

Leadership Essentials



...a better way to manage

the
happy
manager

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HOW TO BE A BETTER MANAGER

Leadership Essentials

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How to be a Better Manager...

Leadership Essentials is one of a series of practical, thought-provoking guides, designed to help you deal with a wide range of management ideas, activities and situations. Whether you are a new manager, or one who wants to hone or develop existing skills, we're sure you'll find something valuable in any of these guides.

This series of e-guides is published by Apex Leadership Ltd. The guides have been developed by a team of professional managers, consultants and educators. The full range of titles is available from [Apex Leadership Ltd](#), or from [the Happy Manager.com](#). Use these guides to benefit from our wealth of management expertise. Let us help you find: **a better way to manage...**"

Phil Higson & Anthony Sturgess
Directors, Apex Leadership Ltd

Using the guides

Each guide contains information, insight and inspiration on essential management topics. The best way to use the guides is to read through each section in turn, ensuring you pause for reflection wherever you see the "Consider..." points. Be sure to answer any questions posed, wherever they appear - they are there for a reason!

Consider ...

Tools ...

After you've worked through the guide, work through the tools. These have been designed to help you use and develop the advice given in the guide.

- Click on the tool buttons where they appear for an in-text hyperlink to the actual tool.
- At the end of each tool you can simply click on the "return" link to get back to your place in the guide.

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Where do you start?

Search Amazon.com for "leadership" books and you'll find over 40,000 titles from which to choose. It seems everyone has a view on leadership but how is it possible to learn about leadership, and how do you learn how to be a better leader?

Think for a moment about your own leadership training. Was it based largely on a formal course or qualification, or have you mainly picked up things as you went along? However you may have started, keeping up to date is crucial - whether through more courses, by on-the-job-training, or by your own personal development.

Techniques and tools may build solid foundations, but it's intellectual skills and insight that will really help leaders to build their careers.

More commonly, leaders tend to gain these initial techniques and intellectual skills on courses. These provide an excellent start, but they are only that... a start.

Leadership and management knowledge is not static. It must be dynamic if it's to help us respond to the constantly changing environment in which our businesses operate.

Some ideas may well have a timeless quality about them, others may have had their time and have a diminishing relevance for the future. Therefore, what we know about leadership and management should be under regular review.

This e-guide is designed to help you:

- Explore key leadership ideas.
- Evaluate the relevance, credibility and limitations of current ideas of leadership.
- Apply relevant leadership models to your practice.
- Develop your ability to keep-up-to -date.

Before thinking about the qualities of leadership, stop for a moment to reflect on why you might want to be a leader...

Consider ...

"I believe in businesses where you engage in creative thinking, and where you form some of your deepest relationships.

If it isn't about the production of the human spirit, we are in big trouble."

UK Entrepreneur, Anita Roddick

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How is leadership defined?

It quickly becomes apparent that there is little agreement to be found when trying to define leadership. This is partly because it is a complex area to understand, one that conjures different viewpoints and perspectives in many of us.

Some define leadership:

- In terms of qualities that leaders have.
- In terms of the few rather than the many (leaders are born not made).
- As a process of influencing and motivating followers.
- As something distributed or collaborative – with many people at many levels showing leadership.
- By a position within an organisation. Leaders have formal position and authority.
- As a sub-set of management.
- As a philosophy, attributing values and a moral position to leadership.

To illustrate this diversity of interpretation, here are two definitions of leadership. The first is an expression of the process view of leadership. The second explains leadership as a part of management:

- “People who know what they want and why they want it, and have the skills to communicate that to others in a way that gains support” Bennis.
- “Leadership can be seen as performing the influencing function of management, largely involved with establishing goals and motivating people to help achieve them.” Hannagan.

One might argue that these are mainstream views but are they enough? Isn't there a strong case for a definition of leadership which is also informed by a philosophical view? One which emphasises values and a moral perspective?

Think about the leader quoted by well-known U.S. management thinker Gary Hamel, in his book “Leading the Revolution”:

“We always felt we were on a mission. We were morally outraged that so much of the energy business was a government mandated monopoly. You were hostage as a customer. We were always on the side of the angels. The people who were against us were always the entrenched interests.”

This might sound like a principled leadership position until you reflect on the organisation this leader worked for: Enron. Following the crash of Enron many leadership and management courses quickly revised their curricula to ensure they featured ethics and principled approaches to leadership. This is perhaps unsurprising given that Enron was an organisation noted for hiring significant numbers of high calibre MBA students.

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Old paradigm and new paradigm leadership thinking

Having discussed the way thinking on leadership has evolved, we can now examine how the context of leadership thinking is changing. This is in response to the fact that our organisations, and the wider environment in which they operate, are inevitably changing. For example:

- Hierarchical systems of management control are giving way to new approaches of leadership which have shared vision and individual empowerment at their core, in place of consistency and control.
- Leadership is no longer the preserve of those in positions of power. Increasingly it is dispersed through the organisation and has become a form of influence; an interaction between leader and follower.
- A generation of young people in the workplace who will not accept, or will not readily conform, to older style control and hierarchy.
- A networked, more fluid social and work environment.

Most people agree that the pace of change is not likely to decrease. We may well need to regularly redefine our approach to leadership as the context and circumstance in which it is practiced change.

Of course there is still value in some of the earlier thinking on leadership. For example:

- Trait theory – it's worth thinking about your own strengths (and how you use them) to improve the way you lead. Knowing yourself, your personal characteristics and qualities, is a vital step in your leadership development.
- Situational and style leadership – there is value in recognising that some styles will be more appropriate in different circumstances. As can the insight that leadership is always set in a context, a particular situation. It is helpful to know how changing your behaviour might ensure you are more effective in a particular context.

However, much has changed in both a social business context, and in the way we think about leadership. The changing nature of leadership is captured well by the following quotation:

"The leader of the past... is a doer; of the present, a planner; of the future, a teacher. Her job is to develop capabilities; not to plan the company's actions but to increase its capacity to act, its responsiveness, and its repertoire.... This kind of leader doesn't need to know everything; on the contrary, she'll want to be surrounded by people who know a whole lot more but trust her to weigh their competing claims."

Thomas A. Stewart.

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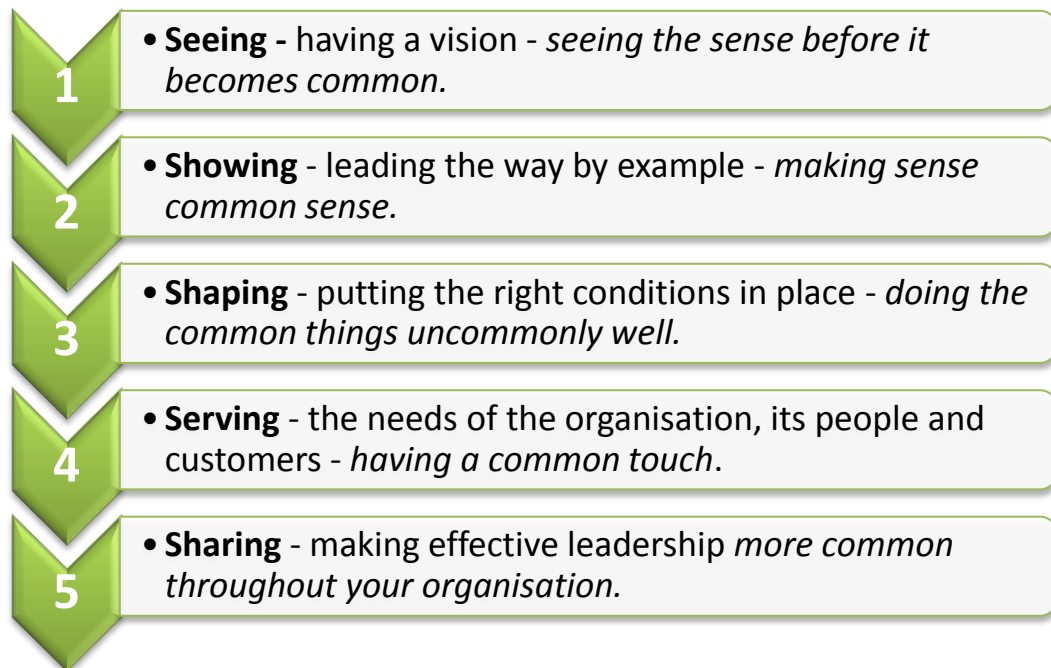
Uncommon leadership

In our 5-S Uncommon Leadership Model we have brought together an approach to leadership which recognises critical elements. The model includes the two emerging areas we have just discussed:

- Building leadership more widely in the organisation.
- Setting out to serve others as your motive for leading.

The essence of the model is to help you developing your own approach to leadership, building on the wisdom of others but based on your own strengths. It's making critical, positive differences, to people and to the organisations in which you lead. It's leading people effectively, regardless of the context within which they are operating.

The model is built on five steps to uncommon leadership. Through these, leaders develop their organisations and their people by:



The 5-S Uncommon Leadership Model is explored in more detail in our guide: Defining Leadership.

A companion guide to Leadership Essentials.

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Tool 3: The changing face of leadership

There is much to learn from how ideas on leadership have evolved over time. Use this tool to think about how you can improve your leadership by thinking about the best elements from each theory.

Leadership Theory	Characteristics	Insight
Qualities or traits	Assumes leaders are born not made – inherited characteristics.	Think about your own strengths and abilities. How can you use them to improve how you lead?
Functional or group approach	Functions and responsibilities of leadership.	Think about what a leader focuses on: goals; results; developing individuals; building teams.
Behaviour category	Kinds of behaviour demonstrated by people in leadership positions, and its influence on the group.	Think about how you lead and the impact it has on your colleagues.
Styles of leadership	Concerned with the effects of leadership on those being led.	Styles suggest a combination of behaviours that tend to reflect a continuum, from directive to participative to delegative styles.
Situational approach	Importance of the situation. Belief that there is no single style of leadership appropriate to all situations	Think about the context: how experienced are your colleagues; how developed is the team you lead? To what extent do you delegate decision making and problem solving to the team?

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Updates

For more information on the content of this e-guide, and other related topics, visit: www.the-happy-manager.com

Join the community: subscribe to the Happy Manager Newsletter for regular updates and advice on better ways to manage.

Join the conversation: bookmark the Happy Manager blog.

(www.the-happy-manager/blog) Leave any comments, suggestions or examples of your own experiences for the benefit of other readers.

Titles available:

How to be a Happy Manager
Have a Good Workday
How to Build a Happy Workplace
Workstyle, Lifestyle

Build a Better Team
Team Building Exercises
Team Health Check
The Problems with Teams
Why is Teamwork Important?

Leadership Essentials
Defining Leadership
Leading with Style and Focus
Leading Insights

Transformational Change
Sustaining Change
Making Change Personal

It's All About Performance
15 Performance Management Tips
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Performance Management Skills
Performance Management Toolkit
Conducting a Performance Review
Manage Your Own Performance
Motivating Performance

Managing for Strength to Strength
Managers Make the Difference
Re-defining Middle Management
Do More with Less
Managing Time and Priority
Extreme Thinking: Unlocking Creativity
SMART Goals, SHARP Goals
Making Better Decisions
What's the Problem?

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