

LEADERSHIP

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1 THE OBJECTIVE – WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

In this session, you will learn:

- About leadership skills and the characteristics of personal leadership;
- About self-motivation techniques and how to build a personal vision;
- About the importance of leadership in the workplace and what distinguishes leadership from management;
- About different leadership styles you can use when leading a team.

2 WHAT ARE LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Having leadership skills means you have an ability to guide a team or individual to achieve a certain goal through direction, motivation and encouragement. To build your leadership capacity and be able to effectively influence others, you need to develop several qualities:

- **Flexibility** – Leading a team of diverse people, different tasks, projects, and meetings require flexibility. Leaders are constantly adjusting to different people and situations to ensure things are going in the right direction and people are performing.
- **Empathy** – Leaders understand individuals around them and build trustworthy relationships to be able to guide them through the projects and tasks.
- **Decisiveness** – Leaders have to make challenging and timely decisions with the information they have available, usually with no room for hesitations.
- **Communication** – Effective communication reduces misunderstanding and conflict. On the other hand, communication increases collaboration and productivity of a team. Leaders have to communicate ideas effectively, verbally and non-verbally.
- **Integrity** – Leaders have a strong set of values guiding them to make ethical choices and decisions. They are honest and reliable inside and outside their team.
- **Relationship building** – Leaders are not only able to build a strong team, but also maintain it, bringing together different people to work together and strive for the same goal.
- **Problem solving** – Leaders can make quick decisions, resolve obstacles in working processes and mediate disputes inside the team.

- **Ability to teach and mentor** – Leaders think less about themselves and more about how to make a team as a whole successful.

EXERCISE

From the list above, choose two qualities that appeal to you and get better insight by researching them further on-line.

3 PERSONAL LEADERSHIP

Leadership is not a position, but a set of qualities that enables you to fulfil your potential. If you have strong personal leadership skills, you are able to lead yourself as well, not only others. You have the ability to develop and apply your leadership qualities and guide the direction of your life instead of letting time and outside circumstances determine it. You are able to discover your talents and potential and develop them in order to achieve your personal and professional goals. Two vital qualities enabling personal leadership are having a personal vision and self-motivation.

3.1 Personal vision

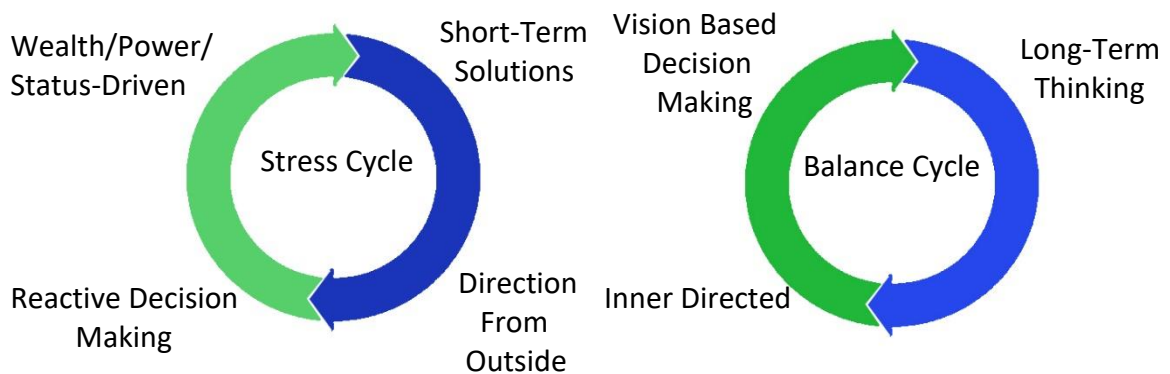
Personal leadership begins when you decide to be your own life coach and live by your personal vision and mission that reflect your values and life goals. Having personal vision is not about doing things well but to really understand why you are doing them in the first place – how you commit to living your life. It is about contributing your talents to people and ideas in which you believe.

Having clear personal vision can keep you more focused on achieving it:

- Personal vision will guide you in decision-making;
- You will become more meaning-driven and inner-directed;
- You will think more in the long-term;
- It will bring balance in your life.

Lack of personal vision can lead you to:

- Seeking short-term solutions;
- Taking directions from outside;
- Making reactive decisions;
- Being driven by wealth, power and status.



When you think about personal vision, think about what you **want to be** (character), what you **want to do** (contributions and achievements) and what are **the values** upon which being and doing are based. When you think about personal vision, think about different roles you play in your life (self, friend, spouse, work, hobby...).

You create a personal vision by going through a discovery process to clarify what is the most important to you. These steps can help you to get in the right mood for the process:

- **Quiet your mind** – Breathe slowly and calm down your thoughts not to be racing, making sure your mind is calm, empty and alert.
- **Connect to your heart** – Place your awareness on your heart and feel the warmth of being connected to yourself.
- **Explore what is important to you in your life** – When discovering what is important to you, you should consider the following:
 - **Values:** What do you stand by and value the most?
 - **Interests:** What do you enjoy doing the most?
 - **Areas of focus:** What are the major categories in your life that always need your attention (for example: health, financial, relationships...)?
 - **Strengths:** What are you naturally good at?

- **Dreams:** If this were your last day on earth, what would you regret not doing?
- **Skills:** What are three areas you strongly want to cultivate skills in that will enrich your life experience?
- **Profession:** What are the things you must do to be fulfilled in your work?
- **Create your personal vision statement** – Take time to reflect on the questions above and come back to them as often as needed while you are drafting the vision statement. Try to capture the things that are most important to you. The statement can be from a simple sentence to a one-page long text.

EXERCISE

Take your time to go through the described process above and think about your personal vision. When you are ready, write it down in simple sentences.

3.2 Self-motivation

To be self-motivated means to be self-driven. If you are doing something for your own purpose, something that will contribute to your goals and personal vision, it will be more fulfilling and enjoyable for you than doing something to please others and meet external standards. If you are only motivated to achieve standards set by somebody else and not for your own satisfaction and fulfilment, you are not self-motivated.

Self-motivation can be intrinsic, meaning it is personally rewarding to you. Self-motivation can also be driven by extrinsic motivation, the drive to achieve external reward, like money or recognition. When you are self-motivated, you not only generally do better work, but you also cope with stress better.

If you answer “yes” to these three questions, it means you are self-motivated to do certain thing:

- (1) Can I do it?
- (2) Will it work?
- (3) Is it worth it?

If you answer “yes” to all, it shows you are (1) self-efficient, (2) that your actions will lead to the desired outcome, and (3) the result of the action will outweigh the costs.

You can work on and improve your self-motivation in the workplace with simple practices:

- Finding work that sincerely interest you;
- Asking for feedback from your boss or co-workers;
- Learning a new skill that is relevant to your job;
- Asking for a raise (extrinsic motivator);
- Reminding yourself of the reason you do certain work – meaningful work is more fulfilling;
- Volunteer your services to others;
- Allowing yourself to rest and recharge by taking vacations or a few days off.

EXERCISE

Think about your last job. Have you found it personally fulfilling (learning new things, expanding the network...) or was it just a way to pay the bills? How can you make sure your job can be more fulfilling and connected to your personal goals?

4 LEADERSHIP IN THE WORKPLACE

Success of an organization depends on effective leadership. Executive leaders are shaping and directing the purpose of an organization. However, there are other leaders contributing to the success of a business as well, many of them without an official leadership title.

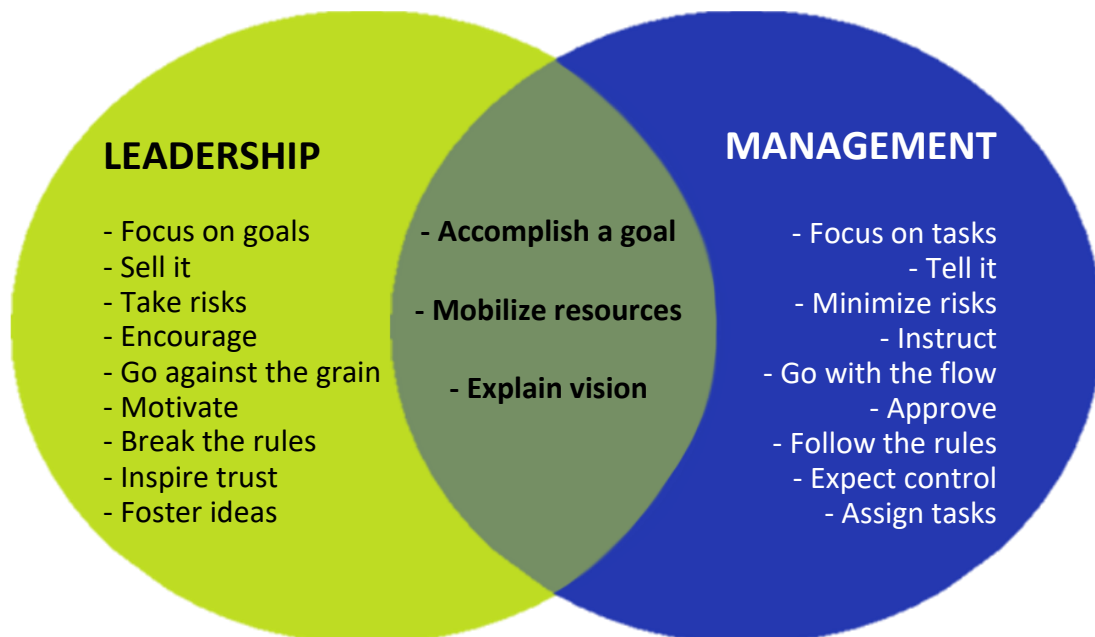
Leadership skills, the ability to drive yourself and the ability to lead others, are highly valued by employers.

4.1 Leadership vs Management

In an organization, leadership and management are two different functions and you cannot identify them as one. While good managers possess leadership skills and good leaders also have organizational skills, each one has specific roles in the company. The two functions are

complementary and one is not better than the other. Organizations need both – without leadership they would become stagnant and uninspired. On the other hand, without the management, they would fall out of compliance, not meeting the goals. Organization needs leaders and managers to grow and reach full potential.

Let us have a closer look at the differences between leadership and management:



- **Focus on goals and vision vs focus on tasks** – Leaders are concerned about the big picture of the organization and are oriented towards its vision and goals. Managers carry out ideas of leaders, thus they are task oriented.
- **Sell it vs tell it** – Leaders are coming up with new ideas and need to convince others about the value of these ideas. Managers’ role is to enforce those ideas, telling employees what procedures to follow.
- **Take risks vs minimize risks** – Leaders push for change in the organization and trying something new, you need to take risk. Managers keep the risks at minimum by making sure employees are doing what they are supposed to do.
- **Encourage vs instruct** – Leaders encourage employees to see the big picture. Managers are also providing encouragement, but their main role is to tell how to do things.

- **Go against the grain vs go with the flow** – Leaders always try new things to be more effective and to avoid the organization to stagnate. Managers, on the other hand, enforce the guidelines set by the leaders.
- **Motivate vs approve** – Leaders use organizational vision to inspire and motivate employees. Managers control employees to meet the standards set by the organization.
- **Break the rules vs follow the rules** – To innovate and distinguish the company from the competition, leaders normally bend rules if they are too rigid. Managers stick to the strategies set out by superiors.
- **Inspire trust vs expect control** – Leaders need to be able to build trust for employees to follow them in their vision and innovations. Managers have authority to tell employees what to do and employees do not have to like or trust them to do what they are told.
- **Foster ideas vs assign tasks** – Leaders are making improvements by fostering new ideas and trying new things, which lead to more innovation. Managers cannot encourage freethinking; they have to make sure employees do what they are supposed to do.

In a nutshell, management always follow leadership:

- **Leadership** as a skill means **DOING THE RIGHT THINGS** – you have a vision and set goals based on that vision. You answer the question: “What do we want to achieve?”
- However, when talking about **management** as a skill, it means **DOING THINGS RIGHT** – to have a good plan and proactive approach to achieving set goals. You answer the question: “How are we going to achieve it?”

4.2 Leadership styles

Everybody has their own leadership style – the pattern of behaviour we use to influence others. Your style is predicated on personal characteristics and preferences, previous experiences and knowledge and lastly on the situation you find yourself in – the type of company and its culture, organizational goals, and characteristics of a team. The more

experienced you are as leaders, more fluid you become shifting between the styles based on the needs and objectives of the team.

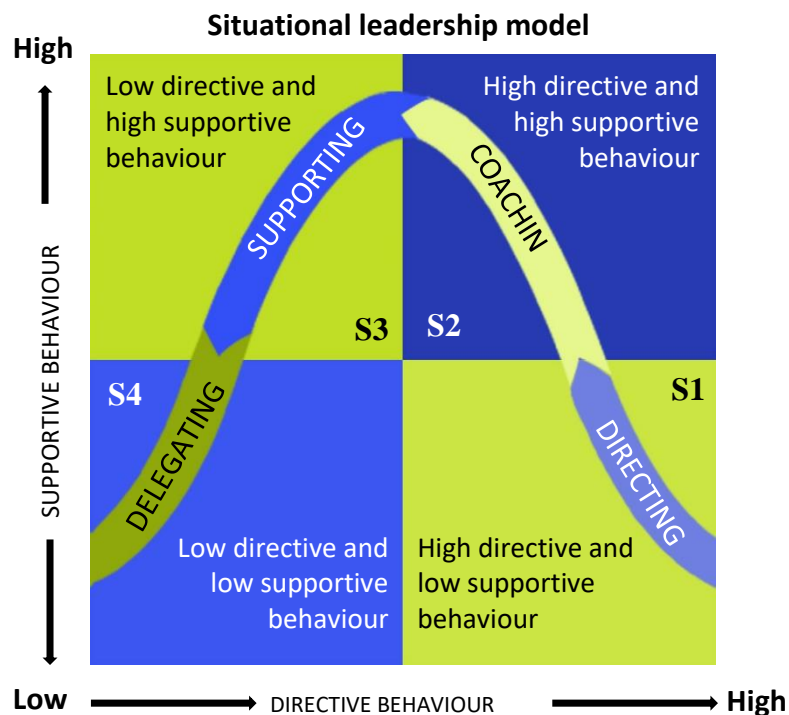
There are four basic leadership styles you can use to effectively lead the team:

- **Directing**
- **Coaching**
- **Supporting**
- **Delegating**

Which one you are going to use depends on how much decision-making authority you are giving away to team members. You decide the level of given authority based on different factors, such as:

- The nature of the task/project;
- Individual role in the task/project;
- Development level of the individuals – competence and commitment.

Based on the situation, you as leaders use different level of support and direction illustrated in the **Situational Leadership Model**:



DIRECTING

You direct someone when you more or less just tell them what to do, how to do it and when is the deadline. You provide regular feedback as well. Therefore, directing is more of a role of the manager than a leader.

You direct individuals with low competences and high commitment. They are inexperienced and unskilled but excited and optimistic beginners. You also direct individuals you outsourced work to (you are not working directly with them, like freelancers), where idea what needs to be done is very clear.

COACHING

You coach someone when you are selling the idea and vision to the team to make them perform. You excite and motivate them to get on-board with the objectives. You use high directive and high supportive behaviour.

You coach individuals with low competence and commitment. They need more explaining and encouragement from the leader. This style is best when you lead full-time employees.

SUPPORTING

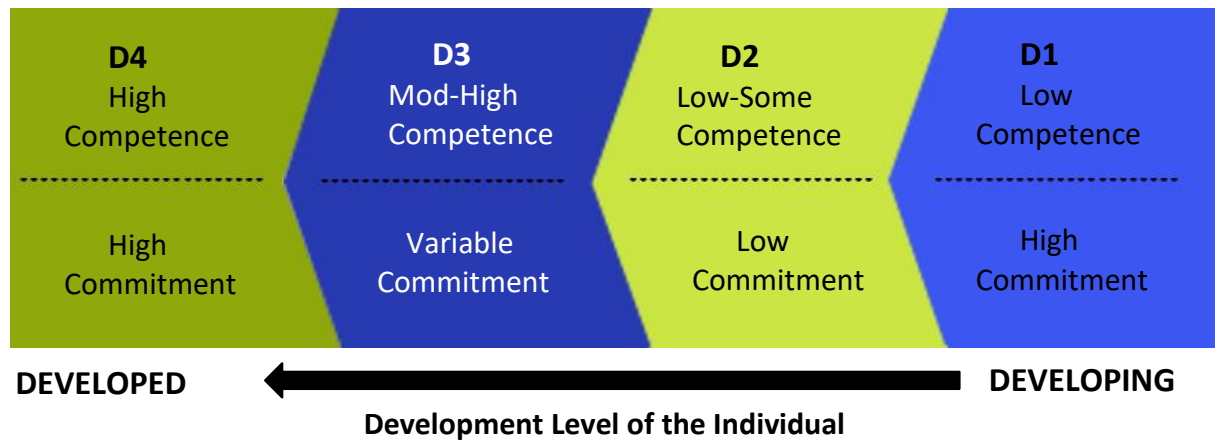
You support someone when you inspire and collaborate with the team, but still have the final say. The style is low in direction (giving individual the space), and high in support (not holding them directly accountable for the outcome).

You support individuals who are self-reliant in problem solving and collaborative. They have moderate to high competences and variable commitment. This collaborative style is used when leading a team of managers or directors.

DELEGATING

You delegate when you provide little direction or support and give full authority to the individual or team to make the final decision. This style is used by CEO's who completely trust

the decision-making abilities of their directors or managers due to their high competence and commitment.



5 HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR LEADERSHIP SKILLS

To be a good leader is a never-ending process of learning and practice and we all need to start somewhere. Here are some tips, how you can start building your leadership skills:

- **Find a mentor** – A mentor can help you identify your strengths and areas you need to improve on. A mentor can help you set goals and guide you on your leadership development path. You can find a mentor in your current or previous job, as well as in your professional network.
- **Conduct research** – There are different resources available on leadership development, from books, articles, on-line resources to podcasts. You can read autobiographies and biographies of your role- model leaders.
- **Take a training course** – There are diverse leadership courses available on-line or in-person. Taking a leadership course will keep you up to date with the latest knowledge and trends.
- **Identify your leadership style** – Get familiar with different leadership styles and find out which one suits you best.
- **Ask for feedback** – Regular constructive feedback from your team can help you improve your leadership skills.

- **Practice, practice, practice** – You can improve your leadership skills only with practice. With practice, you will be able to identify where you need to improve and where you can master the skill.

EXERCISE

Make a plan how you are going to improve on your leadership skills based on given tips. What can you start doing by yourself and where would you need support of others?

6 CONCLUSION

The role of a leader is not only to influence a team to achieve set goals, but also to provide the environment where individuals and a team as whole can grow and become more self-motivated and self-reliant.

Leadership always starts within you, having a clear personal vision and motivation to develop qualities that will enable you to contribute to people and ideas with your potential. With leadership, you are not only transforming yourself, but also people and the world around you, so you have an immense responsibility to be inclusive, socially responsible, collaborative and of service.

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