12.2: Leadership versus Management

Learning Objectives

- Describe the process you may use for leadership development.
- Describe several different leadership styles you may use and their likely influence on followers.

Leadership

Many people use the term leadership as interchangeable with management, but the two terms are actually quite different. The term management implies someone has been given a position, and through that position or title they have power to guide others. Leadership, on the other hand, does not require specific titles. Consider the last group project you worked on for school. It was likely that someone took on the leadership role for this project, such as coordinating schedules, e-mailing the team, and so forth. This person did not have a formal title but lead the group anyway. This is an example of leadership. To be successful at our jobs, we must show leadership skills. These leadership skills can come from our emotional intelligence skills—for example, self-awareness, self-management, relationship management, and social awareness. All emotional intelligence skills are needed to be a successful leader. For example, if you are the informal leader for your group project and feel frustrated with response times, you must have the ability to be aware of this emotion and manage it by not yelling at your team member when you see them!

Getting the team to work better together requires social awareness skills, or the ability to understand how actions of one team member may affect another. Finally, relationship management is necessary to manage group conflict and maintain good relationships with your team. As you can see, leadership encompasses all of the emotional intelligence skills we have been discussing throughout the book. Do you think leadership comes natural to some and not to others?
Whether or not there is a “natural leader,” born with a combination of talents and traits that enable a person to lead others, has been a subject of debate across time. In a modern context, we have come to recognize that leadership comes in many form and representations. Once it was thought that someone with presence of mind, innate intelligence, and an engaging personality was destined for leadership, but modern research and experience shows us otherwise. Just as a successful heart surgeon has a series of skill sets, so does a dynamic leader. A television producer must both direct and provide space for talent to create, balancing control with confidence and trust. This awareness of various leadership styles serves our discussion as groups and teams often have leaders, and they may not always be the person who holds the title, status, or role.

Leaders take on the role because they are appointed, elected, or emerge into the role. The group members play an important role in this process. An appointed leader is designated by an authority to serve in that capacity, irrespective of the thoughts or wishes of the group. They may serve as the leader and accomplish all the designated tasks, but if the group does not accept their role as leader, it can prove to be a challenge. As Bruce Tuckman\(^1\) notes, “storming” occurs as group members come to know each other and communicate more freely, and an appointed leader who lacks the endorsement of the group may experience challenges to his or her authority.

A democratic leader is elected or chosen by the group but may also face serious challenges. If individual group members or constituent groups feel neglected or ignored, they may assert that the democratic leader does not represent their interests. The democratic leader involves the group in the decision-making process and ensures group ownership of the resulting decisions and actions as a result. Open and free discussions are representative of this process, and the democratic leader acknowledges this diversity of opinion.

An emergent leader contrasts the first two paths to the role by growing into the role, often out of necessity. The appointed leader may know little about the topic or content, and group members will naturally look to the senior member with the most experience for leadership. If the democratic leader fails to bring the group together or does not represent the whole group, subgroups may form, each with an informal leader serving as spokesperson.

### Types of Leaders

Thomas Harris and John Sherblom\(^2\) specifically note three leadership styles that characterize the modern business or organization and reflect our modern economy. We are not born leaders but may become them if the context or environment requires our skill set. A leader-as-technician role often occurs when we have skills that others do not. If you can fix the copy machine at the office, your leadership and ability to get it running again are prized and sought-after skills. You may instruct others on how to load the paper or how to change the toner, and even though your pay grade may not reflect this leadership role, you are looked to by the group as a leader within that context. Technical skills, from Internet technology to facilities maintenance, may experience moments where their particular area of knowledge is required to solve a problem. Their leadership will be in demand.

The leader-as-conductor involves a central role of bringing people together for a common goal. In the common analogy, a conductor leads an orchestra and integrates the specialized skills and sounds of the various components the musical group comprises. In the same way, a leader who conducts may set a vision, create benchmarks, and collaborate with a group as they interpret a set script. Whether it is a beautiful movement in music or a group of teams that comes together to address a common challenge, the leader-as-conductor keeps the time and tempo of the group.
Coaches are often discussed in business-related books as models of leadership for good reason. A leader-as-coach combines many of the talents and skills we’ve discussed here, serving as a teacher, motivator, and keeper of the goals of the group. A coach may be autocratic at times, give pointed direction without input from the group, and stand on the sidelines while the players do what they’ve been trained to do and make the points. The coach may look out for the group and defend it against bad calls and may motivate players with words of encouragement. We can recognize some of the behaviors of coaches, but what specific traits have a positive influence on the group? Thomas Peters and Nancy Austin[3] identify five important traits that produce results:

1. Orientation and education
2. Nurturing and encouragement
3. Assessment and correction
4. Listening and counseling
5. Establishing group emphasis

Coaches are teachers, motivators, and keepers of the goals of the group. There are times when members of the team forget that there is no “I” in the word “team.” At such times, coaches serve to redirect the attention and energy of the individuals to the overall goals of the group. They conduct the group with a sense of timing and tempo, and at times, they relax and let the members demonstrate their talents. Through their listening skills and counseling, they come to know each member as an individual but keep the team focus for all to see. They set an example. Coaches, however, are human and by definition are not perfect. They can and do prefer some players over others and can display less than professional sideline behavior when they don’t agree with the referee, but the style of leadership is worthy of your consideration in its multidisciplinary approach. Coaches use more than one style of leadership and adapt to the context and environment. A skilled business communicator will recognize that this approach has its merits.

Since we have discussed both leadership and management in this chapter, you can see where the difference between the two is not altogether clear. Either way, looking toward future careers it can be valuable to understand both management and management styles as well as the process of leader development over time.

Why Human Relations?

As we have discussed in this chapter, you do not need a fancy title to be a leader. To be an effective leader, you must exhibit all aspects of emotional intelligence skills. For example, good leaders will know themselves well and know their strengths and weaknesses. Good leaders also know their feelings from moment to moment and they have learned how to handle those emotions. Good leaders have many similar qualities, such as empathy, ethics, understanding, and patience. These skills are also emotional intelligence skills—specifically, social awareness and relationship management skills.

Social awareness skills are key in leadership, including reading and interpreting social cues and body language, setting goals, resolving conflict, understanding the perspectives of others, and a positive attitude. A leader is someone people want to be around, because they have a certain charisma that draws us to them! Leaders are also excellent at relationship management in that they handle relationships with others well. Remember, you do not need a fancy title to be a leader, but showing these skills in the workplace can not only make you a happier person but also show your supervisor you are ready to move up within your organization.
Key Takeaways

- Leadership is a bit different than management in that management includes a "title" while leadership and the leadership development process can occur without a title.
- Leaders can be appointed into a role, elected into the role, or emerge into the role of leader.
- There are three types of leaders. The first is leader as technician—meaning the person who takes the leadership role has skills we may not have.
- The second, leader as conductor role, involves a central role of bringing people together to reach a common goal.
- The third, leader as coach, combines many talents and skills, such as teacher and motivator.
- Many leaders will use a variety of approaches, depending on the situation.

Exercises

Think of a leader you admire and respect. How did this individual become a leader—for example, by appointment, democratic selection, or emergence? How would you characterize this leader’s style—is the leader autocratic or laissez-faire, a technician or a coach? Write three paragraphs and describe.