of leadership.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

An organizational structure is a framework of goals, roles, responsibilities, authority, relationships, actions, traits, and communication channels within an organization. In essence, the organizational structure influences everything within an organization.

**Organizational Goals:** Provide direction and guidance. Goals are usually established by leader(s) to guide, provide focus, and give direction.

**Strategic Goals:** High-level/organizational, long-term, and broad goals related to organizational success.

**Tactical Goals:** Department-level, mid-term goals that support broad and strategic goals related to organizational success.

**Operational Goals:** Specific, short-term target goals related to an individual(s) or a department that results in expected leadership success.

**S-M-A-R-T Goals:** Successful goals meeting an acronym: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timebound.

**Chunk-Down Goals:** Breaking down of larger ambitious goals into smaller and easily attained goals to provide incremental feelings of success. This approach provides shorter periods between positive feelings of success and a decrease in feelings of being overwhelmed.

Pros--The time-bound targets of strategy used by an organization define and give purpose to organizational efforts. Goals motivate employees, help in resource allocation, and give direction to long-term organizational growth. Goals translate the organization's mission into *steps of action* that can be flexible and adjusted as needed. Goals (in reality) can be flexible as needed and as life demands!

Cons—There is a tendency to be overly ambitious when setting goals. Goals that cause frustration or extreme comparisons with other coworkers could cause excessive work stress and competition. Forgetting the need to “enjoy the journey” and the positive aspects of work may be overlooked.

## **BEHAVIORAL LEADERSHIP**

Behavioral Leadership is defined by observable actions, behaviors, and traits through training, practice, and experience ---not innate personality traits. These skills can be learned by almost anyone. The core behavioral concepts of leadership are:

**Task-Oriented:** Leaders emphasize structure, performance standards, and deadlines. This is a “Production Model.”

**Relation-Oriented:** Leaders emphasize team-work and interpersonal relationships. Trust and mutual respect are important while achieving organizational goals. This is a “People Model.”

Both Task-Oriented and Relation-Oriented leadership concepts are important! When both leadership concepts of tasks and relationship concerns are used appropriately together by leaders, they become the primary essence of outstanding leadership.

## **TRAIT LEADERSHIP THEORY**

The Trait Leadership Theory is also known as the Great Man Leadership Theory. This theory says that there are specific human traits resulting in effective and successful leadership that are innate, inherited, part of a personality, and have physical characteristics and behaviors that differentiate the successful leader from the unsuccessful leader. These proven traits are the secrets to choosing, becoming, and being a great leader.

By using pre-determined benchmarks of required leadership behavior, the Trait Leadership Theory provides a means to identify potential leaders that possess trait leadership benchmarks/components that support leadership knowledge, selection, and success. Selecting leaders through a commonsense benchmark approach confirms that it is far easier, more intellectually astute and wise, and more satisfying to recognize successful leadership traits than it is to experience the negative outcomes of leadership failures and the associated disgrace.

The untold truth is that personal leadership incompetence of knowledge and ability traits is sometimes not recognized by the leader—however, be assured, leadership incompetence is recognized by the observer. Consequently, an intellectually wise leader seeks to put into practice leadership knowledge and expertise that reveal his/her positive personal traits. This truly identifies potential or existing leadership prowess.

## **PROMOTING LEADERSHIP SUCCESS**

### **The Leadership Factor Model (LFM):**

The known factors that promote leadership success are:

**Surgency/Extraversion:** This is a known personality trait of high levels of energy, cheerfulness, and a positive effect showing a natural tendency toward happiness. There is a tendency to be overly energetic and physically active. Sociability and seeking social interactions are common. Impulsivity may be problematic as it sometimes results in limited inhibitory control.

Other important LFM traits include Evolution (leadership traits learned over-time to improve leadership effectiveness), Intellect/Openness, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Intelligence, Self-Confidence, Integrity, Appropriate Social Skills, and Innate Qualities/Origins---(an intended confirmation that leaders are “born”, not made.)

## **PROCESS SKILLS VERSUS SOCIAL SKILLS**

Effective Leadership **PROCESS SKILLS** involve focusing on goal-oriented and management actions designed to influence, motivate, and guide others toward specific organizational objectives and requirements within the work setting. Appropriate leadership process skills are necessary when leadership behaviors and decisions are expected to successfully represent an intended, accepted, and the financially reimbursed role of a leader.

Effective leadership SOCIAL SKILLS involve focusing on effective and appropriate interpersonal interactions, rapport, emotional intelligence, and transparent communication in social settings. The goal of a leader is to present appropriate and effective social skills while maintaining the expected, responsible, professional, and powerful process skills as a leader. Such responsible leadership social behavior tends to increase leadership trust and respect. Excessive and/or irresponsible leadership socialization tends to blur the intended leadership role and tends to decrease leadership trust and respect. The result is leadership role confusion.

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