

Leadership Skills

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Leadership Skills

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Preface

When we talk about leadership skills, what exactly do we mean? Leadership skills are the tools, behaviors, and capabilities that a person needs in order to be successful at motivating and directing others. Yet true leadership skills involve something more; the ability to help people grow in their own abilities. It can be said that the most successful leaders are those that drive others to achieve their own success.

In this textbook, you'll be given information to help you start building your leadership skills immediately. You will be given specific tools and tips so that you'll be able to take what you learn and will be able to apply it the moment you are done reading. If you do, you will be amazed at how quickly you can improve your leadership abilities. You'll start to see those around you react to you differently. You'll find that work can be a more pleasant place to be and that you truly can lead others on to their own success.

Of course, the work place and your studies is not the only area of your life where you can put these skills to use. There are many ideas introduced here that will help you to be a more effective leader in any area of your life. As a parent, a spouse, a soccer coach, a charity board member, or as any other kind of leader, you will be able to apply this information and feel confident that you can be a successful leader in any area of life that you choose.



Sean McPheat, the Founder and Managing Director of management development specialists, MTD Training is the author of this publication. Sean has been featured on CNN, BBC, ITV, on numerous radio stations and has contributed to many newspapers. He's been featured in over 250 different publications as a thought leader within the management development and training industry.

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1 Introduction

1.1 What Are Leadership Skills?

When we talk about leadership skills, what exactly do we mean? Leadership skills are the tools, behaviors, and capabilities that a person needs in order to be successful at motivating and directing others. Yet true leadership skills involve something more; the ability to help people grow in their own abilities. It can be said that the most successful leaders are those that drive others to achieve their own success.

The skills you learn in this ebook can make a difference in all areas of your life, not just at work.

1.2 A Born Leader?

You've certainly heard the phrase. Who do you think of when you hear it? Martin Luther King, Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, or other world-famous leaders in history? Or perhaps there are leaders in your own life that have had a positive impact on you. What skills did all of these people have that made them effective leaders? Here are a few, but there are certainly others:

- Is Committed to a Vision or Mission
- Understands His or Her Role
- Demonstrates Integrity
- Sets an Example
- Understands How to Motivate the Behavior of Others
- Communicates Effectively
- Is Willing to Take Risks
- Is Adept at Problem-Solving

You don't have to be born with leadership skills. They can be learned.

Whereas many leaders may be so committed to a vision that they naturally find ways to pull others along with them, most of us cannot claim to have been born with that level of leadership ability. We certainly may have grown over time and learned many effective skills by experience. Yet if you are reading this ebook, you know that there are areas of your leadership abilities that you would like to enhance or improve.

There is good news for anyone who doesn't consider themselves a born leader or who has specific areas of leadership skills that need work; leadership skills can be learned. All that is required is an open mind, patience with yourself as you learn these skills, and the commitment to put what you learn into action.

1.3 What You Will Learn

In this ebook, you'll be given information to help you start building your leadership skills immediately. You will be given specific tools and tips so that you'll be able to take what you learn back to your work environment and apply it the moment you are done reading. If you do, you will be amazed at how quickly you can improve your leadership abilities. You'll start to see those around you react to you differently. You'll find that work can be a more pleasant place to be and that you truly can lead others on to their own success.

Of course, the work place is not the only area of your life where you can put these skills to use. There are many ideas introduced here that will help you to be a more effective leader in any area of your life. As a parent, a spouse, a soccer coach, a charity board member, or as any other kind of leader, you will be able to apply this information and feel confident that you can be a successful leader in any area of life that you choose.

2 Three Traits Every Successful Leader Must Have

2.1 Introduction

Without exception, there are three traits that every leader must have in order to be successful. You can attempt to lead without them, but at least one of four things will eventually happen if you do:

- You will be so miserable that you will burnout
- Your team will fail in completing their work
- Your team members will leave
- Your team will lose respect for you

So what are these three required traits? First is the desire to lead. Without it, you will never be comfortable in the leader role. You will struggle every day with the basics, and your team members will sense it in everything you do. If you don't burn out first, you'll find that work suffers and your team is frustrated because they can't do their work without you doing yours. They may eventually leave – if you don't first.

The second trait of successful leaders is commitment to the mission and vision of the organization where they work. Imagine trying to convince others to give their best in order to accomplish something they don't believe in. That's difficult. But trying to convert them to believing in the mission and vision of an organization when you don't believe it yourself? That's simply impossible.

The final trait that every successful leader must have is integrity. Integrity in this sense has a simple meaning; doing what you say you will do and behaving the way that you expect your team to behave. At first glance, that may sound simple enough. But if you can truly master integrity, you will find that it changes whole teams and even whole organizations for the better.

2.2 The Desire to Lead

As with any job, resisting the work of leading will make it difficult to be effective – and impossible to find fulfillment or enjoyment in what you do. Without the desire to lead, you will not be willing to do the work that it takes to become the leader of the team. You won't put in the effort to acquire the skills you need to motivate others or to handle conflict. Instead, you'll stick with the comfortable patterns of behavior you've already developed, regardless of whether or not it helps you to lead.

Are you sure that you want to be a leader? If you are, then you are already a step ahead. But if you aren't certain that you want to be someone who is followed rather than someone who follows, you need to consider whether or not a leadership role is right for you.

There are a number of characteristics and feelings that can help you determine your level of desire to lead. Figure 1 lists a series of statements which describe the characteristics which generally indicate your motivation to be a leader. Don't worry if you don't meet all of these criteria. Just use them to gauge where you are now in your leadership development.

- I enjoy it when others seek my ideas or opinions.
- I don't mind asking team members challenging questions when working on a project.
- I like supporting others on my team and can do so in both good and bad times.
- I am comfortable putting the team interest before my own interest.
- When I am working with a group, I facilitate a strong team spirit.
- I am comfortable letting others take my ideas and put them into action.
- I like playing the role of coach to help others improve their skills.
- I prefer to resolve personal conflicts on a team rather than let them continue.
- I look for opportunities to celebrate other people's success.
- I can have a productive discussion even when others don't agree with me.
- When the team has a problem, I consider it my problem too.
- I like to generate ideas and share them with the group.

Figure 1: Statements that Denote Motivation to Lead



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It is possible to have these and similar statements apply to you in some companies and not with others. If you don't like the work that you do, chances are that you are not going to be inspired to lead others to do it either. In that case, you won't reach your potential as a leader until you are working for an organization that you can believe in. This brings us to the second trait that successful leaders all possess.

2.3 Commitment to the Mission and Vision of the Organization

The first leaders of any organization were those that first created it. They had a mission and a vision about what the company would do, who it would serve, and what changes it would make to the industry or sector they were entering. Those leaders had to take risks like borrowing money or leaving the job they were in at the time in order to start the business. There were likely personal sacrifices, long nights and weeks of work, and times of significant stress before the company could be considered a success.

Those first leaders then had to hire others who could share the vision and believe in the mission of the company. The leaders would coach these new hires, helping them learn how to make decisions which would move the team or organization towards the company's goals. This trend would hopefully continue as each layer of administration was added to the organization. In an ideal world, every employee would perform as if fulfilling the mission and vision of the organization were his or her personal goal.

Of course, we don't live in an ideal world. The more layers of administration or bureaucracy there are between the visionaries at the head of an organization and the front-line employees who deliver the actual services or product, the more difficult it is to see the mission and vision translated to the employees.

At this point, there is one question you need to ask yourself. Do you know what the mission and vision of your organization are? If you responded by naming what you do, that's not the same thing. For example, a telecommunications company employee might answer, 'we sell telecommunication products.' But is that the mission of the organization? The mission could be something like 'we help people stay connected by providing the highest quality communication products and the best customer service in the industry.' Can you see the difference? One is what you do. The other is how you do it. If you know what you do, but not the way you are expected to do it, you cannot effectively lead others to assist in accomplishing the company's goals.

What's the Difference between a Mission Statement and a Vision Statement?

A **Mission Statement** states the main purpose and objectives of an organization. The mission statement is written for internal customers such as the stockholders and the company's leadership team. It defines those key actions and measures that can be used to determine whether or not an organization is a success.

A **Vision Statement** also addresses the purpose of an organization, but denotes the values of the organization as well. Whereas a mission statement defines what a company does, a vision statement helps to delineate how that work should be done. The audience for a vision statement can be the employees, who glean from it information on how they should behave. Or it can inform customers, who can use it in part to determine whether or not they want to give their business to that organization.

2.4 Integrity

The third trait that every leader must have in order to be successful is integrity. Integrity can be defined simply as being true to your word, being authentic in your actions and speech, and demonstrating the kind of behavior that you would like to see your employees have. Integrity, like leadership skills, is something that you have to practice. It takes effort to honor your word every time and to be the example you want from your employees even when you are under stress or simply have a personality conflict. But the benefits you can gain from developing integrity are enormous when compared to the damage you can do in the workplace if you lack it.

Think for a moment about characteristics of bosses you have had that you didn't like. What, specifically, were the attitudes, behaviors, or traits of that person that has you still thinking of them in a negative light? Probably you would list things like favoring certain employees, not coming through on promises he or she made, gossiping, taking credit for your work, or treating you disrespectfully. All of these issues can be traced to a lack of integrity.

What was the workplace environment like when you worked for someone who lacked integrity? Did you enjoy going to work? Did you feel inspired to take ownership of your projects and put forth the best effort that you could? Did you feel loyal to the company or believe that there were significant chances for your own personal growth and development? It's a safe bet that your answer to these questions is no. And it's just as safe a bet that as a leader, you could be creating the same kind of environment that you hated if you aren't practicing integrity in the workplace.

So how do you practice integrity? There are three key areas that you can concentrate on developing. As you read each description, ask yourself how you would feel if a leader you worked for did not possess these key characteristics.

2.4.1 Sincerity

Also called authenticity, leaders with this facet of integrity:

- Do not put up a false front
- Accept responsibility for their commitments and strive to meet them
- Are honest about their own limitations
- Accept responsibility for their mistakes
- Tell the truth

2.4.2 Consistency

Leaders demonstrate this facet of integrity by:

- Treating employees equally as much as possible
- Following through on promises
- Working as hard or harder than their employees
- Having the same expectations or rules for themselves as for their employees

2.4.3 Substance

Substance refers to integrity becoming a part of who you are being in all your work relationships by:

- Keeping private employee information private
- Not gossiping or complaining about team members to other team members
- Doing what's best for the team and not just yourself
- Giving credit where credit is due
- Caring about the development of your employees
- Making it a priority to maintain clear communication and resolve any conflicts

If you have read this information and realized that you have not always acted with integrity in the workplace, you are certainly not alone. But going forward, you can now recognize that integrity can be built one action at a time. As you get more practiced at it, you will find that it becomes a habit. And once you start seeing the results that come from practicing integrity, you will want to keep going.

“The supreme quality for a leader is unquestionably integrity.”

- Dwight D. Eisenhower

3 Understanding Your Role: Leading vs. Managing

3.1 Introduction

Management and leadership skills sets are both important in guiding the development and success of any organization. Yet we often confuse the two. Managers may fail to lead and then wonder why they are having difficulty getting people to work at their best ability. Or leaders may fail to manage and then not understand why they can't seem to get jobs done on schedule or on budget. In many cases your role requires both skill sets in equal frequency. In others, you might concentrate on one skill set and only need to adapt the other in specific circumstances.

You can learn to discern the two different types of skills, as well as when to put them into use in order to perform at your best. Some of the questions that will be answered in this chapter are:

- What is the difference between being a manager and being a leader?
- How do I know what role I have, no matter what my job title says?
- How can I determine what skills are appropriate in my role and for the task at hand?

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3.2 Differentiating Between Management Skills and Leadership Skills

What do you think of when you hear the terms ‘management skills’ as opposed to ‘leadership skills’? Undoubtedly you have at least a general notion of each term. Yet when it comes to articulating the difference, it can be difficult to separate specific skills into one set or the other. Don’t the two have aspects in common? Certainly. However, to develop into the best leader you can be, you need to understand how they are different as well.

Here’s one way to differentiate between the two skill sets:

- Management skills – the skills required to manage resources in order to deliver a task, product, or service.
- Leadership skills – the skills required to engage with, motivate, and persuade people to buy-in to a vision, objective, or goal.

We manage tasks.
We lead people.

Table 1 offers some additional comparisons that will help to clarify the difference between management and leadership skills.

A Manager...	A Leader...
Thinks short term	Thinks long term
Thinks tactics	Thinks strategy
Plans how and when	Asks what and why
Looks at the bottom line	Looks to the horizon
Knows the day-to-day business	Knows the customer
Focuses on improving existing products and processes	Focuses on new products and breakthrough processes
Builds success through quality	Builds success through employees
Supervises	Influences
Gains authority from his/her position	Gains authority by his/her mindset and behavior

Table 1: Managers vs. Leaders

After reading Table 1, you should be beginning to see the difference between managing and leading. And of course, there are times when your role and your behavior will cross over between the two.

Here's another way of looking at it: when your management hat is on, you are focusing on how you are going to complete the tasks that are necessary to get a job done. You see the deadline looming, and you organize yourself to meet it. When you put your leader hat on, you are influencing the others on your team to do their part to meet – or exceed that deadline or any other performance expectations you might have.

You know what to do as a manager and you know how to get others to help you do it as a leader. In fact, the best leaders will allow others to determine how they are going to contribute to the final product. These 'super leaders' are not afraid of taking the risk of allowing others to add some of their own thoughts on how they should perform their jobs. If you have led them well enough, they will perform as you would have them perform. In other words, the most effective leaders are those who can successfully influence the way other people influence themselves.

3.3 Our Perceptions of Leadership

Within your own organization, can you name the managers? What about the leaders? How can you tell the difference? In some cases, the answer is obvious because it's in the person's job title. Marketing Manager, Communications Administrator, Assistant Sales Director. Titles such as these imply a level of authority. But what can they tell you about the actual leadership of the organization?

The most effective leaders are those who can successfully influence the way other people influence themselves.

A common way that we try to communicate who leads an organization is through an organizational chart. If you have one of your own organization, take it out and look at it the next time you have a chance. A sample organizational chart for a small manufacturing company has been provided for you in Figure 2 to use as you read the paragraphs that follow.

Before you read the titles of anyone in the organizational chart, look at the overall shape. What does it say about the organization's management and leadership structure? Are there more positions across (horizontally) than there are down (vertically)? This indicates a flat organizational structure. It is communicating to us that the authority in the organization is dispersed across many different units or divisions. Each of these units or divisions then has its own employees, but, as in Figure 2, they may all report back to one central decision maker or final authority.

What if there are more layers of employees vertically than there are horizontally? What impact does it have on the 'top rung' employees' ability to lead when they may be dozens of 'layers' away from those employees that are interacting directly with their customers or clients?

Now look at the positions to see if you can identify all of the managers on the organizational chart in Figure 2. Who would you choose? Do you have enough information to tell? Chances are that you will have to make your choices based on two things; job titles and whether or not the person supervises other people.

Now see if you can identify the leaders in the organizational chart. You may be inclined to pick the same people as you chose for managers – it’s our usual habit to think of those at the top levels as leaders. But the truth is, you cannot tell from the organizational chart who all of the leaders are. How do we know that there aren’t true leaders among the drivers who demonstrate to their fellow drivers how to perform their jobs safely and efficiently? How do we know that one of the customer service agents hasn’t influenced the way that marketing runs their campaigns or the training staff holds their classes because of a new sales technique that the agent has come up with on the job?


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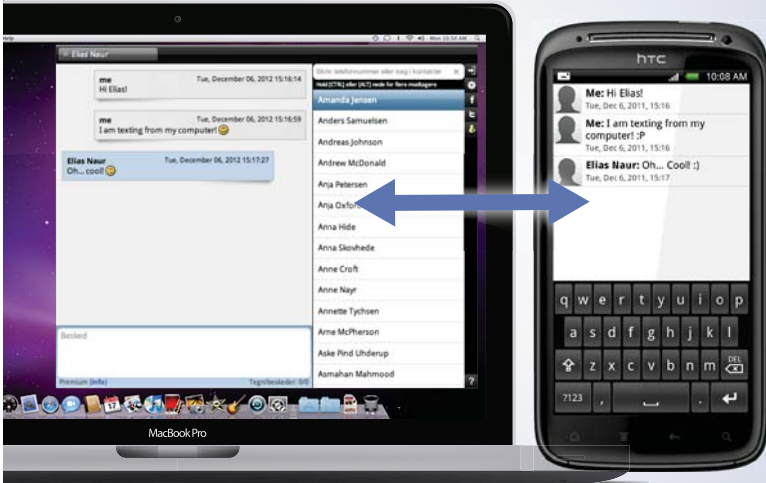
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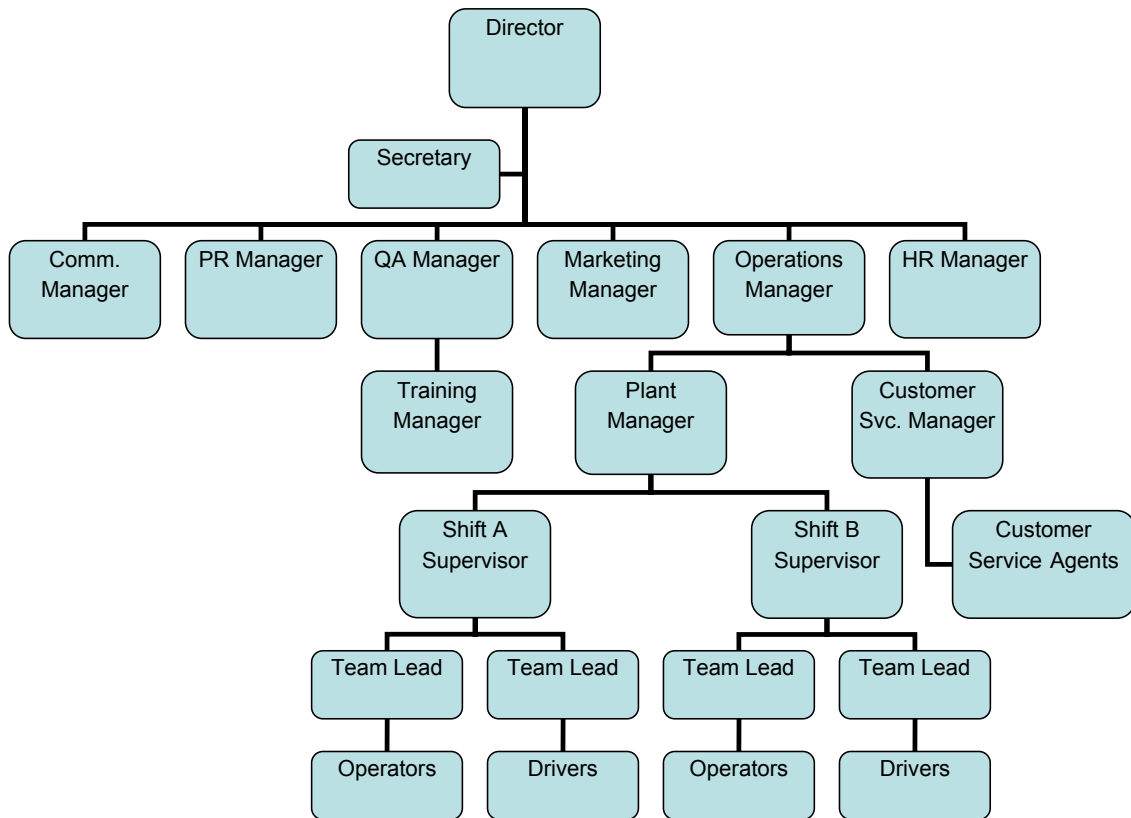


Figure 2: Organizational Chart Example

As a leader yourself, it’s important to remember that leaders don’t always hold a job title or wear a suit and tie. Our culture tends to look to those who bear the distinctive titles or make the high salaries or make sweeping, successful changes as the leaders in our organizations. But this view is too narrow and it limits your team’s potential.

Leaders can be the man picking up the garbage who is always conscientious about cleaning up anything that hits the ground instead of leaving it there, or the administrative assistant who treats every call like it’s the most important one she’s had all day. They can be the co-worker who sets the example for the rest of the team by always being on time, doing their best work, and keeping a positive attitude. Or they can be the person who takes the initiative to organize the group’s help when a coworker’s family has experienced a tragedy.

If you simply take the time to look around you, you’ll see that leaders can come in all different types. Being aware of our cultural perceptions about where leaders can be found helps to take the ‘blindness’ off – it opens up the possibility that anyone in your organization could have hidden leadership abilities that are just waiting to be coached to the surface.

4 How Your Personality Style Affects Your Ability to Lead

4.1 Introduction

All of us have a way that we interact with the world. Our habits, behaviors, and personalities all make us distinct from one another. Sometimes we work in an environment where we find that we are similar to other people in our preferences, our ideas, and our attitudes. These similarities make for an easy, comfortable working relationship – not to mention putting us in the position for making some lasting friendships.

Yet what happens when we work with people who are significantly different from us? They are quiet when you are talkative. They are outspoken when you are more hesitant to share your opinion. They laugh easily and tend to share their personal life regularly, while you are more reserved and prefer to keep your personal life out of the workplace. You work in order to enjoy your life, but they seem to have a life only in order to work. You want things planned and organized, but they tend to make changes at the last minute and then you end up frustrated.

Does any of this sound familiar? Unless you've only ever worked for yourself, chances are that you can relate. How do you feel about those other people that don't share your way of looking at the world? Do you see them as difficult, strange, or worse? Do they make you uncomfortable or even dread it when you have to work together? Do you ever change the way you act or speak around these people?

How well do you work with people who are different from you?

What about when you have to lead those people?

What methods have you developed for 'handling' those people?

Most of us develop some way of 'handling' these different people. We might be polite, we might ignore them, we might dismiss their opinions, we might be loathe to express our own, or we might even, in the worst case, argue with them on a regular basis and speak badly of them when they aren't around. While this is bad enough when this situation exists between you and a coworker; it can be disastrous for your entire team when you have this type of interaction between you and someone that you are trying to lead.

The methods we’ve all developed for working with others become so natural that you might not even notice that you’re doing it anymore. Particularly when we are talking about a person that you find it difficult to supervise, when we find a way of dealing with them that seems to work, we stick to it. Our patterns of behavior and our opinions about that other person cease to be a conscious choice – they become, in our mind, the reality of the situation.

This is an important point – and one you’ll want to make an effort to identify in your own work situation. Where has your opinion of that other person stopped being an opinion, but instead has become something that you’re treating as absolute fact? You no longer distinguish between ‘I think Mark is difficult’ and ‘Mark is difficult.’ Or ‘I find Susan annoying’ and ‘Susan is annoying.’ It is important to recognize that we have chosen to see this person in a certain way – but at the same time, that our perception of them as difficult, annoying, condescending, or anything else doesn’t mean that they are inherently the embodiment of whatever we see in them.

By now you’re certainly saying, ‘but he IS a jerk’ or ‘but she really IS annoying’ – and here comes the next response that will undoubtedly flow through your mind: ‘everyone thinks so.’ When we get affirmation of our own opinion from someone else, it reinforces this pattern of seeing our own perceptions of the person in question as ‘the truth.’ The more we have these affirming conversations about the person we find it hard to supervise, the more we think we are ‘right’ about him or her.

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This is perfectly normal human behavior. But it is also very damaging behavior when you are trying to lead. How can you inspire someone when you see them as annoying? How can you get the best performance from someone when you see them as difficult? So here is another option. It's an incredibly powerful tool that, when added to the others we've looked at so far, can literally transform and reinvent relationships.

Understand that each of us views the world through a type of 'lens' that is, in part, our personality style. When you and another person have similar lenses, you are seeing the world in a very similar way. You will likely find these people easy to lead. You'll know what will motivate them, what kind of instruction and guidance they need to perform at their best, and how to communicate with them when you need to get your point across.

But when you and someone else have very different lenses, or personality styles, everything becomes a bit more difficult. You both stand behind your lenses, looking at and perceiving the world, but your perception is very different. So when the other person acts according to what they see or perceive, and it's not what you see or perceive and not the actions you would have taken, their actions will seem strange (or difficult, or annoying) to you. You could go on forever this way, remaining frustrated and exasperated trying to lead.

When our personalities are very different from another person's personality, we may see them as difficult, annoying, strange, or any other countless negative adjectives.

In time, we cease to see these adjectives as our opinion – instead, we treat them as fact – especially if others in our work group agree with us. These opinions then make it difficult – if not impossible – to lead that person successfully.

The key to leading in this situation is learning about the main differences in personality types so that you gain insight into why the other person acts the way they do.

But there is another option to continuing to struggle with these type of leadership / subordinate situations. You can learn about what the world looks like through that other person's 'lens.' In other words, you can learn to see their personality objectively. When you learn about personality types, you learn to understand why someone else behaves the way that they do – and – just as important – why you behave the way that you do.

When you begin to understand personality types, you can start to see the distinction again between your opinion about the other person and fact. You can understand why that other person rubs you the wrong way or makes you uncomfortable – but you also will have something you can do about it.

You can consciously choose to do simple things to adapt yourself to another’s personality style when interacting with them. No, this isn’t just another way of ‘dealing with’ them. It’s a tool that has you empower them, not dismiss, ignore, or coddle them. If you employ this tool, it’s a way that gives everyone you lead the chance to fully contribute and to be appreciated for that contribution. When you employ this tool, it’s as if you can speak to them in their own language – and even better, you can hear and understand them in their ‘native tongue.’

4.2 The Personality Matrix

Scientists have tried to categorize human behavior for centuries. There are many models, but for our purposes, we will use the model developed by Dr. Eileen Russo. Her model uses two dimensions of personality: expressiveness and assertiveness. Figure 3 shows the interactions of these two dimensions and the four personality ‘quadrants’ that result.

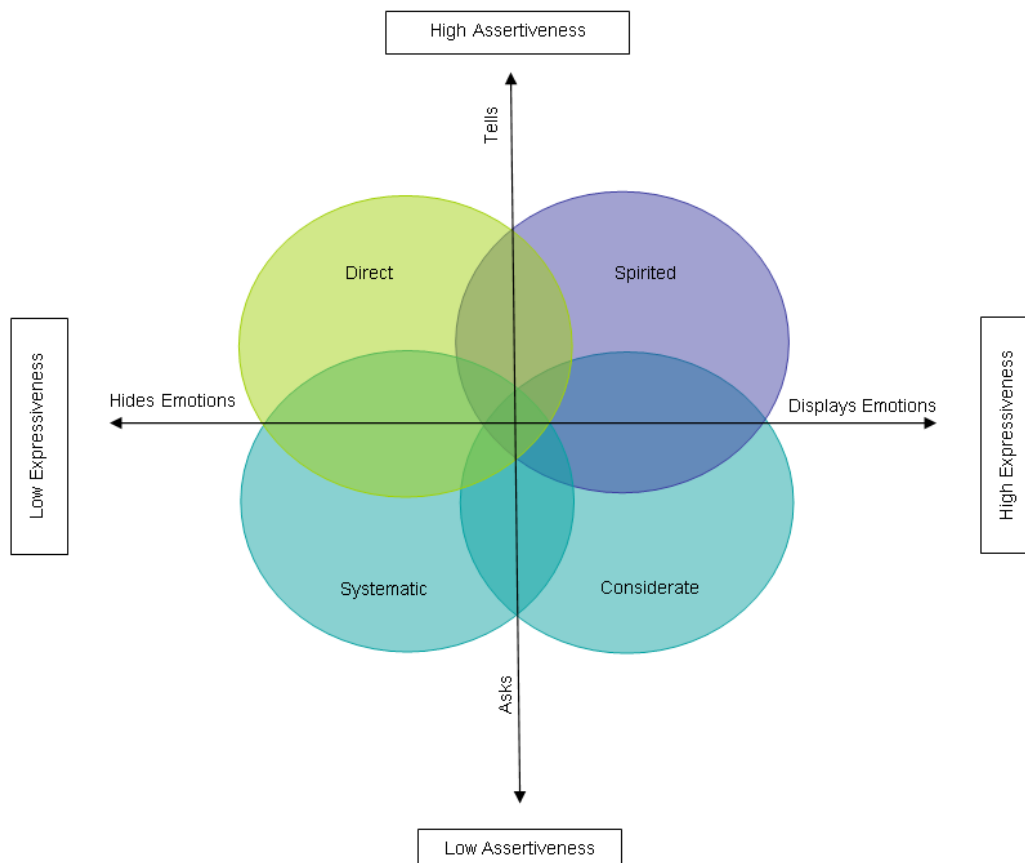


Figure 3: The Personality Matrix

Each personality quadrant represents a basic personality style. People can fall anywhere within each quadrant, becoming more uniformly one style over the others as they move further from the center. Notice that the more assertive styles ‘tell’ others what to do. The less assertive styles ‘ask’ others what should be done. The more expressive styles tend to show their emotions in their face, speech, and tone. The less expressive styles will either not express or hide their emotions.

The resulting four basic personality styles are shown in Figure 4.

Low Expressiveness + Low Assertiveness = Systematic

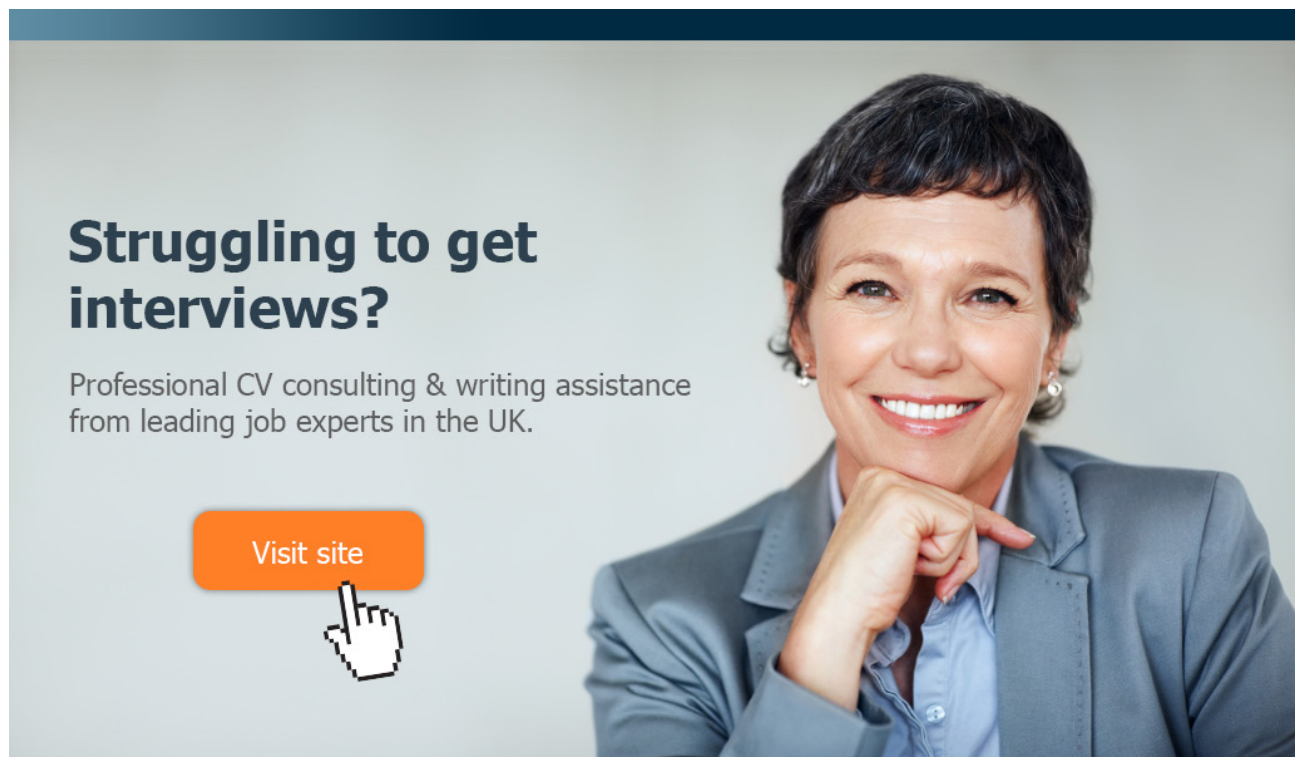
Low Expressiveness + High Assertiveness = Direct

High Expressiveness + High Assertiveness = Spirited

High Expressiveness + Low Assertiveness = Considerate

Figure 4: The Four Basic Personality Styles

In the following sections, we’ll look at the basic characteristics of each personality type and some things you can do to help you work well with each type.



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4.2.1 Direct

People with direct personality styles like to be in charge. They like to take control and get to work – and they'll work hard. They look for results, are driven to succeed, and are often competitive. They have strong focus and are pragmatic in their outlook. They are assertive, decisive, and have strong opinions. They aren't afraid to speak their minds or to make the tough decisions. They don't want to analyze things to death – they want to get in, get it done, and get on to the next project.

For other personality styles, direct styles can come off as overbearing, impatient, stubborn, and autocratic. They may appear as if they don't want other people's input, particularly if it's something that could slow them down from getting the job done. They may not take the time to listen to others or to feel that they need to explain anything to anyone else. They sometimes put results ahead of other people's feelings. Figure 5 gives you some tips for leading a person with a direct personality style.

Here's an example of how **not** to communicate with a direct style:

Hi George,

Sam came over to my desk this morning to tell me about the sales meeting you had yesterday. He said it went really well and that the client was impressed. He mentioned that the client asked you for some data on last quarter's sales. Did you have a chance to look for the data yet? Let me know if I can help you get it together. I'd like to have it to them sometime later this week if possible.

Thanks again, and hope you are having a good Tuesday so far!

Anne

Instead, communicate like this:

George,

Great job on the sales meeting. I'd like you to have the requested data to me by 4pm on Thursday. If you need assistance, call me on ext. 325.

Thank you,

Anne

See the difference? The first one is too personal-sounding and doesn't give a solid result or outcome for the direct style to strive for. The second one still communicates approval and offers assistance but communicates a specific request in a quick, direct manner. If it seems curt to you, don't worry – the direct style person will appreciate it.

- Get to the point quickly – don't bore them with lots of background information
- Appeal to their sense of wanting to have excellent results if you need to make a change
- Give them chances to excel and compete, when possible
- Communicate in short, direct sentences with a specific call to action or request
- Be on time and end on time
- Don't promise what you aren't certain you can deliver
- Don't give or ask for information about personal issues unless they initiate it
- Give specific, measurable outcomes for them to strive towards
- Tell the truth – don't sugar-coat it

Figure 5: Tips for Leading a Direct Personality Style



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4.2.2 Spirited

The spirited personalities are the ‘dreamers’ of the group. They can be like the Pied Piper, generating enthusiasm and excitement about an idea or project. They are persuasive, visionary types who are passionate about whatever they are working on and will throw themselves into their work with abandon. They prefer to multitask in order to avoid getting bored or stymied. They aren’t afraid to take risks and can often convince others to do the same.

Spirited styles, while great at getting a project started, are not always that great at getting it finished. They prefer the big picture to getting down to the details of a task and paying attention to minutiae. It’s difficult to keep their attention for long since they prefer to do multiple things at once. Time management may be a problem for spirited people, as they may have a problem determining exactly how long a project will take to complete and so they can tend to commit to more work than they are truly capable of doing. They may have a hard time listening to others, particularly if what the other person says might rain on their parade. Figure 6 gives suggestions for leading a spirited person.

- Allow time for brainstorming and let them express their ideas freely
- Explain ahead of time how much time will be allowed for discussion
- Praise them in front of other people
- Communicate by showing an interest in their ideas but redirecting them to the practical
- Understand that they may exaggerate
- Establish timetables with specific steps so your expectations are clear
- Set milestone deadlines in order to help them stay on task for the final deadline
- Challenge them to break down their ‘big ideas’ into specific outcomes and steps
- Provide discipline in the sense of making it clear what will happen if they succeed and if they fail

Figure 6: Tips for Leading a Spirited Personality Style

Communicating with a spirited person can be difficult for those who are not expressive by nature. Spirited people love to entertain others with their emotion-rich tales, which other personality styles may not find interesting – or might even find annoying. Yet their enthusiasm, natural ability to come up with new ideas, and their passion about their work are valuable qualities that you can learn to harness by planning for times when they are allowed to shine. Make time for team lunches or other gatherings. If they have a new idea, be sure to give them credit for it – and even better, allow them to be the one to teach the rest of the team about it. Regular coaching on time-management will probably be required, so work out a system for doing so that doesn’t embarrass them in front of their colleagues.

4.2.3 Systematic

Systematic personality types are the analysts among us. They are willing and able to plow through piles of data and still be hungry for more. They excel at identifying and managing details, and logic is their best friend. They are consistent, rational, precise, and are usually very disciplined. They make decisions based on research and analysis rather than feelings. They have patience and are deliberate in their work style. They are business-oriented and not normally apt to share anything about themselves on a personal level. They like predictable processes and precise directions. They stick to the book, and want others to do the same. They value fairness and playing by the rules, no matter what.

However, systematics can sometimes have a hard time making decisions because of the overload of information they have compiled. They will always want more time for more details, and may get bogged-down in one particular area or on one point instead of seeing the entire picture as a whole. They may fear change and upsets in their usual routine. They may not be able to recognize when rules need to be bent or exceptions need to be made to the rules or policies. Others may see them as cold and uninterested, particularly those who are expressive. They do not do well with conflict, as they tend to prefer avoidance rather than confrontation. They may shut down communication as a way of dealing with discomfort or disappointment. Several strategies for leading systematic styles are listed in Figure 7.

- Focus on facts instead of opinions
- Try to be accurate and precise in your communication with them
- Give logical reasons for what you are doing and what you are asking them to do
- Allow time for the research and analysis phase of a project
- Set timeframes around when analysis should be done and the next phase should start
- Give them time to check facts and reflect on what they learn
- Be organized and prepared when you meet with them
- Avoid personal topics in your interactions
- When conflicts arise, focus on facts and figures over personalities and feelings

Figure 7: Tips for Leading a Systematic Personality Style

4.2.4 Considerate

The final personality style is considerate. These are the people-pleasers in your group. They are natural team workers, preferring to work with and support others than to work alone. They are excellent listeners, and seek to connect with others on a personal level. If there is conflict of any kind, they will work to mediate it. They will want everyone to have their turn, to have their say, and to be appreciated for their contribution. They are natural counselors, natural trainers or mentors, and they enjoy helping others. They will encourage others to brainstorm and speak their minds, even if they aren't inclined to do so themselves.

Of course, niceness can have its downsides as well. Considerate personality styles won't always stand up for themselves, or point out mistakes that others might have made. They will worry more about other people's feelings in decision-making rather than the facts. They can be overly emotional and take decisions personally that were not at all personal. They tend to avoid uncomfortable situations such as change or conflict and may do what it takes to be included in the group rather than what is the best decision for a project. Others may take advantage of them, as considerates will often agree to take on more than their share of work in a project in order to make others happy. See Figure 8 for advice on leading a considerate personality style.

- Express a sincere interest in their feelings, thoughts, and personal life
- Foster trust in your relationship with them
- Reassure them that they are doing a good job, and correct them gently when they are not
- Try to move at a relaxed pace, giving them time to process changes
- Monitor their workload to ensure they haven't taken on more work than they should
- Encourage them to ask questions and to share their opinion
- Let them know that you appreciate their help
- Give them opportunities to help others with projects or learning new tasks
- Help them identify goals that they can stretch for, but be certain they are achievable

Figure 8: Tips for Leading a Considerate Personality Style

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One particular challenge in leading a considerate personality style is walking the line between being sensitive to their feelings and coddling them. You do not need to treat them with kid gloves, but you should be aware that they need to feel accepted and approved of in order to do their best work. If you take the time to learn about them on a personal level and show that you remember details about them, you will go a long way towards earning their loyalty.

4.3 The Platinum Rule

All of the knowledge you now have about personality styles is only useful if you take what you know and you apply it in the workplace. You've got some tips for leading the specific personality styles, but there is one last tip that can help you in any situation and with anyone that you may work with. It's called the platinum rule.

We've all heard the golden rule:

Treat others the way that you would like to be treated.

But successful leaders understand and employ the platinum rule:

Treat others the way that they would have you treat them.

You've certainly heard of the golden rule: treat others the way that you would like to be treated. The problem with the golden rule is that it assumes that everyone wants to be treated – and wants to work – in the same way. If this were true, you could just lead someone else the way that you would want to be led. By now, you should understand that this won't work for leading everyone – only for those who are similar to you in personality style.

So what's the best strategy? It's called the platinum rule: treat others the way that they would have you treat them. All of the information you've learned in this chapter can be summed up by this one rule. If you look back at all the tips provided for each personality style, that's really all they are: specific ways to treat each style which are most comfortable for each one. If you can speak to someone in their style, give them what they need to work to their best capacity, and help them meet challenges in a way that empowers them, how could you fail to lead them?

If your first reaction to this is that it would be hard work, you're right – at first. It will require being conscious of the way you communicate with your team, figuring out what kind of support they each need from you, and intentionally delivering it to them in the easiest way for each of them to digest. But just like the characteristics discussed in Chapter Two, once you see the response in the people you lead and the surge in the quality of their work, you will be happy to put in the extra effort. Eventually, you will find that you can adapt to the needs of each team member with more and more ease, and that you are more successful as a leader the more adept that you become.

5 Leadership Styles

5.1 Introduction

You've just learned how your ability to lead can be impacted by your personality style and the personality styles of those on your team. But there will of course be times when you need to lead in a style that is best for getting the particular job done. You can modify it when you can in order to work best with the personality styles on your team. But you should also be able to recognize when you need to change what you are doing, not just how you are doing it, in order to lead the team as a whole towards success.

Just as with personality styles, there are numerous ways to categorize leadership styles. We'll look at some different frameworks and at some situations in which you might need to apply each one. Consider this another tool in your toolbox – the toolbox of a leader who can be flexible to the needs of his or her team – but also to the needs of the work situation itself.

5.2 The Autocratic Leadership Style

5.2.1 Characteristics

The autocratic leader chooses to make the majority of decisions on his or her own. These leaders prefer to keep control and responsibility over the projects that they are assigned. This means that they aren't very likely to delegate decision making to others. They prefer a clear structure and set rigid expectations. These leaders rarely consult with others and aren't very interested in developing their own skills or those of their employees. This style of leadership is rather old-fashioned now, but it still exists because there are times when it still works best.

Autocratic leaders like to keep the decision-making power to themselves.

5.2.2 Advantages

There are several benefits to this type of leadership for the leader, including a reduction of stress for the leader because he or she knows that they are in complete control. Decisions can be made quickly because there is no need to have a long consultation process before moving ahead. When speed is important this is a good choice because not only are decisions made quickly but employees tend to be more productive – as long as the boss is actually there. So for unmotivated employees, this can be a helpful style. Even if this isn't your normal style, it can be useful for projects that have to be implemented in a hurry.

Autocratic leadership allows for fast decision-making and can be useful for keeping employees motivated.

5.2.3 Disadvantages

This kind of decision making isn't going to be popular for the long-term. Plus, it can have detrimental effects on the workforce as a whole. When decisions are made in their entirety by the leader, team members don't have the chance to develop their decision-making skills or other leadership skills.

Autocratic leadership isn't a good option for the long-term. It can de-skill the workforce, making them disheartened and too reliant on the leader.

Although the control it provides can reduce the leader's stress in the short-term, it will increase it in the long-term because of needing to bear all the responsibility all the time. Employees will stop feeling invested in the company or its services if they feel they aren't allowed to have any impact on them. This can lead to reduced motivation and morale.

Plus, the team's ability to function becomes entirely reliant upon the leader. If he or she should leave or be absent, the team's productivity will suffer because the team will not feel confident enough to make their own decisions.



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5.2.4 When to Use It

Good times to use this style are:

- Short-term, complex, technical, or urgent projects
- Low-skilled positions with monotonous tasks that can lead to low motivation
- Where there is high turnover in the employees so keeping organizational knowledge in a leader is important

5.3 The Democratic Leadership Style

5.3.1 Characteristics

The democratic leadership style is just what you would think – it's all about making decisions as a group. The team shares the responsibility for making the decisions, making changes, and making deadlines. The leader delegates a great deal of the work, letting others have a say in what portion of the work they take on.

Democratic leaders share the decision-making – as well as the resulting responsibility – with team members. They seek feedback and prioritize team member development.

The leader seeks continual feedback and looks for opportunities for development for both himself and his team. This is a popular style because when it is done well, it creates a harmonious, productive, evolving work force.

5.3.2 Advantages

In a democratic leadership situation, team members are often more dedicated to their work because they feel that they have had input in not just what was done but how it was done. They take ownership of situations because that ownership is entrusted to them, and they are usually willing to work harder because they know that they will share in the credit. The sharing of credit also goes a long way to reducing the amount of internal politics because there is less need for competition.

Democratic leadership results in dedicated, loyal employees who are willing to work hard to deliver results – and to share the credit for getting those results.

If employees know that the whole team shares responsibility for the work, they are less likely to cover-up mistakes and more likely to be honest about problems they see in the process. Since feedback is given and received continually, in the long-term, decision-making is naturally improved. Overall, the work environment will tend to be more positive and collaborative. There also tends to be less turnover because employees are invested in the outcomes and they know that their employer will invest in their own development.

5.3.3 Disadvantages

The fact that everyone is continually consulted in the decision-making process means that decisions cannot be made quickly. If there is a high-pressure, or a need for fast decisions, this style will not work. In fact, the leader may be forced to change to an autocratic style in some cases, which could cause some resentment. This kind of style requires that the leader must work at creating a balance between allowing others to take the lead and keeping control of the overall process.

Since everyone is involved in the decision-making process, decisions can take a long time to make.

5.3.4 When to Use It

The democratic style is useful when it's important that every member of the team contributes their own creativity and knowledge to the process. When you are ready to prioritize training and team development and take the time needed to give everyone a chance to contribute, this style can produce great results. It's a good way to create a new team of people who have not worked together before and need to get in gear quickly.

5.4 The Bureaucratic Leadership Style

5.4.1 Characteristics

In a bureaucratic leadership arrangement, the focus for the leader is on making certain that employees follow the rules with consistency. This style became very popular when the industrial era began because factory work requires specific rules and procedures in order to ensure consistent quality and to protect the health and safety of the workers. In this leadership situation, the leader gains authority more from his position than for other reasons.

Bureaucratic leadership works well in environments where following the rules is more important than creativity or thinking outside the box.

Employees are rewarded for being able to follow the rules and producing consistently rather than for innovation or brainstorming. The environment tends to be more formal, with clear distinctions between the leaders and their employees. It's commonly found in older, larger organizations or in organizations that have not yet evolved their organizational structure for some reason.

5.4.2 Advantages

When consistent output is required and quality is of the utmost importance, this style can be very useful. It's also a good choice when work is repetitive but must be done the exact same way each time. When tasks are highly segregated and dependent on each other, the bureaucratic style can work well. It also helps in situations where cutting costs and improving productivity are priorities or are how you are measured or evaluated.

Bureaucratic leadership helps promote consistent output and quality, can cut costs, and improve productivity in some environments.

5.4.3 Disadvantages

When there is no difference in work from day to day and no choice in how the work is performed, the environment can be very de-humanizing to individuals. Employees are expected to perform their duties repetitively and without any personal creativity which can harm an organization in the long run.

Over time, bureaucratic leadership can de-humanize and discourage the work force. With no investment in training, you can also end up without a well-skilled work force.



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Due to the usual strict division of labor, there can also be the tendency for bureaucratic leaders to become territorial and to see other leaders as rivals rather than colleagues. Politics and excessive, restrictive policies can result in this work environment. These characteristics also tend to result in communication problems since there are so many distinct segments.

5.4.4 When to Use It

If the desire is to produce the image of regulation and control, the bureaucratic leadership style is a good choice. It is also a natural choice for organizations where there need to be rigid controls over health and safety measures.

5.5 The Charismatic Leadership Style

5.5.1 Characteristics

With this style, the main characteristic is the leader's ability to inspire others. They do so through commitment to a vision which they are charged with communicating to their team. It is possible that the leader will actually have to create the vision as well, requiring the ability to generate excitement in others about new, possibly risky ideas.

As the name implies, the Charismatic leadership style is based on the leader's ability to inspire and influence the actions of others.

It takes a great deal of energy to be a charismatic leader because it requires taking advantage of every opportunity to 'sell' the team on the vision and mission of the organization. Some members of the team will be easy to inspire, while others will be 'sold' more slowly or, unfortunately, not at all. This style depends on the leader's ability to build trust with team members by demonstration personal integrity.

5.5.2 Advantages

When a charismatic leader is successful, the team is powerful. They are committed, loyal, and willing to deliver above and beyond what is expected of them. This type of leader includes and encourages each member of the team and focuses on the development of each member's skill set. The team can be wildly creative and generate interesting, forward-thinking solutions to existing or new problems. Each team member will tend to become a leader on their own by helping their fellow team mates and encouraging them to remain committed to the vision as well.

This type of leadership is excellent for encouraging creativity and forward-thinking decision making.

5.5.3 Disadvantages

As mentioned, this type of leadership requires a great deal of time for the leader. He or she must constantly be responsible for representing the vision of the organization and embodying it in all that they do. It can be stressful to do so, especially when it takes time away from other responsibilities that are required in their position. Plus, since so much relies upon the personal relationships that the leader has with the team members, there is little room for making normal human errors. Mistakes that would go unnoticed in other leadership styles could be detrimental to the function of a charismatic leader.

The Charismatic leader has to invest a great deal of time in fostering his relationships with the team in order to use this style.

5.5.4 When to Use It

When commitment to a vision is the most important aspect of a team's functioning, the charismatic leadership style can work well. Particularly if there is the need to work quickly, work hard, and get a new company, division, or product off the ground. It can also be helpful to rejuvenate an organization where team members have gotten stale or disheartened. When companies seek to recreate their image in the face of the public, they will often put forth a charismatic leader as the representative of the 'new' element.

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6 Leading the Team

6.1 Team Purpose Statements

Each team plays a role within the organization. What they do is important to the function of the company and its ability to fulfill the mission and vision of the entity as a whole – or else they wouldn't be there. Yet in many work situations, it is easy to lose sight of the importance of the work that a team completes.

Team Purpose Statements take the organizations' mission and vision statements and make them relatable to your team members on a personal level.

This is particularly true in organizations that are vertical in structure, so that there are multiple layers of authority between the 'front line' worker and the top leadership of the organization. This can also happen when there is physical separation between your team and the headquarters of the organization so that your individual team members have little direct contact with those that are steering the company. Or when there is a culture in the company of level distinction, where those at the lower levels of the organization are seen as being less important than those that are leading them. Creating team purpose statements is a way to connect your team to the mission of the company as a whole.

6.1.1 The Power of Purpose

Leading others requires that you have somewhere to lead them. While mission and vision statements are used to create the destination for the entire organization, a team purpose statement serves the same function for an individual work unit within the overall structure. The team purpose statement explains the reason that your employees are there, and at the same time, gives them an understanding of how their work forwards the success of the organization. It can help your team to feel important and connected to the mission of the company. If it's done well, a team purpose statement also gives the team something to reach for together, fostering team work and cohesiveness.

Team purpose statements can unite disparate members of the team, they give your team inspiration, and they give you a useful tool in leading the group.

A team purpose statement isn't just for your employees, though. It also has benefits for you as a leader. It gives you a tool to refer to when you need to correct behavior, make changes that might be unpopular, or add policies that could be otherwise perceived by your team members as restrictive or unnecessary. It's even useful as a basis for rewarding behavior; acting in line with the team purpose can be noted and applauded as a way to positively reinforce other team members' behavior.

6.1.2 Creating the Team Purpose Statement

The process of creating a team purpose statement will not be exactly the same for every organization. There are factors that influence a team that may make some of these steps impossible or unwise. But the key is to remember that the purpose statement should inspire, not chastise. It should express a possibility, not something unreachable. It should, ideally, be created with input from the team as a whole in order to foster buy-in. The team will not be as likely to complain about the steps required to fulfill the statement if the team had a hand in creating it.

To begin, identify what it is about your team that distinguishes you from the rest of the organization. What is special about your group? What do you do better than your competitors? Or, if your customers are all internal so you don't have 'competitors' per se, what is it that you can be proud of? It could be the quality of your work, the measures you've reached, or some other success that you've had together.

Start to create your team purpose statement by identifying what it is about your team that makes you stand out from the pack. What do you do better than the competition or what are you particularly proud of?

Next, figure out what the actual function your team performs is. This isn't as straightforward as it might seem at first. For example, if you are the lead of a marketing team, the answer isn't simply 'marketing.' It could be that you help create and perpetuate the image of the organization so that your product can find its way into the homes of your customers and give them the benefits that it offers. Or if you are the training division of your organization, your function could be to empower the company's employees with the knowledge and skills that they need in order to perform at their best.

If you are having a hard time getting to the root of your team's function, ask yourself a question. What would happen if you stopped doing your jobs? How would that impact the company's ability to meet its mission? For example, if you stopped marketing, what would happen? How would it impact the rest of the employees and their ability to perform their own roles? How would that then impact the company's future? What would that then do to your customers or clients? When you start to see what would unravel if you stopped performing, it can give you powerful insight into what your work provides to the organization.

Next, answer some questions to help you identify what your true function is as a team. It's not always what you first think of.

Now that you have your function and you have thought of what it is that makes your team special, you can combine them into a team purpose statement that best exemplifies your team and the work that you do. It should give an indication of how you will measure your success or progress so that you know what it looks like when you are operating in line with your team purpose – and what it looks like when you are not operating in line with it. It should be something that resonates with your team members, something that they can feel personally invested in. For example, if you lead the order fulfillment team, a sample team purpose statement could be:

We strive each day to provide our customers with fast, accurate, safe delivery of their products in order to safeguard our organization’s reputation as the leading widget company in the southeast and to foster the success of our customers in their own endeavors.

It states what you do, and it states the impact of what you do. You can infer that failure would mean that your customers are negatively impacted, and hence the organization’s reputation for customer service would suffer as well. It conveys a message that you are proud to fulfill customer orders because you understand the importance of doing your job well. It’s a statement that you can use to inspire others, correct or direct their actions, or reward them for meeting its standards.

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6.2 Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing

6.2.1 Introduction

No one works entirely independently these days. Even if you work for yourself, you are working for a customer, with vendors, or with your subordinates. It's more likely that you are working in a team environment and are either already in a leadership role or are hoping to advance to one. If you are forming a new team, there are particular challenges involved. When people come together for the first time as a team, there is a learning curve – not just about the project you will be working on together, but also about each other.

Bruce Tuckman, a noted psychologist, first came up with the phrase “forming, storming, norming, and performing” in 1965. It describes the stages of development of every team unit. He later added another stage – adjourning, which is how he describes the end of a team's work together and the parting of ways. Others may call this phase ‘mourning’ instead.

Teams develop in a series of stages as they start to work together. By becoming aware of the stages and what's involved in each one, you will be prepared for the ups and downs of a new team and you will understand that certain difficult aspects of forming a new team are to be expected. Bruce Tuckman first called these stages Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing in 1965, but they continue to be accurate today. In fact, an additional phase, called Adjourning, has since been added, which describes what happens when a team ceases to work together (intentionally) and goes on to other work.

6.2.2 Forming

In the forming stage, everyone tends to be on their best behavior. Everyone is polite and excited, usually spouting positive comments about the new team and the work that will be done together. Others might be anxious, as they haven't quite figured out what the team is about or what their role will be. They are trying to figure you out as a leader as well – what type of leader you will be, how you will interact with them as a team, and whether or not they feel comfortable with you.

At this point in the team formation, your role as a leader is the only one that might be clear and so it is also the dominant one. You will want to make it clear that you have a handle on what the team will be doing. You want to work to build trust, demonstrate integrity, and understand which team members will do the best in which roles.

Forming Phase: The ‘getting to know you’ stage. Everyone is trying to figure out how the team will work, what their roles will be, and what kind of leader you will be.

This stage doesn't tend to last very long. It could be one-meeting or a few weeks while you are still designing roles and forming procedures of how you will operate. Before long the group will move into the second stage, Storming.

6.2.3 Storming

This is when the honeymoon period is over. You may find that some team members seek to challenge your authority or your decision-making. As roles and means of working are clarified, others may express discomfort in their roles, in the amount of work there is to do, or in the way that the work will be done. You might even hear team members questioning the purpose of the project, or expressing feelings that what they are doing is a waste of time. Personal conflicts between team members might rise up as well, as members are still jockeying for position or for your favor.

When you go through this phase, your leadership skills are key. If you can't get the team past this phase, it is likely that the team will either fail or will struggle along, limping painfully towards the final product. You will need to address conflicts, redirect behaviors to what is expected of the team, clarify roles, and check that you have given instructions in a clear, straight-forward manner. Be flexible during this stage, and willing to adjust roles or assignments as necessary. Adopt the attitude that you are all in this together, and that you acknowledge that changes in what was originally set-up as the team structure might be needed along the way. Address complaints before they become roadblocks. And as always, be sure to praise and reward achievements and positive behaviors.

Storming Phase: reality sets in. The team may question you, your decisions, or the point of what they are doing. Your leadership skills must come into play here in order to move the team past this phase.

6.2.4 Norming

As you move past the storming phase and resolve the situations that came up during that phase, you will move your team into the Norming stage. A hierarchy has been established at this point, meaning that your team members have accepted you as the leading authority of the team and may even have begun to take on leadership roles themselves within the team.

By now the team members have begun to get to know each other as well. They may have begun socializing with each other. They feel more comfortable asking one another for help or input and they are more willing to accept constructive criticism.

Norming Phase: In this phase the team has accepted your authority and have begun to get to know each other. They request help and accept constructive criticism. Your leadership role is to reinforce their commitment to the team goal and to monitor for any slips back into Storming behavior.

The individual team members have begun to commit to the team's overall goal, and as the leader, your job is to continue fostering this commitment. You will also need to make minor corrections as the team moves forward, guiding them back onto the path towards goal completion.

Also be aware that there can be some overlap between the storming and norming phases. In particular, the team may revert to some storming type behaviors when new challenges come up or when tasks that they haven't tackled before are required. Over time, and with your vigilance, these slips back into storming behavior will become less frequent and shorter in duration over time.

6.2.5 Performing

At this point in team formation, the team is functioning at its best. They are working under agreed upon methods with the joint purpose of reaching the team's goals. The team structures, procedures, policies, and processes are set up such that they form a sort of team 'culture.' The team could lose members or add new members but would still function well because of the established culture.

Performing Phase: your team is now operating like a well-oiled machine. You can delegate work and know it will be done well. You can focus on individual team-member development, which will help to prepare the team members for leaving the team.

As a leader, you will find this the easiest stage that your team will go through. You will be able to delegate a great deal of the work that there is to do, and to trust that it will be done well. You will also be able to begin concentrating on staff development, particularly because you will have learned a great deal about your individual team members at this point. This is important not just for showing your team members that you are invested in their development, but also because it helps to prepare them for the final phase of team development – the team's end.

6.2.6 Adjourning or Mourning

All teams are temporary. People will leave the team due to promotions, retiring, or transferring to another department or another organization. The organization will shift priorities and will shift resources, meaning the team may be disbanded due to changes in its structure or needs.

Adjourning or Mourning Phase: The team recognizes that their time together is coming to an end. Your role revolves around helping each individual move on to their next position or role.

The dissolution of a team can be difficult for team members, particularly those who don't like change or who have become attached to other members of the team. There may even be team members who aren't sure of their job continuing or who may be reassigned to roles that are distinctly different from what they have been doing on your team. You can expect some agitation and anxiety at this stage. But you can help to alleviate it if you have been working on team development in previous phases. You can help to prepare them for the next level of work or another area of work where they are most likely to find a job after your team's project is finished.

6.2.7 Your Approach During Each Phase

In order to help summarize your leadership role and approach for each phase of team development, follow the steps below to use the tool provided in Figure 9. Identify which phase of development your team is in based on the descriptions provided in the last sections. Then use the tips provided to help move your team towards the Performing phase.



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Phase	Your Goal
Forming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clear directions • Establish clear objectives • Begin defining roles • Form team purpose • Begin working to establish trust and display integrity
Storming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish team structures and reporting relationships • Address challenges to your authority or to the team purpose / goal • Establish processes, procedures, and policies • Identify and address conflicts • Make corrective changes as needed • Encourage positive behaviors
Norming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage team members to give and take guidance from each other • Recognize positive contributions • Arrange team-building activities when appropriate • Encourage team members to take leadership of certain tasks or activities • Fine tune procedures, policies, and roles as needed
Performing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delegate responsibility to team members • Encourage continuing achievement and 'high performance' • Focus on individual team member development and begin thinking about the future beyond the team
Adjourning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate team and individual achievements • Solicit 'lessons learned' from team members • Assist team members in transitioning to new positions or new roles

Figure 9: Leadership Approaches for Each Team Development Phase

As you continue to lead this and other teams, you will begin to get good at identifying which phase your team is in and what needs to happen in order to move your team to the next phase. Here are a few final tips for doing so:

- Schedule time for coaching team members and for working on particular challenges the team faces
- Remain positive, continually bringing your focus and the team's focus back to the team purpose and the team's goal
- Be willing to revisit your decisions if it seems that certain structures, policies, or procedures are not working well
- Have realistic goals for moving forward from phase to phase, and use those targets as methods for gauging your success
- Seek feedback from the team and from those your team serves. Look for ways to improve and be certain to notice and reward individual improvements

7 Delegating

7.1 Introduction

Even “Super-You” needs help and support. There is no shame in asking for assistance. Push aside the pride and show respect for the talent others can bring to the table.

And, remember that there is no such thing as a single-handed success: When you include and acknowledge all those in your corner, you propel yourself, your teammates and your supporters to greater heights.

– Author Unknown.

Delegation. It's a word that brings up different pictures for different people. But in terms of leadership skills, delegation is one of the most important things that you can learn to do well. There are two main reasons for this.

First, as the quote says, you are only one person. You are certain to need assistance in completing the tasks that your team has been assigned – otherwise, why even bother having a team at all? So when you learn to delegate, you are actually learning a powerful time-management skill. You can use it to focus on what is actually important for your team rather than wasting time on items that you could pass on to another of your team members. You will be a better leader if you are able to focus on what is best for the team, and delegating is the way to make this possible.

Second, true leaders recognize that delegating is actually a powerful tool in helping to develop others. When you delegate, you are offering an opportunity to the person you entrust with the job. They can learn a new skill, further develop existing skills, be responsible for bringing back new information to the team, get practice in leading others in completing the task that you assign, or get exposure to other areas of the organization that will make them better informed for performing their roles in the future. This is a powerful way to view delegating – you're not 'passing the buck.' You're offering opportunities for your team to develop themselves.

Of course, delegating is a skill. You can't just hand off a job to an employee and expect them to automatically succeed. You will need to examine your workload, the skills of your team members, the potential for development, and the level of risk you are able to take when you are planning to delegate. And delegating doesn't mean washing your hands of something either. Delegating requires the ability to remain in communication about the status of a project without seeming to be micromanaging. If you're having to follow every detail along the way, you haven't truly delegated and you're not doing yourself or your team member any good.

7.2 Why People Resist Delegating

There are a number of reasons that people decide not to delegate a task or project. One common reason is that you might think it is easier to do it yourself. That's because it takes some work up-front in order for you to be able to delegate. Sure, in the short-term, it might have been faster for you to do it yourself. But once you have established a delegating relationship with your employee, it will take less time as you continue to do it.

Another reason people don't like to delegate is because they are afraid of losing control over the project that they are ultimately responsible for completing successfully. You have to ask yourself where your skills are best put to use. As the leader, focusing on individual projects is usually not the best use of your time. You can delegate the individual tasks, keeping your mind on the overall strategy and direction of the 'big picture.' You'll need to learn to balance the desire to keep control over every bit of a project with the understanding that in the long-run, you can be more effective as a leader and as a team if you learn to delegate well.

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7.3 When Delegating Does and Doesn't Work

Before you know for certain whether a project is something that you can delegate, you'll want to explore several questions about the type of task or project, the frequency of it, and the risk that delegation might entail.

- Does anyone else on the team have the information that is needed (or can be given the information needed) to complete the task?
- Is the task likely to be needed again in the future?
- Could the task help to develop the skills of one of your team members?
- Do you have the time that it will take in order to delegate effectively? You'll need to have time to transfer knowledge, answer questions, check progress and possibly, for corrections.
- Is this a task that I can afford to delegate? Am I comfortable with the risk that I am taking in delegating?

To look at this from another point of view, there are also reasons that delegating might not work. Reasons that you might choose to do it yourself include:

- There isn't enough time to redo the job if it's not done right the first time
- The consequences for not completing the job on time are severe enough that it's not worth the risk
- The results have to be of the highest quality the first time around
- A failure at this project would do critical damage to the project

In general, the more mission-critical a job is, the less likely it is one that you should delegate. But if you have a tendency to view every single job as mission-critical, you need to re-examine your ideas. There are certain to be tasks in every job that are less critical than others, or that are less bound by time. Start small, and gradually you'll build confidence in your team's abilities and in your own ability to delegate successfully.

7.4 To Whom?

To whom should you delegate? That depends entirely on the staff that you have, their skills, and the skills required for the task that you plan to delegate. You want to do the best you can to match the task to the right person. If you're considering more than one person for a task, addressing some of the following factors may help you to make the final decision.

1. The individual's level of experience, knowledge, skills, or ability to acquire new ones
 - What abilities does he or she possess?
 - Is there time to get the person additional needed skills?

2. How does the individual like to work?
 - Is he or she independent enough?
 - Does he or she have enough confidence?
 - Does this task align with his or her interests?
 - Will the new skills acquired align with his or her future work goals?

3. How will I shift his or her existing work load?
 - Does he or she have time for more work?
 - How will this affect the other team members?
 - Will it have any impact on meeting existing deadlines?

Once you have delegated to someone, you might feel that they are taking longer than you expected. Don't let this alone convince you that you have chosen poorly. Often we forget that tasks we are now accustomed to doing regularly once took us longer as well. If you have chosen the right person, their speed will likely increase with time.

7.5 How to Delegate Successfully

Now that you've identified what tasks to delegate and to whom to delegate them, you need to still do the actual delegation. You need to be certain that you have shared all necessary information, given them the needed authority, and set boundaries as to where that authority ends. Other items should be covered so that you give your staff person the best possible chance of completing the task successfully. The following suggestions will help you to delegate well.

1. Identify clearly for the person what the outcome and results of the task should be. You should be able to describe what a successful result will look like in specific detail. For example, you shouldn't give them the expectation of a report. Instead, be as specific as you can. A 10–12 page report, single spaced, answering questions A, B, & C, which includes the same sort of graphics as were used in the similar report dated January of last year.
2. Now give them the boundaries. How much authority do they have? To whom are they accountable during this process? Be sure to identify for them:
 - What types of decisions they can make on their own
 - What types of decisions they must come to you for
 - What information can be shared and what should be kept private
 - Any budget authority or constraints, if applicable
 - Any milestones at which they should check in with you before moving on
 - Any time expectations for those milestones and for the final project
 - Whom they can go to for support, information, or assistance
 - Who else on the team will be assisting them

3. Make sure you are giving them the appropriate responsibility level for the authority level that you have given them. In other words, you cannot hold them accountable for something that you have not given them the authority to do. Remember that ultimate accountability rests with you.
4. Look for the person who is closest to the work that you want done, even if it means delegating to a lower level of the organization than you would have first considered. For example, if you want to write a 'frequently asked questions' document on your product, who better to delegate the task to than the customer service representative who has had the best sales record, customer service satisfaction scores, or other obvious demonstration of expertise in the subject matter?
5. Establish a means and schedule of communicating that ensures that you are available for questions and troubleshooting. Make sure you treat that set aside time as if it is a scheduled appointment you must keep. This lets you monitor progress and identify any corrections that are needed before the person is way off target.
6. Monitor against agreed upon timelines, deadlines and milestones. This has you focus on results rather than the way those results are achieved. In other words, let them do the work their way as long as they are producing satisfactory results in a timely manner.
7. Focus on fostering motivation. Let the person know what additional opportunities might become available if they complete the task successfully. Will there be financial rewards? Public recognition? Shared credit?
8. Expect the person to propose solutions to any problems that they bring to you. This prevents them from passing the project back to you and keeps them involved and responsible.
9. Be certain to inform other team members of the authority that you have given to the person you are delegating to, and to share this information with any relevant stakeholders in other divisions or departments of the company or to anyone else affected by the decision to delegate.

As you have more experiences of delegating to your team, you will learn additional items that need to be covered in order to make each particular project easily delegated. As you continue leading the team, you'll figure out what works best with each team member as well. Remember that as a leader, you are helping your team to develop skills that will not only help you the next time a similar task comes around, but will help that team member to be better equipped for additional responsibilities in the future.

8 Mentoring Others

8.1 Introduction

The best leaders are those who understand that one measure of success is how successful their team members are. Building your team's skills, abilities, and success is an integral part of being a leader. Helping them grow, helping them improve, and helping them become prepared for the next job or task is all part of your role. We can bundle this part of your role under the term 'mentoring'.

Of course, mentoring is invaluable within your team. But it doesn't have to be limited to your team members. You can be a mentor in any area of your life where you have skills, knowledge, experience, or abilities that others can benefit from learning. Or, you can be a mentee yourself so that you have access to another means of developing your own skill set.

8.2 What is Mentoring?

One definition of mentoring is that it is the relationship between two people who have the mutual goal of development on both a personal and professional level. The mentor is usually the senior, or at least more experienced, member of the relationship. The mentor has knowledge, skills, training, experience, and abilities that the mentee would like to develop.

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The mentor is a role model and advisor for the mentee, whether on a formal or informal basis. You do not have to have a direct supervisory relationship over a mentee, though that type of relationship is a natural way for a mentoring relationship to develop. Mentors support mentees by sharing their knowledge and giving their advice on different situations that the mentee faces, usually with the goal of helping the mentee advance his or her career in the future.

The benefits of mentoring are multifold for both parties. The mentee gains all the benefits of personalized coaching and training from someone who is already a success in their field. The mentee has a person they can go to when they find themselves in difficult or confusing situations in the workplace and they are uncertain of how to proceed. Mentors can find mentoring very rewarding as well. On a personal level, being a mentor and seeing your mentee succeed is gratifying. However, there are benefits on a professional level as well. You can improve your leadership skills, your communication skills, and get a better understanding of how you have reached your goals through the mentoring process. In problem-solving with your mentee, you can gain new perspectives on old problems, or learn new ways of handling things that you might not have considered before.

8.3 What to Consider before Mentoring

Mentoring is a great way to improve your leadership skills, but you need to be certain that you are ready for this kind of relationship before undertaking it. Mentoring takes a great deal of time and a significant level of commitment in order for it to be beneficial. Some questions to ask yourself before beginning a mentoring relationship are:

- Are you certain that the skills you have are a good match for the mentee's needs?
- Is there another way of meeting the potential mentee's needs regarding necessary or desired knowledge and skills that would be faster and more effective than mentoring?
- Is this a good use of time for you? Are you certain that you have the time to devote to your mentee on a regular basis?
- How will this relationship benefit you professionally? Personally? Are the benefits enough to keep you satisfied in the arrangement long-term?
- What boundaries do you need to set on the relationship? Are there areas of your expertise or experience that you are not willing to mentor in? Have you made that clear to the mentee?

These questions will help you ensure that you both understand what the relationship will entail. If you have different ideas about what will be shared, what time will be offered, or what length of time the relationship will continue, the relationship will end up as a disappointment to one or both of you.

8.4 Structuring Your Mentoring Relationship

If you are mentoring those within your work group, the structure for that relationship may already be partially set by the requirements of your human resources department. For example, you may be required to submit performance evaluations once per year, and to (hopefully) show improvement in performance from year to year.

In other situations, there may not be a formal structure already in place for mentoring, or you may be able to personalize the structure that you are supposed to use in order to fit the needs of your team. In these cases, you can consider the factors below to help you structure a mentoring program that will have you both be comfortable with the process and that will help ensure the greatest benefit.

- **Formality:** will you have a formal, structured relationship with specific goals and topics to be covered, or will you approach your relationship in more of an ad hoc manner, deciding as you go what to cover?
- **Frequency:** How often are you going to be in contact with each other? You both need to be in agreement about the amount of time you can devote to the relationship. You'll want to agree on:
 - How often you will meet
 - The length of each meeting
 - Whether or not you will be available between meetings
- **Method:** Will you meet face-to-face? What about by phone or by email? Who is responsible for initiating each contact? If you are using email or telephone, what is the expected length of time for responding?
- **Duration:** How long will your relationship last? Will you agree to a specific time frame and corresponding number of meetings, or to the accomplishment of specific goals, no matter how long that takes? Will you have regular, formal reviews of the relationship in order to determine whether or not to continue, or will you just keep meeting as long as you both feel that it's beneficial?
- **Confidentiality:** What level of information and details can you share? You might need to agree that you will not share specific examples, but will only be able to speak in generalities.

Here are a few final things to consider when you are structuring your mentoring relationships within your team. First, be sure that you are treating each team member equally, and providing them all with the opportunity to be mentored. For example, you could use a personal mentoring relationship as a reward for reaching a certain level of performance, but you should not ‘favor’ random employees by dedicating extra time to their development.

Finally, put into place a means of monitoring what impact your mentoring is having on your employees. For example, you might set a goal of decreasing customer complaints about the mentee by 20% after two months of your mentoring relationships. The measures you use will be entirely dependent on the type of work you do and the type of goals you have for your mentee. But using measures gives you tangible evidence that what you are doing is working – or not. Plus, it gives you something to share with your own superiors in demonstrating the impact of your leadership skills.



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