

# DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Leadership Personality, Motivation, and  
Creativity

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# Chapter 1: Welcome and Introduction

## Welcome

Hello and welcome to the book “Developing Leadership Skills: Leadership Personality, Motivation, and Creativity”.

Thanks for having chosen this very compact, straightforward, and yet comprehensive book that leads you through personal, organizational, and environmental aspects of developing leadership skills. Besides courage and hard work, you can look at this book as a (a) thoughtful collection of research highlights, (b) a study and course design aid, and finally (c) a possible passport to your success.

When choosing the topics and research findings covered in this book, the goal was to benefit you personally and keeping in mind how to help you to make a difference in the teams you are working with. You will find plenty of opportunities to:

1. learning about the latest theoretical concepts with numerous references for further reading,
2. deepening the information with real-life cases and illustrative examples, and
3. applying your knowledge and train your skills with practical exercises.

## Introduction to Leadership personality, motivation, and creativity

Whether you are an HR practitioner, a leader, an executive coach, or a student, this book will help you in becoming personally and professionally more effective

and efficient. You will learn to know yourself better, understand your possible roles in team situations, manage conflicts, successfully negotiate, manage stress and your valuable time, stay motivated, make better decisions, as well as unlock your creativity.

Within the firework of bullet points and summary lists you will find the relevant questions and answers to help you develop personal growth and a thriving career:

- What is your personal leadership style?
- How can you overcome cognitive bias and become more self-efficient?
- What does it take to be an authentic leader who is able to enhance team members' intrinsic motivation?
- What's the key to creating new value and innovative change?
- How can you psychologically empower yourself and others, and increase opportunities and performance not only at the individual level, but also at the organizational level?

I hope I can inspire you with an interdisciplinary, innovative, and cross-cultural approach to personal and professional development for your individual well-being and common good alike.

Continuously learning myself and keen to help, I appreciate any questions or feedback you may have at any time. Please visit my blog [www.mathias-sager.com](http://www.mathias-sager.com) or email me directly at [goodthings@mathias-sager.com](mailto:goodthings@mathias-sager.com). Many thanks and see you soon again.

Mathias Sager, Tokyo in June, 2018

## Chapter 2: Developing Your Leadership Style

### Leadership skills can be learned

Understanding and developing leadership skills builds a fundamental red line throughout this whole book. There are many useful tools to assess leaders, for example, through feedback. Also, one can read about leadership research, leaders' success stories, learn techniques and train leadership competencies. However, real-world experience, is still the best method, in combination with above mentioned, to develop leadership skills [2-1].

While there have been debates about how much leadership skills are genetically predisposed and how much they are learned [2-4], it seems to be clear that leadership can be learned through more or less effort put into the learning process. True leadership may always involve hard work combined with vision [2-5] to develop the skills discussed in this book, which are, amongst others, self-awareness, self-efficacy, conflict management, negotiation and decision-making skills, stress management, as well as creativity. The understanding and successful development of those skills depend on a significant overarching influence: the state of mind. A healthy and wise state of mind is determining

- positive human experience, e.g.,
  - inner calm,
  - joy,
  - creativity, and
- thriving, e.g.,
  - good decision-making, and

- honest treatment [2-6].

A quick thought exercise:

- Do you know such positively radiating leaders?
- What is the relationship between this leader and his/her followers?
- What do you think you need to know to develop such qualities as well?

## Transformational leadership

Leadership style definitions are numerous. One of the most commonly described is transformational leadership [2-7]. Transformational leadership is based on the exemplary leader type that is characterized by five major principles [2-8]:

1. **Modeling the way** by integrity through alignment of behavior and ideal personal and professional values.
2. **Inspiring a shared vision** by fostering participation in improvement and possibilities.
3. **Challenging the process** by experimenting with new opportunities and ideas.
4. **Enabling others to act** by facilitating collaboration and trust through accountability and allowing choices.
5. **Encouraging the heart** by recognizing others' contribution to the community.

What do you think about a possible Chief Heart Officer (CHO)?

Transformational leadership style is especially suitable for situations that require information sharing, learning, and development, while transactional leaders

are required for generating a more competitive environment [2-9]. Importantly, when choosing your leadership style, consider that it is not only an economic function but that you have an impact on society overall [2-10].

Sometimes, the terms 'manager' and 'leader' are confused. Simply put, this book is about leaders and not about management in the sense of administration and control of a business [2-11]. Also, you won't find much about leadership skills that would rather fit under the Human Resource Management (HRM) or strategy development and execution field in this book. Instead you will find a focus on socio-emotional aspects of leadership.

Socio-emotional aspects of leadership are becoming increasingly needed, popular, and researched because the communication perspective is found to be essential for participative forms that foster more employee involvement according to democratic principles, especially also in multicultural environments [2-2]. Schwartz's Cultural Values are a simple description of two primary factors for leadership success. Independent of culture or country of a person,

- openness (versus conservation) and
- self-enhancement (versus self-transcendence)

are critical for learning and development [2-3].

## Self-efficacy

An individual is self-efficient when he or she believes in the ability and possibility to be successful in the completion of a task. The belief in training and education

as improving self-efficacy is included in this concept [2-12].

For your well-being and career, your belief in your ability to learn how to be successful (as a leader) is vital. To be able to serve as a role model and to motivate others, you need to be motivated yourself. If you are not curious yourself, how can you spark interest in others? And only if you are inspired, you can inspire your colleagues and employees. Helping yourself and others develop leadership qualities will inevitably result in increased productivity of the whole team and produce better results for the organization.

### **Self-confidence and positive attitude**

Self-confidence means believing in oneself, which is increasing the likelihood of others to trust too and a prerequisite for collaboration and loyalty [2-13]. Organizational culture is made of values and attitudes that are influenced by people's self-confidence as well. It is difficult to change an entire culture, but it is always possible to, for example, strengthen self-esteem and promote positive attitudes to create desired behavioral changes [2-14].

To reflect on your leadership style tendency and possible opportunities for improvement, you can take a quick online leadership assessment at [mindtools.com](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_50.htm) ([https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR\\_50.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_50.htm)). I highly recommend to take a few minutes, visit this free website, take the test, and reflect on your results. You will find further, for example, personality tests and related explanations, in the next chapters as well.



## Chapter 3: Self-Awareness and The Big Five Personality Traits

### What is personality?

Humanistic & psychodynamic models try to determine that consciousness of humans reveals their personality. In other words, personality and behavior are influenced by a person's perception of the self-concept.

It is impossible to predict human behavior accurately. Too many are the choices we have at any given point in time. The influences are manifold, such as: (1) Sociological, (2) biological, and (3) psychological.

However, there is a strong desire to understand and explain behavior, for example, to answer the following questions:

- Why do people behave in certain ways?
- How can future behavior be predicted?
- How can people and organizations be helped and supported in going through change?

Unfortunately, personality characteristics are often over-generalized to simplify the explanations of behavior. It is essential to see personality as a set of tendencies in how people tend to react in a given situation. We don't act on our tendencies all the time, but rather we manage to adapt our behavior as the situation requires. For example, I made the experience that for certain personality aspects there is difference between private and business situations.

## Why is it important to understand personality?

Personality theory is especially useful in business environments and organizational contexts to find the ideal candidates in recruitment, and to match employees ideally to work environments. For that purpose, psychometric assessments are performed. Please note, the scores to such tests need to be complemented through conversations to verify the result and to make it meaningful. The administration of psychometric tests should ideally be led by trained psychologists to ensure its correct application, and meaningful interpretation.

## The importance of self-awareness

Self-awareness is part of the concept of social intelligence, and more specifically, of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence mainly means the understanding of one's emotions as well as those of others. Self-awareness is extremely useful and it is even considered to be the most crucial aspect of emotional intelligence. If you don't understand yourself, how can you possibly start to understand others?! Importantly, an individual is fulfilling its self when the ideal self-image corresponds with actual behavior.

Can you recall that feeling of fulfillment in a situation when you could prove yourself that you really have measured up to your ideal self?

We all have the desire to be our biggest promise. Self-awareness is the starting point for any such learning process. Simply put: If you don't know what you don't know, you cannot learn what you don't know [3-1], [3-2], [3-3].

## Personal differences and the Big Five Personality Inventory

This chapter introduces you to the Big Five Personality Inventory, while later lessons will also show you other concepts such as (a) locus of control, (b) tolerance of ambiguity, (c) learning styles, and (d) core self-evaluation.

The Big Five personality traits are the best accepted and most commonly used model of personality in psychology. Although there are unlimited personality constellations, five factors proved to be suitable to summarize a significant portion of an individual's personality. However, one factor alone does not reliably predict job performance. So, one needs to look at the combination of all the factors. The Big Five factors are:

- Extroversion (i.e., outgoing and social)
- Emotional stability / neuroticism (i.e., negative emotionality, shut in)
- Agreeableness (i.e., friendly and optimistic)
- Conscientiousness (i.e., careful and diligent, organized)
- Intellect / Imagination (i.e., open to experience, unconventional)

Personality traits and intelligence should not be confused. Traits make suggestions on 'HOW' an individual may tendentially approach work. In comparison, intelligence describes 'WHAT' a person knows [3-4], [3-5].

Having mentioned that the Big Five traits explain a lot of one's personality, in fact, they explain 56% of personality, which is a lot, but not everything. The remaining explanation for personality needs to take into account other factors such as Emotional Intelligence and

cultural context as we will see throughout the book. [3-6], [3-7]

## Take the Big Five Personality Assessment

In my experience, taking personality tests can be intimidating, kind of embarrassing even. However, if you get yourself openly into it, it can be a very rewarding exercise, and even fun.

Are you ready to take the Big Five personality assessment? You can take a version for free at [openpsychometrics.org](http://openpsychometrics.org). Answering the 50 questions only takes a couple of minutes, and you will get a result with the scores per personality factor. I would suggest that you analyze the results along the following lines:

- Where do you have your clearest tendency?
- Does the result seem reasonable? Do you agree?
- What was the result that most surprised you?

It's crucial that you don't see your result as carved into stone, nor is it psychological advice. Instead, it is a possible starting point for understanding better your behavioral patterns, as it is vital for your career and as a leader.

Although this is not a rule, average score results in huge populations showed that Conscientiousness and Emotional Stability seem to be especially important for leadership & career! However, this may depend a lot on the environment and type of career. A leader in research may require different traits than somebody in sales. Please always remember that it is possible with any trait constellation to become successful. Most importantly, be aware of your tendencies, so you can use them as the

situation requires. This will help you to be successful as well.

## Chapter 4: Core Self Evaluation and Leadership Styles

### Definition and four core personality characteristics

Core self-evaluation is defined as the “fundamental premises that individuals hold about themselves and their functioning in the world” [4-1, p. 161]. As a personality trait, core self-evaluation refers to how favorable an individual is regarding his or her self and represents the combination of four other well-researched personality characteristics, which are [4-2]:

1. self-esteem,
2. self- efficacy
3. emotional stability, and
4. locus of control.

#### **Self-esteem**

Self-esteem is about how much we value ourselves. Boosting self-esteem is critical to increasing job satisfaction and performance. Employees can be supported in their self-esteem by [4-8] (1) celebrating and appreciating their contributions, and (2) being kind and compassionate towards them.

#### **Self-efficacy**

Self-efficacy is the degree to which somebody believes in the possibility to get things done. Self-efficacy determines whether we abandon a task because we consider it to be impossible to accomplish, or whether we persevere and will finally succeed. The following recommendations are useful when developing self-efficacy in people [4-8]:

- Encourage colleagues regardless of their theoretical inexperience or limiting belief in their capabilities
- Group employees with similar skills together so they can develop a “can do” attitude together
- Provide positive feedback (besides explaining improvement potential in a supportive way) and reward for any progress that is achieved
- Create a learning environment that supports in physical and psychological well-being, allows for mistakes, and creates a lot of encouraging energy

### **Emotional stability**

Emotional instability would mean that somebody is experiencing negative emotions, such as anger, stress, or depression, easily. Social and emotional intelligence and consequently the ability to connect with others is severely impaired by emotional instability or neuroticism as it is called sometimes too. Through, for example, cognitive behavior coaching, emotional stability can be improved, fortunately [4-8].

### **Locus of control**

The concept of locus of control will be explained in more detail in chapter 5. In short, individuals with an internal locus of control believe that their own efforts can lead to success, while externally-focused individuals attribute outcomes instead to fate and destiny, or any other circumstances outside of their control. By asking the right questions, one can reveal the locus of control and work towards self-empowerment of employees to let them take their happiness and productivity into their own hands [4-8].

## Organizational context and leadership styles

In today's dynamic, globally dispersed, and self-managed teams, employee pro-active behavior is essential for organization's success [4-3]. Only if we have a positive self-concept are we contributing deliberately to our social environment. That is why core self-evaluation is vital. Employees with high core-self-evaluation levels tend to perform well in their jobs. However, to result in actual behavior, the trait needs to be activated by the environment. An organization's context is decisive in the behavior it incentivizes and the related performance it creates. Leadership styles are an essential factor that influences whether the motivation is built for proactive behavior or not [4-3].

### **Authentic leadership**

Authentic leadership is considered to be a positivity instrument in fostering intrinsic motivation and goodwill from colleagues at the workplace. In the context of authentic leadership together with empowerment, positive personality as measured by core self-evaluations can develop and thrive [4-7]. An authentic leadership environment in combination with an employee's positive core self-evaluation lays the ground for a positive experience and high performance in the organization [4-5].

### **Ethical leadership**

Not forgotten is the financial crisis in the aftermath of ethical scandals (for example, Enron) and calls for improved ethical standards in management are continuing. There is a clear need for moral leadership on all levels. Research has found that a leader's core self-evaluation is positively related to ethical leadership [4-2]. This is not surprising, I hope. Just think of any situation: When somebody feels beautiful, he or she is acting beautifully. If we have a positive self-concept and outlook on how we function in this world, we behave



accordingly positive, in harmony with the world that is surrounding us.

### **Servant leadership**

Servant leadership was found to contribute to effective leadership too. Studies also indicated that a leaders' core self-evaluations positively correlate with servant leadership and ultimately with leadership effectiveness [4-6].

In conclusion, positive behavior and leadership come from positive core self-evaluations, which itself can be fostered by empowering leadership styles such as authentic, ethical, and servant leadership.

## Chapter 5: Internal Locus of Control

### Rapidly changing leadership challenges

Leadership education has undergone a substantial shift. The life and working world seem to have become more complex with competing urgencies and over-dynamic developments of issues that challenge the required qualities of the next generation of leaders. Leaders today need to be able to find ever-new solutions and adaptations to challenging situations. This can be traced back, for example, to the growing world population and increased economic growth expectations that cause growth issues in the following areas [5-1]:

- Space
- Agricultural yield
- Natural resource management
- Energy production and consumption
- Climate change, and
- Global health.

Organizations keep high aspirations in:

- Increasing profits,
- Acting ethically,
- Promoting equitable communities, and
- Environmental sustainability.

How will it be possible to optimize all these aspects while not doing it at the cost of any other aspect [5-1]? One answer is that it requires leaders who believe they can respond to these challenges through their own will and efforts, a concept that is coined as "locus of control."

## Definition of internal vs. external locus of control

Locus of control is about a person's confidence that he or she can control events in their lives. Individuals with an internal locus of control have a strong sense of self-responsibility and that they have the power to change their lives. Externally-controlled individuals believe that they are not in control of their lives and it is instead chance, opportunities, and other individuals and events (i.e., the circumstances) that determine their destiny [5-2].

According to research, adverse consequences from an external locus of control are:

- heightened levels of intolerance, and
- anxiety, and finally
- higher burnout rates [5-4].

## Summery benefits of an internal locus of control

- Belief in one's control over their life
- Improved information acquisition
- Better decision-making processes
- Self-efficacy, job effectiveness, and higher achievement
- Less risk of burnout
- Generally increased happiness
- Increase leadership adaptability

Internal locus of control, on the other hand, is associated with individuals gathering more information [5-3], which improves their decision-making process, effectiveness, and achievement. That internally-controlled individuals benefit from increased self-efficacy is in line with these results. For example, it was found that teams with individuals of relatively high internal locus of control are able of higher performance in

a self-reliant way respectively without a leader [5-5]. Also, people with an internal locus of control generally enjoy more happiness [5-4].

## Adaptation of leadership style

Locus of control is one aspect of personality. Leaders with an internal locus of control can adapt their leadership style as required to achieve the leadership objectives effectively and efficiently [5-6].

## What's your locus of control?

It's time again to find out more about yourself. You can find a couple of free and paid online assessments related to locus of control. The test at [psychologia.co/locus-of-control](http://psychologia.co/locus-of-control), for example, structures the result along different dimensions of life, such as achievement, career, relationships, and health. Comparing different tests, you will see soon that it becomes quite clear how to distinguish between internal and external locus of control.

This will quite surely be helpful for you to develop the so beneficial self-reliance, be it for a leadership role at the workplace or for success in any part of life.

## Chapter 6: Tolerance for Ambiguity

### The necessity for tolerance for ambiguity

Today's professionals need to succeed in technology-rich environments [6-1]. Information age organizations are characterized by rapid change and uncertainty [6-2]. Progressing globalization poses challenges through ambiguities that are caused by ever novel, complex, and changing socio-economical, environmental, technological, and workforce factors [6-3]. The ability to tolerate ambiguity, therefore, is increasingly vital for successful leaders and employees alike [6-1].

#### **Definition**

"The tolerance for ambiguity (or intolerance for ambiguity) construct relates to a person's disposition or tendency in addressing uncertain situations" [6-4, p.1]. The concept is also described in organizational behavior as "a coping mechanism for dealing with organizational change" [6-5].

### Tolerance for ambiguity as a performance driver

Tolerance for ambiguity was found to support organizational performance drivers, such as [6-2]:

- Mindfulness
- Receptivity for cross-cultural work and collaboration
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Tolerance for failure
- Risk-taking
- Creativity and innovation
- Self-monitoring

- Entrepreneurship
- Managerial performance
- A firm's financial and market performance, and
- Cross-cultural competencies
  - Indeed, studies have found that expatriates high on tolerance for ambiguity adjust and perform better in global workplaces and cross-cultural environments [6-3].

As this list shows, tolerance (or intolerance) for ambiguity influences one's behavior and consequently leadership and decision-making style [6-4].

Excuse:

I recently had a discussion on my blog on how different the application of the tolerance for ambiguity concept would be, for example, in a war situation. This might be a separate topic indeed. My experience and what we are studying together here is more about living and working in rapidly changing societies and different countries rather than surviving in an environment of even physical danger. Being from Western Europe myself and now living in Japan, I am often challenged in adapting to entirely different approaches to how things are done. In that sense, it requires a lot of tolerance to understand, accept, and collaborate with the ambiguity between the European and Japanese culture.

This answer still caused my discussion partners to evaluate this kind of rationale as too introductory CEO talk that is merely theoretical and not "real." Thankful for this challenge, I think it is indeed useful to link the topic back to the basics of human life. It is helpful to remember that, whether we are living in a zone of war or ivory tower, nobody is absolutely safe. Death can knock at everyone's door at any time. From such a point of view, we all are exposed to insecurity in life however well we

try to insure it. Although we tend to deny our mortality, everyone should be fundamentally aware of that fact, and consequently, we all have to deal with ambiguity and uncertainty in our lives. Actually, how we manage any situation in our life, ultimately reflects how we handle all our affairs. A leader's qualities are, therefore, not only relevant and evident in the workplace, but at any given point in life.

To come back to the war rather than safe workplace situation, when I researched in more detail about intolerance of uncertainty and ambiguity, I came to the conclusion that hope, as part of resilience, might be critical in helping people in threatening situations to endure the uncertainty related to their future, and therefore better cope with present situations of ambiguous information that require an open mind despite the stressful conditions somebody may experience [6-7]. Although easier said than done, it is possible to learn to stay perseverant in tolerance and not fall back to mere self-defense however tough the situation [6-8]. Individuals who are able to do so are rewarded with not only safety, but even personal growth and the related benefits of psychological health and well-being that come with it [6-9].

- Where did you experience ambiguity?
- What's your success story in how you turned intolerance for ambiguity into tolerance?

“Dealing with ambiguity is seldom taught at school, but higher-performing leaders tend to understand that uncertainty can be a gateway to opportunity” [6-6, p. 30].

- Did you have the opportunity to learn about the concept in school?

## Practicing tolerance for ambiguity

Learning and development should adapt to the rapidly evolving business world, for example, by providing innovative learning strategies such as simulations [6-2]. Potential for improvement and learning progress related to tolerance for ambiguity can be measured with according psychometric assessments and monitored as a key leadership ability [6-3].

So, I hope this has inspired you a little for learning even more about the development of tolerance for ambiguity.



# Chapter 7: Group Work and Cross-Cultural Teamwork

## Definition of group work and teamwork

A group of employees consists of individuals who simply coordinate their efforts. A team, on the other hand, builds stronger ties by committing to a (1) common purpose, and (2) challenging goals [7-12].

In that sense, for leadership in organizations, the term teamwork might be closer to what we understand to be necessary to achieve collective work success.

## Benefits of teamwork

Be it for learning or work, teamwork is considered a top competency [7-1], and teamwork is an integral part of many of today's complex workplaces [7-2].

- Why do you think is that so? From your experience, what are possible benefits from teamwork?

Indeed, there are plenty of benefits, for example, the following:

- Increased creativity and innovation
- Higher quality decisions
- Improved quality
- Better aligned processes
- Global competitiveness
- Reduced employee turnover and absenteeism
- More fun

## High-performing teams

High-performing teams exert some common characteristics that are either task oriented or people oriented [7-5]:

Task-oriented characteristics are:

- Commitment to technical success
- On schedule, on budget performance
- Committed to producing high-quality results

People-oriented characteristics are:

- High involvement, work interest and high energy
- Capability to solve conflicts
- Good team spirits
- Mutual trust

## The team development stage model

Before being able to reap the benefits of high-performance teams, one has to pay attention to a successful team development process [7-3]. Team building generally follows a certain process, although the sequences sometimes can somewhat differ and some process stages may have to be gone through more than once, for example, when the team development falls back to a previous stage [7-4].

People gathering into a team first need to orient themselves in the formation (**Formation stage**) of the new social situation. The purpose needs to be clarified, why

often a leader needs to provide some guidance and direction. Early in the process in the “Storming” (**Storming stage**), team members try to negotiate the situation and want to position themselves. This potentially leads to conflicts, which are important though in order to clarify the purpose and structure of the team. When the team is “norming” (**Norming stage**), team members’ roles and responsibilities become clearer, and agreements are found. How a leader facilitates this phase, can help the team significantly in establishing the required norms around the purpose and goal of the teamwork before it is possible to perform (**Performing stage**) on a high level as a team and before work can be effectively and efficiently delegated to committed team members. Finally, for example at the project end or whenever the tasks come to an end, a team may start to disengage (**Adjourning stage**). As a leader, don’t forget to appreciate and support individuals also in this process of dissolution; it may even help a next time when people come together for teamwork again.

Let’s practice how leadership can support teams by looking at the following problem statements and responses:

- Teams must be real. - Make clear who is who in the team.
- Teams need a compelling direction. - Articulate a clear direction for your team.
- Teams need enabling structures. - Making sure there is a right mix of members and clear norms.
- Teams need a supportive organization. - Ensure good reward and information systems are in place.
- Teams need expert coaching. - Leader provide coaching in team processes.

## Multi-cultural teams

Often, international teams comprised of individuals from different cultures find it difficult to work together [7-10] because:

- One side is used to multidisciplinary teamwork, the other side is used to specialist group work.
- One is knowing market and culture x, the other is knowing market and culture y.
- Somebody may be used to flat hierarchies, others are more used to dominant leaders.
- Some team members are working in time zone A, while others are operating from time zone B.
- Spoken languages can be German, or English, respectively any other language.
- Someone may be] Familiar with homogeneous teams, while somebody else is familiar with heterogeneous teams.
- There are team members who may have experience in working in virtual teams and online communication; others may be mainly used to face-to-face communication.
- There could be tendencies for explaining culture stereotypically, or higher cultural sensitivity and individual recognition.

As many industries continue to grow globally, there is high demand for the skills necessary to work successfully in interdisciplinary and multi-cultural teams [7-9]. Organizations can significantly improve their creativity and innovation capacity through harnessing team members' different nationalities, and knowledge about markets, and knowledge about cultures, if they manage to resolve conflicts, and build effective teams [6] that are logistically well organized, cross-culturally skilled, and sensible in bridging language barriers, and successful in reducing risks for misunderstandings [7-7].

I think that the more diverse teams are, the more face-to-face communication opportunities should be provided to create the socio-emotional basis that fosters understanding and agreement in heterogeneous teams [7-8].

As a leader in culturally diverse environments, please also keep in mind that differences within multi-cultural teams should be recognized and personal characteristics acknowledged as individuals of a team want to be allowed to be genuinely themselves and not just a representative of a stereotypical culture or ethnic group [7-11]. In that sense, cultural understanding is not making everybody the same, but recognizing and appreciating individual differences.

# Chapter 8: Conflict Management

## Importance of conflict management

Rather than the wished perfect harmony, disagreements and arguments are a reality at the workplace too. What is at risk is (a) employees well-being [8-1], (b) work performance, and (c) productivity [8-2].

There is a trend today that conflict management isn't anymore the Human Resource departments but rather each line manager's responsibility [8-1].

Conflict is seen to have negative, teamwork and business hindering consequences, such as:

- People become self- versus other-oriented
- Communication effectiveness declines
- Inter-group relations decline, and
- Dysfunctional behavior rises

But conflict can also be a catalyst and support organizations in their:

- Change, adaptation and survival
- Growth and evolution of the organization, and
- Innovation

## Reasons for and types of conflict

Reasons for conflict among others, can be:

- Incompatible Goals that are letting parties feel that their goals interfere with each other.

- Power & Status Differences, which create dependencies and cooperation problems.
- Scarce Resources. A situation that can motivate competition for the resource.
- Ambiguous Rules that create uncertainty and therefore threaten goals.
- Group Identification, which increases, for example, stereotyping.

Research has found three main categories of conflicts, which are [8-5]:

1. Task-based conflict
  - Task-based conflict pertains to discussions about the work being done and has a high potential for resolution. It can even provide a vehicle for creative thinking through stimulating multiple perspectives.
2. Relationship-based conflict
  - Relationship-based conflict is a type of conflict that pertains to the interpersonal interaction among individuals and is believed to inhibit cognitive functioning, thus producing suboptimal products.
3. Process-based conflict
  - Process-based conflict pertains to how the work-related roles and responsibilities are assigned and accomplished. This can be very disruptive in an organization, but functional at the beginning of a project when deciding goals and allocation of resources.

## What's your conflict management style?

A well-established and popular conflict management style assessment is based on the five modes of conflict management as initiated by Thomas Kilmann in the 1970s:

- Accommodating
- compromising,
- avoiding,
- competing, and
- collaborating.

This organizational conflict inventory is based on the two dimensions of cooperativeness and assertiveness [8-4]. Assertiveness is the level of one being able to stand up for his/her own self-interest and for other people's rights in a calm and positive way, without being either aggressive, or passively accepting 'wrong'. Cooperativeness is the degree to which a person is generally agreeable in their relations with other people as opposed to aggressively self-centered and hostile.

## Assertiveness and Cooperativeness Test

So, would you like to take the test regarding your assertiveness and cooperativeness?

Instructions: Please think about the way you behave when interacting with one person or a group of people (i.e., sports teammates, classmates, social groups, etc.). Answer the following 15 questions about how you communicate in those interactions [8-4].

Respond to the questions by using the following scale: 1 = Strongly agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Disagree, and 5 = Strongly disagree



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1.	I want things done my way.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I am willing to change my schedule to accommodate others.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I use "I" statements instead of "we" statements.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I make an effort to attend all group meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I talk more than others in conversations.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I tend to suggest my ideas over others.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I invest equal or more amounts of time into group projects than my partners.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I typically initiate tasks in group settings.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I encourage my group members to do their best.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I do not take my teammates' ideas into account before making decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I am appreciative of the work my group members do.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I take a firm stance on positions or ideas I feel strongly about.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I am committed to the success of my group projects.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I voice my opinion more than others during a group or team.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I am willing to compromise with people who have differences of opinion.	1	2	3	4	5

---

Assertiveness Score (1 + 3 + 5 + 6 + 8 + 10 + 12 + 14)

---

Cooperativeness Score (2 + 4 + 7 + 8 + 9 + 11 + 13 +  
15) \_\_\_\_\_

## What's your conflict handling style?

Purpose: This self-assessment is designed to help you identify your preferred conflict management style [8-13].

Instructions: Read each of the statements below and circle the response that you believe best reflects your position regarding each statement. Then use the scoring key to calculate your results for each conflict management style. Respond to the below questions related to conflict at work.

When I have a conflict at work, I do the following: ...  
1 = Strongly agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Disagree, and 5 = Strongly disagree

---

1.	I give in to the wishes of the other party	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I try to realize a middle-of-the-road solution	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I push my own point of view	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I examine issues until I find a solution that really satisfies me and the other party	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I avoid confrontation about our differences	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I concur with the other party	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I emphasize that we have to find a compromise solution	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I search for gains	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I stand for my own and others' goals and interests	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I avoid differences of opinion as much as possible	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I try to accommodate the other party	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I insist we both give in a little	1	2	3	4	5

---

13.	I fight for a good outcome for myself	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I examine ideas from both sides to find a mutually optimal solution	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I try to make differences less severe	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I adapt to the other parties' goals and interests	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I strive whenever possible towards a fifty-fifty compromise	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I do everything to win	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I work out a solution that serves my own as well as others' interests as good as possible	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I try to avoid a confrontation with the other	1	2	3	4	5

Scoring instructions: Write the number circled for each item on the appropriate line below (statement number is under the line) and add up each sub-scale.

Calculate your score:

Yielding

\_\_ (Item 1) + \_\_ (Item 6) + \_\_ (Item 11) + \_\_ (Item 16)  
=

Compromising

\_\_ (Item 2) + \_\_ (Item 7) + \_\_ (Item 12) + \_\_ (Item 17)  
=

Forcing

\_\_ (Item 3) + \_\_ (Item 8) + \_\_ (Item 13) + \_\_ (Item 18)  
=

Problem-Solving

\_\_ (Item 4) + \_\_ (Item 9) + \_\_ (Item 14) + \_\_ (Item 19)  
=

Avoiding  
\_\_ (Item 5) + \_\_ (Item 10) + \_\_ (Item 15) + \_\_ (Item 20)  
=

Score interpretation: Circle whether you are high, medium, or low on each dimension. After the class discussion and explanation of each, comment on whether you feel your score is accurate.

When you have completed the test and score calculation, you will have found out whether you are high levels in some of the five conflict management styles.

Conflict Handling Styles. Are you High, Medium, Low? Is that you?

Accommodating  
14-20 (High), 9-13 (Medium), 4-8 (Low)

Compromising  
17-20 (High), 11-16 (Medium), 4-10 (Low)

Avoiding  
13-20 (High), 8-12 (Medium), 4-7 (Low)

Competing  
15-20 (High), 9-14 (Medium), 4-8 (Low)

Collaborating  
17-20 (High), 11-16 (Medium), 4-10 (Low)

To interpret your results, you can take the following descriptions as a guidance for what your conflict management style tends to be:

1. **Accommodating:** Accommodating or yielding involves giving in completely to the other side's wishes, or at least cooperating with little or no attention to your own interests. This style involves making unilateral concessions, unconditional promises, and offering help with no expectation of reciprocal help.
2. **Compromising:** Compromising involves looking for a position in which your losses are offset by equally valued gains. It involves matching the other party's concessions, making conditional promises or threats, and actively searching for a middle ground between the interests of the two parties.
3. **Avoiding:** Avoiding tries to smooth over or avoid conflict situations altogether. It represents a low concern for both self and the other party. In other words, avoiders try to suppress thinking about the conflict.
4. **Competing:** Competing or forcing tries to win the conflict at the other's expense. It includes "hard" influence tactics, particularly assertiveness, to get one's own way.
5. **Collaborating:** Collaborating or problem solving tries to find a mutually beneficial solution for both parties. Information sharing is an important feature of this style because both parties need to identify common ground and potential solutions that satisfy both (or all) of them. Collaboration or problem-solving style of handling conflict is positively related to social intelligence as the capability of understanding and responding to the feelings and behaviors of oneself and others is positively associated with a problem-solving style of handling conflict [3].

### **When should each style be used?**

The type of issue can situationally influence our conflict management method. The following table gives

some indication for what conflict management styles are typical/suitable for what type of issue. For example:

- If the issue is highly important (**issue importance**), competition may be a likely response. On the other hand, accommodation might be a more suitable conflict handling style in case of relative low issue importance.
- In case of high importance relationships (**relationship importance**), as in an ongoing partnership for example, accommodation or collaboration may be the conflict handling styles of choice, rather than forceful competition or passive avoidance.
- Is there a high/large **power differential** as for example between an established expert and a newcomer? If so, competition might be required to have a saying in the conflict resolution, while accommodation would likely turn out to be ineffective. Compromising may be appropriate if the power is equally distributed among the conflict parties.
- When there are high/pressuring **time constraints**, sometimes there just isn't time for compromising and a quick (albeit sub-optimal) conflict resolution through accommodation or avoidance may be chosen.

### **Leadership and conflict management styles**

Leader characteristics influence the outcome of group conflicts. For example, servant leadership was found to support cooperation among followers for mutually beneficial conflict resolution [8-6]. Conflict resolutions seem to require sometimes some mediation and guidance. In that sense, laissez-faire leadership was found to be counter-productive in reducing conflicts that can result, for example, in unhindered bullying at the workplace [8-7].

## Culture and workplace conflict management

To show how culture can shape conflict management, the introduction of the three 'cultural logics' may be helpful:

- In **dignity cultures**, the concept of individuals is one of relatively equal people, with each having a stable and internal sense of worth. Examples for dignity cultures are Western Europe and the US individualistic cultures.
- **Face cultures** are more hierarchical in comparison, and they emphasize in-group harmony and modesty. Face cultures can be found in East Asian collectivist cultures.
- **Honor cultures** put greater emphasis on the need to establish and defend the virtue and honor of oneself and one's group. Examples of honor cultures are within Mediterranean, South Asian, and Latin American cultures [8-9].

Studies have found that, depending on the culturally different types of self-worth of people, conflicts too can arise from different reasons and are handled differently. Depending on whether someone is from the before mentioned dignity, face, or honor cultures, the negative emotions from conflict are either anger, shame, or both [8-8].

*Table.* Cultural characteristics

Culture/cultural characteristic	<b>Dignity</b> (e.g., Western Europe, US)	<b>Face</b> (e.g., East Asia)	<b>Honor</b> (e.g., Mediterranean, Latin America)



- Source of self-worth	Achievement	Fulfillment of roles	Reputation
- Style of confrontation	Direct	Indirect	Direct
- Type of expression of negative emotion	Slow anger	Shame	Shame and swift anger
- Timing of third party intervention	Late	Early	Early
- Type of third party intervention	Facilitation and autocratic	Forceful facilitation and autocratic	Forceful facilitation and autocratic

## Training to enhance conflict management skills

Conflict styles may be partly determined by individuals natural disposition [8-10], but training can definitely help improve and adapt conflict management skills [8-3]. We can learn to use different strategies for conflict resolution [8-5] and to choose less confrontative approaches in favor of explorative styles that are built on negotiation that facilitate joint solutions [8-11], as we will see in the next chapter as well.

# Chapter 9: Negotiation Strategies

## Introduction and Definition

Any kind of deal involves negotiation whenever interdependent parties interact for business with each other [9-4]. "A negotiation is a communication process in which multiple parties discuss problems and attempt to solve them via dialogue" [9-1].

## Perception and bias

One of the greatest hindrances to effective communication and negotiation is unconscious bias [9-3]. For leaders, even the tiniest unconscious biases have an outsized impact. The following are common areas of such bias:

### Bounded Awareness:

- When cognitive blinders prevent a person from seeing, seeking, using, or sharing highly relevant, easily accessible, and readily perceivable information during the decision-making process.

### Cultural Differences:

- Sometimes, our perceptions can be misguided, and things are not always as they seem
- Our interests, values, and culture act as filters which lead us to distort, block, or even create what we choose to see and hear
- Unconsciously we bring our own cultural frame of interpretation to a situation

- Culturally influenced misperceptions such as stereotyping and projected similarities

### **Perception is selective**

As there are too many stimuli in the environment to observe, we screen out most of what we see, hear, and feel. We allow only selected information through our perceptual screen to our conscious mind.

### **Perception is learned**

We are not born seeing the world a certain way. Our experience teaches us to see the world specifically based on our cultural background.

### **Perception is constant**

Once we see something in a particular way, we tend to continue to see it that way.

## **Negotiation formats and negotiation styles**

Actually, while countless types of negotiations exist, there are only two main formats in which these negotiations take place: it is positional bargaining, and principled negotiation. Positional bargaining is distributive, arguing based on extreme positions, resulting in a win-lose situation, and that can be suitable for price negotiations and times of crisis. For all other situations, the principled negotiation is the better alternative as it is integrative, creating shared interests, and win-win situations [9-1].

As described in more detail in chapter 8 about conflict management and handling styles, the five negotiation styles in summary are the following:

- **Competition** is the most adversarial style because it creates winners and losers. Competing negotiators seem aggressive and strategic. The competing style works best when under time pressure. Competing style can create deadlocks and damage relationships.
- **Accommodation** is a submissive style and quite the opposite of the competing style. This style in making concessions can be successful when one wants to protect a relationship. If this need is not critical, however, the accommodative style risks to give away too much without getting value back in return.
- **Avoidance** is passive and can appear non-transparent and even dishonest because of the lack of communication. Avoidance may be used in highly emotional negotiations. However, normally this style results in resentment and strained relationships.
- **Compromise** involves meeting halfway. One side makes some concessions, while the other side makes some concessions too. In the end, there are no clear winners, but rather, what is believed to be a fair result instead occurs. It works especially well when there is an ongoing and strong relationship with the other party. Compromising helps keeping the relationship strong, although the agreements are usually not the most optimal ones for both parties.
- **Collaboration** involves ensuring that both

parties' needs are met. Parties brainstorm on how to create mutual value and think outside of the box on collaborating on a solution. Collaborating is all about value creation and is commonly encouraged by those who support the principled negotiation format. This style is great at forming strong bonds or maintaining good relationships. However, the collaborating style is the most consuming and the most mentally exhausting style. Also, it does not work equally well with competing style negotiators as they may try to take advantage of the situation.

*Table.* Negotiation styles, suitability, and effects

Negotiation style	Suitable when	Result	Effect on Relationship
<b>Competition</b>	Under time pressure	Win-lose	Damaging
<b>Accommodation</b>	Both sides collaborating	Lose-win	Protective
<b>Avoidance</b>	Emotional situations	Lose-lose	Damaging
<b>Compromise</b>	Good relationship	Fair (lose-lose)	Positive
<b>Collaboration</b>	Both sides collaborating	Win-win	Positive

Collaboration as an integrative negotiation style is increasing the pie of value. That's what makes it so worth striving for! It's simply not true that what one wins the other is losing. If all interests are well understood, collaborative negotiation results can increase the value for all and therefore create new value, which is not just distribution of an existing pie.

## Negotiation preparation styles

It is a myth that there is no need for preparation. It would be wise to use the 80-20 rule also for negotiation:

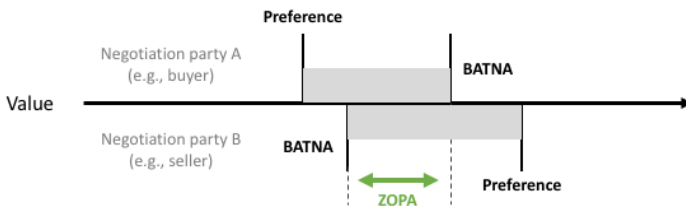
80% of the effort is preparation, 20% is actual negotiation.

One of the most popular forms of negotiation preparation uses a Seven Components approach, as described in the famous book "Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In" by Roger Fisher, William Ury, and Bruce Patton. The Seven Elements include interests, options, legitimacy, alternatives, communication, relationship, and commitment. By considering all of the seven components, you can go into a negotiating fully prepared and optimally informed [9-1].

Also, this approach stresses the recommendation to separate people from the issues to see the real interests, to come up with more problem-solving options, and to neutralize conflict by applying principles of fairness [9-2].

The parties to a negotiation ideally do not only determine their preferential best-case outcome of a negation, but also a Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement (the BATNA), which means an acceptable worst-case scenario compared to the preference. The combination of both parties BATNA and your preference form what is called the Zone of Possible Agreement or ZOPA, as shown in the graph [6].

Figure. Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement (BATNA), Zone of Possible Agreement (ZOPA)



As you can see, both the negotiator A (for example the buyer) and the party B (for example in that case the seller) have a range of acceptable prices between their BATNA and their preference.

The following approach can help you in practice:

### **Know your opponent**

- Find out what the other parties BATNA is
- Make the first offer, if you are prepared (which is called anchoring)
- Make bi-lateral, not unilateral concessions
- Focus on role-playing issues, not personalities (again: separate person from issue)

### **Create value**

- Ask diagnostic questions
- Expand issues on the table
- Reveal information about interests and priorities
- Make multiple offers of equivalent value simultaneously

## Trust and negotiation strategy

Negotiation can either rely on Questions & Answers (Q&A) or Substantiation & Offers (S&O). The former is associated with high trust between the negotiation parties, the latter with low trust. If there is little trust, parties tend not to want to share information. Because of distrust, questions and answers are seen exposing possible vulnerabilities to the counterpart. Because of the resulting lack of information low or no joint gains can be realized [9-4].

### **Hard-negotiation tactics**

I also need you to make aware of some hard tactics that you might better prepare for not to be caught off-guard by, as some counterparts may employ the following tactics:

1. Extreme demands followed up by small, slow concessions
2. Downplayed commitment tactics, pretending that there is no negotiation space
3. Take-it-or-leave-it negotiation strategy, which actually is non-negotiation
4. Inviting unreciprocated offers without making own concessions
5. Trying to make you flinch by making greater and greater demands
6. Personal insults
7. Bluffing and lying
8. Threats and warnings
9. Belittling your alternatives
10. Good cop, bad cop game although always both sit in the same boat who accept to negotiate with each other

## Negotiation exercises



Like it is with everything, better negotiation comes with practice, and you can use the following four exercises if you want to condition yourself to be a better negotiator, in any area of life [9-5]:

- Practice saying no
- Listen to others, observe their behavior, and be alert
- Conduct sufficient research for preparation
- Negotiate everything, which means to use every occasion to become a better negotiator

# Chapter 10: Stress & Time Management

## Causes and consequences of occupational stress

Ever-increasing job volumes, time restrictions, high requirements at work, customer dissatisfaction, and conflict situations are causing workplace stress in employees [10-1].

Occupational stress can have detrimental consequences. For example, it can change whole organizational cultures through leadership under pressure becoming less democratic and thereby demonstrates that it is not able to adapt to new circumstances [10-1].

For example, for decades it was found that lawyers have a significantly higher rate of problematic drinking due to the destructive impact of stress and long hours [10-7]. For leadership coaches, it is important to uncover also more subtle symptoms of stress. Research has identified five areas of signs of senior executive stress [10-2]:

1. **Appearance** (e.g., sleep patterns, eating habits/weight control, exercise, energy levels, hypertension)
2. **Performance** (e.g., ability to take decisions, concentration and memory, innovation capability, generating new ideas)
3. **Growth and self-development** (e.g., satisfaction with opportunities for personal growth and learning - too much? not enough?)
4. **Affect management** (e.g., ability to feel, understand, control and show emotions appropriately)

5. **Relationships** (e.g., perceived quantity and quality of relationships with life partner, family, friends and with professional peers and superior)

## What stresses you out?

- What's your personality predisposition? For example, do you tend to be Type A or B personality, and how is your emotional stability ...
- Is there a Person-organization misfit? For example, in the form of under-, over-qualification, or not having the right tools and resources ...
- How stressful is the organizational culture? For example: the hierarchies, beliefs, and communication style ...
- Are there role conflicts or ambiguities? For example: are you in middle management, are there unclear role boundaries ...

## Personality predisposition Type A/B

To predict the likelihood for perceived levels of stress, the personality types A and B can be useful as a model. People with Type A characteristics are more [10-9]:

- restless,
- tensed,
- impatient,
- achievement oriented,
- workaholic, and
- possessing domineering characteristics.

Whereas individuals with Type B characteristics are more:

- complacent,
- easy going,
- relaxed, and
- people with tolerance.

Unsurprisingly, studies found that individuals with Type A personality tend to be more prone to stress [10-8, 10-9].

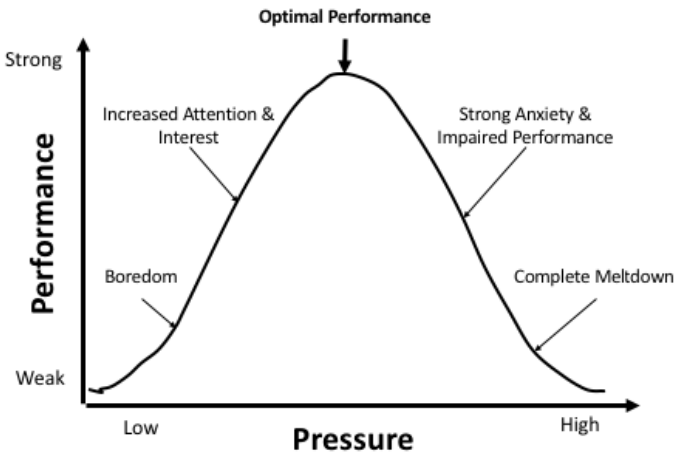
You can assess whether you incline more towards Type A or Type B personality, for example, at [psychologytoday.com](https://www.psychologytoday.com) (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/tests/personality/type-personality-test>), where they offer a free psychometric test.

## The relationship between stress and job performance

High complexity, rapid change, risk-taking, and innovation are characteristics of productive workplaces, but the same can also be perceived as stress factors as they potentially result in high workloads, pressure, and uncertainty. So, as long as stress does not become overwhelming and chronic to employees, stressful conditions of high demand environments are positively correlated with high productivity and performance [10-3].

There is a level of ideal pressure that results in optimal performance. This relationship can be illustrated by the so-called inverted-U diagram of pressure and performance.

*Graph.* Inverted-U diagram of pressure and performance



As you can see, if there is too little pressure, employees may get disinterested, demotivated and even bored, while on the other hand, too much pressure causes anxiety, and strain with the negative effects discussed in this chapter until up to a total personal breakdown because of stress.

## What can you do?

Can you resolve your stress with a hot chocolate, a café latte, or do you need a dark roast americano or even double espresso? Joke aside, how stress is managed personally and within organizations has a lot to do with leadership and related leadership styles.

### **Self-leadership**

Self-leadership training decreases stress and increases self-efficacy and positive emotionality. Self-leadership is, therefore, a preventive stress management approach and utilizes strategies such as [10-4]:

- Goal-setting,
- Self-monitoring,
- Self-reward,
- Focus on intrinsically motivating aspects of tasks, and
- Work design for increased meaning and enjoyment.

Scholars recommend that the teaching of self-leadership should be emphasized more in any management courses to increase leaders' ability to cope with stress effectively [10-5].

### **Transformational leadership**

Transformational leadership has been found to help in reducing stress through the promotion of positive employee behavior [10-6].

### **Appreciative leadership**

Often what it mainly takes by management to reduce stress in teams is to give employees what they need

regarding appreciation and care. Appreciative leaders create an environment of [10-11]:

- Trust and respect,
- Good communication,
- Employee recognition,
- Flexibility of control, and
- Cultural differences that are all valued.

Indeed, a daily dose of simple praise and gratitude by either leaders, customers, or co-workers significantly predicts serenity at the workplace, which means more joy and well-being overall [10-12].

## Time Management

Some persons with leadership aspirations in some working environments may feel guilty and little productive if they don't work overtime, don't feel delayed, and don't over-communicate even outside of working hours [10-16]. However, as time management is an essential leadership competency [10-14], the following rather might be true:

*“If you’re busy as a leader, you’re doing something wrong!”*

## Time management profiles

You may want to develop your time management style. The following three profiles may be helpful in remembering some useful patterns [10-14, 10-15]:

1. The **Centralized Monochrons**
  - Do preferentially one thing at a time
  - Appear to be self-enclaved by their centralized management style
  - Tend not to delegate power
2. The **Procrastinative Managers**
  - Are passive
  - Continue status quo
  - Delegate without monitoring
  - Are unaware of their procrastination
3. The **Decentralized Polychrons**
  - Have a preference for doing two or more activities at the same time
  - Are multi-tasking intentionally
  - Use time management techniques effectively

Studies in education leadership found that most of the male leaders were Procrastinative Managers, although this is the least effective time management style. Decentralized Polychrons were found to manage their time best [10-15].

However, please keep in mind that these findings come from an organizational leadership environment. In other situations, full dedication rather than polychronism may be more appropriate. Einstein, for example, had his scientific breakthroughs not during his multi-tasking employment time at the patent office in Bern, but when he focused consequently on his research.



## **Organizational strategies**

There are some organizational strategies that will benefit the individual leader as well as the organization in their time management. These are [10-14]:

- Planning & Goal setting,
- Writing it down,
- Staying focused,
- Delegation,
- Clarifying decision authority, and
- Maintaining work-life balance.

Finally, although it may be against your intuition: Do what is most important, not what is just urgent! In fact, many survey results show that employees often spend too much time on seeming urgent tasks, while neglecting the important ones that would promise to dramatically increase the quality of the work accomplished [10-16].

# Chapter 11: Motivation

## What is motivation?

Motivation is a process that explains how hard a person tries (effort), where his or her efforts are directed (direction), and how long the effort is maintained towards achieving a goal (persistence).

What motivates you? What's the order of importance of the following possible motivators at the workplace?

- Effort, direction, persistence
- Good wages
- Feeling of being in on things
- Interesting work
- Personal loyalty to employees
- Good working conditions
- Job security
- Full appreciation of work done
- Sympathetic help on personal problems
- Promotions and growth in the organization
- Tactful discipline

When doing this exercise, myself, I found that the context at which I think is influencing my prioritization. Also, I have found that over time the importance's of certain points changed. What's your experience?

### **Achievement motivation**

A traditional approach to explain varying levels of motivation in individuals is the achievement motivation theory, which states that peoples strive for achievement is a personality disposition [11-7]. Although the personal desire to achieve individually differs indeed [11-2], to understand behavior, it is vital to consider

situational and environmental characteristics rather than personal ones alone [11-7].

### **Intrinsic / extrinsic motivation**

Intrinsic motivation, in contrast to extrinsic motivation, is behavior that is driven by internal naturally satisfying rewards rather than external material compensations. It was found that intrinsic motivation increases the delightfulness of services that employees are providing [11-4]. This sounds logic, as intrinsic motivation means that they must love what they do.

Most effective ways in motivating workers in knowledge organizations are to redesign their job to, besides competitive financial rewards, allow for flexibility, empower, provide a fair and respectful environment, intellectually challenge without fear of mistakes, and experience superiors as mentors, to mention a few [11-10].

### **Job characteristics model of work motivation theory**

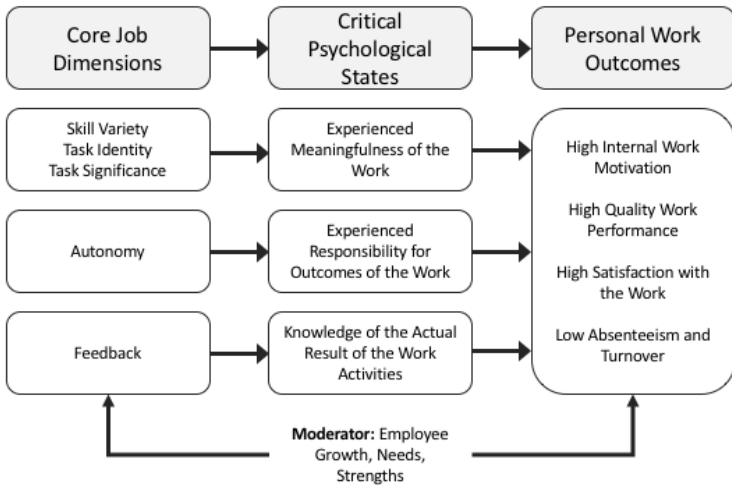
The notion of intrinsic motivation was indeed taken further by psychologists in the 1970s by linking it to specific psychological states as necessary predecessors of motivation. These psychological states include states of [11-6] meaningfulness, responsibility, and knowledge.

The psychological states are believed to depend on job characteristics as described by the core job dimensions of skill variety, task identity, and task significance, job autonomy, as well as feedback received. This together will result in positive work outcomes that are:

- High internal work motivation,
- High quality work performance,
- High satisfaction with the work, and
- Low absenteeism and turnover.

The more an individual seeks and experiences growth and personal development, these mechanisms get strengthened. Think of it as a positive circle.

Figure. Job characteristics model of work motivation



The relationships between core job dimensions, critical psychological states, and personal work outcomes are of highest importance for employers and leaders who want their employees to pro-actively

engage, take responsibility, and optimally perform [11-5].

## Self-determination theory (SDT)

More recent advances in motivation science, specifically the development of self-determination theory (SDT) call for a shift from the focus on the 'quantity' of motivation a person has for a goal to the 'quality' of their motivation. Low-quality motivation impacts short-term and sporadic performance, while high-quality motivation fosters optimal functioning that translates into higher job performance, improved individual long-term well-being and thriving [11-1]. Job enrichment, for example, is one means to promote a qualitatively improved career success perception and effectively can help in keeping employees motivation high and ensure their retention in the company [11-9].

Using the lessons learned from Self-determination theory to spark passion in employees and get their self-motivation for increased workplace engagement, Human Resource Development (HRD) professionals are advised to develop the following three competencies in their employees that are increasingly expected and rewarded, especially by the younger generations [11-1]:

### A. Encourage Autonomy

- Invite exploring choices within agreed-upon boundaries
- Collaboratively set goals

### B. Deepen Relatedness

- Show employees how they can contribute to something greater
- Help individuals to align work with their own values and work-related purpose

### **C. Build Competence**

- Emphasize learning goals, not just performance goals
- Facilitate problem-solving and alternative strategies

### **Dynamic leadership for team motivation**

Dynamic leadership helps improve team motivation rather than just for individuals [11-3]. As teams achieve more than the sum of individuals, leadership for teamwork is what organizations need. Dynamic leaders who are facilitating team motivation are characterized by:

- Focused energy
- Benevolent compassion
- Promoting success that is not based on any one individual, but on the entire team
- Seeing opportunities in obstacles
- Taking risks
- Inspiring and influencing people rather than just demonstrating hierarchical command and control
- Supporting employees in different situations
- Fairness
- Humility

### **Alignment with HRM practice**

Leadership for motivation needs to be developed. This is also the task of Human Resource Management practices. HRM practices also influence job design and work climate in an organization in many ways [11-8] as

they can bring in personalized motivational designs in all learning & development activities.

# Chapter 12: Decision Making and Creativity

## Skills for decision making

Prior to all leader behavior, a decision-making process was performed [12-6]. It is not the machines, despite the hype about artificial intelligence, that is ultimately responsible for the decisions that lead to the creation of novel outcomes [12-10]. It is people and their decision-making skills. Good human decisions are key for the survival of any business. In healthcare, for example, bad decisions are the number one reason for death and they cause more than 80% of the health expenses [12-3].

## Information sharing

Competitiveness and pioneering new markets depend a lot on the generation of new value. In today's information age, the information-sharing collaboration among teams (and also virtual teams) is vital for enabling informed decision-making and related creativity [12-11].

## Relatedness

Leaders who can relate to situations and people can make more meaning out of it, which helps them to engage in more robust and inclusive decision-making processes [12-2].

## Collective problem-solving intelligence

High average individual intelligence in a team and the way a team collaborates leads to higher collective intelligence. As a result of high collective intelligence respectively high problem-solving abilities, the quality of decisions was found to improve as well [12-1].



## **Beyond rationalization**

Rationality in decision-making is considered an essential factor for organizational leadership success [12-4]. Rationalization in decision-making is about (1) collecting evidence and (2) analyzing the information to make a final choice [12-4]. However, the desire for rationality often over-reduces the complexity of situations, which may make life easier in the short-term, but can have severe detrimental consequences for the future. Modern decision-making embraces the accommodation of paradoxes and is using complexity as a source for creative strategies rather than over-simplifying things [12-5].

You might have learned about the benefits of a shared vision too. That's valuable, but there is also a view that would suggest that we need to rethink such single version approaches. A shared vision imposes a rationalized sameness and limited set of possibilities on different stakeholders of an organization who, in fact, would earn the recognition of their different interests and needs [12-5].

## **Emotional Intelligence to mitigate cognitive bias**

Biases in perception and habits can also render our decisions biased. Biases in perception and habits can also make our choices biased. We all too easily fall into learned patterns of thinking without questioning anymore. This can also be called an 'expert trap.'

As I often say, we not only need to learn, but we also need to unlearn. Especially the beliefs about what is not possible should, for the creative process, be abandoned. In that respect, we can learn a lot from children and their fearless imagination and play. Such an open mind might be a recipe for adults too to detect cognitive bias, especially in leadership functions. Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a helpful concept in that regards as it includes high competency in self-awareness, self-

expression, interpersonal communication, and stress management [12-7].

### **Participation for psychological safety**

Participative decision-making is depending on how psychologically safe the members of a team feel. If the participative climate is good, decisions are generally better too [12-8]. This is mainly the case because joint decision making is positively related to team creativity that is enhanced if team members feel safe [12-9].

### **Creativity**

Not only is creativity important for decision-making, as we have seen, but creativity is also directly related to increased business performance, especially in constantly changing environments [12-10], be it in educational or corporate setting [12-12].

Creativity is the beginning point for innovation. Or the other way around, innovation is the real-life application of creativity (novel ideas). For organizations to be able to differentiate and stay competitive, they need creative people who help the company to become more innovative [12-13].

### **Authentic leadership**

Research has found that employees creativity increases through authentic leadership. Authentic leadership is psychologically empowering employees through the encouragement of authenticity, which is the ideal precondition for creativity. So, when encouraging for trust and psychological states of safety, intrinsic motivation, and autonomy, leaders can increase

performance on individual employee and overall organizational level [12-10].

As a further mediating element, information sharing by leaders, teams, and team members alike was found to be the climate in which creativity flourishes especially well [12-11].

How creative do you think are you? Are you able to re-invent your leadership style and build the necessary skills? I hope you found the input in this book helpful in this regard. Please let me know, thanks, and all the best!

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