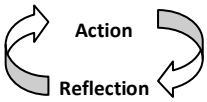
Leadership matters!

the power of self-awareness…

What can be done to deliver more effective leadership?



"Do this and don't do that" approaches to leadership are consistent with a view of organisations as rational mechanisms subject to command and control. Character trait approaches to leadership reflect a view that the personal qualities of leaders are paramount.

In our view these are not enough. The "leadership framework" we offer reflects our perspective that organisations are organic and dynamic expressions of complex relationships. It is intended to stimulate thought and enquiry e.g. questioning assumptions and asking "what's missing".

Creating a mandate to lead

Managers often tell us that they have little or no time for reflection or thinking ahead. They are constantly exhorted to "get into action". Essential for improving leadership is to invest time - in enquiry rather than prescription, reflection as well as action, engagement as a means of achieving control - thereby creating a sense of purpose and direction.

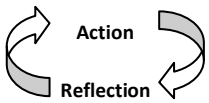
Our experience indicates that, whilst there are many real standards to achieve e.g. product and service reliability, it is not possible to plan such that nothing will go wrong. Whilst many leaders tell us that they understand this dilemma, they still seek to control outputs or ends, instead of inputs, or means, in the rush to achieve targets. This is shown through plans that focus on measures aimed at achieving targets, to the detriment of improved performance.

Leadership is often seen as the "bringer of change"; this can produce stress and anxiety in the leaders and in those they lead. Sometimes this results in a drop in performance rather than improvement and may be followed by even more change, stress and still lower performance. Recognising the need for maintaining stability, continuity and capability in a changing environment will help to overcome this downward spiral.

To create and maintain their mandate to lead, effective leaders communicate – and foster communication in order to build and sustain productive relationships. This helps to build the trust that is essential to sustain performance in uncertain times.

This mandate – the authority to lead – is acquired as a result of many actions and applies at any and all levels: leadership is distributed throughout the organisation.

Questions to get started



- How can I find time to reflect more?
- What are my own assumptions about the leadership context?
- How can I increase my self awareness?
- How can I find out what my staff need to perform better?
- How can I find out if my "measures" help or hinder improving performance?

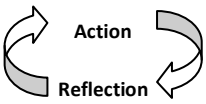
Relate these questions to the framework overleaf.

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A framework to link key elements

There are many books, articles and papers which propose simple models of - or prescriptions for - leadership. These include leadership; 'born or learned'; as a function of particular individual traits, practices or styles; as a consequence of followership; or contingent upon context. Our view is that, taken separately, these fail to provide sufficient guidance for understanding and dealing with the complex situations that confront leaders today.



We believe that leadership - throughout an organisation - is the key to success. It acts as the explicit integrator of strategy and direction, people, and business processes and systems. The effective linking of these elements is key to enabling an organisation to be successful. See our previous occasional paper "The Performance Driver Model".

Here we propose a framework that links essential ingredients of leadership - context, practices, styles and self awareness - in useful ways. We encourage people in organisations, especially those with greater responsibility, to find ways to understand the complexity that is effective leadership and to recognise that there are no prescriptions. So if there is no simple answer, then leadership is about continually reflecting on today's actions and consequences, so as to improve tomorrow's performance.

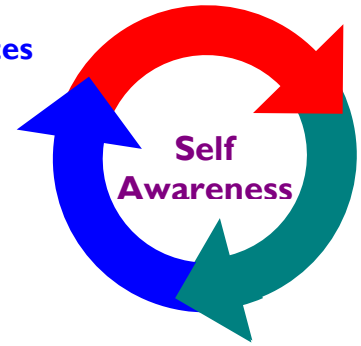
Leadership Context

e.g.
Drivers for Change
Scale and speed of change
Sticking with what we have now
Precedents for the change

Leadership Practices

e.g.
Challenge the process
Inspire a shared vision
Enable others to act
Model the way
Encourage the heart

After Kouzes and Posner



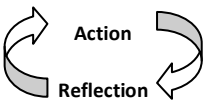
Leadership Styles

e.g.
Coercive
Authoritative
Affiliative
Democratic
Pace setting
Coaching

After Goleman

Self-Awareness

***A real example**. A naturally very assertive – some found him aggressive – director knew that to be effective with a wider range of people he had continually to seek feedback on his impact on others and how he communicated key messages, so that he had the best possible information on which to modify his style and approach for greater success.*



So he regularly asks himself:

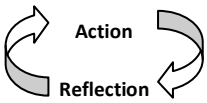
- How and what do I think and feel and communicate?
- What impact does my behaviour and preferred style have on others?
- How do others perceive me and interact with me?
- How do I model appropriate behaviours to meet a variety of needs?
- How do I demonstrate my values?
- How do I discharge roles and responsibilities productively?

Leaders can increase their self awareness by seeking and reflecting upon information from others. This is a pre-requisite for paying real attention to the needs of others, recognising their differences, and understanding the best way to respond to them.

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Leadership Context



***A real example**. A Managing Director in an international electronics manufacturing business paid careful attention to contextual drivers, scale, speed and precedents. In particular his style was to offer managers in the affected division very broad scope to plan their own future. Unfortunately his awareness of leadership context was not complemented by self-awareness about the impact of his leadership style and, critically, of some leadership practices.*

- Where do I find out about the key variables which shape the environment for change – both internally and externally?
- Which of these variables can I quantify? Which can I control?
- Which of these are beyond my control and what do I need to do about them?
- In addressing context, what other leadership ingredients might I be neglecting?

Leadership Practices

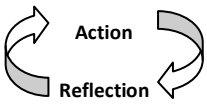
***A real example**. The Chief Executive of a large and complex company was faced with a corporate survival crisis that required substantial change. He illustrated through his own behaviour a complete set of the leadership practices e.g. those outlined by Kouzes and Posner. He also understood the leadership context well and communicated this effectively. He was less successful in dealing with resistance to the change from managers whose own styles were more entrenched.*

- What do I think are the critical leadership practices?
- Which of the practices do I find easy or difficult and what happens if I miss one out?
- How do I find out how I am doing on each of these practices?
- How do I deal with people who can't or won't do these things?

Leadership Styles

***A real example.** The manager of a management development team in a financial services company showed an extraordinary capability to match his leadership style appropriately to the staff he managed. This enabled him to get the best out of a team of people with widely differing backgrounds, experience, skills, motivation and aspirations. He linked this competence with complementary skills and understanding in leadership context and practices. Whilst he was self-aware, however, there was room here for development.*

- How do I find out what my preferred style is?
- How do I determine what the most appropriate style is for the situation?
- How do I lead people who need me to exercise a style outside my comfort zone?
- How do I coach others who resist developing this flexibility so they become more effective?



All four elements of this framework are important in their own right. And they are not enough on their own. They need to be integrated for good leadership. Some of this vital integration can be achieved by ensuring missing facets - such as undertaking the practices or particular aspects of style – are present in the team that surrounds a leader. One of the key points about Self Awareness is to recognise that something is missing and then to find the most effective way of dealing with it.

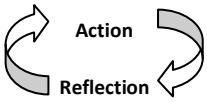
The key role of the leader is to engage everyone in the organisation.

The idea of 'Servant Leadership' outlined in Greenleaf is really important here. On the same front, an excellent illustration of effective leadership can be found in the Harvard Business Review paper – "Level 5 Leadership" by Collins.

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How to apply these ideas



The approach is systemic: its elements have to be taken together. Learning about and becoming a more effective leader requires both **action** *and* **reflection**. Time needs to be set aside for both of these. Leaders really do need to be aware of the whole picture.

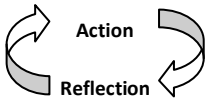
The diagram shown throughout this paper is a useful illustration of how action and reflection continually interact.

The key actions for applying these ideas are

- invest time for reflection and thinking about important and not urgent matters
- use your natural curiosity to investigate leadership and discover what works
- continually seek feedback in relation to processes and one's own and others' effectiveness
- take responsibility for owning and acting upon your own values
- make time to help in the development of others
- model excellence by personal example, let go and so enable others to become leaders – support not control
- learn from other leaders: create a group of peers who learn together
- address each ingredient of the model in turn: self awareness is the foundation
- remember that people and organisations are not machines – learn to differentiate between command and control and systemic thinking

and - most vital of all – allow yourself time to reflect on your actions and plan to act differently as a result.

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Contact us for more information

For more information about this model and ways you can apply it within your organisation please contact. www.alchemyofcoaching.com

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