Module 2

Read Ahead

Leadership Overview
Module 2: Leadership Overview

Objectives

After attending the training in Module 2, participants will be able to:

- understand the need to be a highly effective leader.
- recognize the difference between management and leadership.
- identify the importance of characteristics, attitudes, and skill sets for leadership.
- construct a career path to become a strong, admired, and transformational leader.

Making a Difference

Serving in a leadership role in the transportation profession provides opportunities to make a difference in the lives of others—our employees and the citizens we serve. In fact, one definition of leadership is to “guide and develop others through positive influence and inspiring direction to reach goals for the common good.” A few major opportunities for leadership are shown below:

- We might not recognize that our behavior patterns and practices are watched closely and may become ingrained into the lives of our employees. *Is our behavior worth being watched and copied by others?*
- We have a responsibility to guide and support the careers of those under our care. *Will our employees grow and develop into leaders as a result of our influence?*
- Our leadership has an impact on the quality of work we provide to citizens. Positive leadership skills will influence employees to work enthusiastically toward goals for the common good, impacting the communities in which we serve. *Do our key stakeholders see us as acting on behalf of what is right for our communities?*

Need for New Commitment, Attitudes, and Skills

Our responsibilities to employees and citizens can be better served if we become highly effective leaders. However, becoming a highly effective leader is not easy. It can be intimidating. It requires a deep personal commitment of time and resources. It means we will need to change and grow. The first step in the process is commitment. Are you willing to dedicate yourself to becoming the leader needed at ALDOT?

The second step is to make a plan to adopt the knowledge and competencies needed for effective leadership. These factors will be addressed as you move through the Leadership Program. We ask you to examine these leadership skills, understand the impact they have, and agree to use them in your daily life. Please note that these leadership skills are distinctly different from the technical skills and requirements of our engineering positions. Perhaps some of us do not know how to start. We may have limited leadership training, not know how to improve our leadership, or lack the commitment for leadership growth and development. We just ask for your commitment and an open mind throughout this program.
What Do Leaders Do?

Leaders must know where they are going—now and in the future. They must have the relationship skills to guide others toward that future. In other words, leaders must have vision and influence. As leaders, you need to be able to influence employees to contribute to the team with their heart, mind, body, spirit, and creativity. Employees need to be influenced to excellence. Leadership is influence. Leadership is influencing others to follow. Leadership is influencing people to commit to the mission and to be all they can be. Do our employees see us as consistently influencing people to do the right thing, the right way, for the right reason?

Some managers have an authoritarian style of “command and control” because they mistakenly believe they have all the answers, can fix all of the problems, and, above all else, can maintain control. Sometimes this misperception is the opposite of the true definition of leadership. Management skills help you manage processes, but they don’t help you lead people and inspire them to action.

Managers versus Leaders

One of the most quoted phrases of Warren Bennis, a speaker and author on leadership and a business professor at the University of California, is:

“Managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right thing.”

There is a profound difference between doing things right and doing the right thing. However, the two activities are linked, and each needs the other. To be well-rounded, a leader must manage the day-to-day activities and deliver results while seeing the big picture and recognizing opportunity for change.

Another pertinent quote by Bennis is:

“The world is full of managers and desperately short of leaders.”

He defines the differences between managers and leaders with the following list of paired contrasts. This list allows aspiring leaders to evaluate their current practices and perceptions.

The manager administers, the leader innovates.
The manager maintains, the leader develops.
The manager accepts reality, the leader investigates it.
The manager focuses on systems and structures, the leader focuses on people.
The manager relies on control, the leader inspires trust.
The manager has a short-range view, the leader has a long-range perspective.
The manager asks how and when, the leader asks what and why.
The manager imitates, the leader originates.
The manager accepts the status quo, the leader challenges it. The manager is the classic good soldier, the leader is his or her own person.

After reviewing this list, do you think you are a manager or a leader? (Bennis)

A very simple analogy provides an excellent way to summarize the difference between management and leadership. It is an example familiar to everyone who drives an automobile:

- **Management is the practice of keeping the engine running, gas in the tank, air in the tires, fluids in the systems such that performance meets the current or present needs. Management focuses on daily and weekly operations and making sure the automobile is serviced properly.**

- **Leadership is the practice of keeping the wheels on the road while driving the car in the right direction toward the appropriate and destination. Leadership focuses on the larger organization and assesses the future needs and purpose.**

**Leadership Quotients**

As you grow in your ability to lead, you will see more and more how leadership is a product of several skills and traits that need to be cultivated over time. Not only is possession of these skills important but knowing how and when to utilize them is equally important. Bill Service with Samford University illustrates this concept with what he calls the 12 Quotients of Leadership. An adapted version is below:

- Appearance – Leaders maintain a polished appearance.
- Behavior – Actions speak so loudly that no one can hear anything we say.
- Communications – Leaders move from directing employees to connecting with employees.
- Desire – Leaders have passion, commitment, and self-discipline.
- Emotional Intelligence – Leaders have self-awareness, self-control, social awareness, empathy, and the ability to manage productive and positive relationships with others.
- Intelligence – Leaders have not just traditional IQ but also the ability to live successfully through experiential learning.
- Knowledge – Leaders learn, pay attention, recognize, imagine, and keep up to date on workplace technologies.
- Management – Leaders know how to manage tasks, goals, processes, and resources.
- People Skills – Leadership is contingent on relationship-building, social skills, networking, and the ability to relate to and with people.

- Reality – Leaders must be realistic about themselves, others, and situations. They must recognize the needs of ALDOT and the employees in their department.

- Situational Skills – Leaders must have the ability to read a situation and develop a strategy based on the current assessment.

- Experience – Leaders learn to view accomplishments and mistakes by seizing the moment; practicing discernment; demonstrating maturity; and using insights, intuition, judgment, and decisiveness.

What is Important to Employees?

Although leadership has many attributes, two stand out as necessary for leaders to gain respect and support from their employees:

- **Effective Leader Communications**

  A national employee survey found that “how much employees like and trust their leaders” determines “how much employees like their jobs.” The same survey showed that “their leaders’ ability to communicate effectively” was the key to whether “employees liked and trusted their leaders.” The leader is responsible for the communication of organizational goals, rationale for those goals, roles of employees, employees’ needed performance level, and recognition for employees’ accomplishments. All of these are needed for employees’ performance and organizational success.

- **Effective Management Style**

  Management is situational. Highly respected leaders learn how and when to use various management styles, including the ones described below. Most leaders have a preferred style of decision making, and this likely is the style they use most of the time. Management styles range from simple to complex. The leader’s management style plays a major role in determining organizational productivity and employee motivation. The best leaders feel that their job is to serve the needs of those in their care. How leaders use their authority, view their employees, and interpersonally relate to people generally determine their preferred style.
The following illustration is adapted from *Management: A Biblical Approach* by Myron Rush:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management Style</th>
<th>General Description and Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dictatorial Style</td>
<td>Persons with this style operate like a dictator. They make all decisions about what, when, where, and how things are done and who will do them. Leaders with this style generally keep decision-making power for themselves and do not allow others to question their decisions or authority. Work conditions are non-productive under this style. Often, the more valuable employees will seek employment elsewhere.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authoritative Style</td>
<td>Unfortunately, this is a common style in today’s workforce. Authoritative managers seldom let others make decisions because they believe their experience makes them the most qualified. They consider their views the most valid and are frequently critical of opinions that differ from their own. Also, they frequently lack confidence in others, listen to other people only if they agree with them, and are easily offended if others disagree with them. Personal growth and development of employees are restricted under this style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(or Micro-Manager)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Consultative Style | The consultative style of management focuses on using the skills and ideas of others to develop plans and make decisions. These managers generally retain final decision-making power. However, they make major decisions only after seeking input from those affected by the decisions.

Consultative managers regularly ask for employees’ input, work at providing recognition, willingly delegate decision-making authority, attempt to evaluate all alternatives before making a decision, and explain why certain ideas are not used.

This style fosters personal growth and development among employees. |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Participative Team Style | This is a unique style, and many leaders feel uncomfortable using it.

In this style, leaders give most of their authority—but not all of it—to their team. However, they remain the team leader. These leaders consider everyone’s ideas equally; assume the role of player/coach and become the team’s facilitator; frequently accept the team’s ideas, even when those ideas disagree with their own; and focus on stimulating creativity and innovation within the team.

This style fosters personal growth and development among employees. |

**Morale in the Workforce**

Employees’ attitudes and the overall culture of the workplace are determined by whether there is leadership and what type of leadership a supervisor chooses. Whether employees excel or fall below performance goals, their overall morale reflects their leader’s posture. Leaders must create work environments that are motivating to employees and challenge employees to be fully committed to the mission. That is not always the situation in transportation organizations, as indicated below:

- Leaders are constantly being watched by their employees, and they can choose to see this as an opportunity or a liability.
A large percentage of employees do not have a sense of ownership in their organizations as evidenced by the following statistics:

- **21%: Disengaged** – Typically, these are employees who continually find fault with most everything that is taking place and are generally viewed as disruptive because of their negative attitudes.

- **61%: Not Engaged** – These employees usually strive to “conform” to the majority environment. They generally lack enough self-confidence or courage to take any risk or challenge the status quo; however, this group would likely become part of a team if motivated and given the right opportunities to grow and develop.

- **18%: Engaged** – These employees generally have a sense of ownership and support of their organization.

Morale is a key issue, and highly effective leaders find ways to address it. If supervisors are effective in leading, employees want to follow in both behavior and attitude. Below are actions leaders may use to motivate their employees:

- Dream success; however, leaders must also be willing to deal with failures.
- Have the courage to see reality. Avoid denial and rationalism.
- Have the courage to confront problems.
- Be available to grow. Avoid being “stuck in a rut.”
- Be authentic—real and reliable.
- Have a visible presence among all levels of employees. “Absent leaders” lose their effectiveness.

John Maxwell indicates in *Relationships 101* that believing in employees before they prove themselves is a key to motivating them to reach their potential. In other words, highly effective leaders believe the best in people and have faith in them. Maxwell laid out four important facts about faith in people:

- Most people don’t have faith in themselves.
- Most people don’t have someone who has faith in them.
- Most people can tell when someone else has faith in them.
- Most people will do anything to live up to that person’s faith in them.

**Key Leadership Practices**

In the book *Leadership Challenge*, Barry Posner and James M. Kouzes list five key leadership processes you would be wise to consider:

- Model the way.
- Inspire a shared vision.
- Challenge the process.
- Enable others to act.
- Encourage the heart.
Model the way. Establish principles concerning the way coworkers, employees, contractors, citizens, public officials, and supervisors should be treated and the way the vision and goals should be attained.

Inspire a shared vision. Passionately believe that you can make a difference and envision the future destination of ALDOT.

Challenge the process. Search for innovative opportunities to change the status quo with positive progress even if change may involve risks.

Enable others to act. Foster a collaborative atmosphere where others are actively involved, teams are motivated, trust exists between leaders and employees, and employees are empowered.

Encourage the heart. Recognize the contributions of individual employees and the accomplishments of teams.

As a group, these practices are likely to be associated with optimistic, well-liked, and respected leaders who care deeply about their employees and about the basic mission of ALDOT. In addition, leaders who engage in these processes will assist in creating a motivated and determined workforce.

Choice

No one can force you to become a leader; you make the choice. However, your job as a supervisor at ALDOT will be more rewarding if you begin to practice leadership in a meaningful way. Also, if you choose effective leadership, your employees’ jobs will be more rewarding to them. Sure, leadership takes a lot of work because it means walking each day with purpose, engagement, and forward progress. The question is, “Will you accept the challenge?”

References


