

Leadership and followership



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Introduction and guidance

Introduction and guidance

Leadership and followership is a free badged course which lasts 8 weeks with approximately 3 hours' study time each week. You can work through the course at your own pace, so if you have more time one week there is no problem with pushing on to complete another week's study.

You'll start this course by considering your own leadership experience and learning more about different leadership styles. As you progress, you'll focus on key leadership skills and how you might develop them yourself, exploring elements of both good and bad leadership and looking at possible solutions to problems that can arise. Followership has an important connection with leadership and you'll find out more about what makes a good follower and how leaders can develop their followers to create more productive relationships and encourage them to consider leadership roles in the future. You'll look at common leadership challenges and the future of leadership in this changing world. Finally, you'll identify how you want to develop your own leadership skills and devise a plan to build your experience.

After completing this course, you should be able to:

- describe a variety of leadership styles and approaches and analyse how they fit with personal preferences
- recognise the skills required for leadership and assess personal experience and capability
- define followership, from the perspectives of both the leader and the follower
- identify how effective leadership can overcome a variety of common challenges
- reflect on personal experience, start a leadership journal and devise an appropriate plan of action to develop leadership skills.

Moving around the course

In the 'Summary' at the end of each week, you can find a link to the next week. If at any time you want to return to the start of the course, click on 'Full course description'. From here you can navigate to any part of the course. Alternatively, use the week links at the top of every page of the course.

It's also good practice, if you access a link from within a course page (including links to the quizzes), to open it in a new window or tab. That way you can easily return to where you've come from without having to use the back button on your browser.

Get careers guidance

This course has been included in the [National Careers Service](#) to help you develop new skills.

What is a badged course?

While studying *Leadership and followership* you have the option to work towards gaining a digital badge.

Badged courses are a key part of The Open University's mission *to promote the educational well-being of the community*. The courses also provide another way of helping you to progress from informal to formal learning.

To complete a course you need to be able to find about 24 hours of study time, over a period of about 8 weeks. However, it is possible to study them at any time, and at a pace to suit you.

Badged courses are all available on The Open University's [OpenLearn](#) website and do not cost anything to study. They differ from Open University courses because you do not receive support from a tutor. But you do get useful feedback from the interactive quizzes.

What is a badge?

Digital badges are a new way of demonstrating online that you have gained a skill. Schools, colleges and universities are working with employers and other organisations to develop open badges that help learners gain recognition for their skills, and support employers to identify the right candidate for a job.

Badges demonstrate your work and achievement on the course. You can share your achievement with friends, family and employers, and on social media. Badges are a great motivation, helping you to reach the end of the course. Gaining a badge often boosts confidence in the skills and abilities that underpin successful study. So, completing this course should encourage you to think about taking other courses.



How to get a badge

Getting a badge is straightforward! Here's what you have to do:

- read each week of the course
- score 50% or more in the two badge quizzes in Week 4 and Week 8.

For all the quizzes, you can have three attempts at most of the questions (for true or false type questions you usually only get one attempt). If you get the answer right first time you will get more marks than for a correct answer the second or third time. Therefore, please be aware that for the two badge quizzes it is possible to get all the questions right but not score 50% and be eligible for the badge on that attempt. If one of your answers is incorrect you will often receive helpful feedback and suggestions about how to work out the correct answer.

For the badge quizzes, if you're not successful in getting 50% the first time, after 24 hours you can attempt the whole quiz, and come back as many times as you like.

We hope that as many people as possible will gain an Open University badge – so you should see getting a badge as an opportunity to reflect on what you have learned rather than as a test.

If you need more guidance on getting a badge and what you can do with it, take a look at the [OpenLearn FAQs](#). When you gain your badge you will receive an email to notify you

and you will be able to view and manage all your badges in [My OpenLearn](#) within 24 hours of completing the criteria to gain a badge.

Get started with [Week 1](#).

Week 1: Where are you starting from?

Introduction

Welcome to Week 1 of this free badged course *Leadership and followership*.

Congratulations – you have taken a first important step in exploring these themes and understanding what they might mean to you and your future.

Both leadership and followership have been extensively researched by academics and business experts, and there are many books and research papers available. This course is intended as an introduction to leadership and followership, combining practical advice with a taste of some of that academic research.

If you want to cover any of the topics discussed in greater depth, references are given to support further reading, and there are other [OpenLearn courses](#) available. You might also be interested in the Open University's [BA \(hons\) Business management \(leadership practice\)](#).

Reflection is an important part of your development as a leader, so you'll find many reflective activities throughout the course, which are intended to help you build this skill. You may also find it useful to make notes as you go through the course. You can do this using the note-taking tool in the [Toolkit](#) or, if you prefer, keep a notebook beside you as you study.

Watch the following video in which Lynne Johnson introduces this week.

Video content is not available in this format.



By the end of this week, you will be able to:

- recognise different definitions of leadership and followership
- describe some of the differences and similarities between leadership and management
- review and reflect on your own leadership experiences and aspirations
- schedule time in your diary for these activities and use this time effectively.

The Open University would really appreciate a few minutes of your time to tell us about yourself and your expectations for the course before you begin, in our optional

[start-of-course survey](#). Participation will be completely confidential and we will not pass on your details to others.

1 Definitions

Leadership is a topic that people choose to study for a variety of reasons, including to:

- enhance our personal leadership experience
- further our theoretical understanding of leadership
- enable us to develop more effective leaders within our organisations.

Followership is closely linked with leadership and the two concepts are now widely considered to be interdependent in producing successful outcomes for both individuals and businesses.



Figure 1 Leader and followers

To make a start on your own investigation of leadership and followership, you will begin by considering these two central themes.

1.1 Defining leadership

How would you describe leadership? Before looking at some definitions, use Activity 1 to consider what leadership means to you.

Activity 1 What is a leader?

 Allow about 10 minutes

Think about leaders you are aware of, either from the media or from your own experience. What do they do every day? What are they needed for? What type of people are they? In the box below, write a sentence or paragraph that aims to capture your view of what a leader is.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

You could have approached this in different ways. Did you focus on the personal skills and qualities required by a leader, or consider the process or tasks of leadership? These perspectives reflect the different ways that researchers have conceptualised leadership, as you'll see later in the course.

This personal definition gives you a useful starting point from which you can develop your view as you go through the course. Revisit it at the end of the course to see if you would change or add anything.

In his book *Leadership Theory and Practice*, Professor Peter Northouse takes the central components from 65 different classifications of leadership, and distils them into the following definition:

Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.

(Northouse, 2022, 3%)

Yet, as leadership expert Ralph Stogdill once wrote:

There are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept.

(Stogdill, 1974, p. 7)

Bret Bogenschneider (2016, pp. 15–16) presents an impressive list of definitions in his research to find a common framework to distinguish competing ideas about leadership. The list includes the following:

- Leadership may be considered as the process (act) of influencing the activities of an organised group in its efforts toward goal setting and goal achievement (Stogdill, quoted in Bogenschneider, 2016).
- Leadership is interpersonal influence, exercised in a situation and directed, through the communication process, toward the attainment of a specific goal or goals (Tannenbaum, Weschler and Massik, quoted in Bogenschneider, 2016).
- Leadership occurs when persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality (Burns, quoted in Bogenschneider, 2016).
- Leaders are those who consistently make effective contributions to social order, and who are expected and perceived to do so (Hosking, quoted in Bogenschneider, 2016).
- Leadership is typically defined by the traits, qualities and behaviours of a leader (Horner, quoted in Bogenschneider, 2016).

There are clear parallels between many of these definitions, for example ‘influence’ is a common theme, but there are key differences in concept, with some authors describing leadership as a ‘process’ and others highlighting behaviours. Each writer’s subject specialism, which might be psychology, management or even statistics, will also have an influence, along with the prevailing attitudes from the era in which the term was defined.

In more recent times, Northouse (2022, p. 54) describes a growth in ‘moral approaches to leadership’ and, aligned with increasing awareness of the value of diversity within the workplace, the introduction of inclusive leadership. You’ll explore that in more detail in Week 2.

1.2 Defining followership

Research on followership began in the 1950s, but didn’t start to generate significant interest until 1988, with the work of Robert Kelley. You’ll find out more about his work in Week 5. Early research focused on followers as passive participants in the leadership process. Now there is a growing body of research that presents leadership as a shared endeavour between interdependent followers and leaders.

Crossman and Crossman (2011) reviewed the academic literature to better understand the concept of followership. They cite authors with leader-centred views, for example:

- Followership may be defined as the ability to effectively follow the directives and support the efforts of a leader to maximise a structured organisation (Bjugstad et al., quoted in Crossman and Crossman, 2011).
- Followership can be defined as a process in which subordinates recognise their responsibility to comply with the orders of leaders and take appropriate action consistent with the situation to carry out those orders to the best of their ability (Townsend and Gebhart, quoted in Crossman and Crossman, 2011).

These definitions appear alongside more follower-centred perspectives, such as:

- Followership is the process of attaining one's individual goals by being influenced by a leader into participating in individual or group efforts toward organisational goals in a given situation. Followership thereby becomes seen as a function of the follower, the leader and situational variables (Wortman, quoted in Crossman and Crossman, 2011).
- Followership is a relational role in which followers have the ability to influence leaders and contribute to the improvement and attainment of group and organisational objectives (Carsten et al., quoted in Crossman and Crossman, 2011).

More recently, Pietraszewski (2020) has suggested that no one individual has enough information to solve a complex problem alone, and that leaders and followers are information-processing roles within a 'social marketplace, in which leaders propose possible coordination and cooperation enterprises, and followers evaluate and choose among these offered possibilities'.

In this video clip, Rebecca Fielding, Managing Director of Gradconsult, defines followership from the perspective of an employer.

Video content is not available in this format.



We are all followers, but what we gain from that relationship can vary widely depending on our reasons for following, our enthusiasm for the methods and goals of the leader, and our own skills and characteristics. In this next activity, you'll consider the leaders you follow.

Activity 2 Who do you follow?

 Allow about 10 minutes

In the box below, write a list of the leaders you follow and your reasons for following them. You might follow them in the workplace, or virtually through social media.

Consider these questions:

- Is your 'followership' experience a positive or a negative one?

- How does this experience affect you as a follower?
- What is your relationship with the leader?
- How does being a follower help you to reach your own goals?

Provide your answer...

.....

Discussion

You'll explore followership later in the course (Week 5), from the perspectives of a follower as well as a leader. You'll learn how important it is for a leader to support and develop their followers, and how important good followers are in achieving a leader's vision. You'll also reflect on the interdependence between followers and leaders in reaching positive outcomes for both individuals and businesses.

You may be realising that the themes of this course are not as easily defined as you previously thought! Yet their complexity is what makes them so interesting, and the aim of this course is to simplify some of that complexity by providing a practical, real-life context in which to consider them.

In the next section, you'll move on to look at the differences between leadership and management.

2 Are leadership and management different or the same?

Authors, business experts, academics and practitioners often give contrasting answers to this question. Some think the two roles are different and others believe they are the same.



Figure 2 Managers and leaders in discussion

Before you look at some of the different views in the literature – what is your opinion or experience of leadership and management?

Activity 3 Your views of leadership and management

 Allow about 5 minutes

In the box below, write some words (e.g. focusing on tasks and competencies) that you would associate with successful:

- a. leadership
- b. management

Write whatever comes into your head without thinking for too long about it.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Did you find that you could make a clear distinction between leadership and management? Or did you find you wrote similar or overlapping terms? Does that come from your personal experience or observation of individuals in those roles?

Different?

Many authors have sought to make a distinction between leadership and management, suggesting that they are two separate functions, both crucial to organisational success. For example:

- Zaleznik (1977) writes ‘managers embrace process, seek stability and control, and instinctively try to resolve problems quickly – sometimes before they fully understand a problem’s significance. Leaders, in contrast, tolerate chaos and lack of structure and are willing to delay closure in order to understand the issues more fully.’
- Kotter (1990) agrees that management is about planning, organising and controlling, while leadership involves establishing direction, aligning and motivating people. He argues this is too much for one person and separate roles are needed if organisations are to flourish.

- Drawing from the research of Warren Bennis, Roger Gill (2006, p. 27) summarises the differences between managers and leaders as follows in Table 1.

Table 1 The differences between management and leadership

The manager	The leader
Administers	Innovates
Is a 'copy'	Is an 'original'
Maintains	Develops
Focuses on systems and structure	Focuses on people
Focuses on control	Inspires trust
Takes a short-range view	Has a long-range perspective
Asks how and when	Asks what and why
Imitates	Originates
Accepts the status quo	Challenges the status quo
Is a classic 'good soldier'	Is his or her own person
Does things right	Does the right thing

(Source: Gill, 2006, p. 27)

The same?

Other experts contend that management and leadership may involve different skills and processes, but don't need to be done by separate groups of people, and that disassociating them can even be damaging to an organisation. For example:

- Morgan Witzel (2013), Fellow of the Centre for Leadership Studies, explains that now 'we have managers who cannot and will not lead, because they believe that leadership is someone else's responsibility' and 'at the other end of the spectrum, we have a cadre of leaders who believe management is beneath them.'
- Tyler (2007, p. 276) argues that 'management involves far more than planning, implementation and the exercise of co-ordination and control'. She goes on to explain that 'Leadership – the ability to communicate a vision, influence others and gain their trust – will be crucial to achieving your objectives as a manager, and in turn, those of the organisation.'
- The POLC framework is a management tool that categorises the four principle functions of management as Planning, Organising, Leading and Controlling.

Debate will continue, but there are clearly elements of a leader or manager's role that overlap. This course focuses on leadership skills and processes, which may be relevant to individuals in either leadership or management roles, depending on their job descriptions.

If you are interested in exploring the differences between leadership and management further, there is a great deal of research and commentary available. Start with some of the references listed at the end of the week and see where your reading takes you!

Theoretical frameworks and discussions underpin the work of an effective leader and in Sections 1 and 2, you have started to explore some of that theory. In Section 3 'Reviewing your own leadership experience', you'll reflect on your practical leadership experience before looking at how the theory might influence your further development.

3 Reviewing your own leadership experience

Reviewing your own leadership experience provides a personal starting point for this course, allowing you to develop a clearer idea of what to do next as you learn more about the different facets of leadership.



Figure 3 Key words that capture the essence of leadership

There are numerous situations or contexts in which you might have developed your leadership skills. Here are just a few:

- undertaking a leadership role in the workplace either for a project or team
- organising a fundraising event or social gathering
- mentoring someone
- volunteering to lead a project or a group within your local community
- taking responsibility in your home due to the illness of a parent or guardian
- being captain of a sports team
- holding a committee position within a university society
- leading a group project as part of your course.

Rebecca Fielding adds her ideas about ways to build your leadership experience both within and outside of the workplace.

Video content is not available in this format.



Activity 4 provides some prompts to help you to reflect on your experiences.

Activity 4 Reviewing your leadership experience

 Allow about 20 minutes

Use the space below to note any occasion, role or activity that has involved you leading in some way. If you were part of a leadership group, think about your specific role.

For each of your examples, ask yourself the following questions:

- If you asked the other people involved who was the leader – would they have said it was you?
- Did you make a conscious decision to take a leadership role or did the situation evolve around you?
- Did you enjoy being the leader?
- Looking back, is there anything you could have done differently?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

The context in which you took on the leadership role may have influenced your perception of the experience. For example, if it felt like a negative experience that was forced upon you, you may be underestimating how much you learned from it. Try to detach your emotions and view the experience more analytically.

Maybe you took on the challenge expecting to fail or dislike the role, but you surprised yourself. Look for a new experience that pushes you further.

Perhaps you sought out the experience but felt disappointed by the outcome. Think about why you feel dissatisfied. Would others agree with your assessment?

Don't worry if you don't yet have many examples. Later in the course you will look at ways to build your leadership experience.

Asking yourself if you would have done anything differently is a useful learning tool.

Reflecting on your experiences so far is one aspect of identifying your starting point for this course. Another is to consider your aspirations, and in the next section you'll reflect on your reasons for choosing the course.

4 Identifying your aims

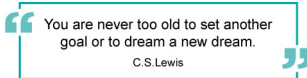


Figure 4 An inspirational quote by C.S. Lewis

What are you hoping to achieve by undertaking this course? This will vary for each of you depending on your experience and circumstances, your aims and aspirations. For example, you might be:

- at the beginning of your leadership journey, with clear aspirations but limited experience
- keen to develop your existing leadership skills and understanding further
- interested in exploring how leadership theory might enhance your practical experience
- looking for a boost to help you reach the next step on your career ladder.

If you haven't thought about this in any depth yet, Activity 5 provides some basic prompts to help you consider where you are now and what you want to change or develop.

If this is the first time you have been asked to think about what you want to achieve in the future, you may find it useful to look at the Personal Awareness tool in the [Toolkit](#). This tool will encourage you to consider what you want from life, your values and the kind of work–life balance that would benefit you. This self-reflection is an important skill to develop as it will be the base from which you can consider your options for the future. You'll find out more about using reflection in your leadership development in Week 3.

Activity 5 What do I want from this course?

 Allow about 5 minutes

Think about the following statements and choose the one that best suits your current aspirations:

I know I don't want to be a leader but am curious about leadership and wish to understand it better.

I want to be a leader in the future but am at the beginning of my leadership journey and deciding what to do next.

I am already a leader and want to be more effective in my role.

I want to make myself more employable.

I am a follower and I want to know how to better support/understand my leader.

I am a leader and I want to develop my followers.

Provide your answer...

If none of these statements reflect your reasons for choosing the course, use the box below to articulate your motives:

Provide your answer...

.....
Discussion

Having a clear sense of why you want to do the course will help you to make the most of each week – focusing greater attention on the particularly relevant elements as you go through. For example, if you are hoping to enhance your employability, the more practical approach of Week 3 may be somewhere to focus more of your additional study time; if you are interested in the concept of followership, Week 5 will be of particular relevance; or if you are a leader hoping to improve – Weeks 4 and 6 should be particularly valuable.

In this section, you've considered your aspirations – another important starting point for your leadership journey. In Section 5, you'll focus on setting aside the time you need to get the most from the course.

5 Making time for this course

One of the key skills that you will need to demonstrate during this course is managing your time effectively. If you are working full time, or balancing your studies with other responsibilities such as childcare, you may only have a small amount of spare time available.



Figure 5 Making time

To gain the most benefit from this exploration of leadership and followership, you'll need to set aside a certain number of hours each week for completing the course and doing any extra work involved. If you follow the steps outlined in this section, you should be able to plan your time and fit everything in.

A useful place to start is by identifying how you currently spend your time. If you've completed our other badged open course, [Understanding your sector](#), you may have undertaken this activity before.

Activity 6 How do you spend your time?

 Allow about 15 minutes

The schedule below lists 90-minute blocks of time between 8 a.m. and 11 p.m. on the seven days of the week. It assumes that most people sleep sometime between 11 p.m. and 8 a.m., but you can adapt this for your own circumstances. Complete the boxes, showing how you spend the hours within each block of time.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
08:00–09:30	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...
09:30–11:00	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...
11:00–12:30	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...
12:30–14:00	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...
14:00–15:30	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...
15:30–17:00	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...
17:00–18:30	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...
18:30–20:00	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...
20:00–21:30	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...
21:30–23:00	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...

Discussion

After undertaking Activity 6 you should have a clearer idea of the time available in your usual week. You can hopefully identify blocks of time that you could devote to completing this course and achieving any goals you set yourself.

It will also be useful to consider when you study most effectively, i.e. what time of day. For example, some people are more productive in the evenings, while others prefer mornings. When are you least likely to be distracted? If you want to explore your energy levels and productivity further, Chris Bailey has written a book on managing your time, attention and energy – *The Productivity Project* (2016). Or you can view his [recent articles and sign up for his monthly productivity newsletter](#).

If you need additional help in finding those blocks of time, you can use the Time Management tool in the [Toolkit](#). This will help you break down large tasks and be realistic about your priorities.

Time management is also a crucial skill for a leader with competing priorities. Pressure to complete a project or deliver an outcome within a short time frame can come from many sources, including senior leaders, clients, funding bodies or even governments. Managing your time effectively can make meeting key deadlines much easier.

6 This week's quiz

Now you've reached the end of Week 1, you can try a short quiz to help you reflect on what you've learned.

[Week 1 practice quiz](#)

Open the quiz in a new tab or window and come back here when you are done.

7 Summary

By now, you should be feeling confident about your reasons for choosing this course and should have identified a useful base for developing your personal understanding and experience further. You have explored what is meant by the terms leadership and followership, and considered what they mean to you. You can now also recognise some of the differences and similarities between leadership and management. You are more aware of the leadership research that is available should you choose to explore the theory in more detail.

You should now feel that you can:

- recognise different definitions of leadership and followership
- describe some of the differences and similarities between leadership and management
- review and reflect on your own leadership experiences and aspirations
- schedule time each week for these activities and use this time effectively.

Next week, you will look at different leadership theories and styles, and how the context of leadership can have an impact on how you lead.

You can now go to [Week 2](#).

Week 2: What kind of leader could you be?

Introduction

Welcome to Week 2 of the free badged course *Leadership and followership*. Last week, you were introduced to the broad concepts of leadership and followership, and some of the wide-ranging research behind these concepts. You reflected on your reasons for choosing the course and started to identify a useful base for developing your understanding and experience further.

This week, you'll be looking more closely at different leadership theories and styles, and how the context in which you lead can have an impact on your approach. Increasing your awareness of different styles will give you a theoretical base to support your own choices about the way you lead.

Now watch the following video in which Lynne introduces the week.

Video content is not available in this format.



By the end of this week, you will be able to:

- recognise how context can impact on leadership
- identify a variety of leadership styles/approaches
- assess your own leadership style.

1 Leadership theory – a brief history

For decades, philosophers, researchers and business experts across the globe have been attempting to define effective leadership and to identify a formula for leadership success.



Figure 1 Leaders throughout history have had different styles and characteristics

Too many theories have been proposed for us to cover them comprehensively here, but this is an overview of the most commonly discussed categories, in the order in which they were developed.

Table 1 Leadership theories

Theory	Further reading
<p>Trait theories suggest there is a set of personal characteristics that exemplify the ideal leader. Early, so-called 'great man' theories, suppose that leaders are born and not made and that these characteristics are fixed. While attitudes have changed since early trait research, there has been a renewed interest in leadership traits, for example, with recent studies on the emotional intelligence of leaders.</p>	<p>Mann (1959); Stogdill (1974); Lord, DeVader and Alliger (1986); Caruso et al. (2002)</p>
<p>Behavioural theories focus on leadership as a behavioural pattern i.e. what leaders do and how they do it. The assumption is that these behaviours can be learned and developed, so anyone has the potential to become a leader. Several authors have developed tools that can be used to investigate leadership behaviours, such as the Leader Behaviour Description Questionnaire developed by the Ohio State University in the 1950s and 60s.</p>	<p>Stogdill (1963); Likert (1961, 1967); Blake and Mouton (1985)</p>
<p>Contingency theories propose that effective leadership is contingent (or dependent) on the situation and that good leaders adapt their approach or style in response to different situations.</p>	<p>Fiedler (1964); Hersey and Blanchard (1993)</p>

Taking these three categories, we can summarise a good leader as someone who:

- demonstrates the right traits and skills e.g. integrity, empathy etc.
- exhibits appropriate behaviours
- adapts to the situation in which they are leading.

The rest of the course will focus on exploring these characteristics and investigating where leadership theory goes next.

What do you think is the core element of good leadership? Which theory do you identify with the most? The next activity will give you an opportunity to explore one of these categories in more detail. If you feel inspired, you could repeat the exercise for each theory!

Activity 1 Choose a theory

 Allow about 30 minutes

Choose a category from those outlined i.e. trait, behavioural or contingency theories, and research it in more detail. You might look at the references suggested in '*further reading*' in Table 1 or conduct your own online or library-based research. In the box below, outline your findings in no more than 200 words.

Provide your answer...

Reflect on your own perception of your chosen theory. What do you think are the pros and cons of that approach to leadership? Write a brief summary of your view.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

While a particular theory may be discredited over time, or contradicted by other academics, there are often elements that strike a chord and lead to further research and development of the ideas within it. You may have your own ideas about how current theories could be developed further – perhaps you could use this course as a starting point for a future focus on leadership studies. You'll find out more about leadership training opportunities in Week 8.

Professor Jean Hartley, Professor of Public Leadership in the Faculty of Business and Law at The Open University, explains why it is useful for leaders to have a theoretical overview to underpin your practical experience.

Video content is not available in this format.



Professor Hartley talks about changing your leadership style depending on the situation you find yourself in, and in Section 2 you'll explore the role that context plays in determining how you lead.

2 Leadership context



Figure 2 Adapting to your context

Adapting your leadership to your situation is an important aspect of effective leadership, and context plays a key part in determining that situation.

Context can be drawn from a range of perspectives, including international, national, local and internal. It can be influenced by politics, community values and organisational culture. Two areas of particular interest are cross-cultural and generational context.

2.1 Cross-cultural context

Leaders are increasingly required to lead multicultural teams, sometimes spread across the world, and different cultures take a different approach to leadership. Excerpts from a series of interviews conducted by House et al. (1997, pp. 535–6) highlight the following:

- The Dutch place emphasis on egalitarianism and are sceptical about the value of leadership.
- Iranians seek power and strength in their leaders.
- The Malaysian leader is expected to behave in a manner that is humble, modest, and dignified.
- The French appreciate two kinds of leaders. (...) a strong charismatic leader [or] (...) a consensus builder, coalition former, and effective negotiator.
- The Americans appreciate two kinds of leaders. They seek empowerment from leaders who grant autonomy and delegate authority to subordinates. They also respect the bold, forceful, confident, and risk-taking leader.

Dempsey (2019) refers to the importance of hierarchy and dominant leadership in Latin American and Asian cultures, which can lead to tensions between colleagues with contrasting cultural viewpoints. He also reports that approaches to staff motivation can change with culture, from a focus on risk-aversion in Northeast Asia and the Middle East, to a more flexible and opportunistic stance in the UK and US.

In a multicultural team, it helps if a leader is aware of potential cultural sensitivities.

2.2 Generational context

In the workplace today, it is possible for up to five generations to be working together. While there will always be outliers, it is broadly accepted that each generation has a set of characteristics that it is useful to be aware of when working in cross-generational teams. Descriptions provided by the Indeed editorial team (2022) are summarised in the following table.

Table 2 Perceived workplace characteristics

Generation	Age group	Perceived characteristics
Traditionalists/ Silent generation	Born prior to 1945 (mostly retired)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value hierarchical structures with clear definition Appreciate top-down management approaches Loyal and likely to exert extra effort to help others Tend to be quite formal in the workplace, even with peers
Baby boomers	Born 1946 to mid-1960s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Favour flatter hierarchies and democratic working structures Value equal opportunities and friendly work environments Measure success through personal goals Like to challenge established processes and generate change
Generation X	Born between mid-1960s and 1980	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrepreneurial, appreciate flexibility and independence Value efficiency and innovation Work well with mentors More likely to prioritise a healthy work-life balance
Millennials/ Generation Y	Born 1981 to late 1990s (one of the largest portions of the workforce)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technologically aware Value collaborative opportunities and open channels of communication Motivated by meaningful work Professional and personal development more important than company loyalty
Generation Z/ Centennials/ iGen	Born late 1990s to approx. 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Naturally competitive multitaskers Value the integration of technology in the workplace Security is important Prefer flexible working and prioritise results over effort

Source: <https://uk.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/generational-differences>

Clearly these different characteristics and perceptions can bring challenges, particularly if the leader has different values from their workforce! The key to successfully navigating

these differences is for the leader to set aside any personal frustration, view diverse perspectives positively and be open to learning from them.

Context is a broad issue with many elements. In Activity 2, you'll reflect on the context of an organisation you are familiar with.

Activity 2 Influences on leadership context

 Allow about 20 minutes

Choose an organisation you are part of, or would like to be part of, and consider its various influences. Under each of the following headings, list the issues that you would have to consider as a leader of your organisation.

International trends and issues (e.g. globalisation)

Provide your answer...

National trends (e.g. political policies)

Provide your answer...

Local influences (e.g. the role of local communities)

Provide your answer...

Internal influences (e.g. the culture of the organisation)

Provide your answer...

Cross-cultural influences (e.g. a variety of nationalities within the workforce)

Provide your answer...

Generational influences (e.g. a variety of generational viewpoints within the workforce)

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Depending on your chosen example, you may not have issues to consider in every category, but the point is that all organisations and leaders will be subject to a range of influences. In addition, you may have thought of funding issues, attitude to risk, team motivation etc.

Many experts conclude that adapting your style to fit the situation or context is a useful approach, so in Section 3, you'll explore leadership style and consider some of the different styles that have been defined.

3 What is leadership style?

Leadership style is a sub-section of leadership theory that concentrates on the traits and behaviours of leaders.

Your leadership style is the way in which you utilise your personality traits, learned behaviours and experience to maximise the performance of your team.



Figure 3 Leaders have different styles

Many leaders benefit from the use of frameworks, theories and definitions to guide and underpin their actions. There are several leadership style frameworks available. Two are listed here:

1. The work of Kurt Lewin and colleagues in the 1930s defined three different styles of leadership that are still referred to regularly today:
 - **Autocratic** – the leader makes decisions themselves, without consulting others.
 - **Democratic** – the leader involves followers in the decision-making process.
 - **Laissez faire** – the leader has little involvement, allowing followers to make their own decisions.

Further reading: Lewin (1939)

2. Path-Goal Theory is concerned with how leaders motivate their followers to achieve specified goals. Developed by Robert House in 1971 and subsequently updated, this complex theory incorporates leadership style, follower needs and situation. It defines four leadership behaviours, each with a different impact on followers:
 - **Directive** – being clear and specific about expectations, tasks and deadlines
 - **Supportive** – focusing on followers' needs and welfare, creating a positive working environment
 - **Participative** – involving followers in decision making and encouraging their ideas
 - **Achievement-orientated** – having high expectations and setting challenging goals that you are confident followers can achieve.

Leaders use the framework to match an appropriate behaviour to the task and situation, factoring in follower characteristics, such as desire for control and preference for structure.

Further reading: House (1974); House (1996)

Such frameworks are intended to give you choices and guidance about the way you lead in particular situations. Watch this short video which explains when you might use different styles:

View at: [youtube:ukVXp0a4ZhU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukVXp0a4ZhU)



Youtube link: The Open University is not responsible for external content

At the end of this video there is reference to an accompanying article. If you would like to read it, you can find it on the [MindTools website](#).

Once you have watched the video, try this short exercise to check your understanding.

Activity 3 Varying your leadership style

 Allow about 10 minutes

1. When might you use Kurt Lewin's autocratic style of leadership?

- When the team consists of new staff with little or no experience of a time critical task
- When the team are highly motivated and knowledgeable
- When a complex task needs to be carefully planned

2. When might you use Kurt Lewin's laissez faire style of leadership?

- When the leader doesn't really know what to do
- When staff are highly motivated and take pride in their work
- When a task requires effective collaboration between different staff members

Discussion

Although autocratic leadership is sometimes described as too controlling, there are occasions when it might be an appropriate approach, for example, when working with a new, inexperienced team who need support in delivering a project quickly, or in a military situation where there are clear and present dangers.

Laissez faire leadership is also discredited by some as too 'hands off', but can be used effectively to develop and encourage motivated and capable staff who have a drive to succeed.

Leadership skill is demonstrated when making a judgement on which approach to adopt.

While some researchers have developed leadership style frameworks that incorporate a range of options, others have focused on a single style. You'll find out more about some of these in the following sections.

4 A closer look at leadership styles

In this section, you will focus on two prominent leadership styles that are regularly discussed together: transformational and transactional leadership. In fact, transformational leadership theories are often thought of as the next category in the evolution of leadership theory, after the trait, behavioural and contingency theories that you considered earlier this week.



Figure 4 Looking through the lens at leadership styles

Initially contrasted by James McGregor Burns (1978), transactional leadership focuses simply on the link between performance and reward, whereas transformational leadership builds a connection with your followers that will motivate and inspire them to achieve more.

Transactional leadership

Transactional leadership plays an important role in many organisations, particularly where there is a focus on standards and procedures.

Transactional leaders are process and action oriented, and are particularly effective when projects must be tightly controlled, for example on a production line with low paid employees. Their style is responsive and directive, which can be useful in emergency situations.

A key advantage is clarity for employees – they know what's expected of them and have incentives to perform well. A disadvantage is the lack of autonomy, potentially leading to demotivation for both the leader and employees.

Bill Gates is often given as an example of a transactional leader – particularly in his early days of setting up Microsoft, when reward and punishment were a key focus for his style. Many commentators also view Steve Jobs, the former CEO of Apple, as a transactional leader. He was famous for his strong focus on tasks and structures.

Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership has become one of the most popular leadership concepts. It was developed further by Bass (1985), who defined four basic elements, known as the four 'I's':

- Individualised consideration – supporting individual followers; coaching and developing them
- Intellectual stimulation – encouraging followers to solve problems creatively for themselves
- Inspirational motivation – inspiring and enthusing followers through clear communication of their vision
- Idealised influence (charisma) – being a role model for followers; having high moral and ethical standards.

A case study

A well-known case study (Penn State blog, 2013) that exemplifies transformational leadership is that of Nelson Mandela, the first black President of South Africa.



Figure 5 Nelson Mandela

He motivated and inspired his followers to end apartheid by encouraging them to come up with their own solutions to a variety of issues (*intellectual stimulation*), showing a personal concern for the struggles of individual followers (*individualised consideration*), and his ability to repeatedly articulate a clear vision with charisma and conviction.

Can you think of any transformational leaders?

Activity 4 What makes a transformational leader?

 Allow about 10 minutes

Think of someone you consider to be a transformational leader. They could be someone you work with, a community leader, or a historical figure. In the box below, present three pieces of evidence that demonstrate their transformational style.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

For example:

Walt Disney – animator and founder of one of the top motion picture companies in the world – was often quoted as a transformational leader.

1. He had a very clear vision of what he wanted to achieve and understood that he couldn't do it alone.
2. He was a charismatic leader whose enthusiasm was infectious and motivating.
3. He was a creative leader who encouraged his team to explore new ideas and offered personal support when needed.

Although transformational leadership is mainly viewed positively, there are potentially negative aspects to this style. For example, transformational leaders often struggle with detail, and while carried away by passion and enthusiasm, they may miss what the facts are telling them and end up leading the organisation in the wrong direction.

Their approach may not meet the needs of all their followers, so they can end up working more closely with a small cohort and isolating other team members.

Their enthusiasm might lead them to expect too much from their followers, such as working long hours.

In this section, you've looked at two well-established leadership styles and considered their key characteristics. Did they ring true for you? Have you seen or experienced them in action? In Section 5 you'll look at some more recently described styles.

5 A closer look at more leadership styles

Historically, leadership research has focused on male leaders, often in large private-sector organisations within the North American context. Today's research considers the perspectives of both male and female followers, peers and supervisors from a diverse range of organisations and countries across the world, and this has led to the definition of more inclusive leadership styles.



Figure 6 A focus on leadership styles

Adaptive leadership

Adaptive leadership helps people and organisations to adapt to changing and challenging environments: 'Simply stated, adaptive leaders prepare and encourage people to deal with change' (Northouse, 2022, p. 498).

The concept of adaptive leadership was developed by Ronald Heifetz, who worked with a variety of colleagues during the 1990s and beyond. He explains that 'adaptive work is required when our deeply held beliefs are challenged, when the values that made us successful become less relevant, and when legitimate yet competing perspectives emerge' (Heifetz and Laurie, 1997, p. 132).

Heifetz and Laurie define six leader behaviours that are key to the process:

1. *Get on the balcony* – take a step back from the 'field of action' and look from a different perspective
2. *Identify the adaptive challenge* – find out what the key challenge is
3. *Regulate distress* – manage conflict and provide direction for your followers
4. *Maintain disciplined attention* – encourage followers to remain open to, and learn from, conflicting points of view
5. *Give the work back to the people* – empower your followers to solve their own problems

6. *Protect voices of leadership from below* – encourage junior staff to share their concerns and don't dismiss them.

Heifetz separates adaptive from technical challenges, explaining that technical challenges can be more easily defined and solved through the leader's authority and/or expertise. In contrast, adaptive challenges are not clearly defined and require a range of expertise and a supportive and collaborative environment.

We face many adaptive situations in the workplace – Activity 5 will help you to consider a challenge you have faced.

Activity 5 What are your adaptive challenges?

 Allow about 15 minutes

Consider an adaptive challenge you have faced, either at work or in your personal life, for example, implementing a new set of regulations in the workplace or changing your lifestyle to correct a health issue, and answer the following questions:

What was the challenge?

Provide your answer...

What was difficult about adapting to your new situation?

Provide your answer...

What personal behaviours or habits did you have to change?

Provide your answer...

What specific actions did you take?

Provide your answer...

Who else needed to be involved to ensure success? What was their approach?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Change can be difficult and distressing for many individuals and an effective leader will address that, even while having to adapt their own behaviours/values. Was the example you've used difficult or distressing for you? Did you receive support from the leader in your situation?

Understanding more about theories such as this one can help you to be a better leader of change in a difficult environment. It can be useful to have a list, such as the six behaviours outlined by Heifetz and Laurie, to refer to. You'll explore leading change in more detail in Week 6.

In recent research, Goniewicz and Hertelendy (2023) argue that ‘in the post-pandemic world, adaptive leadership becomes even more vital as it requires strategic foresight, empathy, resilience, and effective communication.’ Drawing from lessons learned during the COVID-19 outbreak, they make the following recommendations for post-pandemic leaders:

- Adopt a learning mindset, both personally and organisationally
- Prioritise mental health and wellbeing, investing resources to help teams manage stress and maintain a healthy work–life balance
- Forge partnerships with other organisations, sectors and countries to share knowledge, resources and best practices
- Address systemic inequalities, creating inclusive, equitable environments to ensure future resilience
- Enhance crisis management skills such as rapid decision making and effective resource allocation.

Inclusive leadership

In their recommendations for adaptive leaders, Goniewicz and Hertelendy (2023) prioritise ‘creating inclusive, equitable environments’ and this is increasingly important in any leadership situation as the workforce grows more diverse, and global collaboration expands.

A report commissioned by the Employer Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI, 2016), drawing from a survey completed by almost 1000 employees from a range of organisations, and 61 interviews with 11 participating organisations, defines an inclusive leader as an ‘exemplar of inclusive behaviour’ who:

- listens to and seeks out the views of diverse people and takes account of these views, without bias, in the decisions they make
- appreciates that a diverse group of people will generate more creative solutions to problems and encourages this
- inspires people through a shared vision of future success and motivates them to deliver it
- leverages difference for high performance and provides responsive excellence to customers’, clients’ and service users’ needs
- provides positive feedback to boost people’s self-efficacy
- puts effort into helping diverse people identify their talents and develop them for performance now and future advancement
- communicates authentically and honestly in a way that inspires trust, loyalty and well-being.

The report also describes 15 core competencies present in an inclusive leader, ranging from empathy and confidence building to stewardship and healing. You can access the full list though the link to the Executive Summary in the References section of this week. You’ll explore a selection of leadership skills in more detail in Week 3, but if you’re interested in investigating inclusion in more detail, the OpenLearn course ‘[Diversity and inclusion in the workplace](#)’ is a useful resource.

While inclusive leadership has not yet been extensively researched, there is evidence to suggest a variety of benefits in the workplace, ranging from the promotion of

psychological safety and work engagement (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006) to innovative work behaviour (Qi, Liu, Wei & Hu, 2019).

Professional services and consultancy firm Deloitte, uses its community pro bono programme as a growth opportunity for cultivating inclusive leaders, as outlined in the following case study.

A case study



Figure 7 Deloitte

In common with many other global firms, Deloitte offers a broad range of pro bono programmes, encouraging staff to contribute to a variety of community based activities ranging from an annual day of service to immersive international projects.

A recently published report (Taproot Foundation, 2021) sharing the learning from some of these activities presents six stories of US based Deloitte professionals who have connected their pro bono experience to key inclusive leadership traits. One of these traits is **curiosity**.

One of the Deloitte professionals, Robert, had the opportunity to help a non-profit organisation dedicated to serving high risk young people. They wanted help in quantifying the impact of one of their programmes, requiring extensive research and stakeholder interviews. Robert and his team had experience with strategic communications and data analysis, but they weren't familiar with the non-profit organisation's intervention model or the challenges faced by their clients.

The report explains, 'Robert saw first-hand how powerful curiosity can be. He learned to ask open-ended questions and facilitate conversations that brought together the Deloitte team's expertise and the client's knowledge – helping them to articulate and quantify the impact of their work in an entirely new way' (Taproot Foundation, 2021)

The report's page on 'curiosity' concludes 'An inclusive environment must also be a curious one. Inclusive leaders constantly ask questions, recognising that knowledge from others can fill in the gaps in the bigger picture. They create an environment of inquiry to discover where new passions may lie. This openness can create a space for teams to safely push and inspire each other to the highest quality results.'

Now that you've explored several styles and theories, it will be useful to reflect on your own leadership style, which you can do in Section 6.

6 Assessing your own leadership style

Are you an autocratic leader or do you prefer the transformational style? Are you facing significant change within your organisation and feeling drawn to the adaptive approach?



Figure 8 What is your leadership style?

Activity 6 will start your thinking. There are no right or wrong answers. Many experts conclude that your leadership style is not fixed, and that you are able to adapt and develop it as your career progresses.

Activity 6 How do you lead?

 Allow about 10 minutes

In the box below, write three words that you feel describe your leadership style. If you need inspiration, consider if someone was observing you in a leadership role, what would you want them to see, hear and feel?


Provide your answer...

Discussion

Are you happy with your current style? Would an observer see different elements to the ones you outlined? Would you like to make any changes to your leadership style? **!Warning! Calibri not supported** Experts agree that you can change your leadership style. You can learn different skills and behaviours, implement elements of the models outlined here and in the wider literature, or choose a style that inspires you and work towards developing that.

There are many online tools available that will help you to analyse your leadership style. They are not designed to give you a definitive outcome, but reflect your preferences for different styles and approaches. In Activity 7, some tools are suggested.

Activity 7 Leadership style questionnaires

 Allow about 1 hour

Investigate some of the online leadership tools available. Choose one from the list given or find something else that you like the look of. If you use a tool that isn't on this list, please do make sure there is no charge for the assessment. Do the test and use the box below to summarise your results.

To avoid losing your place in the course, if you are studying on a desktop you should open the link in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on it. If you are studying on a mobile device hold down the link and select to 'Open in New Tab'.

[Skills You Need: What sort of leader are you?](#)

[Coach-You: Leadership style assessment](#)

[The Foundation of Nursing Leadership: What is your leadership style?](#)

[Psychologies: Test - What's your natural leadership style?](#)

Provide your answer...

Discussion

While these questionnaires are not intended to give you a definitive analysis of your leadership style or skills, the questions or statements they present can be useful in stimulating your own thoughts about your approach to leading.

You can refer to this summary when you start your own leadership skills audit in Week 3.

If you are interested in exploring your style in more detail, it might be worth investing in a copy of *Leadership Theory and Practice* by Peter Northouse. This publication covers a different leadership style in every chapter, and includes a relevant leadership style questionnaire for each.

7 This week's quiz

Now you've reached the end of Week 2, you can try a short quiz to help you reflect on what you've learned.

[Week 2 practice quiz](#)

Open the quiz in a new window or tab and come back here when you are done.

8 Summary

By this stage, you should feel better informed about leadership theories and styles, with a greater awareness of the extent of leadership literature you can access. You have explored the impact that context can have on leadership and you've learnt about some key leadership styles, including transactional, transformational, adaptive and inclusive leadership. You've also had an opportunity to consider what your own style might be.

You should now feel that you can:

- recognise how context can impact on leadership
- identify a variety of leadership styles/approaches
- assess your own leadership style.

Next week, you'll focus on the specific skills and behaviours required of an effective leader, looking from the perspectives of a range of employers. You'll also start to look at your own leadership skills and where and how you can develop them further.

You can now go to [Week 3](#).

Week 3: What makes a good leader?

Introduction

Welcome to Week 3 of the free badged course *Leadership and followership*. Last week, you looked at different leadership theories and styles, and how the context in which you lead can have an impact on how you lead.

This week, with that theoretical awareness underpinning your thinking, you'll be focusing in more detail on the skills that employers look for in successful leaders. You'll consider leadership frameworks from major employers across different sectors, and reflect on your own leadership skills using a skills audit.

Watch the following video in which Lynne introduces the week.

Video content is not available in this format.



By the end of this week, you will be able to:

- recognise key skills and behaviours required for effective leadership
- review your own experience and capability in using these skills
- identify opportunities to build your skills and experience
- use a leadership journal to reflect on your experience.

1 Leadership skills and abilities

Although the academic perspective on leadership is an important one, so too is that of the employer, particularly if you are interested in obtaining a leadership role.



Figure 1 Leadership skills and the employer

Leadership skills are important to employers for a number of reasons:

- Evidence suggests that employees with leadership skills and ambitions remain loyal to their organisation, have fewer work absences and have higher levels of morale.
- Change is constant in the business world, and effective change requires leaders with the right skills.
- Succession planning is crucial, so most employers are keen to train and develop their future leaders.
- Effective leaders lead to successful businesses and ineffective leadership can lead to failure.

Before you look at employers' requirements, focus for a few minutes on your own view of leadership and the skills you think are important. You may have already considered skills when you were defining leadership in Week 1, Activity 1. If you did – refer back to that activity now.

Activity 1 Leadership skills list

 Allow about 5 minutes

In the box below, list all the leadership skills you can in five minutes.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

It is impossible to provide a definitive list, but the most commonly described leadership skills and abilities include the competence to communicate, motivate, make decisions, solve problems and delegate, combined with self-awareness, creativity, positivity and integrity.



Figure 2 Branson's Centre of Entrepreneurship

Many business leaders are keen to share their experience, either online or in print, and their hints and tips are often worth reading. For example, famous entrepreneur and founder of the Virgin Group, Sir Richard Branson, values the following leadership qualities and attributes:

- the ability to think differently
- an eye for talent
- a positive company culture
- the ability to delegate
- willingness to listen and learn

- a hands-on approach
- the ability to make decisions (and move on from mistakes)
- attention to detail
- passion for the job.

(Half, 2016)

1.1 A key leadership skill: emotional intelligence

In the following sections, you'll learn about a range of skills and abilities that employers value. One of the most important elements of effective leadership, and a key theme in current discourse on leadership skills and worthy of emphasis, is emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is defined by Mayer and Salovey (1990, p. 189) as the 'ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions.'

Daniel Goleman (1998) adapted their model to identify five basic emotional and social competencies:

1. self-awareness
2. self-regulation
3. motivation
4. empathy
5. social skills.

This video, from Harvard Business Review, explains the value of emotional intelligence, examining each of the five competences in turn: [Daniel Goleman: what makes a leader?](#).

In Section 2 you'll see how some of these qualities are reflected in the competency frameworks used by a range of employers.

2 What employers look for

Employers place an emphasis on different leadership skills depending on their context, as can be demonstrated by reviewing a variety of leadership frameworks. You will now look at five frameworks from a variety of sectors, from healthcare to corporate finance. It should be noted that organisations tweak and update these frameworks regularly, so these examples are correct at the time of writing.



Figure 3 There are many leadership frameworks

1. In the healthcare sector, the NHS has developed six core principles, branded 'Our Leadership Way' and focusing on the heart, head and hands of leadership:

- **Heart: We are Compassionate**
 - We are inclusive, promote equality and diversity and challenge discrimination.
 - We are kind and treat people with compassion, courtesy and respect.
- **Head: We are Curious**
 - We aim for the highest standards and seek to continually improve harnessing our ingenuity.
 - We can be trusted to do what we promise.
- **Hands: We are Collaborative**
 - We collaborate, forming effective partnerships to achieve our common goals.
 - We celebrate success and support our people to be the best they can be.

Source: Leadership Academy, 2023

2. Across the humanitarian sector, the UN's Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) has agreed a series of competencies that are critical for humanitarian coordination and leadership. They are:

- **Leadership**
 - Formulating strategies, applying humanitarian principles and norms
 - Deciding and initiating action
- **Managing Relationships**
 - Relating and networking
 - Fostering humanitarian teamwork
- **Influencing and Representing**
 - Advocacy and negotiation
 - Presenting and communicating information
- **Managing complexity**
 - Analysing complexity
 - Planning and organizing
- **Adapting and Coping**
 - Coping with pressure and setbacks
 - Adapting and responding to change

Source: Inter-Agency Standing Committee Source, 2021

3. In Higher Education, the University of Cambridge presents its leadership attributes framework visually, as follows in Figure 4:



Figure 4 University of Cambridge's leadership attributes framework, 2020. (Source: <https://www.ppd.admin.cam.ac.uk/leadership-development/leadership-attributes->

[framework](#))

4. From the private sector, PwC is a professional services company providing specialist advice to businesses. One of the five attributes in their **PwC Professional leadership development** framework is 'Whole leadership', which is explained as:

'The ability to lead yourself and others to make a difference and create a positive impact in a responsible, authentic, resilient, inclusive and passionate manner.'

This is followed by the questions:

- Can you lead yourself?
- Can you lead others?
- Are you purpose-led and values driven?

Source: PwC, 2023

5. The technology sector often takes a less formal approach to listing leadership qualities, for example, an in-house research project at Google identified 10 behaviour styles common to highly rated managers:

1. Is a good coach
2. Delegates to the team and does not micromanage
3. Has an inclusive approach that takes into account not only the team's performance, but also their well-being and fulfilment
4. Is highly productive and results-oriented
5. Communicates effectively – listens carefully and shares information
6. Supports career development and discusses performance
7. Has a clear vision/strategy and shares it with their team
8. Has the expertise to advise the team
9. Collaborates across departments
10. Is decisive.

Source: Google re:Work (n.d.)

Common themes across these frameworks focus on developing people, inclusion and communication. Other themes reflect the priorities of the different sectors, for example, influencing and representing are key skills across the humanitarian sector, and compassion is understandably high on the NHS agenda. The idea of emotional intelligence, which you looked at earlier, also runs through many of these frameworks, supporting inclusivity, authenticity and relationships with others.

2.1 Different employers value different skills

As you can see, these are different models each emphasising different facets of leadership. Some are presented in a very formal style, others are more informal. Most are clear about how the themes and dimensions should impact on all employees regardless of their role.

If you are interested in working with small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), you may have to look harder for a list of their preferred leadership competencies. Smaller organisations often don't have the resources to develop and publicise relevant structures.

You could talk to someone in a senior position to better understand their priorities, or look for clues on their website or in their annual report.

Activity 2 What leadership skills do employers value?

 Allow about 20 minutes

Choose the leadership frameworks of at least two different employers. Either use the ones outlined here or choose an organisation that means something to you and try to identify its leadership focus. You might find leadership discussed in a framework, a professional development programme, a job description or recruitment literature.

Use the space below to consider the following questions:

1. What are the similarities between the frameworks you have chosen?
2. What are the differences?
3. Are they written in a different style?
4. Do they highlight different skills?
5. Can you see why they would focus on different elements of leadership based on their context?
6. Do you feel more aligned to a particular style or culture?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

The more you understand about the ethos of leadership in an organisation, the better you'll be at aligning yourself with the culture, and working and progressing within it.

If you chose to look at the leadership skills prioritised by your own organisation, or one that you want to work for, you'll now have a list of the skills you need to develop. Alternatively, you may have realised that their ethos doesn't work for you and be starting to consider other approaches that do.

By comparing two frameworks, you can see the relevance of context again (as discussed in Week 2). Reflecting your understanding of their context will be attractive to employers during an application process.

Rebecca Fielding draws on her extensive experience of recruiting leaders for a variety of organisations to summarise key skills and attributes, including self-awareness and self-belief.

Video content is not available in this format.



Rebecca highlights some important skills and attributes in her short video, ranging from self-awareness and self-belief to the ability to make good decisions and communicate effectively with your team. You'll explore the importance of these skills in more detail later in the course.

Understanding the skills and abilities that employers value is an essential part of preparing for a leadership role. They will be looking for evidence that you have the skills they require. In the next section, you'll start to assess your own skills and to identify any gaps in your experience.

3 Reviewing your leadership skills

A skills audit is a useful way to review your skills and gauge how well developed you think those skills are. It could be helpful to refer to a recent CV or application form when undertaking the next activity, as this will remind you of the things you've already done.



Figure 5 A skills audit is a useful way to review your skills

Activity 3 Personal skills audit

 Allow about 30 minutes

In the table below, you will find a list of skills that commonly appear in leadership job descriptions. If you have personal leadership experience, or access to leadership-related job descriptions, you may wish to add your own suggestions to the empty rows in the table. Score your level of expertise against each skill/ability as follows:

- 0 = no experience yet
- 1 = basic
- 2 = competent
- 3 = proficient

Add at least one example of when you've demonstrated that skill.

When you've completed the task, ask a colleague, manager, mentor or friend who knows you well whether they agree with your assessment.

Table 1 Personal skills audit

Skill	Proficiency	Evidence
Ability to inspire and motivate others	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
Ability to create and share a clear vision	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
Empathy	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
Integrity	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
Diplomacy	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
Resilience	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
Initiative	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
Self-awareness	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
Self-reflection	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
Self-motivation	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
Ability to influence others	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
Relationship building	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>

Negotiation skills

Provide your answer...

Provide your answer...

Team working

Provide your answer...

Provide your answer...

Verbal communication

Provide your answer...

Provide your answer...

Listening skills

Provide your answer...

Provide your answer...

Presentation skills

Provide your answer...

Provide your answer...

Ability to drive/lead change

Provide your answer...

Provide your answer...

Problem solving

Provide your answer...

Provide your answer...

Decision making

Provide your answer...

Provide your answer...

Ability to take risks

Provide your answer...

Provide your answer...

Multitasking

Provide your answer...

Provide your answer...

Planning and organising

Provide your answer...

Provide your answer...

Strategic thinking

Provide your answer...

Provide your answer...

Financial acumen

Provide your answer...

Provide your answer...

Ability to evaluate information

Analytical thinking

Provide your answer...

Provide your answer...

Provide your answer...

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Provide your answer...

.....
Discussion

If you group your skills by score e.g. all those that scored 3, all the 2s etc. – what are your perceived strengths and areas for development? Is there an obvious gap in your experience or is your next step to grow your overall expertise from basic to competent?

For the final part of the activity, talking to someone who knows you well can help you to understand whether your perceptions of yourself are accurate. They may also have ideas to add. Many people underestimate their own abilities!

When you are in a leadership role, your employer will also assess your skills and abilities in a variety of ways, such as through a performance review or appraisal. If you can, use the feedback from those assessments to enhance your audit. Rebecca Fielding explains some of the methods that employers use.

Video content is not available in this format.



Now that you've considered your skills and started to assess where your current strengths and areas for development lie, the next step is to look at ways to build and develop these skills. In Section 4, you'll look at the opportunities around you and start to consider practical steps towards enhancing your leadership skills.

4 Building your leadership experience

In Activity 4 in Week 1 of this course, you reflected on your leadership experience so far. No matter where you found yourself on the spectrum of experience, there is always more to learn!

There are many leadership-related opportunities you could explore, both in and outside of work, such as:

- a. **Joining a club or society:** Volunteering for a committee position e.g. treasurer, chair, social secretary etc. will give you useful leadership experience.
- b. **Leading a local community project or campaign:** Volunteering within your local community can help you to develop a wide range of leadership skills, particularly those related to interacting with people.
- c. **Organising a fundraising event or social gathering:** The skills required to organise and run a successful event are extensive, from making decisions and planning, to relationship building and negotiating.
- d. **Mentoring or coaching someone:** While this activity focuses on a specific element of leadership, it is a crucial one. Listening to people and helping them to develop are themes that you will encounter in many of the sections on this course.

Taking inspiration from these ideas, what could you do to enhance your own leadership experience?



Figure 6 Voluntary work is a great way to build up leadership skills

Activity 4 Developing your skills

 Allow about 15 minutes

Consider the strengths and areas for development you identified in Activity 3, and reflect on how you might fill them, prioritising those that feel most relevant at this

stage. It is important to note that you don't need to have all the skills listed in that activity, particularly when you are at the beginning of your leadership journey, so focus on the areas where you know you need to develop further. Use the box below to note ideas for possible projects or activities that will allow you to do this, e.g. chair a working group; volunteer to give a presentation; organise an event.

As you consider your options, ask yourself the following questions:

Do I need to focus attention on a key area, e.g. interpersonal skills or negotiating experience?

What are the projects or activities that could allow me to build those skills e.g. fundraising for a local charity, changing my approach with an existing member of staff I currently struggle to connect with?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Involving your mentor, manager or another leader who knows you in this exercise will be useful. They may suggest options you hadn't considered or weren't aware of.

If you found this exercise useful, you might want to use the GROW tool in your [Toolkit](#). GROW stands for 'Goal, Reality, Options, What will you do next?', which will give you a framework to consider your actions in more detail.

Having a leadership mentor or coach within your organisation could be a very useful strategy. They can guide you towards useful experiences and potentially put your name forward. Find out if your employer already runs any relevant leadership development schemes – your Human Resources department should be able to advise. If they don't, assess who within your organisation is the type of leader you would like to be and approach them for advice.

If you'd rather look outside your own organisation, or are not currently in work, join a relevant LinkedIn or other social network group and look out for someone who has interesting things to say about their own leadership experiences.

Top tips for finding a mentor include:

- It must be someone with more experience than you.
- It will be easier to build rapport if you choose someone you respect and who shares your values.
- The relationship must be honest, so choose someone you trust to keep your conversations confidential.
- Consider potential mentors inside and outside your organisation. If you're looking outside, it might be someone you've met at a conference or other networking event.

So, who could be a good mentor for you?

Activity 5 Finding a mentor

 Allow about 20 minutes

In the box below, list individuals who you could approach for leadership advice or mentoring, either within your current organisation or elsewhere.

Provide your answer...

Now prepare some key questions you would like to ask them, for example:

- What are the key skills a good leader needs?
- What do you wish you had known before taking your first leadership role?
- Can you describe your path to leadership?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Before requesting a formal mentoring relationship with someone, you might prefer to arrange an initial meeting to ask some informal questions and gauge whether they are the type of person you could work with. If not, you will still go away with some interesting insights. You could even ask them how they would approach finding a mentor – they may make some useful suggestions. If you don't feel ready for a mentor yet, talk to all the people on your list and ask them your questions. Your research will be useful and you can then add them to your network of contacts.

If you want to find out more about using mentoring to enhance your career, the OpenLearn course ['Exploring career mentoring and coaching'](#) covers the topic in detail.

Now you have some practical ideas about what you are going to do and who you are going to talk to, the next step is to ensure you make the time to reflect on these activities and therefore get the most from them. In Section 5, you'll look at how to keep a leadership journal and why this can be beneficial.

5 Keeping a leadership journal

If you have a complex and challenging job, which most leaders do, it can be difficult to make the time to reflect on your own leadership journey. Writing in a journal can help you to clarify and explore your thoughts/questions/concerns in a way that simply can't happen when they are all circulating in your brain, competing for attention.



Figure 7 A leadership journal is an important tool

Writing a leadership journal is an excellent habit to get into from an early stage in your career, for a range of reasons. You can use it to:

- capture and explore your ideas or note down questions you'd like to answer
- look back on specific events and consider how you felt, what you did, and if things didn't go so well, what you could do differently next time
- rehearse future conversations that might be difficult
- facilitate decision making – allowing you to clarify the decision to be made, explore the pros and cons etc.
- note anything of interest – quotes, goals, feelings, lessons learned etc.
- note things that have gone well. This is called positive reinforcement and it can boost your confidence when times are difficult.

Over time, you can reflect on what you've written and look for patterns or themes that will give you insights into your typical behaviours and responses.

Activity 6 Starting your journal

 Allow about 25 minutes

Decide whether you are going to create an online journal or do things the old-fashioned way! You might decide to treat yourself to a new notebook and pen, or explore some of the numerous journaling apps that are available.

Consider the best time of your day for journaling, for example, is it first thing in the morning, before you go to bed, in the office or at home. You must be able to focus on what you are doing with no distractions.

Set aside 15 minutes at your chosen time to write about things that are currently in your head. In time, you can use your journal to explore wider issues in your life, but for now, try to focus on issues that relate to your leadership interests and the aspirations for this course that you outlined in [Activity 5 in Week 1](#).

You might ask yourself questions, jot down ideas, revisit events and experiences that you have recently had, or outline your goals for the future. If you need ideas, a

starting question might be – what would I do if I had an extra hour every day? Or how would I like to be able to describe myself as a leader?

Write your first entry.

When you've done this exercise, reflect on how it could help you to become a better leader.

.....

Discussion

Did you spend more than 15 minutes on this activity or did you struggle to think of anything to write in the time? Reflection is a skill and it can seem difficult or awkward at first, but it does get easier with practice. The key element is to make the time to do it. If every day seems too much, try setting aside 10–15 minutes each week to start with. If you aim to do this at work, you might need to schedule a slot in your diary. If you need help finding the time, refer to [Activity 6 in Week 1](#) or use the Time Management tool in the [Toolkit](#).

Models such as Gibbs' (1988) reflective cycle can provide structure to your reflection if required. This model focuses on what you were thinking and feeling, what was good and bad about the experience, and what sense you can make from it, before you consider what could have been done differently and what you might do if it happened again:

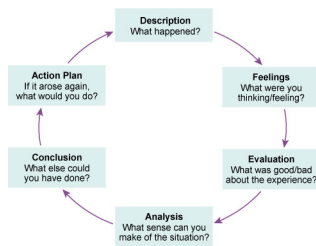


Figure 8 Gibbs' reflective cycle

6 This week's quiz

Now you've reached the end of Week 3, you can try a short quiz to help you reflect on what you've learned.

[Week 3 practice quiz](#)

Open the quiz in a new window or tab and come back here when you are done.

7 Summary

At this point in the course, you should be feeling more comfortable about reflecting on your leadership experience and skills, and considering your next steps.

You have looked at the leadership skills employers value and then audited which of those skills you have already, identifying those you need to gain or enhance further. You've also started to look at the opportunities for leadership development that are available to you. You can recognise the benefits of mentors and reflective practice, and have begun to think about people you know who could advise and support you in your leadership journey. For those who haven't kept a journal before, you have taken the first steps in building your leadership journal and understanding how it can enhance your leadership experience.

You should now feel that you can:

- recognise key skills and behaviours required for effective leadership
- review your own experience and capability in using these skills
- identify opportunities to build your skills and experience
- use a leadership journal to reflect on your experience.

Next week, you'll look at the impact of bad leadership, considering the common mistakes that leaders make and looking at ways in which those mistakes can be rectified.

Learning from the mistakes of others can be a very valuable leadership experience.

You can now go to [Week 4](#).

Week 4: When leadership goes wrong

Introduction

Welcome to Week 4 of the free badged course *Leadership and followership*. Last week, you looked at leadership skills – why employers value them and how you can develop yours further.

This week, you will move your focus from good leadership to bad. You'll consider the spectrum of poor leadership and look at the common mistakes that leaders make. Learning from those mistakes might help you to avoid making them yourself.

Watch the following video in which Lynne introduces the week.

Video content is not available in this format.



By the end of this week, you will be able to:

- recognise poor leadership in different forms
- reflect on the impact of poor or weak leadership
- describe ways in which leadership mistakes might be avoided.

1 What is poor leadership?

Poor leadership can be described on a spectrum. In this course, you'll concentrate on the poor leadership that you are likely to encounter in your workplace, ranging from the common mistakes that many leaders make, to leaders who are 'destructive'.



Figure 1 Poor leadership can damage your team

At some point in your life, a leader in your organisation, or in the public domain, will have made a decision you disagree with, or upset a group of people with a damaging comment or announcement. They may even have exhibited negative behaviours over a longer period, having a detrimental effect on the morale of you and your colleagues.

Have you ever taken a step back and wondered why they did what they did? Was it the pressure they found themselves under, the circumstances they were in, or did they lack the skills to handle the situation appropriately?

Activity 1 Your experience of poor or weak leadership

 Allow about 15 minutes

Think of a time when you've felt shocked, offended, disappointed or angry at an action taken by a leader you follow.

In the box below, write a brief summary of the situation and how you felt. What do you think made it poor leadership?

Provide your answer...

Now try to put yourself into the leader's position. What could you have done differently?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

When you considered what you would do differently, what were the key differences? Would you use different skills, different language or a different method of communication? Would you seek out and apply knowledge/information that you feel the leader didn't have and should have asked for?

Reflecting on how a situation could have been dealt with more effectively is important for any leader. Your leadership journal is a useful tool to use for this type of activity.

Sometimes the poor or weak leader might be you. Have you ever had feedback that surprised you? Have you ever had coaching that encouraged you to reflect on your own actions?

Professor Jean Hartley explains the importance of making time to review yourself and reflect on your leadership.

Video content is not available in this format.



There are many things that can impact on your own leadership ability, from being forced to lead on a vision you don't share, to a lack of confidence in your own skills and abilities and a feeling of being out of your depth. Sometimes you might just have a bad day!

Many leaders find coaching and reflection invaluable tools for reviewing their actions.

This part of the course is designed to help you recognise the wrong behaviours and consider more rewarding or successful alternatives. The leadership journal you started in Week 3 will also be a useful tool. Use it to identify where you might be going wrong and to consider ways to improve.

If you feel your leadership isn't going well, Professor Hartley has the following advice.

Video content is not available in this format.



In Section 2 you'll explore some of the different types of poor leadership in more detail.

2 Defining poor or weak leadership

Now that you've considered your own experience of poor leadership, in this section you'll look at definitions that researchers and business experts have developed.



Figure 2 Bad leaders can be found in both real life and fiction

There is a growing academic interest in the negative side of leadership, and Schyns and Schilling (2013) outline two main reasons for that:

- prevalence of destructive leader behaviours in organisations, and the associated costs
- findings that the effects of destructive leaders on their followers are severe.

Researchers have defined many types of negative leadership, often using different terminology. Two key categories are outlined here.

Ineffective leadership

Barbara Kellerman (2004) defines seven types of bad leadership and uses numerous high-profile case studies in her book *Bad Leadership: What it is, How it Happens, Why it Matters*. She first divides bad leadership into two broad categories:

1. Ineffective leadership 'fails to produce the desired change. For reasons that include missing traits, weak skills, strategies badly conceived, and tactics badly employed, ineffective leadership falls short of its intention'.
2. Unethical leadership 'fails to distinguish between right and wrong'.

For the purposes of this course, you'll concentrate on the first category, ineffective leadership, which Kellerman (2004) divides into three groups, illustrating each with a range of case studies:

1. *Incompetent* – lacks the will or skill (or both) to sustain effective action; does not create positive change. Case study: Juan Antonio Samaranch (business leader)
2. *Rigid* – stiff and unyielding, unable or unwilling to adapt to new ideas, new information, or changing times. Case study: Mary Meeker (business leader)
3. *Intemperate* – lacks self-control and is aided and abetted by followers who are unwilling or unable to intervene. Case study: Marion Barry Jr (political leader)

Destructive leadership

A growing body of authors and researchers focus on the concept of destructive leadership.

Following a comprehensive review of the literature, Padilla, Hogan and Kaiser (2007) set out five features of destructive leadership:

1. Destructive leadership is seldom absolutely or entirely destructive: there are both good and bad results in most leadership situations.
2. The process of destructive leadership involves dominance, coercion and manipulation rather than influence, persuasion and commitment.
3. The process of destructive leadership has a selfish orientation; it is focused more on the leader's needs than the needs of the larger social group.
4. The effects of destructive leadership are outcomes that compromise the quality of life for constituents and detract from the organisation's main purposes.
5. Destructive organisational outcomes are not exclusively the result of destructive leaders, but are also the products of susceptible followers and conducive environments.

A more recent literature review and meta-analysis of over 400 data samples (Mackey et al, 2021) suggests that we still have an incomplete understanding of the broad construct of destructive leadership, and aims to provide a solid foundation for further research to better understand the wide variety of destructive leadership styles and behaviours now defined. In Table 1 of their paper (p3), they share 21 definitions of different styles of destructive leadership taken from the literature, ranging from aversive leadership (i.e. leading through intimidation, threats, and punishment) to leadership incivility (i.e. leaders displaying a lack of regard for followers).

Have you ever encountered a leader who falls into one of these categories? Can you recognise any of those characteristics in yourself?

Case study



Figure 3 Biotech company, Theranos

Elizabeth Holmes was the CEO of a biotech company called Theranos, which claimed to have developed a new technology that could run hundreds of tests on small blood samples, speeding up diagnosis and treatment. In fact, the technology never worked successfully, and Holmes has since received a prison sentence for fraud. Tourish (2023) draws out some of the examples of bad leadership demonstrated in this case:

- The Board that Holmes appointed was very high profile across US society but had no expertise in the biotech industry, so there was no one to offer expertise, oversight and feedback on key decisions.
- The leadership style within the company was controlling, using surveillance cameras and placing strict limits on colleagues sharing information with each other.
- Employees who asked too many questions or who weren't prepared to 'show unmitigated loyalty' were encouraged to leave.

Holmes has subsequently been described as both a destructive leader and a negatively charismatic leader, i.e. one who used their natural charisma in a destructive way.

Activity 2 Categorising poor leadership

 Allow about 10 minutes

Refer to the example of poor leadership you thought of in Activity 1. Looking at the various types and definitions listed in this section, can you fit that leader into any of those categories? Summarise your thoughts here:

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Did your example fit into Kellerman's *ineffective leadership* category i.e. 'incompetent', 'rigid' or 'intemperate'? Or was your leader destructive or even negatively charismatic? A key question to ask yourself is 'What can I learn from that person's approach to ensure it isn't a path I might take during my own leadership career?'

If you can't recognise your leader as ineffective or destructive, it may be that they are just making common leadership mistakes. You'll look at some of those in more detail in Section 4.

Both Kellerman (2004) and Padilla et al. (2007) include followers in their definitions of poor or bad leadership, making the point that bad or destructive leaders can't have the same impact without either bystanders who look the other way, or colluders who join in the destruction.

Analysis completed by Mackey et al (2021) shows 'that much of destructive leadership research actually examines subordinates' negative perceptions of their supervisors instead of how destructive leaders impact followers and their organisations.'

You'll investigate followers and followership in more detail in Week 5.

Now that you're familiar with some of the ways in which leadership can be poor or weak, the next step is to consider the impact of that poor leadership on individuals, teams and businesses.

3 Exploring the impact of poor or weak leadership

In Section 2, you considered different types of poor leadership. Here, you're going to look at the potential impact of that leadership.



Figure 4 Poor leadership can be shattering

Activity 3 Impact of poor leadership

 Allow about 15 minutes

Think of a time when you felt demotivated. Could your leader (manager, supervisor, team captain etc.) have done anything to change how you felt? What could they have done? What could you have done yourself to change the situation? Summarise your thoughts here:

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Demotivation is a common result of poor leadership, but there are opportunities for a leader to do something about it. For example, acknowledging the demotivation and taking steps to boost morale is a good start. You'll learn more about motivating teams in Week 6.

Did you have any ideas about what you could have done yourself to change the situation? Giving your leader appropriate and constructive feedback can lead to a positive outcome for everyone.

In extreme circumstances, e.g. bullying or harassment, you may require support from your Human Resources team.

The impact of poor leadership can be felt in many ways across an organisation. In their meta-analysis of destructive leadership, Schyns and Schilling (2013) propose a framework made up of four concepts:

1. Leader related
 - Followers show resistance towards a destructive leader e.g. ignoring requests
 - Followers lose trust in the leader
2. Job related
 - Job satisfaction diminishes as the environment becomes less pleasant
 - Followers become less dedicated or motivated
3. Organisation related
 - Commitment reduces as followers feel the organisation has failed to protect them
 - Productivity and turnover is affected
4. Individual follower related
 - Followers experience stress and there is a negative impact on well-being
 - Followers reduce their efforts, leading to poor performance

You can see from this framework that the impact of negative leadership can have profound consequences for everyone involved.

In their meta-analysis, investigating the association between different types of leadership and workplace aggression, Cao et al. (2022) concluded that destructive leadership was most strongly associated with increased workplace aggression, while ethical leadership had the strongest negative association – suggesting that ‘the emerging leadership types [...] have considerable added value.’

Activity 4 Case study

 Allow about 15 minutes

Read this case study:

Lucy was a Head of Department in a school. She was an effective leader with a dedicated and successful team and a strong relationship with the Headteacher.

After a few years, the external context started to change. The school came under pressure to obtain better results and the increasingly stressed Headteacher started to change his approach. Instead of supporting and encouraging Lucy, he started to make unrealistic demands of her and her team.

As Lucy had a strong relationship with the Headteacher, she resisted his demands and repeatedly argued the case for a different approach. He disagreed and became increasingly autocratic, telling her what to do and how

to do it, and criticising work that he had previously been happy with. She felt she had no choice but to follow his instructions.

When she communicated his demands to her team, Lucy was met with resistance. She represented her boss's vision as enthusiastically as she could, despite her misgivings, but the team could see she lacked her usual conviction. They interpreted this as Lucy losing interest and not fighting their corner, and started to lose their respect for her. Eventually, many of them became demotivated and critical.

Lucy started to lose confidence. As a result, she communicated less with her team and became increasingly intimidated by her boss, which only increased his frustration. She felt she had lost the support of both the Headteacher and her team and she eventually left the school.

In the box below answer the following questions:

1. Was the Headteacher a destructive leader?
2. What could Lucy have done differently?
3. How might Lucy have maintained the motivation of her team?
4. Might members of the team have viewed Lucy as a destructive leader?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

There are many different circumstances that can lead to destructive leadership. In this case, increasing pressure was causing the Headteacher to behave destructively. A lack of emotional intelligence also meant he didn't see the impact that his behaviour was having on Lucy.

Lucy could have been clearer with her team about her efforts to counter his demands, and a discussion about ways to convince him, incorporating ideas from the team, could have been beneficial.

She might also have enlisted support from other Heads of Department or consulted with Human Resources advisers to explore whether his behaviour was appropriate. School governors or the local authority could also offer support.

Members of Lucy's team might have viewed her leadership as 'incompetent', based on their poorly informed assumptions about the circumstances.

In Activity 4, you've started to consider ways you might mitigate the impact of poor leadership. You'll explore these ideas in more detail in the next section.

4 Common mistakes leaders make



Figure 5 All leaders will make mistakes

You don't have to be a poor leader to make mistakes. All leaders will have good and bad outcomes regularly throughout their careers, no matter how good their intentions. The point is to learn from those mistakes and, even better, learn from other people's mistakes before you make them yourself!

Rebecca Fielding offers the following advice, including the three-step model that she often takes people through when they've made a mistake at work:

Video content is not available in this format.



Activity 5 encourages you to consider some common examples of leadership mistakes, and to suggest possible solutions.

Activity 5 Common mistakes and possible solutions

 Allow about 20 minutes

Here are six examples of common leadership mistakes. Use the space below each one to propose possible solutions, and then reveal the comment.

Lack of clear vision

Your team doesn't know why they are doing something or what they are working towards. They don't have a sense of what success looks like. They lack direction and waste time on activities that might, or might not, be useful.

Possible solutions:

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Be clear about what your team are working towards or what success looks like. Regularly communicate with them in different ways to create a shared sense of purpose. Don't make it complicated – create a concise message, or better still, involve them in creating that message. Your team will be more engaged and better motivated as a result.

Poor communication

Individuals don't know what you want from them or whether you think they are doing a good job, so they feel uncertain and lack commitment. They don't know how best to communicate with you so they stop trying.

Possible solutions:

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Provide timely praise or constructive feedback. Make yourself regularly available for debate and discussion. The more you understand what motivates or concerns them, the better you will be at finding ways to inspire them and mutual trust will grow. The team will feel valued and important.

Micromanagement and failure to delegate

Your team members feel that you don't trust them or value their input, and are demotivated. They start to wait for your instructions and are less likely to show initiative.

Possible solutions:

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Find the right balance between letting trusted members of your team take responsibility for key activities, and overseeing those activities to ensure they're moving forward as you expect. Employees will feel empowered and trusted and that will increase their commitment and motivation.

Recruiting the wrong people

Individuals who lack key skills or have the wrong attitude can be very damaging to both team morale and the progress of a project. If you thought that person would fit in, what does that say about your opinion of everyone else?

Possible solutions:

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Take the time to surround yourself with good people who you can trust and delegate to. You'll have more time to focus on the elements of leadership that will maximise team performance and get the best results.

Failing to develop your team

You haven't invested in upskilling your team, yet your expectations are high and keep growing. Employees feel unappreciated and out of their depth, losing confidence and motivation.

Possible solutions:

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Get to know the developmental needs of your team and align them with your vision and strategic plan. Make sure that everyone has an opportunity to develop themselves (including you). It doesn't have to be an expensive training course – it could be work shadowing in a similar department etc.

Failing to lead by example

You never attend their meetings or events, so they assume you aren't interested in what they do. You are always on your phone. Although they are business calls, your team don't know that. They start to copy your behaviour.

Possible solutions:

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Attend key team meetings or events the team have organised and ensure you participate in an appropriate way. Model the behaviours you look for in your team. A

good work–life balance is important, so make sure you work reasonable hours and take the time to check on anyone who is still in the office when you leave.

The solutions to each of the issues highlighted will vary depending on your context, and you may find that several solutions are required to address the issue effectively. Identifying and acknowledging the mistake is the starting point, then you can start to consider other behaviours and approaches that might be more successful.

4.1 Advice for leaders

If you are worried about making mistakes, there are several avenues of support available to you. Rebecca Fielding explains how employers often support their leaders and how leaders can better support themselves.

Video content is not available in this format.



As you saw from the examples used in Activity 5, much of the impact of poor leadership is felt by the followers. Based on findings from her extensive case studies, Barbara Kellerman (2004) has some advice for leaders wishing to work more effectively with their teams:

- Establish a culture of openness in which diversity and dissent are encouraged.
- Install an independent person to review complaints and maintain standards.
- Bring in strong and independent advisers who aren't afraid to tell you the truth.
- Avoid 'group think' as it discourages healthy dissent.
- Get reliable and complete information, and then disseminate it.
- Give a senior manager, who knows the organisation well, responsibility for ensuring the mission continues to matter.
- Establish a system of checks and balances to avoid policies and procedures that support bad leadership.
- Make sure you connect to all your constituents and not just a chosen, like-minded few.

4.2 Advice for followers

For a follower on the receiving end of poor leadership, she has this advice:

- Make bad leaders pay for their transgressions.
- Find allies.
- Develop your own sources of information – don't rely on information provided by your leader.

- Take collective action e.g. get a small group together to talk to the boss.
- Be a watchdog.
- Hold leaders to account.

Some of these actions won't be easy, and you'll need to adapt them according to your context – but Kellerman's key message is don't let them get away with it. Whether your action is to discuss the issue directly with your boss or to escalate things appropriately, followers play a crucial role in leadership and business success, and this includes when your leader is failing.

You'll look in more detail at followership and its close links with leadership in Week 5.

In this section, you've considered common leadership mistakes and possible solutions. In the next section, you'll explore some of the key skills that a leader requires if they are to recognise their mistakes and improve their poor leadership.

5 Developing key skills

In Week 3, you looked at the skills and abilities a good leader needs. In this section, you'll focus on some of those that a poor leader can lack and how to develop them.



Figure 6 A gap in your leadership skills?

Activity 6 What skills were lacking?

 Allow about 10 minutes

In Activity 1, you thought of a negative experience of leadership and considered what that leader did wrong and how you might have behaved differently. Go back to that example and think more specifically about any skills or abilities the leader didn't demonstrate. Use the [list of leadership skills from Week 3](#) as a useful prompt.

List the skills in the space below:

Discussion

What did you come up with? Many instances of poor leadership relate to a lack of empathy or poor communication. Did you identify other areas for that individual's development?

Some of the skills and abilities you have listed might seem fixed, for example, the ability to empathise. Experts agree that even the least empathetic individual can learn how to demonstrate empathy even if it doesn't come naturally to them.

While there are many different skills that could be listed here, those that have the most impact on leadership often involve how an individual relates to, is perceived by, and communicates with other people. You will explore some of these issues in the following sections.

5.1 Lack of emotional intelligence

In Week 3, you identified the importance of emotional intelligence in good leadership. It incorporates elements such as empathy, self-awareness and self-regulation, all of which are potentially missing or under-developed in many of the types of poor leadership outlined this week.

The [video you watched in Week 3](#) included an explanation of how emotional intelligence can be developed. Bariso (2016) suggests seven steps:

1. Reflect on your own emotions
2. Ask others for perspective
3. Be observant
4. Use 'the pause', i.e. stop and think before you act
5. Explore the 'why', e.g. ask yourself: 'Why does that person feel the way they do?'; 'Why do I feel differently?'
6. When criticised, don't take offence. Instead ask: 'What can I learn?'
7. Practice, practice, practice.

Point 7 is an important one. These are steps that won't come naturally at first and require perseverance over time to become embedded.

5.2 Lack of integrity

Integrity is always high on the list in surveys of leadership skills or when recruiting leaders. It can be perceived as deficient in poor leaders, particularly if they try to cover up their mistakes or lack of ability with lies. The Oxford English Dictionary (2023) defines it as:

Soundness of moral principle; the character of uncorrupted virtue, especially in relation to truth and fair dealing; uprightness, honesty.

It might also be described as always doing the right thing and being honest.

Amster (2015) offers the following tips to help you strengthen your integrity in the workplace:

- Fulfil your promises
- Keep appointments
- Before you make a commitment, reflect on whether you can deliver
- Get comfortable with saying no.

A Mind Tools (n.d.) editorial on 'Preserving integrity' recommends analysing every choice that you make and asking yourself the following questions:

- If my choice were printed on the front page of the newspaper for everyone to see, would I feel OK about it?
- If I make this choice, will I feel OK with myself afterwards?

Tips like these can provide a helpful checklist if you're unsure about how to proceed.

5.3 Lack of resilience

Resilience has become a buzzword in recent times, referring to an individual's ability to 'bounce back' from difficult and challenging situations. Without this ability, a leader can rapidly lose self-confidence and the ability to motivate those around them, soon becoming ineffective.

Lucy, Poorkavoos and Thompson (2014, p. 9) outline the five key factors that make for a resilient leader in their Resilience Capabilities model. They include a series of questions that are extremely useful to reflect on:

Perspective

- Are you able to positively reframe negative experiences and find opportunity in adversity?
- Are you able to accept what you cannot change, and focus your efforts on those things you can?
- Are you solution-driven or do you tend to get stuck in the problem?
- Are you able to face fully negative information whilst not dwelling on it?

Emotional intelligence

- Do you acknowledge your own feelings and express them appropriately?
- Are you able to change your mood when you need to?
- How intentional are you about providing support to others?

Purpose, values and strengths

- Do you have a clear sense of purpose at work?
- Do you have a clear sense of your personal strengths and make the opportunity to use them regularly in your work?
- Do you have a clear sense of your own values and act in a way consistent with those values?
- Does your work fit well with your personal values and beliefs?

Connections

- Do you have a strong and reliable network of colleagues inside and outside of work that will help you through difficult times?
- Are you able to meet your varied needs through a diverse support network?

Managing physical energy

- Do you make time to exercise regularly?
- Do you get enough sleep?
- Do you make sure you eat a healthy diet?

- Do you make time in your schedule for the pursuit of activities that give you joy and/or help you relax?

Managing physical energy, or taking care of yourself, is a key element of resilience that is often overlooked. How can you grow and lead your team through adversity if you're tired, unhealthy and stressed?

If you want to explore resilience in more detail, the OpenLearn course [‘Developing career resilience’](#) covers resilience in the workplace.

Throughout this week, you've considered the impact of poor leadership on followers and next week you'll look at the leader–follower relationship in more detail.

6 This week's quiz

Now it's time to complete the Week 4 badge quiz. It's similar to previous quizzes but this time, instead of answering 5 questions there will be 15.

[Week 4 compulsory badge quiz](#)

Remember, this quiz counts towards your badge. If you're not successful the first time, you can attempt the quiz again in 24 hours.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window, then come back here when you've finished.

7 Summary

By now, you should have a better idea of what constitutes a poor leader and the negative impact of poor leadership. You've also considered how you might rectify some of the common mistakes leaders can make.

You should now feel that you can:

- recognise poor leadership in different forms
- reflect on the impact of poor or weak leadership
- describe ways in which leadership mistakes might be avoided.

Next week, you'll change perspective and start to look at leadership from the follower's point of view, moving on to consider your own followers and how you might develop them further.

You are now half way through the course. The Open University would really appreciate your feedback and suggestions for future improvement in our optional [end-of-course survey](#), which you will also have an opportunity to complete at the end of Week 8. Participation will be completely confidential and we will not pass on your details to others.

You can now go to [Week 5](#).

Week 5: Why is followership important?

Introduction

Welcome to Week 5 of the free badged course *Leadership and followership*.

Last week, you looked at what you could learn from different types of bad leadership and the common mistakes leaders make. This week you'll focus on followers and the part they play in effective organisations.

If you're primarily interested in leadership, don't view this week as less relevant – many of the qualities of a proactive follower are the same as those of an effective leader.

If you don't yet have very much leadership experience, becoming an effective follower is an excellent starting point.

If you are currently a leader, you'll already know the value of positive relationships with your followers. This week, you'll look at how to develop them and encourage your followers to consider their own leadership journey.

Now watch Lynne introduce this week.

Video content is not available in this format.



By the end of this week, you will be able to:

- recognise different types of followership
- describe the benefits of effective followership
- identify followers' needs
- describe ways of engaging and developing your followers.

1 Different follower types

As you saw when defining followership in Week 1, the concept has been studied since the 1950s, when the focus was mostly leader-centred, i.e. framing followers as recipients of leadership.



Figure 1 Followers have an important role to play

The body of research continues to grow, taking a more follower-centred approach and investigating the interdependence between followers and leaders. This section explores the different types of followers you might encounter. Understanding the characteristics of different followers can make you a better follower and a better leader.

There are several follower typologies in the literature, mainly taking the **leader-centred** focus. One of the earliest and most widely cited is by Robert Kelley (1988), who describes five groups:

1. **Sheep** – passive and uncritical, lacking in initiative and a sense of responsibility. They perform the tasks given to them and stop.
2. **Yes people** – a livelier but equally unenterprising group. Dependent on a leader for inspiration, they can be aggressively deferential, even servile. In later work, Kelley refers to them as ‘conformist followers’.
3. **Alienated followers** – critical and independent in their thinking but passive in carrying out their role. Often cynical, they tend to sink gradually into disgruntled acquiescence, seldom openly opposing a leader’s efforts.
4. **Survivors** – perpetually sample the wind and live by the slogan ‘better safe than sorry’. They are adept at surviving change.
5. **Effective followers** – think for themselves and carry out their duties and assignments with energy and assertiveness.

He makes the point that ‘followership is not a person but a role’ and explains that ‘effective followers and effective leaders are often the same people playing different parts at different hours of the day.’

Ira Chaleff (2009) focuses his typology on levels of support and challenge. He describes four styles of followership:

1. **The resource** – low support/low challenge – does what’s required but doesn’t go beyond the minimum
2. **The individualist** – low support/high challenge – has low deference and isn’t afraid to criticise
3. **The implementer** – high support/low challenge – does what is needed with minimal oversight or explanation
4. **The partner** – high support/high challenge – gives vigorous support but is also willing to question the leader.

While much of the research focuses on how follower styles and behaviours can support or derail the leadership process, Carsten et al. (2010) take a **follower-centred** approach and explore how style and behaviour can impact on followership itself. They asked people a series of questions about their role as follower, focusing on positives, negatives, personal qualities and behaviours.

They divided the responses into three categories:

1. **Passive** – taking and following orders, and deferring to the leader’s knowledge and expertise
2. **Active** – offering opinions when given the opportunity but remaining loyal and obedient regardless of whether they agreed with the leader
3. **Proactive** – exhibiting behaviours more aligned with partnership than dominance and submission.

Carsten et al. (p. 21) concluded that ‘followership holds a multiplicity of meaning for individuals occupying the role’. They found that the context of followership is important, and depends on variables associated with leadership style and working environment.

1.1 What type of follower are you?

So far in this course, you’ve spent some time considering what type of leader you are, or could be, but how many of us ever think about what type of follower we are?

Activity 1 What type of follower are you?

 Allow about 10 minutes

In Week 1, Activity 2, you thought about your reasons for following various leaders. Choose one of those leader–follower relationships and using the typologies listed in this section, consider what type of follower you are. Summarise your thoughts here:

Provide your answer..

.....
Discussion

Much of the available research suggests that your follower type stems from your own personal qualities and behaviours, but following their review of the nature of followership, Bastardo and Van Vugt (2019, p. 28) raise the possibility that 'followers match their styles to those of their leaders to ensure smooth coordination – and that their engagement results from a combination of satisfaction with outcomes, fairness of leader procedures, consideration of alternative leaders, and investments in the relationship.'

Does this ring true for you?

Context can also play a significant role in your level of engagement, for example if a department's funding is suddenly cut, this is likely to have an impact on the engagement and commitment of staff.

Do you see yourself as an effective follower? If not, why not? What would help you to become more engaged? Do you think your leader understands the benefits of having effective followers?

If you are an effective follower, what inspires you to be engaged and energetic? How do you benefit from that relationship?

If you want to become a more effective follower, set yourself a relevant goal, for example, to give appropriate, constructive feedback to your leader within the next month. Use your leadership journal to list some ideas. The GROW Goal Setting tool in your [Toolkit](#) might also be helpful.

Identifying your own follower type will make you more aware of how you and other individuals interact with leaders. This awareness will be useful when reflecting on your own role as a leader and the relationships you have with those following you.

How to develop as a follower

In the typologies explored here, positive/pro-active followership is about having energy and assertiveness, providing support but being willing to question, and seeing yourself as a partner rather than a subordinate.

But Benson et al. (2016) warn that leaders may interpret proactive followership behaviours differently in different situations. Working with the leaders of highly competitive sports teams, they identify five relevant factors (p. 960):

- the presence of third party observers
- the momentary demands of the task at hand
- the stage of the decision making process
- suitability of the targeted issue
- relational dynamics.

They suggest that effective engagement in proactive followership behaviour requires a degree of skill. The key to success is for a proactive follower to recognise when their contributions are appropriate, or they may be interpreted negatively by the leader.

Following their review of current and emerging followership research, Matshoba-Ramuedzisi et al. (2022 p. 657) suggest that 'whether a follower is good or not is not just a matter of activity, but also depends on whether they assist the organisation in achieving its

objectives or not', explaining that a follower may be very proactive 'but in the opposite direction to what the organisation requires.'

Professor Jean Hartley offers her thoughts on how to be a good follower here – including the value of understanding your leader's personality and preferences.

Video content is not available in this format.



In the next section, you'll explore some of the benefits of being a good follower.

2 The benefits of good followership

Good followership benefits both followers and leaders in a variety of ways. When followers and leaders are working effectively together this will also have a positive impact on the organisation they work for.



Figure 2 When followers and leaders work well together there are many benefits

It is clear that leaders and organisations benefit from effective, engaged employees, but there are benefits for the follower too, especially if they have an interest in developing themselves as future leaders.

Benefits for the follower

The typologies covered in the previous section labelled good followers as 'effective', 'proactive' or 'partners'. As leaders increasingly value the partnerships they develop with their followers, followers should also be aware of the potential benefits to them.

Upward influencing

If a follower forms an effective relationship with their leader, they can potentially influence situations where they perceive the leader to be making a mistake or offer additional support if needed. They may also be able to improve circumstances for themselves and colleagues. This is sometimes known as 'managing up'.

Kipnis and Schmidt (1983) identify four strategies of organisational influence that are commonly used when influencing superiors:

1. *Reason* – using data and information to support your requests
2. *Coalition* – mobilising others to support you
3. *Ingratiation* – creating goodwill
4. *Bargaining* – negotiating and exchanging benefits or favours.

It should be noted that these strategies are also used by leaders wishing to influence their followers, but they are just deployed in a different way.

Activity 2 Influencing up

 Allow about 10 minutes

Think of a time when you've tried to influence someone who was senior to you. What strategy did you use – reason, coalition, ingratiation or bargaining? Was it successful? If it wasn't, might one of the other strategies have worked better? Make notes in the space below:

Provide your answer..

Discussion

As Professor Hartley explains in the previous video, the most successful approach will depend on the person you're trying to influence. For example, one person might respond better to a logical argument with back-up data, whereas another might prefer to focus on the bigger picture. These are not the only strategies you could use. Depending on the problem, you may need to elicit the support of a more senior member of staff, or use recognised organisational policies and processes to highlight an issue.

If you're interested in exploring this topic further, have a look at the Managing your Manager tool in the [Toolkit](#). This may help you to better understand your boss and their context.

Developing leadership skills

As a follower, you have the opportunity to develop yourself as a leader of the future. This might be through observing the strengths and weaknesses of your leader, or through the support, advice and development opportunities that they give you. Many of the skills and attributes you develop as an effective follower are mirrored in an effective leader, for example:

- courage
- judgement
- communication
- independent thinking
- initiative
- self-awareness and self-management
- commitment
- diplomacy
- collaboration
- influencing.

Agho (2009) collected the perceptions of over 300 senior-level executives on the distinguishing characteristics of effective leaders and followers. Although his findings

don't show identical characteristics, he states that 'a significant number of the respondents agreed that followership skills should be viewed as prerequisites for effective leadership' (p. 7).

2.1 Benefits for the organisation

A more engaged and committed workforce is obviously beneficial for the organisation in numerous ways. The work of leaders and managers can become easier and more rewarding, and a range of business enhancements can result.

More effective leadership

A leader with a team that is disengaged and lacking motivation, can find it difficult to complete projects, to innovate, to introduce change etc. Engaged and enthusiastic followers can make a huge difference to achieving goals and moving forward.

Activity 3 What's in it for the leader?

 Allow about 5 minutes

Consider how a strong, engaged, enthusiastic team can benefit their leader, and list your ideas in the box below.

Discussion

Benefits include:

- When your followers are engaged, your leadership is more effective.
- If your followers use their own initiative and look for responsibility, this will free up your time to focus more strategically.
- Engaged and enthusiastic team members are inspiring and stimulating to work with and this will make your own role more enjoyable and fulfilling.
- If you have followers who are willing to challenge you, this could save you from making some of the common leadership mistakes outlined in Week 4.

A leader must think strategically about the types of followers their organisation needs. For example, you might not always need your followers to be 'effective' or 'proactive'. As Chaleff (2009) explains, an 'implementer' might seem to be the perfect follower, but if a leader starts to make mistakes, the 'implementer' is unlikely to challenge them. You might also be working within a context that benefits from passive followers who are happy to abide by the rules, for example, a manufacturing production line.

Employee engagement

Employee engagement is an increasingly popular management concept, focusing on the mutual benefits of a strong relationship between employer and employee.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) lists the benefits of employee engagement as follows:

- Happier, healthier and more fulfilled employees
- Better staff retention
- Improved business performance e.g. increased customer satisfaction levels; productivity; innovation; efficiency
- Increased profit
- Stronger brand and reputation.

You'll consider how to build good followership and an engaged workforce later this week.

In this section, you've seen that the benefits of good followership are numerous – impacting on the follower, the leader and the organisation. However, some organisations are starting to question whether the traditional leader–follower relationship is the most effective approach. You'll explore this idea in more detail in Section 5.

3 Can you be a leader without followers?

The answers to this question are varied, with some commentators delivering an emphatic 'no' and other experts exploring whether there needs to be a leader at all.



Figure 3 Can you lead if you have no followers?

In a comprehensive review of the existing followership literature, Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) conclude that in the emerging field of followership research, there are two key approaches:

1. *Followership as a position or role* – this approach considers how followers' identities and behaviours influence leader attitudes, behaviours and outcomes
2. *Followership as a social process* – this approach looks at followership and leadership as being co-constructed in social and relational interactions between people.

In both scenarios, followership and leadership relationships are closely linked, each influencing and interacting with the other to create the best possible outcomes.

Taking this a step further, Kempster et al. (2020) ask the question 'Where have all the followers gone?' Their interviews with a number of Executive MBA students revealed an 'absence of follower identification in their everyday working lives', leading them to ask 'Can we, as researchers, label practices as leading or following and label our research subjects as leaders or followers if they themselves reject those identifications?' They go on to discuss types of leadership where the roles are more fluid, such as distributed and collective leadership, describing 'a flow between people leading and following – rather than designated, materialised leaders permanently leading and followers following.'

You'll explore some of these perspectives on leadership in the next section.

Activity 4 Leadership from a dancing guy

 Allow about 5 minutes

In the following video clip, a man is dancing and others are encouraged to join him. Watch the video and consider what characteristics the man exhibits that persuade others to participate:

View at: [youtube:fW8amMCVAJQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fW8amMCVAJQ)



Youtube link: The Open University is not responsible for external content

In the box below, make a list of your observations.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

The man's enthusiasm and commitment to his activity is infectious. Once people start to join him, the overall mood changes and everyone wants to participate. This tells us that anyone can start something without followers, but if they have a clear vision that is easy to follow – followers will join them.

This is transferable into a workplace leadership role too. For example, you might find that a project or change proposal starts off as unpopular – people are reluctant to embrace it with enthusiasm. However, if you communicate effectively and can inspire them to get involved, their approach to followership will change. If you can convince one or two of your team members to support an idea, they might advocate for you across the wider team, inspiring others to come on board with enthusiasm too. You'll cover this in more detail in Section 5.

While it is widely acknowledged that followers play a key role in leadership success, there are approaches to leadership that blur the traditional roles of leader and follower.

Shared leadership

Shared leadership is defined by Pearce and Conger (2003, p. 1) as 'a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both'.

This means that leadership behaviours are exhibited by a set of individuals rather than following the more traditional model of a single person. Leadership is no longer seen as a role, but as a shared function or activity.

Shared leadership can create a strong sense of shared responsibility and facilitate effective collaboration, but relies on excellent communication and without this, can impede the decision-making process.

It can be a useful approach in a complex, technical environment where the expertise of different members of a multidisciplinary team becomes relevant at different stages of a project.

Other versions of shared leadership that you might come across (referred to by Kempster et al. above) include collective and distributed leadership.

In **collective leadership**, ‘a group of people with diverse skills and experience come together to work toward goals that they develop jointly... the group empowers the person or people with the most relevant expertise to tackle particular problems and implement solutions.’ (Shonk, 2023).

Distributed leadership can be described as ‘collaborative, autonomous practices managed by a network of formal and informal leaders across an organization’ (Ancona, quoted in Somers, 2022).

Another, more radical approach, known as ‘Holacracy’, attempts to distribute leadership between all employees, removing the traditional leader–follower relationship altogether. You’ll find out more about this in Week 7.

Even within these different approaches, each individual will have needs and responsibilities that require nurturing and support. In the next section, you’ll explore these needs in more detail.

4 What do followers need?

Taking the time to understand the needs of your followers is an important step. Responding to and meeting those needs will allow you to form positive relationships with your team.



Figure 4 Followers' needs are important

Jackson and Parry (2011) explain that followers have several needs that the leader must attempt to fulfil, for example:

- the need for clarity, for example, what should we be doing? Where are we going?
- the need for meaning, for example, what are we doing this for?
- the need for safety, for example, will it be ok if we do this?

A Gallup research team asked over 10 000 followers what the most influential leaders contribute to their lives. The research (Rath and Conchie, 2008) identified four basic needs:

1. trust
2. compassion
3. stability
4. hope.

In an interview in the *Gallup Business Journal* (Robison, 2009), the researchers elaborate:

- 'Trust is primarily built through relationships, and it's important because it's the foundational currency that a leader has with his team or his followers.'
- 'Leaders need to be thinking constantly about what they're doing to create a basic sense of security and stability throughout an organization.'

- 'Followers need to see how things will get better and what that future might look like. Leaders need to build that foundation of stability, and hope sits on top of that.'
- 'At the individual level, compassion can manifest itself in many different ways. You can show you care, for example, by having tough conversations with people about their performance and their positioning.'

Considering the needs of different types of followers is an important exercise. If you currently have followers, it will allow you to interact with them more effectively. If you don't, it will be useful preparation for future leadership and may help you to pre-empt certain issues before they arise.

Activity 5 Identifying the needs of your followers

 Allow about 20 minutes

Choose a typology and think of some examples of different types of followers you have encountered. If you are not currently leading anyone, think about a leader you follow and consider your fellow followers and their types.

Answer the following questions:

Did you observe behaviours that were positive or negative?

Provide your answer...

What were the reasons for their engagement or lack of it?

Provide your answer...

What do you think those followers needed?

Provide your answer...

What actions did the leader take to identify the needs of those followers? What actions could they have taken?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

The followers you were considering might have a common type or you may have identified a range of different types of followers. Their needs might be the same, but expressed differently, or you might have a range of issues that you need to address. Are there any common themes that could be addressed with the whole team? Use your leadership journal to explore any issues in more detail.

Depending on the size of your team, you may not be able to address everyone's needs individually, but there are likely to be group activities, communications strategies etc. that you could facilitate or delegate. You'll learn more about how a leader might approach common challenges, including building teams and motivating staff, in Week 6.

A positive step towards engaging your followers is to emphasise your commitment to their development, and you'll focus on that in more detail in the next section.

5 Engaging and developing your followers

Engaging and developing your followers is a crucial part of a leader's role. A team of people who are motivated and feel valued will perform more effectively than one where the members feel underappreciated and ignored. Professor Jean Hartley explains.

Video content is not available in this format.



5.1 Engagement

Findings from the State of the Global Workplace report (Gallup, 2023), show that 23% of the world's employees were thriving and engaged at work in 2022, the highest level since measurements began in 2009. However, the report also defines two other categories. Those who are:

- 'quiet quitting', i.e. 'filling a seat and watching the clock', feeling lost and disconnected from their workplace (59%), and
- 'loud quitting', i.e. taking actions that directly harm their organisation, 'undercutting its goals and opposing its leaders'. For these individuals, trust between employer and employee has been broken (18%).

Gallup estimates that 'low engagement costs the global economy US\$8.8 trillion and accounts for 9% of global GDP'. So employee engagement is clearly an important element of economic, as well as individual, productivity and success.

In their research, MacLeod and Clarke (2009) set out four enablers of employee engagement:

1. Leadership

- Leaders provide a strong strategic narrative which has widespread ownership and commitment from managers and employees at all levels.
- The narrative is a clearly expressed story about what the purpose of an organisation is, why it has the broad vision it has, and how an individual contributes to that purpose.
- Employees have a clear line of sight between their job and the narrative, and understand where their work fits in.

2. Engaging managers

- Managers are at the heart of this organisational culture – they facilitate and empower rather than control or restrict their staff.
- Managers treat their staff with appreciation and respect, and show commitment to developing, increasing and rewarding the capabilities of those they manage.

3. Employee voice

- Employees' views are sought out; they are listened to and see that their opinions count and make a difference.

- Employees speak out and challenge when appropriate.
- A strong sense of listening and of responsiveness permeates the organisation, enabled by effective communication.

4. Integrity

- Behaviour throughout the organisation is consistent with stated values, leading to trust and a sense of integrity.

These themes are reflected throughout this course. For example, in Week 4, you explored common mistakes, and possible solutions that focused on a clear vision, good communication, developing your team and leading by example. In Week 6 you'll look at some common challenges for every leader that also reflect the value of motivating and developing your team.

Professor Jean Hartley adds her thoughts in the following video.

Video content is not available in this format.



5.2 Development

Looking from the followers' perspective, Kelley (1988) suggests that while leadership training and development is undertaken by many organisations, few focus on training their followers. He outlines topics for a potential follower training programme as follows:

- Improving independent, critical thinking
- Self-management
- Disagreeing agreeably
- Building credibility
- Aligning personal and organisational goals and commitments
- Acting responsibly towards the organisation, the leader, co-workers and oneself
- Similarities and differences between leadership and followership roles
- Moving between the two roles with ease.

More recently, Oc et al. (2023) undertook a systematic and critical review of the study of followers in leadership research. Their recommendation for future leadership development initiatives is to focus first on 'how a group of individuals interact with each other', determining their common, shared objective before turning to 'the things they need to do to achieve that objective'. They conclude that both leaders and followers must 'learn how leadership can be shared and how the roles they play can change depending on the circumstances' (p. 18).

As well as providing suitable training and development opportunities, there are several other ways in which you can support and encourage your followers:

- Allow them to take responsibility and lead on different elements of the work.

- Give them praise and encouragement, acknowledging their work and taking a step back yourself.
- Give them the confidence to be innovative by allowing them to implement changes without fear of repercussions.
- Use your knowledge and experience to coach your followers. If you don't have time for all of them, select some key individuals who can cascade your knowledge to other team members.

Looking at this from the opposite perspective, followers may be reluctant to be developed if they feel you are asking too much of them. For example, they may argue that they aren't paid enough to take on more responsibility or resent you delegating tasks that they aren't interested in. Development planning should include discussion with your followers, giving them a voice and allowing you to explain the business needs that must be addressed.

Activity 6 Developing your followers

 Allow about 10 minutes

Think about an individual or group of people you want to develop into more effective followers or prepare for leadership in the future. They might be members of an existing team; a social group that you want to inspire; or social media followers that you want to build on Twitter or LinkedIn.

Once you've identified the person or group that you want to develop, spend a few minutes thinking about how you could inspire or develop them. What could you do to explore their needs and expectations?

Summarise your thinking below:

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Now that you've started thinking about followers, use your leadership journal to continue to explore these ideas and form a plan. It would be great if you could implement some aspect of follower development over the next few weeks and months. Use the GROW Tool in your [Toolkit](#) to plan your next steps.

While our theoretical understanding of followership and its interdependence with leadership is still developing, it is clear, even from the more leader-centric studies, that followers play a vital role in leadership and business success.

Followers should be nurtured and encouraged to interact, sometimes critically, with leaders, and leaders should reciprocate with feedback and dialogue. This will not only enhance their engagement and motivation, but will also help to prepare them for their own leadership roles in the future.

6 This week's quiz

Now you've reached the end of Week 5, you can try a short quiz to help you reflect on what you've learned.

[Week 5 practice quiz](#)

Open the quiz in a new window or tab, then come back here when you've finished.

7 Summary

At this stage, you should feel more informed about the concept of followership and understand why it is becoming such an important element of leadership learning. You've looked at followership from both the perspectives of follower and leader. You have also considered how you might develop as a follower yourself and how you might develop your own followers.

You should now feel that you can:

- recognise different types of followership
- describe the benefits of effective followership
- identify followers' needs
- describe ways of engaging and developing your followers.

Next week, you'll look at some of the common challenges faced by modern leaders, including dealing with the internal politics that can sometimes seem all consuming, team dynamics and leading change. You'll also focus on motivating and developing staff, a key element of the leadership role.

You can now go to [Week 6](#).

Week 6: Challenges for every leader

Introduction

Welcome to Week 6 of the free badged course *Leadership and followership*. Last week, you looked at followership from the perspectives of both follower and leader, and considered the importance of follower engagement and development.

This week, you'll focus on some of the key challenges that leaders face – building an effective team, dealing with internal politics, motivating and developing staff, and leading change. Each section will encourage you to consider the issues and look at potential solutions to each challenge.

Now watch this video as Lynne introduces the week.

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By the end of this week, you will be able to:

- recognise a range of common leadership challenges
- reflect on challenges you have observed or experienced
- describe ways in which common leadership challenges might be addressed.

1 Challenges for modern leaders

The role of leader is not an easy one. They must juggle and prioritise many complex responsibilities and as leadership styles and employee expectations develop and change, they must increasingly prioritise the wellbeing of their staff. While many leaders thrive on the variety, it can also be challenging.



Figure 1 There are many challenges for modern leaders

In recent years, many researchers have surveyed leaders across the globe, aiming to identify common leadership challenges. Before you explore some of the results in more detail, you'll start by considering your own perceptions.

Activity 1 Three most critical leadership challenges

 Allow about 5 minutes

What are the three most critical leadership challenges you or your leaders currently face? List them in the box below:

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Did you choose predominantly internal or external challenges, or a mix of both? Perhaps you focused on the internal challenges involved with building and

motivating your team. Or you might have considered national or global issues that could impact on your leadership.

As you've already learned, the challenges different leaders face will vary, depending on the context of their work and their own personal strengths and abilities.

When searching online for the most common leadership challenges in recent times, the following are frequently mentioned:

- leading a team
- inspiring and motivating others
- developing employees
- dealing with change
- fostering trust.

Drawing from her experience of working with many high-profile leaders, from elected politicians to civic activists and other public and private sector professionals, Professor Jean Hartley adds her own impressions of common leadership challenges.

Video content is not available in this format.



Following on from Professor Hartley's comments, in the prologue to his practical and insightful book, *Grace Under Pressure: Leading through Change and Crisis*, John Baldoni (2023) expands on the phrase 'grace under pressure', describing it as meeting:

- anger with composure
- denigration with respect
- sadness with compassion
- scarcity with abundance
- insults with smiles
- selfishness with selflessness
- hoarding with generosity
- life with gratitude.

Baldoni, 2023, p. xvii

Something for everyone to aspire to!

Before you look in more detail at some of the most common issues, you'll spend a few minutes reflecting on your own experience of a leadership challenge.

Activity 2 Personal leadership challenges

 Allow about 20 minutes

Reflect on your experiences of leadership challenge, either as the leader or as an observer. Choose one example from the common challenges highlighted so far to consider in more detail. Summarise the challenge/situation in the box below.

Provide your answer...

Now answer these questions:

What actions did the leader take?

Provide your answer...

What actions did others take?

Provide your answer...

What was the outcome?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

By reflecting on your own times of challenge or crisis and considering your actions, you can gain an insight into your own methods and assess whether you need to change them. Use your leadership journal to do this regularly.

If you were reflecting on the actions of a leader you observed, you can learn from their strengths and weaknesses and apply what you have learned to your own leadership practice either now or in the future.

In the next section, you'll focus on the challenging but crucial process of building and leading a motivated team.

2 Building an effective team

Leading a team is a significant element of any leader's role, and encouraging an increasingly diverse range of team members to work well together can be a challenge.



Figure 2 Building a strong team is essential

One way to navigate the process of building a team, is to use Bruce Tuckman's (1965) model for team development, still regularly referenced today. It involves four stages:

1. **Forming** – team members are testing boundaries and exploring behaviours i.e. getting to know each other. Your role is to introduce team members and roles, and describe the focus of the team with clarity.
2. **Storming** – members start to push against boundaries, leading to conflict and emotional responses. Your role is to mediate, using your authority as leader when required, helping them to recognise each other's different work styles etc.
3. **Norming** – the group overcomes previous resistance and finds a new cohesion. Now you can focus on monitoring progress and providing constructive feedback and praise where appropriate.
4. **Performing** – roles become more flexible and functional, and energy is given to the task. This is the stage where you can take a step back, delegate more and focus your attention on developing the team.

Later, Tuckman added a fifth stage: **adjourning** – where the team is reorganised to work on other projects, or disbanded. This can be a period of uncertainty for everyone involved, perhaps even bringing a sense of loss if the team have performed well.

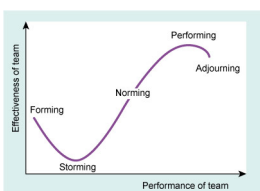


Figure 3 Tuckman's team development model

Understanding the different stages your team might be going through can help you to respond appropriately. For example, recognising that the storming stage is normal – but that with the right mediation it will end – can help you to deal with any personal feelings of frustration or negativity.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a significant shift in working styles, with many teams now working in a hybrid fashion, some in the office and some remotely. You'll explore the broader leadership challenges of hybrid working in more detail in Week 7, but the potential impact on team building can be significant.

Hoffman (2022) shares the following observations based on Tuckman's model:

- The forming process takes longer for virtual teams so you'll need to find creative ways to connect, e.g. through messaging apps or team celebrations. This is especially important with new hires who might easily feel left out.
- During the storming stage, a virtual environment might make some feel more enabled to lash out, while others will find it easier to withdraw. Leaders need to find the right balance.
- During norming – research shows that remote working leads to greater productivity when it comes to task completion, at the expense of spontaneous collaboration – you must look for opportunities to encourage that spontaneity.
- Maintaining the performing stage in a virtual team takes constant work. Team members can take things out of context or struggle with communication – so leaders must look out for signs.
- In a virtual environment it is easy for people to 'disappear' once a project is over – as the leader, public acknowledgement of contributions made and an invitation to continue communication can help to combat the loneliness that is felt by some home workers.

There are many sources of online advice about team dynamics and developing a team, but the fundamental elements can be distilled into:

- choosing the right people – ensuring a good mix of skills and knowledge that will complement each other and get the job done
- making sure that team members are clear about the task and are motivated to achieve it
- regular communication – monitoring progress, giving feedback and celebrating success.

2.1 Team building exercises

A useful tool in helping to create a cohesive team is the team building exercise! Many of you will have experienced these in your workplace, but they can take many forms – ranging from moving blindfolded through an obstacle course led by a team member who can see, to having a sports competition. In the new hybrid working environment, there will be even more different types of activity to consider.

Not only will these exercises give the team an opportunity to interact outside the work context and learn more about each other, they will give you the chance to observe team members' strengths and weaknesses in a different environment.

The key is to find an exercise where the learning points can clearly be transferred back into the workplace. An activity that is viewed as 'pointless' by team members can demotivate them and lead to loss of respect for the leader.

Brown (2016) outlines three key ways to set up team-building exercises that create impact:

1. Identify what impact you need, for example, spending time together, learning skills, accomplishing something.
2. Decide what type of 'different' you need, for example, different location, mix of people, activity.
3. Create something tangible, for example, an action plan, a decision made.

Activity 3 A team building exercise

 Allow about 25 minutes

1. Think of a team you are in, either virtually or in person, and answer the following questions:

- a. Is the purpose of the team clear?
- b. Does it have the right mix of people/skills etc.?
- c. Are people in the right roles/using their strengths?
- d. Are team members motivated?
- e. What phase of team formation do you think you are in (forming, storming, norming or performing)?
- f. What development could the team benefit from?

Provide your answer...

2. With your answer to f in mind, devise a team building exercise that will address the development need. Set a realistic budget and come up with something that will have a purpose and a benefit when you return to your normal team situation.

If you're short of ideas, the Venture Team Building website has a list of [over 60 activities to inspire you!](#)

If you need to consider virtual team building exercises, a recent Hoppier blog (Aite, 2023) suggests [20 activities for fun and engagement](#).

.....

Discussion

Could you consider actually running your exercise with colleagues in your workplace? If you aren't currently leading a team, find out if you have any away days or training afternoons scheduled and volunteer to run a session. Your boss will probably be delighted!

If you do run it, use your leadership journal to reflect on how it went. Collect some feedback from participants and consider what you might do differently next time.

Models such as Gibbs' (1988) reflective cycle, that you saw in Week 3, can provide structure to your reflection if required:

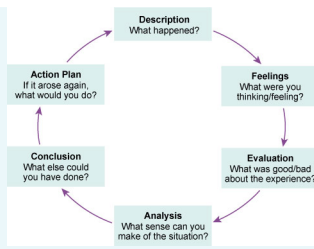


Figure 4 Gibbs' reflective cycle.

3 Motivating and developing staff

Now that you have a better understanding of the dynamics of your team and how to support them, you need to consider their motivation.

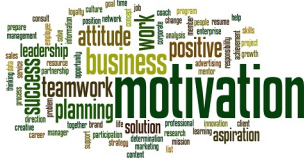


Figure 5 Key words that capture the essence of motivation

For a team to be motivated, they need to know what they are working towards and share your enthusiasm and commitment to achieving it. If they believe in you and respect you as a leader, they will often follow you when they are not yet certain about something. There are three elements that are required to facilitate this effectively:

1. a clear vision that you believe in, and a focus on the impact of the work you are doing
2. regular and inspiring communication to the whole team, not just your direct reports
3. leading by example and making yourself visible and accessible to your team.

These elements are equally important when working with virtual teams, particularly point 3 about making yourself visible and accessible. You may need to be more creative about how you do that online.

Professor Jean Hartley agrees that communicating progress is a crucial and sometimes challenging part of keeping your team inspired and focused.

Video content is not available in this format.



Before you can effectively motivate your team, a useful starting point is to think about what motivates you. Activity 4 will help you to do that.

Activity 4 What motivates you?

 Allow about 10 minutes

Think about a professional situation in which you felt really motivated. What made you feel like that? How was your motivation demonstrated in your actions? Summarise the situation in the box below.

Provide your answer...

.....
Discussion

Remember that different people feel and demonstrate their motivation in different ways, so consider the personality types of your team members when looking for signs that they are with you.

Enthusiasm and commitment can be demonstrated in a range of ways, from an individual volunteering to take on extra tasks/responsibilities to tasks being quietly completed on time or even early!

A key method for motivating individuals is to show an interest in their circumstances. Support them, coach them, look together at their career plan and consider ways in which to develop them – most people will respond. Development doesn't have to be all about attending a formal training course, it could involve:

- work shadowing/secondment to a different department or organisation
- taking on a new responsibility that stretches them, for example, chairing a discussion group or delivering some online training
- allowing a team member to implement a new idea they have had
- delegating some of your work to someone – showing you trust them to represent you
- encouraging someone to find or become a mentor, perhaps by making virtual introductions between hybrid workers.

Back in Week 3, Activity 6, you explored the benefits of creating and using a leadership journal. You could use it here to reflect on whether some of these ideas might suit your current team members.

The business advantages of developing a motivated team are significant and you explored them in Week 5 when you looked at the benefits of developing effective followers. A motivated team is usually happier and more productive, leading to better staff retention and improved business performance.

4 Leading change

“Change is a threat when done to me,
but an opportunity when done by me.
Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Business Strategist”

Figure 6 A quote about change from a well-known business strategist

One of the biggest issues for any modern leader is change. People are often reluctant to change but organisations require almost constant variation and transformation as the external environment continues to develop at a fast pace. Motivation plays a key role in successful change, so the leader must find a balance between meeting the needs of the organisation and motivating the team to constantly look forward.

Now watch this video:

View at: [youtube: __IIYNMdv9E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=__IIYNMdv9E)



Youtube link: The Open University is not responsible for external content

Over several decades, John Kotter has developed his eight-step change process, presenting his ideas in two best-selling books (2012's *Leading Change* and *Accelerate* in 2014) and on the Kotter International website.



Figure 7 Kotter's eight step change process

These points can be summarised as follows:

1. *Create a sense of urgency* – Inspire people to act, with passion and purpose, to achieve a bold, aspirational opportunity.
2. *Build a guiding coalition* of effective people to guide it, coordinate it and communicate its activities.
3. *Form a strategic vision and initiatives* – clarify how the future will be different from the past and how you can make that future a reality through initiatives linked directly to the vision.
4. *Enlist a volunteer army* – large-scale change can only occur when many people rally around a common opportunity. At an individual level, they must *want* to actively contribute. Collectively, they must be unified in the pursuit of achieving the goal together.
5. *Enable action by removing barriers* that slow things down or create roadblocks to progress. Clear the way for people to innovate, work more nimbly across silos, and generate impact quickly.
6. *Generate short-term wins* – they must be recognised, collected and communicated, to track progress and energise volunteers to persist.
7. *Sustain acceleration* – after the first successes, your increasing credibility can continue to improve systems, structures and policies until the vision is achieved.

8. *Institute change* – regularly articulate the connections between the new behaviours and organisational success until they become strong enough to replace old habits.

In Activity 5, you'll put Kotter's plan into practice.

Activity 5 Plan a change

 Allow about 20 minutes

Consider something you'd like to change, for example, at work, in a voluntary organisation you're involved with etc. and summarise it in the box below. It doesn't have to be a major organisational change, it could be a process that you think needs updating.

If you can't think of anything, here's an example you could use:

Imagine you are running a small customer advice team within a local government office. You want to improve the customer experience by changing the booking process for appointments with your advisers. Currently it is a 'drop-in only' service within office hours, but the queues can become huge.

Now consider each stage of Kotter's eight-step process and make some notes.

1. Create a sense of urgency – why is your change urgent? How will you create that sense of urgency?

Provide your answer...

2. Build a guiding coalition – who would you choose? Try to consider a variety of people at different levels, with different spheres of influence etc.

Provide your answer...

3. Form a strategic vision and initiatives – what is your vision? How will it improve things? Is it strategic? What initiatives could you introduce to support it?

Provide your answer...

4. Enlist a volunteer army – who do you need to influence and how will you persuade them that your change is a good one?

Provide your answer...

5. Enable action by removing barriers – are there any barriers to your change? What or who are they?

Provide your answer...

6. Generate short-term wins – are there any short term, achievable goals along the way? How can you share those successes with your supporters?

Provide your answer...

7. Sustain acceleration – how will you keep the change moving? Who/what do you need to be monitoring to ensure the momentum is continuing?

Provide your answer...

8. Institute change – how will you communicate the success of the change? Who will need to know about it? How will you ensure that it is maintained?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

If you've used your own example, your leadership journal will be a useful space for recording thoughts and ideas. A next step could be to talk this through with a colleague and to consider implementing it. If you do take action, use your journal to reflect on the experience.

For the example given, here are some suggestions:

1. The change is urgent because customer complaints about the queues are increasing, and advisers are unable to meet everyone's needs so they are feeling demotivated and under pressure.
2. Key supporters would be senior management, customers themselves, influential members of the advisory team and reception staff who deal with the queues.
3. The vision is to meet customer needs within one week of their request for advice, and within 24 hours for urgent enquiries. It will reduce the queues, clarify realistic expectations for customers, and allow advisers to plan their time more effectively. This will align with government office goals for increasing good customer service and reducing employee stress. Initiatives might include the collection of customer feedback about the proposed changes.
4. The people who need to be 'on-side' include customers, advisers and reception staff. Introduce decision-making meetings that involve as many of them as possible in key elements of the change, for example, what appointment booking system should be used.
5. One of your advisers is strongly against this change – talk to her and find out why. If you have a good relationship with her, a one-to-one meeting where you do more listening than talking could be effective. If she is wary of your motives, invite each adviser for a one-to-one discussion so she doesn't feel she is being singled out.
6. Short-term wins might include securing the support of the IT department to develop a new online appointment system. Invite the advisers to a meeting to discuss their requirements.
7. Make sure you set a clear timeline for the changes and provide regular updates on progress, either at meetings or via email etc.

8. Collect evidence of reduced waiting times and share any positive feedback received from clients with all your stakeholders. Regularly check that the system is working until you are satisfied it has been fully adopted.

If you want to try a different structure, have a look at the Plan Do Study Act tool in your [Toolkit](#). This tool allows you to make small-scale, focused changes, assess their impact and then decide what to do next.

A key reason why change management is challenging for many leaders is the natural discomfort or even active resistance that team members often display.

4.1 Force field analysis

Force field analysis, developed by Kurt Lewin (1951), is a useful change management tool that looks at the drivers and resistors of change. Watch this short MindTools video for an explanation of how it works:

View at: [youtube:HCe2H3AsHio](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCe2H3AsHio)



Youtube link: The Open University is not responsible for external content

At the end of this video there is a reference to an accompanying article. If you would like to read it, you can find it on the [MindTools website](#).

4.2 Trust

Trust is a key element of successful change. If your team members trust you, they are more likely to follow your lead.

Watch this short video from change management consultant Wendy Hirsch, explaining why trust is so important.

Video content is not available in this format.



5 Dealing with internal politics

After examining survey results from over 750 participants of leadership programmes across the globe, Gentry (2016) identified the issue of internal politics as one of several key challenges for leaders. Sometimes referred to as office or workplace politics, this is an unavoidable challenge for many, relating to the actions and behaviours of those competing for status or power in the workplace.



Figure 8 Internal politics

Office politics exist for a range of reasons:

- Individuals and teams are often competing for limited resources and use a range of tactics to influence those in charge of the finances.
- Some individuals are seeking promotion and want to be viewed as better than their colleagues.
- People are committed to their project or department and want to promote it at every opportunity, particularly in front of senior managers.
- People with strong moral or ethical views will seek to share those views and can be dismissive of those who don't agree.
- Different personality types also play a part – with those who are more confident and vocal sometimes frustrating others who prefer a quieter, more measured approach.

It can take up a lot of your time and energy, but when you are leading a team, you need to involve yourself in the political discourse of your organisation, as otherwise your team might miss out on much needed resources or profile.

So how do you deal with these issues with minimum expenditure of time and energy?

- Be a part of several networks, so you aren't seen as taking sides. If senior managers need your help with something, prioritise that and make sure you are reliable.
- Don't gossip and don't rely on promises of confidentiality unless you know you can trust someone.
- Don't be afraid to give timely, appropriate and constructive feedback to senior staff.
- Communicate clearly and authentically. Follow up important conversations with an email.
- Know what you are trying to achieve and be ready to articulate why that is best for the organisation.
- Listen – a better understanding of your organisation, will allow you to align your priorities with those of other departments. A collaborative approach is often viewed positively by senior managers.

Professor Jean Hartley explains the importance of mobilising people outside your own team to support your goals.

Video content is not available in this format.



Activity 6 What would you do?

 Allow about 5 minutes

Reputation plays a key part in office politics. If you are well regarded, people are more inclined to support you, collaborate with you, share funding etc. The decisions you make can impact on how you are perceived, even if they seem relatively small and insignificant.

Consider the following scenarios and decide what you would prioritise.

1. You're in your office and an email comes in from your manager. It is marked urgent and requires your immediate attention. At the same time, a colleague puts their head around your office door to say that your manager's boss has been on the phone and wants you to call them back as soon as possible. What do you do?
- Phone the more senior manager back straight away, your boss can wait
 - Read your manager's email before you call their boss – it might contain relevant information
 - Deal with your manager's email first – they said it was urgent and you've no idea what the senior manager could want from you anyway

.....

Answer

Answer: Read your manager's email before you call their boss – it might contain relevant information.

Prioritise your response to the senior manager, but if you have time to quickly view your boss's email, that could provide you with information that will enhance your phone call.

2. You're in a meeting and you have a really important point to make, but you know it contradicts a senior manager at the meeting and their boss is also attending. What do you do?
- Keep quiet but discuss it with the senior manager after the meeting
 - Make your point in a constructive and polite manner
 - Keep quiet and never make your point – you don't want to make enemies

.....

Answer

Answer: Question 2 is a more difficult question to give a clear answer to. The textbook answer would be: Make your point in a constructive and polite manner.

A good leader should respond positively to constructive criticism and disagreement. You don't know what the more senior leader's view is either – they may agree with you. At the very least, by making a reasoned and articulate point, the other staff in the meeting will gain a favourable impression of you.

CAUTION: Do you have a senior manager who would see your comment as a challenge and react badly? You learned about emotional intelligence in Weeks 3 and 4, and this is a situation that will require it!

Understanding the context and the mood of the individuals around you will be very valuable in this scenario. If you know what you hope to get from the action, it may also help you to decide what to do. For example, if you know your senior manager is under stress and you're waiting for them to sign off a budget increase for your department, you may choose to prioritise that and opt for option a. On the other hand, if you have been struggling to make your senior manager see your point of view on a particular topic, gaining support from around the table could help you to change their mind.

6 This week's quiz

Now you've reached the end of Week 6, you can try a short quiz to help you reflect on what you've learned.

[Week 6 practice quiz](#)

Open the quiz in a new window or tab, then come back here when you've finished.

7 Summary

You should now feel more confident about facing some of the key challenges you may encounter as a leader. You are aware of a variety of processes and models that might give you a structure to plan your actions around, or provide some insight into why people behave in a certain way. All the topics covered in this section are the focus of much attention and research, and you can easily find out more about them in print or online.

You should now feel that you can:

- recognise a range of common leadership challenges
- reflect on challenges you have observed or experienced
- describe ways in which common leadership challenges might be addressed.

Next week, you'll look at some of the potential challenges for leaders of the future, including technological developments and global change. You'll consider some of the leadership styles that are emerging and find out where to go to keep up with the sometimes rapid changes that are underway.

You can now go to [Week 7](#).

Week 7: The future of leadership

Introduction

Welcome to Week 7 of the free badged course *Leadership and followership*. Last week, you focused on common leadership challenges and how you might begin to tackle them – looking in more detail at areas such as team dynamics and development, internal politics and change.

This week you'll look to the future, considering how global change might impact on leadership style and looking at some of the new challenges leaders will face.

Watch Lynne introduce the week.

Video content is not available in this format.



By the end of this week, you will be able to:

- describe how global change can impact on leadership styles
- describe new approaches to leadership
- identify sources of information to keep you up to date with future leadership trends.

1 The impact of change

Change is all around us, from global and political transformation to changing attitudes and ways of living.



Figure 1 The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a new normal

One of the most significant events to impact on the global workforce in recent times was the COVID-19 pandemic, and the remote working that was widely enforced as a consequence. While the imperative for staying at home has since gone, a hybrid working structure has become normal for many of us, and this brings new challenges for leaders.

1.1 Hybrid working

Haas (2022) describes the challenges of hybrid work with 5Cs. They are:

1. *Communication* – including the technological difficulties associated with remote working, but also the fact that some people are more comfortable speaking up over screens than others, especially in situations where there may already be barriers due to power, status or language differences.
2. *Coordination* – because of the extra work required to coordinate with remote teammates, they can be left out of small exchanges and minor decisions, an issue which can grow to include more important conversations and decisions over time.
3. *Connection* – as well as technical connections, social connections can be lost when working remotely, potentially creating an ‘underclass’ of those who feel peripheral and disconnected from both the work and the social life that bonds them with colleagues.
4. *Creativity* – both collective and individual. As well as the loss of those more fluid and spontaneous conversations, colleagues based at home miss the stimulus of a change of scenery that can also contribute to new ideas.
5. *Culture* – if employees, particularly new hires, never or rarely come into the office or spend time together – how can a company’s distinctive ‘feel’ be maintained, and then how can companies differentiate themselves from each other in the competition for talent?

Haas goes on to suggest that using the 5Cs as a checklist and working through them with your hybrid team might be a way to unlock some of the issues. She recommends that you evaluate, analyse, plan and implement improvements together.

There are a number of specific skills and competencies that promote effective hybrid working. In their study of healthcare providers in a hybrid work mode, Oleksa-Marewska and Tokar (2022) identified four core remote leadership competencies that indicate ‘readiness for the challenges of remote and hybrid work’. They are:

- **communicativeness** – especially crucial in communicating vision in remote work
- **credibility** – both personal and professional, important in building trust and commitment

- **self-development** – understood as ‘being open to the search for new solutions and acquiring industry knowledge’
- **digital readiness** – referring to ‘an openness to technological solutions and a readiness to implement and use them in order to improve the work of both one’s superiors and subordinates’.

Much more will no doubt be discussed regarding the challenges of leading in a hybrid workplace – this is certainly a developing topic to keep coming back to, and the sections later this week about leadership resources will help you to do that.

1.2 Mental health and wellbeing



Figure 2 Prioritising the mental health and wellbeing of employees is now more important than ever

As well as changing our work practices, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on health, and issues surrounding the mental health and wellbeing of employees are now more important than ever for leaders to prioritise.

Burnout has become a common term, both in the context of leaders and followers. Kumar (2018) describes burnout as ‘a psychological response to exposure to chronic stressors at work [...] characterised by high levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment’. Kumar goes on to describe the following signs of burnout:

- **Affective signals** – irritability, being oversensitive, lessened emotional empathy with clients, increased anger
- **Cognitive signals** – cynical and dehumanizing perceptions of clients; negativism / pessimism with respect to clients; labelling clients in derogatory ways
- **Behavioural signals** – violent outbursts; irritability toward clients; interpersonal, marital and family conflicts; social isolation and withdrawal; responding to clients in a mechanical manner
- **Motivational signals** – loss of interest; indifference with respect to clients.

Note – physical signs are excluded as they can be observed ‘only on an individual level’. Using written vignettes outlining various scenarios, Pischel et al. (2022) reviewed leaders’ awareness of the warning signals of emerging depression and burnout and found that ‘even under favorable conditions, only about half of the leaders recognized warning signals as a health risk.’ They also found that ‘leaders showed lower awareness during times of high stress and low autonomy and when followers displayed less clear warning signals.’ Findings suggested that leaders need to understand how their awareness may be impeded and that training on common mental health disorders and early warning sign recognition may be valuable.

Wright (2023) suggests the following strategies to prevent burnout, in yourself and your employees:

- Encourage an open and honest workplace culture – it will help you and your employees connect with each other in a more positive way.
- Put specific HR policies in place – make sure you manage workloads to a sustainable level and your employees have enough time to relax and recover after a busy, stressful day at work.
- Notice changes in working patterns – keep an eye on whether team members are sending emails outside work hours.
- Be aware of workloads and deadlines for team members – make sure workloads are manageable and notice when employees are asking for help with their work.
- Notice behaviour changes – be aware of mood swings, energy levels and how employees are interacting with other team members.
- Balance work allocation – make sure you allocate work proportionately.
- Think about giving back time – if an employee has had a significant workload for a period of time, try to give them back some time with leave or by working fewer hours.
- Signpost to support – make sure your employees know where to find support.
- Practice what you preach – as a leader, you need to model the behaviour you want your employees to follow, so don't be the one working at all hours and expecting responses out of office hours.
- Look after your own wellbeing – remember your team are likely to follow your example.

1.3 Talent management and retention

As the workforce came to terms with the impact of the pandemic and had a taste of life without the daily commute, many people decided to make changes to their career. This contributed to what is often referred to as 'the great resignation' and, as a consequence, many leaders have had to focus more attention on attracting and retaining employees. Of course, this also applies to leaders themselves and the ability of their organisations to attract and retain them!

Watch this short video from Gartner, which focuses on decoding 'the great resignation'.

View at: [youtube:bvC8UfRA13o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bvC8UfRA13o)



Youtube link: The Open University is not responsible for external content

Developing a greater awareness and understanding of the issues facing your employees is a good place to start.

Next, you'll consider another big disruptor to the world of work and leadership – artificial intelligence.

2 The impact of disruptive technologies

At a first glance, the phrase ‘disruptive technologies’ might sound intimidating, but it actually refers to many of the things you are most familiar with – from accessing the internet via your mobile phone to storing things in ‘a cloud’.



Figure 3 Disruptive technologies are more familiar than you think

IT Education site Techopedia (2017) defines disruptive technology as ‘any enhanced or completely new technology that replaces and disrupts an existing technology, rendering it obsolete. It is designed to succeed similar technology that is already in use.’

Păvăloaia and Necula (2023) conclude that the five most prominent examples of disruptive technology are AI, the Internet of Things, blockchain, 5G and 3D printing. Within the scope of this course, it isn’t possible to cover all of these topics in detail, so you’ll concentrate on a disrupter with a particularly high profile and wide reach across many sectors – artificial intelligence, also known as AI.

2.1 Artificial intelligence (AI)

In a recent guidance document produced by the Information Commissioner’s Office and The Alan Turing Institute (2022), AI is defined as follows:

AI is an umbrella term for a range of technologies and approaches that often attempt to mimic human thought to solve complex tasks. Things that humans have traditionally done by thinking and reasoning are increasingly being done by, or with the help of, AI.

The document goes on to provide some examples, explaining that in healthcare ‘AI can be used to spot early signs of illness and diagnose disease’, in policing it can ‘identify

potential offenders' and, perhaps more familiar to most of us, in marketing 'AI can be used to target products and services to customers.'

With such wide ranging uses, it is clear that AI is likely to have a significant impact on the work lives of many leaders and followers.

Activity 1 The impact of artificial intelligence

 Allow about 10 minutes

Consider what you know about AI and, in the box below, summarise how you think it might impact on leadership in the future. This could be within your own organisation or more broadly.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

While it is relatively easy to think of the possible negative impact of AI, Khatri (2023) describes several ways in which artificial intelligence might positively influence leadership in the future, including:

- accelerated decision making
- better predictions of future patterns and consequences
- more streamlined operations
- enhanced collaboration
- development of technical knowledge and skills.

As the impact of AI grows, there will be certain decisions, methods of working etc. that are different and, as a leader, you'll need to be prepared for any changes and able to facilitate their introduction.

The management of innovation is a complex field. If this is a topic you'd like to explore further, Nieminen (2023) has created ['Innovation Management - The Ultimate Guide'](#).

When disruptive technologies are transforming your operating and business models, and your customer experience, there will be an inevitable impact on the staff experience too. Your role as leader is to embrace, support, promote and deploy innovation, while facilitating the potentially rapid change that your team will be experiencing. Refer back to [Week 6](#) to revisit leading change.

While many are concerned about the impact of AI on numerous jobs, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (Milanez, 2023) has collected almost 100 case studies from across eight countries and concludes that the situation is more positive than might have been anticipated:

- To date, the case studies suggest that employment levels have remained steady in the face of AI adoption, though there is evidence of slowed job growth.
- Robust demand for specialised AI skills is driving growth in AI-related occupations.
- Job reorganisation is more prevalent than job displacement, with tasks shifting towards those in which human workers have a comparative advantage.

- Job quality improvements associated with AI – reductions in tedium, greater worker engagement, and improved physical safety – may be its strongest endorsement from a worker perspective.

One of the many things that AI can do in the business environment is drive tools that support more effective virtual collaboration, including project management or content analysis tools. In the next section you'll look at collaboration in more detail.

3 The impact of collaboration

As the global population becomes better connected and opportunities for collaboration continue to grow, a leader's ability to build productive relationships and share control is becoming increasingly important.



Figure 4 Collaboration and partnership is increasingly important

This has been further challenged by the global pandemic and changes to the ways in which we interact with each other, such as through hybrid or remote working. The need to create, develop and maintain connection between people, whether that's team members, partners or clients, has become an even more important element of a leader's role.

3.1 Collaborative leadership

Although the concept of collaborative leadership has been around for many years, it is a style that might be viewed as particularly relevant in current times.

Hank Rubin (2009), the founder of the Institute for Collaborative Leadership, provides the following explanation (p. 2):

You are a collaborative leader once you have accepted responsibility for building – or helping to ensure the success of – a heterogeneous team to accomplish a shared purpose.

This succinct summary is equally relevant whether you are leading the team in person or remotely.

In their book *Collaborative Leadership: Building Relationships, Handling Conflict and Sharing Control*, Archer and Cameron (2013) explain three critical skills and three essential attitudes a collaborative leader needs:

Skills

1. *Mediation* – the ability to address conflict constructively and effectively as soon as it arises

2. *Influencing* – the ability to share control and choose the best approach to influencing partners
3. *Engaging others* – the ability to network and build relationships

Attitudes

1. *Agility* – a forward-looking attitude of mind, coupled with an ability to quickly assimilate facts and ask incisive questions
2. *Patience* – able to take a calm and measured approach, reflecting on new information and giving confidence to others
3. *Empathy* – a willingness to truly listen and be open-minded to the views of others

They go on to lay out a ten-point manifesto for the collaborative leader:

1. Seek out conflict early – address it openly and with confidence.
2. Don't expect your partners to have the same objectives as yourself – look for common ground.
3. Understand that collaboration is not a zero-sum game – if you want your partners to invest in your success, you must invest in theirs.
4. Value and use diversity to find innovative solutions.
5. Only get as close and collaborate as much as the situation demands.
6. Look to the long-term in relationships.
7. Listen hard and then show you have understood what you heard.
8. Be clear where the significant 'points of interdependence' are in a relationship.
9. Engage others in your mission to be a collaborative leader.
10. Be authentic in all you do.

Generalising, this research represents a Western view of collaboration, which comes from a more individualistic starting point. Elsewhere in the world, for example East Asia, people have a more naturally collaborative/collectivist approach, stemming from a childhood focused on family and community.

What is your experience of collaboration?

Activity 2 Are you collaborative?

 Allow about 10 minutes

Choose one skill and one attitude from Archer and Cameron's list. Reflect on when you have demonstrated those attributes or seen others do so. In the box below, describe your best example(s).

If you find this a useful exercise, and have experience of leading both in person and remote teams, it might be interesting to compare the two experiences. Is there any difference in how you demonstrate your chosen skill or attitude? Are you more comfortable in one context than the other?

Provide your answer...

.....
Discussion

Being collaborative in your approach is an increasingly important leadership skill and brings many potential benefits. Looking from a wider perspective, collaborative projects are more likely to win funding; your connections and collaborations will make you better informed about competitors and context; the individuals you add to your network might have an impact on your future career, etc.

Looking closer to home, creating the right environment and encouraging your team members to collaborate more effectively might take some effort, but is an important aspect of a leader's role. Even if you are not yet the leader, you can use some of the skills and attitudes outlined by Archer and Cameron, to work more effectively with other team members.

Whether you are collaborating with your colleagues or beyond your organisation, the core skills required are the same.

If you are struggling to think of examples of when you've demonstrated these skills, talk to your boss or mentor about ways in which you can become more involved in collaborative projects, for example, working across teams or departments.

3.2 Global collaboration

While some of your team might be excited by the prospect of learning from colleagues overseas, others may see it as an unnecessary complication that will take up valuable time.

Gardner and Mortensen (2015) give the following advice about global collaboration in their online article, 'Collaborating well in large global teams':

- *Focus on commonalities*
 - Remind teams of shared goals – make it clear why you're working globally, what each team brings to the project.
 - Recognise your interdependence – explain why success depends on the knowledge and experience of those in other locations.
- *Symmetrise information*
 - Hold regular virtual meetings to share information and personal experience.
 - Prioritise team members with the right knowledge and expertise, but also the cultural intelligence to work effectively with global colleagues.
 - Combine meetings with virtual tours of each other's locations to set the context.

Being clear about the knowledge and experience that each team or individual contributes will help to demonstrate why this collaboration is valuable on a practical level, and if people are able to see each other in their own environments it can make the prospect of working with them seem less complex or daunting.

Some relevant awareness training on the cross-cultural context, referred to in Section 2.1 of Week 2, could also be valuable in reassuring any concerns.

4 Emerging leadership styles

Many different leadership styles have been developed and discussed over the decades, reflecting changes in attitude and varying priorities, and this process continues today.



Figure 5 New leadership styles continue to emerge

In Week 2 you looked at different leadership styles, from the well-established to the more recently defined. In this section, you will focus on the latest leadership research, considering newly defined styles and approaches that are emerging to suit the way our changing society perceives the nature of work and authority.

In recent times, leadership has become more concerned with supporting a positive employee experience, and various styles, some of which have been around for many years, have started to gain greater traction. These range from servant leadership and coaching leadership to democratic leadership and authentic leadership.

4.1 Authentic leadership

Many commentators emphasise the value of being authentic in what we do and say, so it's no surprise to find a focus on authenticity within leadership. This has become particularly important as people struggle to return to 'normal' following the global COVID-19 pandemic.

George (2003) explains authentic leadership as follows:

Authentic leaders genuinely desire to serve others through their leadership. They are more interested in empowering the people they lead to make a difference than they are in power, money, or prestige for themselves. They are as guided by qualities of the heart, by passion and compassion, as they are by qualities of the mind.

He goes on to suggest that authentic leaders demonstrate five qualities:

1. understanding their purpose
2. practising solid values
3. leading with their heart
4. establishing connected relationships
5. demonstrating self-discipline.

Understanding your purpose is particularly important for an authentic leader, and this can be a challenging process, involving self-reflection and self-awareness.

Smith (2023) explains that, despite what many leaders think, your own leadership purpose shouldn't be the same as your company's vision or mission statement, or your own. (You'll explore writing a leadership vision in Week 8). Instead, it should reflect 'who you are as a person and how you bring those unique qualities into your leadership, so you can excel as a leader. First and foremost, leadership purpose is about your values and what in life is most important to you. It's also considered your *why* statement—the cause, purpose or beliefs that motivate you in your work on a daily basis and about which you're most passionate.'

Smith (2023) shares some examples:

- make the world a better place by helping leaders help themselves and their organizations
- advocate for growth, freedom and prosperity through hard work, risk-taking and connection
- create an environment where everyone can reach their highest potential.

If you're inspired to develop your own purpose statement, Boulard and Cashman (no date), suggest using the three G model to define your personal purpose:

Start by drawing a Venn diagram that focuses on three overlapping areas, labelled grow, give and gifts:

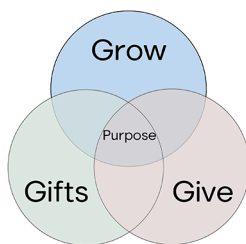


Figure 6 The three G model can help to define your personal purpose

Next, fill in each of the areas considering the following questions, suggested by Boulard and Cashman (no date):

Gifts – of all the attributes you possess, which two or three are your most valuable? How are these attributes, individually or in combination, unique to you?

Give – when you act on your gifts, who does that help and how? What positive influence can you have on an individual, a situation, or the world?

Grow – what are the situations or conditions that enhance your ability to act on your gifts? What is that final factor that allows you to give your gifts more powerfully and make an impact?

Once you've mapped these three elements, your purpose can be more clearly defined in the centre. They advise keeping your purpose statement to one sentence, and making it short, simple, memorable and useful.

4.2 Politically astute leadership

As internal and external interests and politics continue to diversify and divide opinion, Hartley et al. (2015) present a framework of political astuteness skills that will benefit leaders and managers across all sectors. You'll find a version of this framework reproduced in Activity 3.

Professor Hartley (2023) explains that political astuteness is about 'working with contest and conflict to achieve organisational and social goals' and describes a variety of work-based situations in which leaders might use these skills, ranging from 'dealing with people within their organisation, including factions and disagreeing tribes' to 'liaising with partners and in strategic alliances.'

Activity 3 Are you politically astute?

 Allow about 10 minutes

View the dimensions of the framework (Hartley, 2023) below and consider whether you already use these skills or not. Are they relevant to your context?

Y = Yes, N = No and NR = Not Relevant

Table 1 Political astuteness skills

Dimension	Description	Y/N/NR
Strategic direction and scanning	1. Retaining a sense of purpose	1. 2. 3.
	2. Understanding when to move fast on your agenda and when to hold off as the timing is wrong	
	3. Picking up signals from others (trade press, colleagues, external sources) highlighting changes in situation and helping you to identify what is over the horizon.	
Building alignment and alliances	1. Understanding who you can work with and who to exclude in order to achieve organisational goals	1. 2. 3. 4.
	2. Making alliances in situations of competition	
	3. Knowing when to collaborate or compete	
	4. Understanding organisations differences in alliances.	

Reading people and situations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Being able to see others' perspectives: what their values, motives, interests and goals are2. Understanding organisational goals and power structures3. Recognising the threat you (individually or organisationally) cause others.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.
Interpersonal skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Listening to others2. Encouraging people to be open with you3. Being curious with people, making them feel valued.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.
Personal skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Having self-awareness2. Being able to exert self-control3. Having a pro-active disposition, i.e. someone who tries to anticipate and develop the agenda.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.

Discussion

Political astuteness is important both internally (refer to [Week 6](#) to revisit internal politics) and externally. This framework presents a useful checklist of skills, attitudes and behaviours, particularly for a leader who is still developing their strategic thinking.

If you feel this is an area for personal development, Professor Hartley (2023) shares the results of a survey of 1,500 people, which found that the most frequent learning opportunities for developing political astuteness skills come from failure or mismanagement, i.e.

- 88% learnt from their mistakes
- 86% gained on the job experience
- 85% learnt from handling a crisis
- 77% followed the good example of a senior manager
- 70% learnt through observing bad behaviour from a senior manager.

Taking time to reflect on previous 'political' conversations you've participated in or observed is another good use of your leadership journal. Think about what went well or went wrong and reflect on what could have been done differently.

4.3 Is there a future for leadership as we know it?

In her fascinating book, *Dare to Unlead: The art of relational leadership in a fragmented world* (2022), corporate change-maker Céline Schillinger makes the point that the

leadership styles that worked when we were an industrial society, are no longer fit for purpose in a knowledge based one. She explains that what we need are 'leaders who can gain a better understanding of the world around them, who can facilitate connections between different domains and areas of expertise, and who can enable us to change what doesn't work.'

How we get there, she suggests, is through focusing on the three 'universal values' of liberty, equality and fraternity, giving individuals the freedom to exercise their judgement and develop their agency; embracing collective working practices and encouraging peer leadership; and inspiring a shared commitment to a common cause, forming communities based on intent and impact.

In a recent interview (Schillinger, 2022), she explained:

I think our organizations, and more generally our society, are sick – they make us sick. This is because of a noxious leadership that we continue to perpetuate, revere even, despite all the evidence that it doesn't work. We keep putting leaders on a pedestal, attributing to them singular virtues, linked to their charisma or to the way they demonstrate a 'natural' authority, which places them in our minds – and in organizational charts – above others.

This view of leadership is a toxic ideology. It hurts people, it hurts organizations, it hurts the planet. It is time to 'un-lead': to realize that leadership is first and foremost a collective capacity to be cultivated, whose basic constituent is the relational and emotional fluency, which is served by a very different set of behaviours, including effacing oneself in the collective rather than standing above it. This requires not less effort than the traditional conception of leadership, but more. It is worth it. Un-leadership creates sustainable economic and human value, unlike the extractive model we are used to.

If you want to hear more from Schillinger and other influential voices in this field, there is a podcast associated with the book, available at <https://weneedsocial.com/podcast>.

Rebecca Fielding also shares her view on the types of leaders that organisations will be recruiting in the future.

Video content is not available in this format.



Holacracy

Several organisations are currently exploring alternatives to leadership in its traditional form. Shared leadership is one option, and a more extreme model of this is 'holacracy', now used by more than 200 organisations across the world in sectors ranging from education and technology to retail and design (Holacracy Foundation, 2023). HolacracyOne, the organisation driving this approach, describes it as a management framework with 5 modules that are ideally adopted together but can be implemented separately. These are:

1. Clear organisational structure – no need to ask your manager who you should talk to whenever you need something from another department.
2. Clear rules of cooperation – clear rules, around duties of transparency, prioritisation and processing requests, that everyone can rely on.
3. Efficient, ‘tactical’ meetings – staying focused and avoiding the never-ending tangential conversations, or even the time wasted trying to reach consensus.
4. Distributed authority – clear limits and boundaries, so employees can lead and use their judgement within an agreed upon scope of authority.
5. Decentralised governance process – anyone can propose changes to their role and their colleagues’ roles, in service of the organisation.

4.4 Case study

A well-documented case study is that of online shoe retailer Zappos, which removed its management hierarchy and introduced the holacracy model several years ago. Their key focus was on transparency and adaptability – providing tools to help staff identify the work that needed doing, and giving staff the ability to pitch for work that interested them rather than work that was associated with an out-of-date job description.

In a *Harvard Business Review IdeaCast*, Bernstein and Bunch (2016) outlined the significant work involved in retraining staff and putting in place the technology and structures to support the new approach. A key point was that this wasn’t a ‘leaderless’ environment – leadership or management was distributed throughout the organisation.

This approach isn’t for everyone – it was widely reported that a number of employees chose to resign a short time after implementation.

Zhou (2023) has used a case analysis approach to analyse the effectiveness of the new structure and its impact on the company’s overall performance, finding that a self-management structure can enhance employee engagement and consistency in achieving company objectives, but warning that attention must be paid to issues such as intercultural collaboration and motivation.

The company has subsequently created [Zappos Insights](#), sharing resources, testimonials and even offering tours to highlight their ‘unique’ company culture.

Activity 4 What do you predict?

 Allow about 30 minutes

1. Find an article, blog or paper about the future of business leadership that captures your imagination and summarise its contents in the box below. Alternatively, you could visit the Holacracy website or read up on Céline Schillinger’s Dare to Unlead approach.

Provide your answer...

2. Next, answer these questions:

a) How does the approach you've summarised compare with leadership that you've experienced/observed, or even your own leadership style?

Provide your answer...

b) Is it an approach that you feel could be effective in your workplace?

Provide your answer...

.....

Discussion

Cutting edge approaches like the one introduced by Zappos are still relatively unusual, but interest is growing all the time. While a radical change may be unlikely to happen in your organisation, there may be elements of these new approaches that could inform small changes.

Use your leadership journal to identify areas that interest you and experiment with ideas.

5 Sources of information/expertise to keep you up to date

As you've learned throughout this course, leadership and followership are significant subjects that have stimulated research and discussion for decades – and will continue to do so.



Figure 7 The internet is a useful source of information about leadership

If you plan to continue your leadership learning beyond this course, there are several resources that you may find useful. See the References section for the web links.

Business resources

- **Harvard Business Review:** a resource for new ideas and classic advice on strategy, innovation and leadership, for global leaders from the world's best business and management experts. At the time of writing, non-registered users can read up to 5 free articles per month. After a free sign-up you can access more.
- **Forbes:** a global media company, focusing on business, investing, technology, entrepreneurship, leadership and lifestyle. At the time of writing, non-registered users can read up to 4 free articles per month.
- **European Business Review:** a source of scholarly economic articles on *European* companies, with sections dedicated to leadership and strategy.
- **Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD):** the professional body for HR and people development (search for 'leadership').

- **Chartered Management Institute:** provider of management and leadership development training, qualifications, membership and research (search for 'leadership').

Academic resources

Note that while academic resources will allow you to view abstracts, there is usually a charge to view full articles and papers.

- **The Leadership Quarterly:** a social science journal dedicated to advancing our understanding of leadership as a phenomenon, how to study it, as well as its practical implications. A range of open access articles are available [here](#).
- **Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies:** peer-reviewed and published quarterly, this journal seeks to advance the theory, research and practice of all aspects of leadership and organisations. A number of articles are designated 'free' or 'open' access. Search the most read articles in the last 6 months [here](#).

Leadership organisations


- **International Leadership Association:** organised for educational purposes to serve as a global network for all those who practice, study and teach multiple facets of leadership.
- **Centre for Leadership Studies (University of Exeter):** brings together outstanding students, faculty and partners to conduct distinctive and high-quality leadership and governance research.
- **Institute of Leadership and Management:** creates leaders and develops managers through qualifications, training and cutting-edge research.

High-profile leadership experts who are keen to share their approach

There are numerous individuals who could be listed here, but the following three have different styles, and will introduce you to leadership from slightly different perspectives. Their YouTube videos and TED Talks etc. are a good starting point.

- Marshall Goldsmith: leadership coach
- John Kotter: Professor of Leadership, author
- Simon Sinek: author, motivational speaker and marketing consultant

Activity 5 Reviewing the resources – what works for you?

 Allow about 1 hour

Spend some time online reviewing the resources, organisations and individuals recommended in this section. They each have different styles and approaches – some are more academically focused and others are more practical. Which ones suit you?

Choose three resources that you could regularly refer to or follow on social media.

1.

Provide your answer...

2.

Provide your answer...

3.

Provide your answer...

.....

Discussion

A resource that inspires and motivates you is a useful tool. You could include inspiring quotes etc. in your leadership journal and look back at them when you are feeling tired or frustrated. Following people or organisations on social media, for example, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, provides an easy way to keep up to date with their views and activities without having to spend lots of time reading.

6 This week's quiz

Now you've reached the end of Week 7, you can try a short quiz to help you reflect on what you've learned. Don't forget that you can use your leadership journal to do that too.

[Week 7 practice quiz](#)

Open the quiz in a new window or tab, then come back here when you've finished.

7 Summary

This week, you have learned that the future of leadership involves significant change. You have also seen that leaders are capable of rising to the challenge, and that many researchers and experts are already investigating and discussing what will happen next.

You should now feel that you can:

- describe how global change can impact on leadership styles
- describe new approaches to leadership
- identify sources of information to keep you up to date with future leadership trends.

In your final week, you'll be able to reflect on your own leadership experience and start to identify areas for development.

You can now go to [Week 8](#).

Week 8: Developing yourself as a leader

Introduction

Welcome to Week 8 of the free badged course *Leadership and followership*. Congratulations, you've almost finished the course!

Last week, you focused on how leadership is changing and will continue to change in the future. This week, you'll concentrate on your own leadership learning and development, reflecting on what you've learned from this course and setting some goals for your own career progression and leadership development.

When you finish the course, you have the chance to claim a badge and add this course to your personal resources.

Now watch the final video with Lynne.

Video content is not available in this format.



By the end of this week, you will be able to:

- reflect on your own leadership experience and identify areas for development
- set SMART goals and devise an action plan to support your leadership development
- identify appropriate training/networking opportunities.

1 What have you learned?

This course has covered a wide range of topics relating to leadership and followership. Some of the themes may be more familiar to you than others, but hopefully each week has offered ideas and suggestions that are relevant and interesting.



Figure 1 Reviewing your learning

By this stage in the course, you should be feeling more comfortable with reflection, and your leadership journal should be well underway. By now, you should have settled on a good time of day to add your thoughts to it and be starting to develop a style that you feel comfortable with.

Leadership expert, Professor Jean Hartley is very clear on the benefits of taking a reflective approach. She offers her advice here:

Video content is not available in this format.



Activity 1 Reviewing your learning

 Allow about 40 minutes

Reviewing your journal entries so far, alongside your notes and responses to each activity throughout the course, what have been your key learning points from each

week? These notes don't need to be comprehensive – two or three bullet points will serve to crystallise your thinking. If you've already been doing this at the end of each week anyway, use this space to bring those thoughts together.

Provide your answer...

.....
Discussion

Summarising your learning points here will demonstrate how your knowledge of leadership and followership has grown and developed over the last eight weeks. This should be an inspiring activity – if you can learn something new about leadership and followership from 24 hours of study, just think what you can achieve during your career!

2 Progressing your career

Now you have a clearer understanding of what a leader is, the crucial interdependence between leaders and followers, and the challenges leaders will face both now and in the future – you must decide how you want to personally progress from here.



Figure 2 Climbing step by step

You might find it useful to refer to [Week 1, Activity 5](#), where you were thinking about your aspirations for the course. Have those aspirations changed?

Before you start to identify goals and plan your actions, many business experts highlight the value of having a personal leadership vision. Knowing what kind of leader you want to be and how you want to lead will help you to prioritise your goals and give you a clearer target for the future.

Activity 2 What is your leadership vision?

 Allow about 15 minutes

When exploring authentic leadership in Week 7, you considered your leadership purpose, which author and coach Tony Robbins describes as ‘your ultimate reason for doing what you do every day’ (Robbins, no date). If you’ve spent some time thinking about your daily leadership purpose, you can use that to inform your leadership vision for the future.

Use your leadership journal to consider your own leadership vision. Try to keep it concise and inspiring. Describe what kind of leader you want to be in, for example, five years.

Examples of personal leadership visions include:

'To be a teacher. And to be known for inspiring my students to be more than they thought they could be.'

Oprah Winfrey

'To be an honest and accessible leader, known for leading engaged and effective teams.'

Higher Education Leader

Use the space below to articulate your vision:

Provide your answer..

Discussion

What did you come up with? Did you focus on personal traits and qualities or on how you want to undertake the leadership process? Whatever you chose, you can start to consider how to develop from where you are now into that leader. A vision can take some time to perfect, so you may not have identified precisely what you want to say in the 15 minutes allocated here. Spend some more time refining it if you need to. If you have identified a mentor, they could be a useful sounding board for your ideas.

Now you have a sense of the type of leader you want to be, where are you going to put it into practise? For example, in your current workplace, in a voluntary role or in a new job? Many of you will be planning to use the information and practical advice covered in this course to advance your career in some way. Take a few minutes to focus on the options that you could explore next.

Activity 3 What could you do next?

 *Allow about 15 minutes*

In the box below, list all the career-related options that you could potentially explore next, for example, a new project role, promotion, a new job etc. If you are not currently looking for employment, you might consider voluntary activities or perhaps sharing your own leadership observations and experience through social media. Don't worry at this stage whether they are options you actively want to pursue – include anything that comes into your head!

If it helps, use the following categories:

- In the workplace
- Outside work
- In person
- Online

Provide your answer..

.....
Discussion

This activity is intended to be done as a quick brainstorm about all the options that might be available to you. You could also include others in the brainstorming process, for example, your mentor, manager, friends, family etc. to see if they come up with anything different. In Section 3 you'll edit these ideas and settle on some key goals for the future.

3 Planning your leadership development

Personal development planning allows you to focus on potential study, career and personal development options and goals. Watch this short video for an introduction to the concept.

View at: [youtube:6gqPHCWT3f0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6gqPHCWT3f0)



Youtube link: The Open University is not responsible for external content

You started this process in Week 3, when you reflected on your own skills and those you'd like to develop, and you started to consider ways in which you could do that.

You have also started a leadership journal. The thoughts you've recorded in there could make a useful starting point for articulating your goals and ideas.

It is highly recommended that the goals that you come up with are SMART:

- S = specific
- M = measurable
- A = agreed
- R = realistic
- T = time bound

In your [Toolkit](#), you'll find a Goal Setting tool, which will take you through the SMART process and help you to write down and plan your goals. If you choose to access this, you'll notice that R = Relevant, A = Achievable and the acronym has been expanded to SMARTER, adding Engagement and Reward to the list of letters. There are various different interpretations of the SMART tool and you should choose the one that resonates for you. In this course, we've chosen to use 'Agreed' as you may need to agree your plans with a current manager. 'Realistic' has been chosen as it's important that your goal is achievable and that you've identified and can remove any potential obstacles or constraints, such as financial cost to either yourself or your organisation.

If none of this resonates with you, there are other goals setting tools available, such as HARD (*heartfelt, animated, required and difficult*) and PACT (*purposeful, actionable, continuous and trackable*), which we don't have time to cover in detail here, but that you can easily explore using your preferred online search engine.

Swann (2024) suggests that to be effective for the individual in that specific situation, different types of goals should be set in different circumstances. He goes on to explain that setting the wrong goal can be detrimental and lead to feelings of failure, and proposes two important questions to ask yourself:

- Are you already good at the task? If you already have the ability and resources to pursue the goal, then a specific goal will probably work best. He recommends aiming high!
- Are you new to/still learning a complex task? A learning goal will work better for you instead. For example, focus on identifying a number of strategies that you aim to try out in order to get better at something.

There are numerous different templates you could use to break down the different elements of your personal development plan. Here is a worked example:

Table 1 An example of goal setting

Goal	To increase my confidence in leading a team
Current status:	
a. experience	a. Limited practical experience of leading – led project group at university and captained the football team at school
b. knowledge	b. Currently undertaking badged open course on <i>Leadership and followership</i> and did a module on leadership during my degree course
c. skills	c. Some key skills – good communicator, empathetic, well organised, creative, but limited experience of negotiation and strategy
Development/training needed to reach my goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More up-to-date leadership experience • Build skills in negotiation and strategic thinking
Action plan	Organise a charity fund-raising event in the next six months
Outcome	Disco organised in July, raised £2000
Evaluation	Wrote a strategic plan for the event. Had to negotiate fee waiver with venue and DJ. Feel more confident about my leadership skills.
Next step	Build strategic thinking further. Look for opportunities to contribute to strategic planning at work

Activity 4 Putting it all together

 Allow about 30 minutes

1. Refer back to key activities from earlier in the course, and pull together relevant content in the box below (e.g. Week 1, Activities 4 and 5; Week 2, Activity 7; Week 3, Activities 3, 4, 5 and 6; Week 5, Activity 5; Week 6, Activity 5; Week 8, Activity 2):

Provide your answer...

2. Now you have the information you need to start building your leadership development plan. Use the template here to set your goals. If your workplace has a template that is used to support performance review processes etc. – use that if you prefer. You could also use the Goal Setting Tool to make sure your goals are SMART.

	1	2	3
Goal	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...

Current status:

- a. **experience**
- b. **knowledge**
- c. **skills**

<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
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**Development/
training needed
to reach my goal**

<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
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Action plan

<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
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Outcome

<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
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Evaluation

<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
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Next step

<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
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Discussion

You may have identified more than one goal, in which case you'll need to prioritise your action plans. Is it achievable to tackle them all in one go? Don't have too many goals or you'll be overwhelmed and may not achieve them all, which can be demoralising.

By now, you should have a set of SMART goals and an action plan for achieving them. Next, you'll consider the people who might be able to help you to achieve those goals.

4 Networking with the right people

A key element in achieving your goals will be to identify the people who can help you. They might be more senior colleagues who can put you forward for relevant opportunities (sometimes referred to as a 'sponsor'), or members of the team you're collaborating with on a project. Either way, building a strong network can be hugely beneficial to your leadership development.



Figure 3 Networking is key to success

The Oxford English Dictionary (2017) defines networking as 'The action or process of making use of a network of people for the exchange of information, etc., or for professional or other advantage'.

It can often seem daunting and many people profess a dislike for it as an activity. However, put simply, it is about getting to know professional people and showing them your potential.

Harvard Business Review offers some useful advice in this short video:

View at: [youtube:MnrINCauK-E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MnrINCauK-E)



Youtube link: The Open University is not responsible for external content

Activity 5 Who can help you?

 Allow about 10 minutes

Look at the goals and action plans you identified in Activity 4. Are there any individuals who could help you with those actions? Use the following categories to get you started:

People I already know, for example, at work, personally (including any 'dormant ties' as discussed in the Harvard Business Review video you just watched) etc.:

Provide your answer...

People who are connected to them, for example, their LinkedIn contacts, friends/colleagues etc.:

Provide your answer...

Strangers who have a shared interest, for example, leadership experts, discussion forum members etc.:

Provide your answer...

Others:

Provide your answer...

.....
Discussion

Now you have generated a list of useful contacts, add contacting them to your action plan and set a time frame in which to do it.

There are several professional organisations with an interest in leadership. In the UK these include:

- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
- Chartered Management Institute
- Institute of Directors
- Institute of Leadership and Management.

See the References section for web links.

Many of them will have online discussion forums or run conferences or other networking events that you may be able to access. Your sector-related professional bodies and organisations will also have an interest in leadership, regardless of their specialism, so it's worth visiting their websites and investigating their approach to leadership development too.

If you are based outside the UK, there will be a range of professional organisations that are either relevant to your profession or focus specifically on leadership. Use a search engine tool such as Google to identify them.

5 Exploring training

Leadership development and training is big business. A recent report found that US companies spend \$14 billion annually on it. There are numerous organisations offering courses, both physical and virtual, that promise to train you in key skills or provide you with relevant knowledge.



Figure 4 Training leaders is big business

This course has given you a taster, but you may have decided that there are key areas you want to learn more about in order to meet your goals.

You don't have to be a leader to benefit from developing leadership skills. Followers can gain as much from leadership training as leaders can. Followers are the leaders of the future and a good organisation will take the time to develop them too.

So where do you start?

Internal training

Many organisations provide training for their staff, either internally or externally, depending on their size and structure. Before you start to explore what might be available to you externally, investigate the in-house options that are on offer.

Contact your Human Resources department or talk to your manager about what is available. It could be:

- a dedicated leadership training programme
- a workshop covering a specific skill
- an afternoon of networking with existing leaders from within your organisation.

If there is currently no provision that meets your needs, perhaps you could offer to organise something.

Find out if there is a budget for external speakers and consider whether this would be an event for your department only or whether you would make it available to staff from across the organisation. If you did – that might be a useful networking opportunity and help with some of the internal politics!

External training

Be aware that you don't need a leadership qualification to prove that you are a good leader. It may be useful to you in a variety of ways, but it is not a substitute for practical experience.

First you need to ensure that you choose a reputable training provider. Professional organisations such as those listed in the previous section will offer their own programmes of training or may endorse certain courses and qualifications. Visit their websites or call them to find out more.

An online training catalogue such as findcourses.co.uk will list relevant courses, which will give you a starting point for further research about the providers, course content etc.

How do you know if an external training programme is going to be valuable? Ask the following questions:

- Will this course help me to develop the right skills and take me closer to achieving my goals?
- Is the course practically or theoretically based, or a mix of the two? What suits my needs best?
- Do I feel inspired/motivated by the content/style of delivery etc. of the course?
- Will there be regular opportunities to receive feedback on my progress?
- What kind of support does the course offer, for example, peer support, coaching, mentoring etc.?
- Will the course/qualification be recognised by my future employers?
- Can I talk to previous participants before signing up?

Do as much research as possible before signing up. These courses can be expensive and you don't want to choose something that isn't going to add something to your CV, build your leadership skills and confidence, or allow you to develop a useful peer support network – preferably you'd like all three!

If you do take a leadership training course, there are numerous learning activities you might be expected to participate in. Activity 6 gives you one example.

Activity 6 Leadership shield exercise

 Allow about 15 minutes

1. Draw the outline of a shield on a piece of paper or a page from your leadership journal. Divide it into four quadrants and allocate each quadrant a different category as follows:

- a) two of your leadership skills
- b) the part of your current work that you like best
- c) two values that influence how you lead others
- d) a recent success or accomplishment.

2. Which quadrant was the easiest to complete? Why?

Provide your answer...

3. Which quadrant, if any, reveals something about you that others might not know?

Provide your answer...

4. On a training course, you would be asked to discuss your choices with a partner or in a group. Find someone to talk to about this exercise.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Your background, values and personal philosophies inevitably affect the way you interact with and lead people, and this exercise attempts to highlight some of those characteristics. Did it reveal anything new?

Taken from *The Leadership Training Activity Book*, Hart and Waisman (2004)

Academic study

If you want to explore the academic side of leadership in more depth, there are many institutions offering relevant courses.

In the UK, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) has a searchable database of undergraduate and postgraduate courses (see References for the web link).

6 This week's quiz

Congratulations on almost reaching the end of the course.

Now it's time to complete the Week 8 badge quiz. It is similar to the badged quiz that you took at the end of Week 4, with 15 questions in total.

[Week 8 compulsory badge quiz](#)

Open the quiz in a new tab or window, then come back here when you're finished.

7 Summary

This week, you have amalgamated your learning from the course as a whole, and considered how you can use that knowledge to support your next steps.

You've spent some time identifying key goals and actions to support them – considering who might be able to help you and whether you need to explore additional training in order to achieve them.

You should now feel that you can:

- reflect on your own leadership experience and identify areas for development
- set SMART goals and devise an action plan to support your leadership development
- identify appropriate training/networking opportunities.

Congratulations! You have come to the end of the course. Don't forget that in order to finish the course and get your badge you will need to complete this week's quiz.

Tell us what you think

Now you've come to the end of the course, we would appreciate a few minutes of your time to complete this short [end-of-course survey](#) (you may have already completed this survey at the end of Week 4). We'd like to find out a bit about your experience of studying the course and what you plan to do next. We will use this information to provide better online experiences for all our learners and to share our findings with others. Participation will be completely confidential and we will not pass on your details to others.

Where next?

If you've enjoyed this course, you can find more free resources and courses on [OpenLearn](#). If you have not already done so, you might be especially interested in looking at our other badged open courses on employability, [Understanding your sector](#) and [Developing career resilience](#).

New to University study? You may be interested in our [Access courses](#) or [certificates](#).

You might also be interested in our [BA \(hons\) Business management \(leadership practice\)](#).

Making the decision to study can be a big step and The Open University has over 40 years of experience supporting its students through their chosen learning paths. You can find out more about studying with us by [visiting our online prospectus](#).

Get careers guidance

The [National Careers Service](#) can help you decide your next steps with your new skills.

Web links

[Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development](#)

[Chartered Management Institute](#)

[Institute of Directors](#)

[Institute of Leadership and Management](#)

[Universities and Colleges Admissions Service](#)

Further reading

Business resources

[Harvard Business Review](#)

[Forbes](#)

[European Business Review](#)

[CIPD](#)

[CMI](#)

Academic resources

[The Leadership Quarterly](#)

[Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies](#)

Leadership organisations

[International Leadership Association](#)

[Centre for Leadership Studies \(University of Exeter\)](#)

[Institute of Leadership and Management](#)

Leadership experts

[Marshall Goldsmith](#)

[John Kotter](#)

[Simon Sinek](#)

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