

HOW TO BE A MORE EFFECTIVE LEADER
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Leadership, it can be defined in a number of ways.

This paper and subsequent presentation will focus on the leadership skills of an overall management/leadership role within your organization and/or your role as a team leader for value management teams.

Leadership can be and has been defined over the decades by numerous experts in the field. The way business professionals have looked at leadership has also changed over the years, from leadership to coaching to mentoring and other spin offs of virtually the same thing with a new twist. This paper will focus on not one single way to lead, but things that will help you as an individual to become a better leader in a team environment; regardless if you lead a team in your own organization to help develop and improve processes or lead a team for a specific project for a value study.

As you read this paper, consider this:

“There is no one correct way to lead, and talented leaders come in many personality types. They are loud or quiet, funny or severe, tough or gentle, boisterous or shy. They come from all ages, any race, both sexes, and every kind of group there is.”

Dale Carnegie, **The Leader in You**

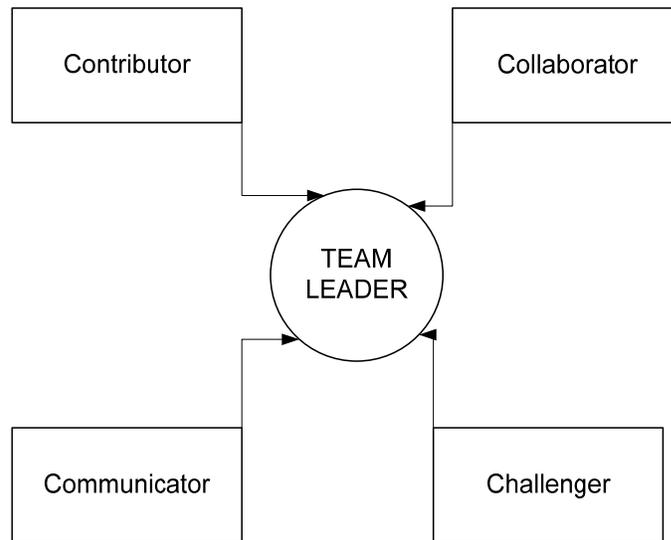
Good team leaders must be good team players. You might ask, “If I’m leading the team, what difference does it make about my abilities as a team player?” Leaders must understand the successful elements of what defines a good team player if they are to lead effective teams. Team players can be described as individuals willing to participate, provide input, provide resources, able to help establish goals and then aid in implementation of those goals, and able to keep a focus on the needs of the entire team versus their individual or personal needs. If you think about the various types of teams that we encounter on a day to day basis, what are the important things that you see make up successful teams. Let’s talk about sports teams for a moment. If you think about successful teams, they cannot do it alone, we have to focus on how each player participates and each player must step up and accomplish that role effectively. I don’t know how many times I have caught myself yelling at the television at one team member or another for not stepping up and doing their job. Another thing to keep in mind is that every team is made up of individuals with differing “team styles”. Team styles refer to the individual work behavior styles of your team members not necessarily their personality profiles.

“A team player isn’t an isolated example. It’s a way of life that is exhibited in everything they do....including others in decisions, sharing, pitching in, networking, looking for new ways of doing things, etc.” Kathy Zarr, Northwestern Mutual Life

We have learned that teams are an effective tool in the successful development and implementation of value ideas. As a team leader, you have many roles as it relates to helping your team players/members to use their styles for the benefit of the team and the project,

program or process. We consistently see a wide range of work styles on our teams. As you read through this paper, I am sure you will begin to identify with the various styles, and even be able to assign those styles to various team members you have worked with or led.

For a team to be successful, it is helpful to ensure that all styles are represented. As is illustrated, good team players will possess all four styles. However, all styles will not be represented equally, this is what allows all of us to be different and to bring individual strengths to our teams.



Keep in mind, however, one of the challenges of many of our teams in the value arena is that often, our teams are just thrown together for a specific project, program or process. We have not had the luxury of hand selecting the team to ensure we have the right mix of team members and these teams have not had the benefit of having developed working relationships. This can often cause difficulties. For example, when we are trying to have open dialogues, often there is a much lesser degree of trust with this type of team which can often lead to a reluctance to being open and honest in our communication. Does the team leader have a role when we encounter this type of challenge? Absolutely, effective team leaders need to identify this challenge and make sure to include all team members in discussions. To make them feel as an integral part of the process and the project.

“Effective team leaders ensure the completion of immediate tasks and work assignments in a high-quality and timely fashion. The most effective team leaders inspire a desire to produce quality products and services and to provide excellent customer service. They have the ability to communicate with all team members. The most effective leaders have excellent skills in listening, conflict resolution and consensus building. And they create an open environment in which members feel free to express their views with candor and integrity. The most effective leaders are challengers of the status quo and are supportive of others who push for risk taking and innovation.” Glenn M. Parker, **Team Players and Teamwork**

I use Glenn Parker's definition of effective team leaders because his book is the basis for this paper and presentation. Although the book's focus is strongly on a team organization and team players, this information can be readily used to help identify key leadership styles for leading teams.

Just as I mentioned earlier in this paper about Team Player Styles, these same styles can help us to identify both effective and ineffective leadership styles. The styles that will be looked at in depth include the Contributor, Collaborator, Communicator and Challenger. The thing to remember about work styles is that no person is so simplistic that they can be identified as a single style. As previously discussed, it is necessary to have many of the traits of all four styles to be truly effective.

Let us first discuss the team player styles as a whole. Each team leader has their own distinctive team player style. You must first learn about each of the styles and then we will relate these styles to the leadership role.

CONTRIBUTOR TEAM STYLE

The adjectives that describe this style include *dependable, responsible, organized, efficient, logical, clear, systematic, relevant, and proficient*. These individuals are highly task oriented and focus on getting tasks/work done in a very efficient and quality manner. Behaviors that can be expected from this style include:

1. Freely shares information and opinions
2. Helps the team use its time and resources
3. Completes assignments in a timely manner
4. Accepts responsibilities for all actions as a team member
5. Completes all assigned tasks and some not assigned
6. Provides technical training for team members as necessary
7. Prioritizes tasks efficiently
8. Pushes team to set high quality standards
9. Offers clear and concise presentations at meetings

COLLABORATOR TEAM STYLE

The adjectives that describe this style include *cooperative, flexible, confident, conceptual, open, accommodating, generous, visionary and imaginative*. These individuals are highly goal oriented and focus on establishing goals and then continuing to bring the team back to that focus. Behaviors that can be expected from this style include:

1. Establishes long term goals and clarifies objectives
2. Helps to see that the objectives fit the total organization
3. Reminds team members of the need to revisit goals and plans of action
4. Encourages team members to establish milestones to help them accomplish the goals
5. Pitches in and helps others as needed
6. Promotes consensus even when not in total agreement

7. Does not gossip: promotes “positive” comments
8. Is flexible to new ideas that may alter the goals
9. Can share the “limelight” with all team members

COMMUNICATOR TEAM STYLE

The adjectives that describe this style include *supportive, encouraging, relaxed, tactful, helpful, friendly, patient, informal, considerate, and spontaneous*. These individuals are very process oriented individuals. They often help teams to focus on the more enjoyable side of our team behaviors and they also help to develop needed processes. Behaviors that can be expected from this style include:

1. Steps in to help process problems whenever necessary
2. Listens attentively to all viewpoints
3. Helps the team to relax; jokes, laughs and discusses personal interests
4. Praises other team members for their efforts
5. Communicates enthusiasm
6. Summarizes the status of a discussion
7. Encourages participation by all team members
8. Helps team members learn about what each can contribute as a resource
9. Gives feedback-descriptive, specific and helpful

CHALLENGER TEAM STYLE

The adjectives that describe this style include *candid, ethical, questioning, honest, truthful, outspoken, principled, and adventurous*. These individuals are what we describe as questioners. They are a very important part of the team as they help to ask the questions that don’t often get asked. Why are we doing certain things a certain way? Are there other ways of doing something? Can we do this faster, cheaper, better? Behaviors that can be expected from this style include:

1. Can disagree openly with other team members
2. Candidly shares views about the team’s work
3. Questions the team goals
4. Encourages the team to set high, ethical work standards
5. Challenges the team to take risks
6. Honestly reports problems and progress to the team
7. Will back off and support team consensus when necessary
8. Asks “Why?” and “How?” at team gatherings

As you can see by the descriptions, all four of the styles are very important to a successful, productive team. While you were reading through each Style, you probably noticed those traits that you either illicit or others that have been important in some of your teams. They all have valuable roles in both value analysis teams and with any internal teams. However, can you also see why it is so important that an effective team player possess some of each of the four styles?

And can you also see why it is important for an effective team leader to be a team player as well as understand all of the other styles that may be involved?

Look at the adjectives that describe each of the styles,

Contributor: *dependable, responsible, organized, efficient, logical, clear, systematic, relevant, and proficient;*

Collaborator: *cooperative, flexible, confident, conceptual, open accommodating, generous, visionary and imaginative;*

Communicator: *supportive, encouraging, relaxed, tactful, helpful, friendly, patient, informal, considerate, and spontaneous; and*

Challenger: *candid, ethical, questioning, honest, truthful, outspoken, principled, and adventurous.*

Can you identify, from the four style groups, which style best represents you in your work environment? It is very important to ensure you are identifying the style based on your work environment. We as individuals often behave radically different in our personal environment than we do in our work environment. What you may see is that you can identify with several of the styles, and that is the best. However, the key is to look at each of the styles and if you can identify behaviors in any of the styles that you realize you are lacking, focus on improving those particular traits or behaviors.

Remember, as we begin to talk about leadership styles related to the team styles, your team style will remain fairly constant regardless of whether you are in a team player role or a leadership role.

So what might some of the traits be for each of the styles in a leadership role?

CONTRIBUTOR AS A LEADER

The leader represented by this style is one that will push their teams to accomplish an extensive amount of work. They will push them to do quality work and to ensure that there is an adequate amount of data that accompanies the completed work. In communication, Contributors are leaders of few words and they prefer most of that communication to be written. Their planning is vary tactical in nature, so the meetings and workshops should be well thought out and planned to the minute. As it relates to their approach to taking risk, Contributors are much more conservative in their acceptance of change or doing something in a different manner. As problem solvers, they will be analytical in nature, once again, pushing for the facts and the data as the basis. They will require that the “right” expert provide the needed information. As we ask the Contributor to be a part of the decision-making process or to help establish a process, they will favor using methods that are practical, logical and cost effective. They will push to keep things working within the current framework of the team or organizational culture.

CHALLENGES WITH THE CONTRIBUTOR AS A LEADER

If you look at the approaches of a Contributor as a leader, there may be some inherent challenges that you may immediately see. This might be in yourself or someone else you have identified as a Contributor. As we discussed earlier in what it takes to have an effective team, one of the positive attributes is allowing for open dialogues and a great exchange of ideas. So how does the Contributor's style affect the ability for the team to be open to dialogue and brainstorm new and innovative ideas? These leaders tend to also get stuck on the "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" mode. This is not always helpful, for these leaders may not push their teams to take risks or look at new ideas that might be outside of their normal comfort level or what might be "the way we have always done things". These individuals are also so focused on the task and getting the work done, they may lack effective interpersonal skills to help a team come together and work as a team. It is all focused on just getting the job done. Workshops will tend to be very structured, much work will get done, but there may be very little enjoyment involved with the event.

COLLABORATOR AS A LEADER

Remember, the style of the Collaborator has a strong focus on goals. This is a positive attribute for a leader, this individual will help the team to set goals and potentially relate the team or study goals back to the overall goals of the organization or program. The Collaborator is a visionary in their thinking and behaviors. They believe that everyone should participate in the process and will push to involve all team members. However, they will continue to bring the group back to the goals as they push to accomplish work elements. Collaborators are eternal optimists. They will push for calculated risks and will focus on the upside of the risk not the potential challenges or pitfalls. Collaborators also have the ability to jump in and help whenever possible and make sure the team gets the recognition they deserve for a job well done. Collaborators have the ability to ensure teams have whatever resources are necessary for them to succeed and they communicate well with outside groups to keep them informed of the team's progress or potential needs. The Collaborator will also push to establish milestones and action plans that correlate with the goals.

CHALLENGES WITH THE COLLABORATOR AS A LEADER

Once again, think about the key factors of a good leader in the value arena. ***Can you identify some of those key traits that are needed that the Collaborator provides? What about what traits might be missing?*** Goal development and action plans are very key and important for the success of any team. Also, including all stakeholders and involving everyone in helping to make decisions. One area that you may have identified that is often represented by the Collaborator is the potential lack of actual work that needs to be accomplished. The Collaborator will keep the team focused on the goals but might miss the actual work that needs to be done to accomplish the goals. The details, facts and data needed to support the team might get lost. One other challenge that can often be associated with the Collaborator is their need to include everyone. This can often be time consuming and the team might be pressed to accomplish everything in the amount of time given. Also, only focusing on the positives or upside of a problem or risk, might leave teams open for problems in the future for any given idea or approach. All sides of any issue or idea should be considered.

COMMUNICATOR AS A LEADER

If your meetings or workshops lack enthusiasm and enjoyment, you're key traits are probably not those of a Communicator. The Communicator believes the process to achieving the plan is as important as the content of the plan. They focus heavily on ensuring that team members are comfortable and they will use different methods to keep meetings light and enjoyable. They like to personalize much of what they do. Communicators will strive to include everyone in decision-making and at a minimum will push to hear everyone's opinions and comments. They make great listeners. They will also push the team to address the challenges that might have been brought up and help to facilitate solutions by the team. Risk is not a problem for the Communicator, however they will want to talk about all impacts to the risk and make sure that the team is comfortable with the potential problems inherent in any given idea. Communicators show great enthusiasm for what they do.

CHALLENGES WITH COMMUNICATORS AS LEADERS

As many of you know, many people do not like meetings and workshops because they are considered very boring, technically driven and just not fun to attend. With the help of Communicators, these traits can be eliminated. However, the challenge with a Communicator is they often see the team dynamics as the panacea to any problem and they get hung up on making sure that everyone is having "fun". This can lead to work not getting accomplished and schedules being sacrificed. Also, because team dynamics and keeping everyone comfortable is a focus, this type of leader tends to want to stay away from disagreements within the team. It is very important that team members have the ability and are expected to discuss and disagree openly with our team members. This leads to understanding all sides of an idea or issue and potentially additional opportunities for better and new ideas stemming from that disagreement. Otherwise we run into the problem with "group think". Or otherwise stated, "going along to get along". Questions by team members are absolutely necessary to ensure all sides of an idea or issue are discussed and a direction is agreed on by the team. One other challenge is their need to include everyone in the decision-making process, again, like the Collaborator, this can be time intensive.

CHALLENGER AS A LEADER

Someone who takes charge, pushes the team to go beyond established norms, promotes risk taking, and promotes openness and candor at meetings. This truly describes the Challenger as a Leader. A Challenger promotes lively discussions in their groups and pushes teams to solve problems by working through all of the symptoms, getting to the root of the problem is a strong focus of the Challenger. Challengers are very candid in their discussions, they ask questions to gain understanding and make sure the team is focused on the things they need to be focused on. The Challenger also encourages team members to have numerous alternatives and ideas, but will then push the team members to scrutinize those ideas. The Challenger will then encourage the team members to use their experience and judgment to make decisions that are "right".

CHALLENGES WITH CHALLENGERS AS LEADERS

After reading the description of the Challenger as Leader, who wouldn't consider this style as the best style for leading a team. As in all styles, the things that seem positive and beneficial, if not managed correctly, can become negative to the team's behavior. When we talk about communication styles, the Challenger pushes for answers, always wants clarifications and encourages teams to question the suggested ideas and alternatives. The downside of this behavior is that some team members may be intimidated and always feel their ideas are being questioned. This will lead to team members not participating effectively and they even may feel attacked. They will resist participating at that point in time. Also, risk taking is a good thing, especially in a value-based environment where we are always looking at pushing the norms. So how does this become a negative? Sometimes the Challenger may be pushing so hard for innovation that the resources might be wasted on ill conceived ideas or promote ideas that are well outside of the mission or the goals of the team. The Challenger also focuses on the benefits of the risk and very rarely discusses the possible failing points.

SUMMARY OF STYLES

In a very brief synopsis, you have been provided with a description of all four team styles and the behaviors that can be expected of those styles as both a team player or as a team leader. One last thing to consider, for comparison purposes only, is what might the adjectives be that describe an ineffective team player for all four styles. The purpose for sharing this information is to help you understand the definition of an ineffective team player and how negatively these behaviors might impact a team you might be leading.

Contributor - *Data Bound, Short Sighted, Compulsive, Perfectionist, Uncreative*

Collaborator - *Over Committed, Over Involved, Too Global, Over Ambitious, Hypersensitive*

Communicator – *Aimless, Foolish, Placating, Impractical, Manipulative*

Challenger – *Rigid, Arrogant, Self righteous, Argumentative, Nit-picking*

If any of these adjectives describe any of your behaviors, you have some work to do. You need to continue to focus on the things that you have the power to change. Look for the areas where you might be lacking and improve yourself by focusing on those areas that will help you to be more effective.

“The leadership techniques that will work best for you are the ones you nurture inside. You cant’ just try and model yourself after someone else. But first we must look inside at ourselves.”

Kenneth Blanchard – **The One Minute Manager**

Remember, there is not just one way to lead. Build on your attributes to be the best leader YOU can be.

References: **Team Players and Teamwork, The New Competitive Business Strategy,**
Glenn M. Parker
The Leader in You, Dale Carnegie
One Minute Manager, Kenneth Blanchard