



A Primer on Leadership Technique

Lecturer: Dr Carlo Kopp, MIEEE, MAIAA, PEng

Leadership Qualities and Technique



Reference Sources and Bibliography

- **NOTE:**
 - These sources are indicative - there are many other good texts available in libraries or on the web. They are referenced here as this presentation draws on them extensively.
- Jim Wuest, A.W. Fraser and Associates, **Self-Assessment Tool: Self-Check for Leadership Qualities.**
<http://www.pao.gov.ab.ca/toolkit/tools/self-check.htm>
- Michele Erina Doyle and Mark K. Smith, **classical leadership**,
http://www.infed.org/leadership/traditional_leadership.htm
- **Military Leadership Quotes**, <http://www.military-quotes.com/leadership-quotes.htm>
- **Napoleon Bonaparte Quotes**, <http://www.military-quotes.com/Napoleon.htm>
- **Unpublished correspondence – Brigadier B.H. Cooper (ret)**



Why Study Leadership?

- **Leadership is a critical capability in technical management.**
- **Managers without leadership capabilities achieve much less than managers with leadership qualities.**
- **Success in technical management is contingent upon the ability to motivate and focus the effort of personnel.**
- **No technical manager can think for all of his personnel all of the time.**
- **Delegating tasks is essential, but unmotivated personnel will not perform well when allocated tasks.**
- **Good leaders are effective at motivating their personnel and keeping them focused.**



Management vs Leadership

- Management skills and leadership qualities are often misrepresented as one and the same.
- A *manager can have excellent management skills and poor leadership ability.*
- A *manager can have excellent leadership ability and poor management skills.*
- Exceptionally successful managers are those who combine strong management skills with strong leadership abilities.
- Technical managers have to manage and lead personnel with very high skill levels who are often not receptive to being 'told what to do'.
- Leadership ability is therefore essential to success.



How Do We Define Leadership Qualities?

- There is a vast amount of literature available on leadership qualities, covering business leadership and military leadership.
- Many historical case studies have been documented, covering exceptional leaders in business, industry, politics and war.
- Often such literature will confuse domain skills with leadership qualities.
- *We will define 'leadership qualities' as those skills which make for a good leader, regardless of the discipline the leader operates in.*



Leadership Qualities (1)

- **Wuest identifies eleven qualities central to good leadership ability:**
 - 1. Competence**
 - 2. Integrity**
 - 3. Values**
 - 4. Vision**
 - 5. Commitment**
 - 6. Decisiveness**
 - 7. Effectiveness**
 - 8. Understanding people**
 - 9. Ability to build teams**
 - 10. Self confidence**
 - 11. Learning ability**



Competence or Professional Mastery

- Competence or professional mastery is a measure of the leader's understanding and experience in the area of activity.
- Understanding is critical to the leader's ability to recognise problems and define solutions, as it is important for recognising what others' aims may be.
- Experience is critical as it provides a leader with prior examples of problems and solutions with may be encountered.
- *A leader with much experience but poor understanding will not cope with new problems not encountered before.*
- *A leader with good understanding but little experience will repeat the mistakes of others.*



Integrity

- **Persons with integrity usually have these qualities:**
 - They always keep their word
 - They are always truthful
 - They are usually humble
 - They never ignore problems or inconvenient issues
 - They always admit mistakes and aim to correct them
 - They choose to do things properly even if this is difficult
 - They understand the limitations of themselves and others
- **Integrity is important as personnel place their futures in the hands of their leader. Few people will put themselves at risk if they cannot trust the person they are to be led by.**



Values

- A good leader will understand the values of the organisation or group he is leading within.
- A good leader will internalise these values and 'live' them.
- A good leader will test the performance of him/herself and others against these values.
- A good leader will test the organisation's values against wider community values.
- *Values are important as they represent a shared point of view between the leader and his or her followers. Personnel confronted with decisions can test their choices against the organisation's values to determine whether the choice is appropriate.*



Vision

- **Vision is the capacity to see a long term direction for the organisation and its actions.**
- **A leader with good vision can identify long term aims to be achieved, and possible paths to achieving them.**
- **While strategy usually deals with specific aims and specific paths to achieving these aims, vision is usually broader and less detailed.**
- **Vision is, effectively, the capacity to think strategically.**
- **Leaders who lack vision are 'reactive' in that their decisions are in *reaction to external events*, rather than chosen to achieve a long term aim.**



Commitment

- **A leader must be committed to his or her task, and be seen to be committed by those being led. The leader always sets an example.**
- **People will seldom follow a leader who has a visible lack of commitment.**
- **A committed leader will actively motivate personnel through his or her own enthusiasm and interest.**
- **A committed leader must be 'energetic' and confront problems aggressively.**
- **A committed leader must be seen to have the stamina and perserverence to maintain a course of action.**



Decisiveness

- **Decisiveness is the ability to make sound decisions quickly, and exploit opportunities.**
- **Making decisions usually involves some risk, and a good leader has the ability to identify risks and payoffs for a range of choices, and then make the best choice.**
- **Courage is an important aspect of decisiveness, since taking risks requires it.**
- ***Leaders who lack courage will often avoid making choices until the developing situation leaves only one choice, which is the one they take.***
- **Lack of decisiveness is one of the most common features of poor leaders.**



Effectiveness – Goals vs Process

- Effectiveness is a measure of a leader's ability to focus on objectives, rather than the processes of how to achieve those objectives.
- Good leaders will maintain a focus on the goal and adapt the techniques used to get to that goal as quickly required, with minimal resources.
- Poor leaders lose sight of the goal and become preoccupied with the processes to be followed in getting to the goal.
- *Since processes are usually devised to deal with past problems, leaders who are preoccupied with process usually fail when confronted with new types of problem.*



Understanding People

- **A good leader must understand human behaviour, especially what motivates or causes anxiety in the personnel being led.**
- **A good leader has the ability to listen to those he follows and understand their concerns.**
- **A good leader respects the abilities and opinions of those being led.**
- **A good leader cares about the successes and failures of those being led.**
- **A good leader encourages those being led to achieve their full potential.**
- **A feature of bad leadership is 'disconnection' from the concerns, opinions, interests and individual successes / failures of those being led.**



Ability to Build Teams

- For a leader to achieve effect, he or she must have the ability to form teams.
- In practical terms, this is more than the ability to organise and structure groups of personnel to perform tasks.
- A team must share a commitment as a group to achieve a shared or collective goal.
- A leader must be able to articulate team goals, provide personnel with the opportunities and means to achieve these goals, guide and support team members,
- A leader must also resolve disagreements and conflicts between team members, encourage active debate and critical argument over team decisions, and motivate team members.
- A good leader will identify team members with leadership potential and encourage them to develop these abilities.



Self Confidence

- **A confident leader has the ability to face up to unpleasant realities.**
- **A confident leader is always certain of his or her abilities.**
- **A confident leader understands his or her limitations and is comfortable with them.**
- **A confident leader has a good sense of their own worth in the organisation and broader community.**
- **Leaders cannot be confident if they present themselves to others as being more capable than they really are.**
- **A lack of self confidence in a leader usually impacts decisiveness, and will cause anxiety in those being led.**



Ability to Learn and Adapt

- The cliche 'the only constant is change' is more than often true, especially in technical management where markets, technology, workforce and regulation are continuously evolving.
- A good leader must have the ability to adapt to a rapidly evolving environment.
- Adaptation requires the ability to learn, and acceptance that learning is a continuous process which cannot be avoided.
- A good leader will actively aim to learn new ideas, techniques and methods.
- A good leader will encourage his followers to do the same.



The Importance of Loyalty

- A good leader must be loyal to his own leadership and their goals. If a leader is not perceived to be loyal, he or she may be denied full access to critical information like organisational objectives and vision.
- A good leader must be loyal to his followers, and protect them from external attacks by third parties, and superiors. Followers will not display loyalty to their leader if they know that leader will not protect them.
- Loyalty is a reciprocal relationship, insofar as it cannot be expected unless it is offered in return.
- Loyalty must be earned by actions, as proclaiming oneself to be loyal convinces nobody.
- *The loyalty of followers is often abused by poor leaders, usually with destructive effects.*



'Principles of War' vs Management Technique

- Military leadership technique is often emulated in business, sometimes successfully, sometimes not.
- ***Selection and Maintenance of the Aim.*** Know what you are out to achieve and do not be sidetracked;
- ***Knowledge.*** Know yourself, those you follow, those you lead and the business area in which you operate;
- ***Sustainment.*** Ensure you and those you lead have the resources to carry out the task; and
- ***Force Preservation.*** You must ensure that the risks you may need to take do not outweigh what your final product can offer.