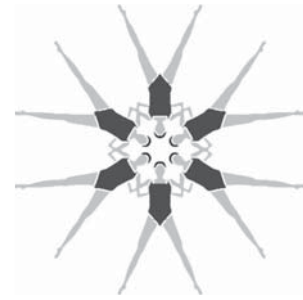


1 Introduction: The Nature and Importance of Leadership



Everyone says there's a lack of leadership in the world these days. I think we should all be thankful, because the only reason for leadership is to convince people to do things that are either dangerous (like invading another country) or stupid ([like] working extra hard without extra pay).

Obviously you don't need any leadership to lead you to, for example, eat a warm cookie. But you need a lot of leadership to convince you to march through a desert and shoot strangers. Generally speaking, whenever there is leadership, there's lots of hollering and very few warm cookies. Let's enjoy the lack of leadership while we have it.

Scott Adams, *Don't Step in the Leadership*¹

OVERVIEW

- In recent times the notion of leadership has increasingly met with cynicism and become a 'hot topic' for debate. Despite a burgeoning but fragmented literature, there is no agreed paradigm so far for the study and practice of leadership.
- This lack of consensus on what leadership is together with a spate of high-profile failures due to poor or absent 'leadership' have proven to be contributory factors towards the cynicism that has since developed.
- Yet 'good' leadership – that is both effective and moral – has nevertheless been long recognized as crucial to human achievement and well-being.
- This chapter considers the multiplicity of definitions of leadership and proposes an integrative and over-arching definition: *leadership is showing the way and helping or inducing others to pursue it.*
- Leadership is characterized by six core themes and their associated practices: envisioning a desirable future, promoting a clear purpose or mission, supportive values, intelligent strategies, and empowering and engaging all those concerned.
- Leadership effectiveness can be evaluated either in terms of behaviour – the extent to which a leader helps or induces others to pursue a given way and purpose or mission – or in terms of outcomes – the extent to which a given desired future becomes a reality as a result of a leader's behaviour. This means that there are many different possible measures of leadership according to the nature of the envisioned future, purpose and context in which leadership takes place.

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- One fruitful approach to understanding leadership is to study followership: what followers expect of leaders and how leaders can satisfy these expectations.
- The chapter compares and contrasts concepts of management and leadership: we manage things and processes, but we lead people.
- Leadership is about showing the way – from where we are now to a desired place or state. Leadership, therefore, is about change and so we must explore the leadership of change.
- The past emphasis on individual leadership and command-and-control has been superseded by an emphasis today on shared and distributed leadership and collective leadership capacity. An organization's collective leadership capacity is the basis for a distinctive leadership 'brand' and its ability to change.

What is Leadership?²

Every week, probably even every day, we can read a fresh new article or book that says: 'Effective leadership is the key to success' – defined in terms of organizational and managerial effectiveness, financial results, or people's morale and happiness, or all of these. When I entered 'leadership' into Google on 24 February 2011, I was presented with 'about 176,000,000' entries. I then focused my curiosity and entered 'definition of leadership'. In 0.4 of a second I was presented with a mere 59,100,000 suggestions.

Now I cannot claim that this introductory section in Chapter 1 is a comprehensive summary of the extant literature on the question 'What is leadership?' But without reviewing all of it (to say the least), this is my humble attempt. After all, according to one Malaysian writer, theorizing about leadership is 'great fun, hugely indulgent and largely useless' (doing it instead, he says, is much more worthwhile).³ Nevertheless, my aim in the first part of this chapter is unapologetically to indulge in what hopefully is an interesting – if not fun – account of how concepts and definitions of leadership agree and differ and the problems associated with this lack of consensus. I then attempt a synthesis that reflects the essence of the etymology of the term that I hope will be defensible to scholars and useful to practitioners.

How Concepts and Definitions of Leadership Agree and Differ: A Problem that Needs Resolving

Walter Friedman describes some of the earliest references to leadership in American newspapers and books. He says, 'The term "business leadership" appeared in U.S. newspapers only occasionally during [Andrew] Carnegie's heyday'⁴ (b.1835, d.1919). Popular books on leadership started to appear from 1912 onwards. The British Academy of Management says: 'The subject of leadership has created a plethora of publications, research and debate and has become a key issue in both the public and private sectors'.⁵ Today, leadership is a hot topic for debate.

The burgeoning leadership literature ranges from highly cerebral academic research studies and scholarly treatises that few if any actual leaders will read to idiosyncratic personal prescriptions by self-acclaimed paragons of virtuous leadership of how to be an outstanding leader at the 'popular' end of the spectrum. Some of the contributions to the leadership literature are both fictional and speculative:

... [divining] the dubious leadership acumen of either long-dead military leaders [e.g. Attila the Hun] of questionable reputation or fictional characters [such as Winnie the Pooh and Captain Picard of Star Trek] in order to proffer it to the masses as pearls of wisdom.⁶

John Roulet, a management consultant in the United States, feels that there is a surfeit of books, articles and discussion about leadership, with 'much competing and confusing information in the public domain' and that 'today's leaders seem to be getting worse instead of better'.⁷ And Joel Kurtzman says that '... a consensus has so far failed to emerge with respect to what leadership is, how leaders develop, and – perhaps most important – how to become a more effective leader'.⁸

One of the problems with leadership studies, Robert Terry says, is that the subject has 'suffered from a lack of a common language'.⁹ Victor Vroom of Yale University states, '... like many popular terms, [leadership] has been used in many different ways'.¹⁰ Perhaps 'leadership' is a 'Humpty Dumpty' word:

When I use a word, Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less. The question is, said Alice, whether you can make words mean so many different things. The question is, said Humpty Dumpty, which is to be master – that's all.¹¹

Bruce Winston and Kathleen Patterson, addressing the problem of the lack of consensus on what leadership is, suggest, as I do, that the problem arises from studying the parts of leadership rather than the whole.¹² This is what I mean when I suggest that those theories which are well known to academics and practitioners alike – such as action-centred leadership, the managerial (leadership) grid, situational leadership and transformational/transactional leadership (which we discuss in Chapter 3 on leadership theories) – are each individual pieces in the jigsaw puzzle that is leadership. Winston and his team at Regent University carried out an extensive review of the leadership literature and produced 92 categories made up of over 1,000 constructs or statements relating to leadership. They distilled these into the following 'integrative definition of leadership':

A leader is one or more people who selects, equips, trains, and influences one or more follower(s) who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the follower(s) to the organization's mission and objectives causing the follower(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the organizational mission and objectives.

The definition then proceeds to describe *how* leaders do this. However this definition, while a heroic effort, is contentious in several ways. It has a top-down,

directive tone that might be appropriate in some organizational and national cultures (see our discussion of culture in Chapter 6 on leadership and values), but not as a universal definition. For example, a leader might well 'focus' a follower – or somebody else who may not be a 'follower' as such – but the intention might be to *help* that person to identify, clarify, pursue or fulfil his or her personal 'mission' or objectives.

The definition also refers to 'gifts, abilities, and skills' – a confusing admixture. Elaborated in a later explanation, with a Christian biblical reference to Chapter 12 in *Romans*, it is still not made clear what these (seven) 'gifts' – 'driving characteristics of the individual' – are and how they are different from, and perhaps supplementary or complementary to, abilities or skills. Indeed their 'natural abilities', what people can do easily and well, that people are born with and which mature 'enough to be defined and measured' by the age of 14 years, and skills – 'function-related knowledge and physical skills that contribute to the success and efficiency in completing tasks' – are ill-defined, confusing and highly contentious.

How can one scientifically investigate something that is beset by its multiplicity of definitions? Indeed the very existence of 'leadership' as an observable phenomenon in daily life in organizations has been questioned by some scholars, such as Mats Alvesson and Stefan Sveningsson.¹³ They say: 'Our general impression is that it is difficult to say anything of the possible existence of leadership in the great majority of organizations and management situations.' For example, they found the accounts that managers in a research-and-development company gave of leadership to be ambiguous, incoherent and often contradictory.

Simon Kelly, correctly in my opinion, questions whether the problem that Alvesson and Sveningsson see is 'a consequence of the research methods being used to make leadership visible and researchable in the first place'.¹⁴ And one problem here is interpretation: the 'meaning of a word [in our case "leadership"]', Louis Pondy says, 'is the set of ways in which it is used'.¹⁵ This requires further discussion that is beyond the scope of this book but which Kelly's article might assist.

Even the UK's Investors-in-People institution (IIP) does not explicitly define leadership. It says: 'Leadership and management are almost impossible to define because they mean different things to every organisation.'¹⁶ Manfred Kets de Vries of INSEAD puts it more strongly:

When we plunge into the organisational literature on leadership, we quickly become lost in a labyrinth: there are endless definitions, countless articles and never-ending polemics. As far as leadership studies go, it seems that more and more has been studied about less and less, to end up ironically with a group of researchers who studies everything about nothing. It prompted one wit to say recently that reading the current world literature on leadership is rather like going through the Parisian telephone directory while trying to read it in Chinese!¹⁷

Warren Bennis, noted writer and leadership scholar, observes that: 'Leadership is what the French call a portmanteau field – a field with many different variables.'¹⁸ He says there is no agreed paradigm for leadership or framework for studying it:

Researchers have so far failed to come up with a widely accepted framework for thinking about leadership. There is no equivalent of *Competitive Strategy*, Michael Porter's 1980 classic, accorded near-biblical reverence by strategy experts ... I don't think [leadership] is yet a 'field' in the pure sense. There are something like 276 definitions of leadership. You can't say that there is a paradigm, any agreed-upon set of factors, that is generally accepted.

Gary Yukl criticizes the unhelpful way such variables have been classified:

Sometimes different terms have been used to refer to the same type of behaviour. At other times, the same term has been defined differently by various theorists. What is treated as a general behaviour category by one theorist is viewed as two or three distinct categories by another theorist. What is a key concept in one taxonomy is absent from another. Different taxonomies have emerged from different research disciplines, and it is difficult to translate from one set of concepts to another.¹⁹

Keith Grint of Warwick Business School in the UK in his 'constitutive approach' questions whether we can be objective at all in defining the context of leadership and the leadership required. He suggests that when we do this we are merely constructing our own view of leadership behaviour and the situation in which it takes place:

We may never know ... the true essence of an identity, a leader, or a situation ... and must often base our actions and beliefs on the accounts of others from whom we can (re)constitute our version of events ... Leadership is an invention ... [it] is primarily rooted in, and a product of, the imagination.²⁰

This view is misleading and unhelpful. Leadership may be 'created' or 'designed', for example as a process or a relationship, but it is hardly imagined, an invention – a 'fabricated story', 'made up, especially so as to deceive'.²¹ In the 'real' world (whatever that is, Grint may say), we all experience and recognize leadership, 'good', 'bad' and inconsequential.

More reasonably David Collinson and Keith Grint do point out that, while there was still (in 2005) 'little consensus on what counts as leadership, whether it can be taught, or even how effective it might be', the recent plethora of publications of all kinds on leadership '[extols] the need for excellence in management and leadership ... in part fuelled by a breakdown in confidence in leadership'.²² Our Scott Adams quotation on page 1 captures the confusion and cynicism that have grown rapidly around the idea of leadership since he wrote those words in 1999. This cynicism perhaps is a consequence of the unacceptable face of leadership in recent times that has so deeply pervaded politics, business and sport.

Top-level leaders are frequently criticized for being out of touch with employees in their organizations. And this appears to have grown in recent years. In reporting research findings in January 2011 from Roffey Park, the management development institute in the UK, Carly Chynoweth notes that 'Many board directors seem to be living in a rose-tinted bubble ... They feel more positive about

everything ... than their counterparts in executive management' as well as middle and junior managers.²³ This includes optimism about the future, the organization's sense of collective purpose, leadership in the organization, perceptions of the respect with which the organization is held by outsiders, and the extent to which leaders behave ethically towards stakeholders.

Almost as jaded a view of leadership as Scott Adams's, and perhaps reflecting the times,²⁴ is that from novelist and former journalist Robert Harris:

What [is] leadership, after all, but the blind choice of one route over another and the confident pretence that the decision [is] based on reason?²⁵

'The main goal of ... leadership', according to Donald Krause, 'is to accomplish useful and desirable things that benefit the people being led'.²⁶ This is arguable. It certainly may be argued as desirable or ideal and may be part of a definition of good leadership. But on the other hand it may be argued as unrealistic. In reality many people are led by those who lead them not for their benefit but for the benefit of others elsewhere. Leaders in the business world may argue reasonably that in meeting shareholders' expectations, or even customers' needs and expectations, they are providing a benefit to employees – for example, employment and income. But this benefit is not necessarily their *raison d'être*. And, of course, some leaders will 'lead' (use) others to further their own interests.

Leadership has been variously defined in terms of traits, process, skill(s), competency, a relationship, and a construct. Sociologists frame leadership in terms of relationships among people rather than in terms of individual traits or characteristics, often focusing on power and dominance.²⁷ James MacGregor Burns argues that 'to understand the nature of leadership requires understanding of the nature of power'.²⁸ The two essentials of power, Burns states, are motives and resources. He explains that leadership is not just a top-down phenomenon with clear unidirectional causality between leaders' and followers' behaviour but also a series of complex, reciprocal relationships involving a use of power and the control of resources.

According to a 1920s' definition, leadership is 'the ability to impress the will of the leader on those led and induce obedience, respect, loyalty, and cooperation'.²⁹ By current standards this is a remarkably authoritarian viewpoint that has little currency today (at least in democratic countries and enlightened organizations). Donald Krause, drawing on the writings of Sun Tzu and Confucius, suggests that leadership comprises:

... the will to control events, the understanding to chart a course, and the power to get a job done, cooperatively using the skills and abilities of other people.³⁰

There are various levels at which one can define leadership. Jay Lorsch defines a leader straightforwardly and simply as 'an individual who influences others to follow him or her'.³¹ Lorsch argues that leaders use influence gained from various sources of power (discussed in the chapter on leadership and engagement) such as charisma and knowledge (personal power) or the right to insist on action and the right to dispense rewards and punishments (position power or authority). He also argues that the definition

applies equally to a senior executive and a first-level supervisor: both must get others to do their bidding. Lorsch's definition is appealing in its simplicity. But its brevity sacrifices clarity, scope and depth and begs many questions. For example, follow *where* (to what?) and *why*? And use influence *how*? It is also not true to the etymology of the word 'leader', namely 'one who shows the way'.

Underlying the leadership development programmes at the Leadership Trust is the following concept of leadership:

Leadership is using our personal power to win the hearts and minds of people to achieve a common purpose; the minds ... by giving people a clear understanding of what they have to do, why, and how it might be done; the hearts ... by generating feelings of challenge, involvement, ownership, commitment and excitement.³²

This otherwise useful working definition implies a directive style of leadership rather than a contextually more variable one. But it also implies three important principles of leadership:

1. There must be a common, shared mission or purpose, or at least one that a leader gets commitment to, and clear strategies for pursuing it.
2. Hearts and minds have to be won in the sense that the vision, mission and strategies must make sense intellectually and must also appeal to, or create, positive emotions, engagement and motivation or inspiration as a result.
3. The use of position power (authority) is abrogated in favour of gaining commitment through using one's personal power.

James MacGregor Burns defines leadership as a mobilization process undertaken by individuals who are using the power they draw from motives, values and access to resources in a context of competition and conflict in their pursuit of goals.³³ Another political scientist, Joseph S. Nye, Jr – former Dean of Harvard Kennedy School (the John F. Kennedy School of Government) – defines leadership as '[helping] a group create and achieve shared goals'.³⁴ Nannerl Keohane, a former president of both Wellesley College and Duke University and also a political scientist, says that leaders 'determine or clarify goals for a group of individuals and bring together the energies of members of that group to accomplish those goals'.³⁵ And an appealing definition of leadership comes from Charles Handy: 'To combine the aspirations and needs of the individuals with the purposes of the larger community to which they all belong.'³⁶

Leadership is recognized in the well-known Business Excellence model promoted by the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) and the British Quality Foundation (BQF). This model includes 'leadership' as an underpinning enabler in attaining key performance results. Leadership is defined as how:

... leaders develop and facilitate the achievement of the mission and vision, develop values required for long-term success and implement these via appropriate actions and behaviours ... [for example, strategies, management systems and operational plans].³⁷

8 ❄ Theory and Practice of Leadership

Leadership is evaluated in the EFQM/BQF Excellence Model according to several sub-criteria:

- * Leaders develop the mission, vision and values and are role models of a culture of excellence.
- * Leaders are personally involved in ensuring the organization's management system is developed, implemented and continuously improved.
- * Leaders are involved with customers, partners and representatives of society.
- * Leaders motivate, support and recognize the organization's people.

In this model, leadership also includes:

- * Stimulating and encouraging empowerment, innovation and creativity.
- * Aligning organizational structure to support the delivery of policy and strategy.
- * Supporting and engaging in activities that aim to improve the environment and the organization's contribution to society.
- * Personally communicating the organization's mission, vision, values, policy and strategy, plans, objectives and targets to people.

This model identifies key themes or concepts in leadership: vision, mission, values, strategy, empowerment and motivation, but not all of these in a formal, composite way. We deal with this in later chapters as the basis for a formal model of leadership. The model also links leadership to management, implying rightly that both are necessary for organizational effectiveness.

All of these definitions share a common theme – the idea of facilitating the accomplishment of shared goals. Most definitions (the EFQM's excepted) say little or nothing about *how* this is done. Many are prescriptive (like the Leadership Trust's and the EFQM's) or aspirational (like Charles Handy's) rather than descriptive of the reality (like Nannerl Keohane's). And most stray from the etymological essence of the term 'leadership'. So how can we make sense of the multiplicity of definitions that exist for leadership?

Towards a General Definition of Leadership

I propose that one useful thing to do when exploring the meaning of leadership is to consult the etymology of the word and see how its meaning has developed.

The word 'lead' comes from the Old English *lædan*, corresponding to the Old Saxon *ledian* and Old High German *leiten*, meaning to 'take with one', to 'show the way'.³⁸ *Ledere* was the term for a person who shows other people the path to take and guides them safely along the journey.³⁹ The Old Icelandic derivative *leidha* means 'the person in front', referring to the person who guided ships through the pack-ice in spring. The word 'leader' appeared in the English language in the thirteenth century, but 'leadership' appeared only in the early nineteenth century. The terms *leadership* and *leader* are used today in ways that stray from their etymology and original meaning, which we will now discuss.

Showing the way is the essence of leadership. My definition of leadership, which underpins the model of the six core themes discussed in the following chapters, is this:

Leadership is showing the way and helping or inducing others to pursue it. This entails envisioning a desirable future, promoting a clear purpose or mission, supportive values and intelligent strategies, and empowering and engaging all those concerned.

The word 'induce' is used in preference to 'influence' because it has a wider meaning: 'to succeed in persuading or leading (someone) to do something',⁴⁰ 'prevail upon', 'bring about', 'cause' or 'attract' in addition to 'influence'. 'Influence' on the other hand has a more restricted meaning: 'to have an effect on the character or behaviour of someone'.⁴¹ The wider meaning of 'induce' embraces leadership behaviour that employs position power or authority, such as directing or insisting on (even enforcing) particular actions by others in appropriate situations, as well as personal power – influence or persuasion – in more usual situations. This definition allows for the possibility of leading not only in the sense of 'being followed' but also in the sense of getting others to follow the way shown by the leader. It does not prescribe whether or not the leader should actually participate personally in that activity or whether or not others must necessarily (though desirably) be voluntarily willing.

'Showing the way' presupposes knowing, or at least believing in, that way. And 'the way' implies the route to a destination: a vision of a desirable future position – *what* we want to be or *where* we want to be. This may be a state of being or a position or place, even more specifically a goal, an objective or a target. Knowing or believing in the way also presupposes the desirability of this known or believed-in destination.

Desirability relates to *why* one wishes to promote and pursue a particular vision. One reason is that this vision relates to our purpose or mission. A purpose or mission is what we do and why we do it; a vision is a mental image of what the future will (or could) be like, based on imagination or wisdom,⁴² which we discuss in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 respectively. A related reason is that the vision relates to what we believe in, what we feel is meaningful, valuable and worthwhile in our work, and perhaps in our life in general. This spiritual dimension concerns our values and beliefs. So leadership is about promoting and pursuing a vision and a mission or purpose that reflect particular values. Effective leadership includes the creation and sustaining of a *shared* vision, mission or purpose and values.

But *how* do leaders and followers effectively pursue a vision, mission and values? They do so through *strategies* – 'ways and means' that involve the use of resources (as Burns says). Hence we have financial strategies, marketing strategies, product strategies, IT strategies, people strategies, and so on. Because leaders, like managers and indeed all of us, get things done with, by and through other people, we need to consider that special resource – people. What does it take for human beings to get things done? The answer is the ability (power) to do so and the desire to do so; in other words empowerment and motivation. Leadership therefore is about empowering people to be *able to* do what needs to be done and influencing, motivating or inspiring

people to *want to do* what needs to be done. Influence, motivation and inspiration constitute what is now popularly known as *engagement*.

This definition provides the model of six themes and associated practices of leadership that this book proposes. This model is a synthesis of the extant themes, models and theories in the leadership literature. It prescribes the *practices* of effective leadership – *what effective leaders do*. The outcome of *effective leadership* is the achievement of what was intended – both the results (vision, goals, etc.) *and* appropriate behaviour – by a led person or group of people. We speak of effective leadership at a variety of levels: oneself, one-to-one (as in coaching or counselling, for example), team or group, organization-wide, national, regional or global. ‘Good’ leadership, however, is defined by intentions (purpose, vision, goals), achievement (of what was intended) and behaviour (in achieving it) that are judged by those involved or affected to be ethical or moral (on the basis of their personal and shared values).

Good versus Bad Leadership

What is ‘good’ leadership as distinct from non-leadership and ‘bad’ leadership? Joanne Ciulla makes the point that ‘good’ has two senses that need to be interrelated: good in the moral sense and good in the sense of being effective (even if also morally ‘bad’).⁴³ Barbara Kellerman developed this distinction in her book *Bad Leadership*, with a model (Figure 1.1) and many case examples, acknowledging the ‘dark side’ of human nature and how this affects leaders and followers alike.⁴⁴ She identifies seven major forms of bad leadership: incompetent, rigid, intemperate, callous, corrupt, insular and evil. Her argument is that, if bad leadership is to be avoided, leadership must reflect a shared responsibility between leaders and followers. Birgit Schyns and Tiffany Hansbrough explain that leaders, followers and situational factors can make leadership go awry.⁴⁵

	Unethical	Ethical
Effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bad intentions • Change/goal accomplished 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good intentions • Change/goal accomplished
Ineffective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bad intentions • Change/goal not accomplished 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good intentions • Change/goal not accomplished

Figure 1.1 ‘Good’ and ‘Bad’ Leadership (based on Barbara Kellerman, 2004, *Bad Leadership: What It Is, How It Happens, Why It Matters*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 32–37)

So what is *good* leadership? Barbara Kellerman observes:

Scholars should remind us that leadership is not a moral concept. Leaders are like the rest of us: trustworthy and deceitful, cowardly and brave, greedy and generous. To assume that all leaders are good people is to be wilfully blind to the reality of the human condition, and it severely limits our scope for becoming more effective at leadership.⁴⁶

Most leadership textbooks – and indeed most leadership books for practising executives – constantly provide case studies or case examples of brilliant leadership. These are about what we might call ‘heroic leaders’, those people who turned around failing organizations apparently single-handedly (and inadvertently took the credit for doing so, which is why they would have agreed to the case study or example). There are occasional books on bad leadership, like Barbara Kellerman’s. One notable case of bad leadership in 2010 illustrated Tony Hayward’s rise and demise as a ‘leader’; until that date he had been the CEO of BP. As Rosabeth Moss Kanter says, ‘The case of Tony Hayward and the Gulf oil spill will be fodder for business school discussions for years to come, as a how-not-to-do-it guide for leadership when disaster strikes.’⁴⁷

In an insightful psychological analysis, Jean Lipman-Blumen explains how ‘toxic’ leaders first charm and then manipulate, mistreat, weaken and eventually devastate their followers.⁴⁸ She explains how human beings are psychologically susceptible to toxic leadership and how we can reduce our dependency on ‘strong’ leadership, identify ‘reluctant leaders’ and nurture leadership within ourselves. Michael Maccoby believes this dependency is the result of what Sigmund Freud called ‘transference’ – the tendency to relate to a leader as some important person from the past, such as a father or mother, a brother or sister, or even a nanny.⁴⁹

Those who suffer toxic leadership are, of course, primarily subordinates or followers. Leaders do not exist, of course, without followers. Leadership implies followership (oneself in the case of ‘self-leadership’). As Manfred Kets de Vries and Elizabeth Laurent-Treacy say:

Without followers, a leader’s journey is solitary and unproductive. If the conductor of an orchestra lifts his or her baton and none of the musicians responds, there is no music.⁵⁰

Followership is attracting increasing attention. For example, reflecting the trend, the term appears in the name of a leadership centre established in 2010 in Durham Business School at Durham University in the UK: the International Centre for Leadership and Followership.

Leadership and Followership

The desire to follow others is a basic human (indeed animal) instinct, Robert Ardrey suggests,⁵¹ although it most certainly does not necessarily dominate human behaviour. While most theories of leadership focus on leaders, Stephen Covey suggests that: ‘A more fruitful approach is to look at followers, rather than leaders, and to assess leadership by asking why followers follow.’⁵² This question can be addressed by looking at the needs and aspirations that people have and how leaders use power in helping people to satisfy them.

Sometimes we will lead – in domains where we have expertise, for example – and sometimes we will follow, when we need direction or lack expertise. ‘Followers also have the power to resist and to lead’, says Joseph S. Nye, Jr, former Dean of the Kennedy School (the John F. Kennedy School of Government) at Harvard University.⁵³ As Stephen Fineman says, we talk a lot about our leaders – our bosses and politicians – and we also criticize them freely:⁵⁴ we can make intelligent judgements for ourselves. But our desire to follow has deep emotional roots, and interestingly the Bible emphasizes followership more than leadership.

While many writers have identified a ‘crisis’ in leadership, there is perhaps also a crisis in followership that has lasted some 20 years so far. Robert Kelley reports one study that indicated dissatisfaction among followers with their leaders:

- ✨ Forty per cent questioned their ability to lead.
- ✨ A minority (14 per cent) of leaders were regarded as role models.
- ✨ Fewer than half were trusted.
- ✨ Forty per cent were regarded as having ego problems: they were perceived to be threatened by talented subordinates, needing to act in a ‘superior’ way, and not sharing recognition.⁵⁵

James MacGregor Burns points out that:

One talent all leaders must possess [is] the capacity to perceive needs of followers in relationship to their own, to help followers move toward fuller self-realization and self-actualization along with the leaders themselves.⁵⁶

This is about empowerment. Followership, according to one leadership development practitioner, results from being empowered – through delegation, creating team values, coaching and mentoring, and building a high-performance team.⁵⁷

In the political world, leaders appear to have fewer and fewer ‘followers’. In democratic nations they are elected, but by whom? The 2001 general election in the UK was one example of a growing crisis in followership, where the lowest turnout for 80 years gave a large majority to the ruling Labour Party. Even so, only a small minority of the electorate actively supported the nation’s political leadership – in effect they were ‘followers’. And even within the Labour Party, there was some dissension from the policies the government was following, for example by the trade unions that supported it. Nor was the Conservative Party immune from dissension, which was part of the reason for its downfall from government in 1997 and its several subsequent leadership crises. And the proportion of the US electorate that ‘followed’ president George W. Bush was 51 per cent, according to the 2004 election.

The British government’s report on *Strengthening Leadership* includes an interesting analysis of followership:

... the most successful organisations appear to be those where the errors which the leaders inevitably make are compensated for by their followers: responsible followers prevent irresponsible leaders. But where followers are unable or unwilling to constrain their leaders

the organisation itself may well suffer. This ‘compensatory followership’ operates right across the organisational and political spectrum such that, for example, the obsequious behaviour of most of Hitler’s entourage (fortunately) failed to prevent him from making catastrophic strategic errors in the latter half of the Second World War.⁵⁸

The report also gives a more contemporary example. In many hospitals, consultants are ‘treated as “gods” and junior staff [are] afraid of “telling tales”’. While making mistakes is essential to learning and progress, examples of unnecessary tragic mistakes as a result of this culture in hospitals appear all too frequently. Institutionalizing the role of devil’s advocate is one way of preventing leaders from making such mistakes.⁵⁹ Followers take turns to express dissent from the group’s decisions with the purpose of focusing the attention of the group and the leader on potential problems.

Jonathan Swift, in *Gulliver’s Travels*, provided a graphic account of how leaders may reflect the characteristics of their followers in an extreme way and how they may have a ‘favourite’ who is hated by everybody else:

... in most Herds there was a Sort of ruling Yahoo, (as among us there is generally some leading or principal Stag in a Park) who was always more *deformed* in Body, and *mischievous* in Disposition, than any of the rest. That, this Leader had usually a Favourite as *like himself* as he could get, whose Employment was to *lick his Master’s Feet and Posteriors, and drive the Female Yahoos to his Kennel*; for which he was now and then rewarded with a Piece of Ass’s Flesh. This Favourite is hated by the whole Herd; and therefore to protect himself, keeps always *near the Person of his Leader*. He usually continues in Office till a worse can be found; but the very Moment he is discarded, his Successor, at the Head of all Yahoos in that District, Young and Old, Male and Female, come in a Body, and discharge their Excrements upon him from Head to Foot. But how far this might be applicable to our Courts and Favourites, and Ministers of State, my Master said I could best determine.⁶⁰

Whether Swift’s analysis can be applied to business and political leadership today is self-evident. Political journalist and broadcaster Jeremy Paxman, describing former British prime minister Tony Blair’s attempts to act ‘normal’, says: ‘The successful leader would like to be as like his followers as possible.’⁶¹ He quotes the political reporter, James Margach, who likens political parties, in the way they turn on their discarded leaders, to crabs, which devour their sick, wounded and dying.⁶² Paxman describes how vulnerable political leaders are: cabinet ministers in particular, once discarded, will usually simply vanish from public view.⁶³ For prime ministers, losing an election or being sacked by their party, he says, can bring castigation and public humiliation – they become the ‘excrement’ of Jonathan Swift’s yahoos. This is also true for prime ministers who resign over-tardily.

Added to this Paxman describes how power in (British) politics has come to be concentrated less in parliament and more in the prime minister, perhaps in a very small number of ministers (but not the Cabinet as a whole), and even in a coterie of special advisers who, controversially, will sometimes be given executive powers over the Civil Service. The media are quick to report the discarding of such special advisers – Swift’s ‘favourites’ – and they usually suffer the same insalubrious fate.

Paxman suggests that loyalty, a characteristic of voluntary followership, is vacuous in politics: he comments, 'There is no room for either friendship or gratitude at the top.'⁶⁴ Witness the frequent Cabinet reshufflings, acrimonious ministerial sackings and resignations in government, and the subsequent sniping at the prime minister by those who are sacked. Add to this what Paxman says is an increasing tendency by prime ministers not only to make decisions without the consensus of, or even without consulting, their Cabinet but also to direct their ministers what to do, and we must call into question how effective prime ministers really are as *leaders*.

Followership in the literal sense has been evolving into collaboration and partnership. Even Admiral Lord Nelson, for example, saw his captains as a 'band of brothers'. And former US Secretary of State Colin Powell says that 'Leadership does not emerge from blind obedience to anyone.'⁶⁵ Leaders provide followers with protection and meaning. Followers identify with charismatic leaders, for better or worse, with pleasure and pride.

According to the respondents in Kelley's study of followership, the best followers are those who think for themselves, give constructive criticism, are 'their own person', and are innovative and creative.⁶⁶ Kelley's review of follower characteristics revealed an additional dimension, namely active engagement in the task: the best followers will take the initiative, participate actively, be self-starters, and do more than what is required.

Michael Maccoby, a noted psychologist, says that the definition of a leader is simple: 'A leader is someone whom people follow.'⁶⁷ And why do people follow leaders? Maccoby suggests one reason for this is fear, and he cites the example of people living in Iraq under the rule of Saddam Hussein. Another reason, he says, particularly in respect of religious leaders, is love, devotion or respect. However, this can be dangerous, and indeed sometimes lethal, as was the case for cult leader Jim Jones's 909 followers. And in addition, as Kurtzman says, 'followership is no excuse for wrongdoing, even when following the will of an elected leader', a principle established at the Nuremberg trials at the end of the Second World War.⁶⁸

Followership is dangerous when it entails surrendering one's judgement or one's will to a leader: being aligned to a common purpose does not entail surrendering the right to express an opinion, oppose a decision or withdraw from the group. Effective organizations and leaders respect dissidence. Followership also occurs, however, when one works with a leader whose purpose one shares, says Maccoby.⁶⁹ We discuss the place of purpose in leadership in Chapter 5.

Followers exert their influence on leaders in many ways. In democracies, Nanerl Keohane says, they hold the ultimate authority, and leaders are both formally and informally accountable to them.⁷⁰ A special report on global leaders by *The Economist* in January 2011 endorses this view:

Elections force politicians to take the public's wishes into account every few years. Competitive markets force business leaders to heed their customers' demands all the time. And the law applied to rich and poor alike ... in liberal democracies the powerful get on by pleasing others. In short, they work for us.⁷¹

For a further discussion of followership, *The Art of Followership* by Ronald Riggio and colleagues is recommended.⁷²

Leadership versus Management

The relationship between the concepts of management and leadership is the subject of continuing discussion among academics and consultants. For example, Marcus Buckingham, well known for his work on emphasizing strengths, writing in *Harvard Business Review*, says:

[Great managers] discover what is unique about each person and then capitalize on it ... This is the exact opposite of what great leaders do. Great leaders discover what is universal and capitalize on it.⁷³

This view is highly questionable: what Buckingham says is management is in fact equally a key aspect of effective leadership, posited specifically in one particular theory of transformational leadership that we discuss in the next chapter. If there is a real difference between what managers do and what leaders do, it is not this. Robert House and R.N. Aditya suggest that:

Scholars of the traditional management and leadership literatures seldom take advantage of each other's contributions and, consequently, these two literatures are not adequately integrated.⁷⁴

The term 'management' derives from *manus*, the Latin word for 'hand'. The term had to do with handling things, and it gained currency in its modern sense during the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century. The archaic French *ménager* meant to 'use sparingly'.

In the oft-quoted words of Warren Bennis and Bert Nanus, 'Managers are people who do things right; leaders are people who do the right things.'⁷⁵ For example, leaders ask the right questions about strategy and make sure the right answers are implemented.⁷⁶ And David Wills, training manager for the Motherwell Bridge Group in Scotland, says:

Leadership is ... about vision and having the courage to do the right thing - different from management, which is all about doing the thing right - even if there is a risk.⁷⁷

But this distinction is epistemologically unsound, according to Peter Gronn:

... it is an attempt to resurrect the traditional distinction between facts and values. Thus, 'things right' reduces to a competence or technical mastery [management], whereas 'the right thing' [leadership] implies desirable ends, purposes or values.⁷⁸

The Work Foundation (formerly The Industrial Society) in the UK defines the differences between management and leadership simply. Managers plan, allocate resources, administer and control, whereas leaders innovate, communicate and motivate.⁷⁹ Vision is one of the key differences between a manager and a leader, according to Stanley Deetz and colleagues.⁸⁰ General Sir William Slim, the inspiring Second World War leader,

saw the difference in the same way. In a speech in Adelaide as Governor-General of Australia in 1957, he said:

... we do not in the Army talk of 'management' but of leadership'. This is significant. There is a difference between leaders and management. [Leadership represents] one of the oldest, most natural and most effective of all human relationships. [Management is] a later product, with neither so romantic nor so inspiring a history. Leadership is of the spirit, compounded of personality and vision; its practice is an art. Management is of the mind, more a matter of accurate calculation of statistics, of methods, time tables, and routine; its practice is a science. Managers are necessary; leaders are essential.⁸¹

Amin Rajan contrasts management and leadership thus:

- * Management is about path following; leadership is path finding.
- * Management is about doing things right; leadership is about doing the right things.
- * Management is about planning and budgeting; leadership is about establishing direction.
- * Management is about controlling and problem solving; leadership is about motivating and inspiring.⁸²

Warren Bennis suggests that the differences between leadership and management can be summed up as 'the differences between those who master the context and those who surrender to it' respectively.⁸³ These differences are detailed in Table 1.1 below.

John Kotter says that management produces orderly results that keep something working efficiently, whereas leadership creates useful change; neither is necessarily better or a replacement for the other; both are needed if organizations and nations are

Table 1.1 Differences between Managers and Leaders

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

to prosper.⁸⁴ A more useful suggestion is that we do not need both managers and leaders (i.e. people in separate roles) but managers who are leaders and leaders who are managers – people who can ‘do the right thing right’? As Mitch McCrimmon says, ‘It is vastly more empowering to define management as a type of activity than as a role.’⁸⁵ And with regard to organizational change, which is for some the preserve of a ‘leader’, he says:

Leadership sells tickets for the journey and, if resistance emerges en route, the tickets can be resold, but the bulk of the journey is a project requiring good management skills.⁸⁶

Warner Burke also agrees that both management and leadership are needed: ‘For clarity of goals and direction, managers need leaders. For indispensable help in reaching goals, leaders need managers.’⁸⁷ We ‘manage from the left, lead from the right’, Stephen Covey says.⁸⁸ In terms of brain dominance theory, the manager’s role is mainly left-brain dominated, whereas the leader’s role is right-brain based. The left hemisphere of the brain deals more with words, specific elements, logic, analysis, sequential thinking and time. The right hemisphere deals more with emotions, aesthetics, pictures, relationships among elements and the *gestalt*, synthesis, and intuitive, simultaneous, holistic thinking, free of time constraints. An Eastern view is that leading involves the *yin* and managing involves the *yang*.

Managers may be good at *managing* and nominally regarded as leaders, but the most effective managers exercise *effective leadership*. John Nicholls says:

When we say that an organisation lacks leadership we mean that its managers are neglecting their leadership responsibility. It is leadership that is missing, not leaders. If every manager understood and fulfilled his or her leadership responsibilities, there would be no shortage of leadership. It is attention to their managerial leadership responsibilities that converts competent administrators into effective managers.⁸⁹

And Bernard Bass says:

Management is not only leadership, nor is leadership only management; however, those appointed to a position of responsibility as managers need to appreciate what leadership is expected of them.⁹⁰

People in management positions who have people reporting to them and avoid the leadership role may be perceived merely as administrators.⁹¹ But while leadership is about innovation and change, Kouzes and Posner argue that it is not necessarily about entrepreneurship:

Leaders must be change agents and innovators. But they need not be entrepreneurs, if by that term we mean those who actually initiate and assume the risk for a new enterprise. Neither must they be ‘intrapreneurs’ – entrepreneurs within a corporation. In fact, we maintain that the majority of leadership in this world is neither entrepreneurial nor intrapreneurial.⁹²

United Technologies Corporation (UTC), the aerospace and defence company, published an arresting notice in the *Wall Street Journal* and several other newspapers and magazines in 1984:

People don't want to be managed.
They want to be led.
Whoever heard of a 'world manager'?
World leader, yes.
Educational leader.
Political leader.
Religious leader.
Scout leader.
Community leader.
Business leader.
They lead.
They don't manage.
The carrot always wins over the stick.
Ask your horse.
You can lead your horse to water, but you can't manage him to drink.
If you want to manage somebody, manage yourself.
Do that well and you'll be ready to stop managing.
And start leading.⁹³

Eighteen years later, in 2002, UTC was ranked the world's most admired company in the aerospace and defence sector.⁹⁴ And in 2007 UTC was one of America's best-performing conglomerates and a darling of Wall Street, with shareholder returns that outstripped even GE's.⁹⁵ The point is that many of us over-manage people and under-lead them. The company's philosophy – and its practice – have evidently paid off, perhaps because its executives manage *things* and *processes* but *lead* people.

And this is the key point. Looking at the putative 'differences' between managers and leaders, nobody would ever want to be a manager, says psychologist Adrian Furnham: managers are dull; leaders 'fizz with electric creativity'.⁹⁶ Furnham also holds that neither stereotype exists: it is a 'false dichotomy'. But it is a helpful conceptual distinction if it is related to context. Good managers may be leaders too – they have to exercise leadership (with other people) in carrying out their managerial functions (with things and processes). And good leaders are poor managers. As Furnham says:

The greatest of leaders are often forceful organisers as well as visionaries ... people who manage their own businesses know the importance of processes and procedures. A business with leaders and no managers would surely fail much faster than one full of managers and without leaders.⁹⁷

Some companies have forsaken the title 'manager' for 'leader', for example W.L. Gore & Associates, one of the UK's best companies to work for (see Chapter 6). However, this may be symptomatic of what Julian Birkinshaw suggests is the demeaning of

management over the past few decades in favour of leadership.⁹⁸ He says we need a fuller understanding of what management is really about, but unfortunately he muddies the water by defining it as ‘the act of getting people together to accomplish desired goals’.

So far we have discussed the concept of leadership – in essence, showing the way; how leaders have followers; and how leadership relates to management. These discussions have brought up the issue of change. If leadership is about anything, it is about change. Leadership is showing the way from here to there, a way that may be unfamiliar or even unknown, to a place or state imagined but never before sought or reached. It is about a change from the present to a desired future.

Leadership and Change⁹⁹

All things change, nothing is extinguished. There is nothing in the whole world which is permanent. Everything flows onward; all things are brought into being with a changing nature; the ages themselves glide by in constant movement.

So wrote the Roman poet Ovid, in *Metamorphoses*.¹⁰⁰ And in the graphic words of an African proverb, it is a journey that takes place every day:

Each morning a gazelle wakes up knowing that it must outrun the fastest lion or be eaten. And every morning the lion wakes up knowing that it must outrun the slowest gazelle or starve. Gazelle or lion, every morning you must run. That’s what change is all about.¹⁰¹

The early 1980s saw a marked growth in interest in the leadership of change. Rosabeth Moss Kanter’s concept of the ‘change master’ focused on entrepreneurship and innovation in organizations.¹⁰² Bernard Bass’s Full-Range Leadership model, which we discuss in Chapter 3, explained how leaders changed how people feel about themselves and could be inspired to achieve performance beyond their previous expectations – the concept of transformational leadership.¹⁰³

The challenges ahead, more than ever before, require organizations, industries and societies to change and to keep changing. Change may be planned, proactive and about creating the future. Or it may be unplanned, reactive and about adaptation. In Warren Bennis’s view, ‘Leaders have to ... create an environment that embraces change, not as a threat but as an opportunity.’¹⁰⁴ The change imperative itself has changed. The challenge used to be to respond positively to the need for change. Now it is the need to actively *create* change. This was expressed forcefully by the former chairman of British Leyland, Chloride and Dunlop, Sir Michael Edwardes:

And they [the new breed of top executives] have a particular drive, a desire to bring order out of chaos, or if something is too cosy, to create chaos in order to bring change.¹⁰⁵

Change may be imposed, from a position of authority, or participative, generating ownership, commitment and creativity. Philip Sadler distinguishes between incremental

and transformational change, in which incremental change concerns activities within a given culture and the latter changes the culture.¹⁰⁶ The most negative reaction that people display at work is not concerned with money, but with change. People will resist change for many reasons. Milan Kubr identified the following:

- * A lack of conviction that change is needed.
- * A dislike of *imposed* change.
- * A dislike of surprises.
- * A fear of the unknown.
- * A reluctance to deal with unpopular issues.
- * A fear of inadequacy and failure: a lack of know-how.
- * Disturbed practices, habits and relationships: 'We've always done it this way.' Moving people from their 'comfort zone' means moving from the familiar, secure and controllable to the unfamiliar, insecure and uncontrollable.
- * A lack of respect for and trust in the person promoting change.¹⁰⁷

James O'Toole says that:

... to be effective, leaders must [set] aside that 'natural' instinct to lead by push, particularly when times are tough. Leaders must instead adopt the unnatural behavior of *always* leading by the pull of inspiring values.¹⁰⁸

He says that any reversion to paternalistic behaviour will break trust with followers: the ultimate lack of respect for others is 'to impose one's will on them without regard for what they want or need and without consulting them'.¹⁰⁹ In fact, O'Toole in his analysis concludes: 'the major source of resistance to change is ... having the will of others imposed on us'.¹¹⁰

In addition, self-interest and shifts in power and influence will hinder change efforts. A loss or change of role is one example here. That change is difficult has been long recognized, for example by Machiavelli:

... there is no more delicate matter to take in hand, nor more dangerous to conduct, nor more doubtful in its success, than to set up as a leader in the introduction of changes. For he who innovates will have for his enemies all those who are well off under the existing order of things, and only lukewarm supporters in those who might be better off under the new.¹¹¹

Andrew Mayo says, 'Our organisations are littered with the debris ... of yesterday's [change] initiatives.'¹¹² One reason for this may be the consequences of the tendency to introduce change when meeting any new situation. As Charlton Ogburn says:

... we tend to meet any new situation by reorganizing; and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency, and demoralization.¹¹³

The ghosts of changes past can often return to haunt us. What effect does the history of change in an organization have on shaping employees' attitudes and behaviour, especially regarding change itself? With respect to change, 'once bitten, twice shy', one might imagine. But what exactly happens? And what leadership lessons can we learn from research into change?

Recent research investigated this question in two studies in the Philippines, one in a property development firm that was merging with another and the other in an educational institution that was undergoing extensive restructuring.¹¹⁴ Based on theory deriving from previous research, cause-and-effect chains were hypothesized (see Figure 1.2).

In a questionnaire survey of 155 employees in the property development firm (a sample of just under 50 per cent of the total number), eight items measured aspects of poor change management (e.g. 'In my experience, past change initiatives have failed to achieve their intended purpose'). Trust was measured using seven items and cynicism was measured using eight items taken from previously validated questionnaires.¹¹⁵ Inept change management was found to be inversely related to trust and directly related to cynicism, as had been predicted.

In the educational institution, the same procedure was followed with a sample of 124 employees (a response rate of 62 per cent), but with two additional aspects investigated. In the implementation of previous changes, staff had not been consulted and management had acted in an autocratic manner, leading to lawsuits being brought by some disaffected staff. Job satisfaction was measured using three items, turnover intentions were measured by four items and openness to change was measured using four items, again taken from validated instruments.¹¹⁶ Data on employee turnover were collected two years later. The results for trust and cynicism were the same as in the first study. In addition, trust was found to be positively related to job satisfaction and inversely related to turnover intentions. And cynicism was found to be inversely related to openness to change. Actual employee turnover was predicted only marginally by intention to leave.

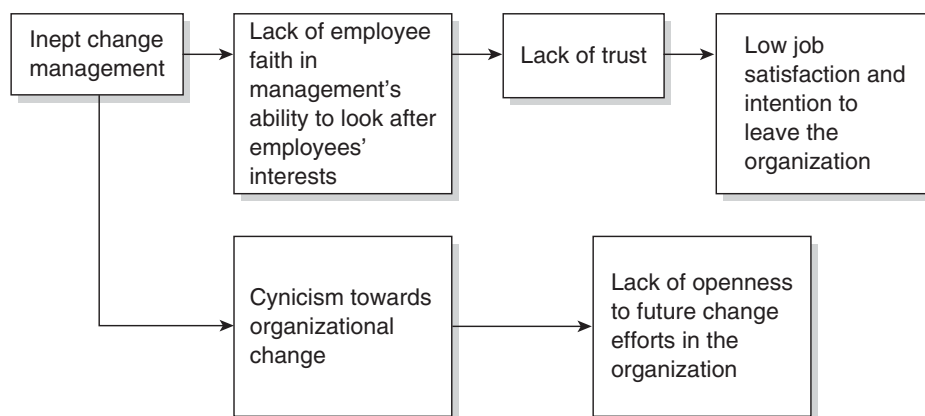


Figure 1.2 Cause and Effect in Organizational Change

Ineptly managed change clearly has dysfunctional consequences. It causes negative attitudes towards both change in general and the organization itself. A vicious cycle then results whereby employees will avoid participating in change initiatives, consequently prejudicing future changes and thereby reinforcing negative attitudes and behaviour.

In the words of Clarence Darrow, the American lawyer in the famous 'Scopes Monkey Trial' in 1925 defending the teaching of Darwinism by high school teacher John Scopes, 'It is not the strongest species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but rather the one most adaptable to change.'¹¹⁷ There are many reasons why change efforts fail:

- * A lack of communication or inconsistent messages.
- * A lack of commitment to change due to a lack of compelling evidence for the benefits of change – and based on unrealistic expectations of the change effort. This lack of commitment shows itself in objections, an unwillingness to consider options or look at process issues and the use of 'hidden agendas' or delaying tactics.
- * A lack of commitment by top-level management.
- * A lack of dedicated effort.
- * A lack of expertise in the organization.
- * Poor planning and coordination.
- * A lack of necessary resources, including training.
- * Inconsistent human resource policies or systems, such as performance criteria used in performance appraisal and the way people are rewarded for their performance.
- * Conflict between functional areas.
- * An imposition of 'intellectual' solutions on emotional problems: a lack of emotional intelligence.
- * A history of failed change initiatives leading to a 'culture' of change failures.

Traumatic change brings with it some well-known reactions: first, a denial that it has happened; then anger about its having happened, bargaining over what to do, depression, and finally acceptance.¹¹⁸ John Mulligan and Paul Barber speak of the *yin* and *yang* of change: the social and emotional considerations and the technical aspects respectively.¹¹⁹ The model of response to change used in leadership development programmes at the Leadership Trust has immobilization first (a non-response or 'freezing') and then minimization ('This doesn't concern or affect us'); after this come self-doubt and depression, the low point at which change either fails or its reality is accepted (in which case change is tested in a search for its meaning and benefits), followed up by internalization. Perhaps the simplest model of change is that of Kurt Lewin:¹²⁰

- * Unfreezing – creating anxiety or dissatisfaction about the *status quo* or a problem and stimulating a desire for change.
- * Changing – new behaviour and activity which people identify with and internalize.
- * Refreezing – positively reinforcing the initial change successes.

While the challenge of change requires effective management, even more does it require outstanding leadership. The challenges are to find new and better ways of

motivating people, especially to make effective change happen, satisfy people's needs and expectations, and win their hearts and minds:¹²¹

- ✨ Responding positively to the need for change.
- ✨ Actively creating change.
- ✨ Making people comfortable with change.

John Kotter provides a model for creating effective change:¹²²

1. Create a sense of urgency and importance to change
Examine the market in which the organization operates and the competitive realities.
2. Create the guiding coalition
Put together a group with enough power to lead the change and get it to work together as an effective team.
3. Develop a vision and strategy
Create a vision for a desired future state as a basis for directing the change effort. Develop strategies for achieving the vision.
4. Communicate the change
Use every method possible to constantly communicate and explain the new vision and strategy and ensure the guiding coalition models the behaviour expected of employees.
5. Empower people for action
Get rid of obstacles to change, change systems or structures that undermine the vision, and encourage risk taking and new ideas and innovative activities.
6. Generate short-term wins
Plan and create visible improvements in performance, or 'wins'. Visibly recognize and reward people who made the wins possible.
7. Consolidate gains and continue the change effort
Use increased credibility to change all systems, structures and policies that do not fit together and do not fit the vision. Recruit, promote and develop people who can implement the change vision. Reinvigorate the change process with new projects, themes and change agents.
8. Embed the new approaches in the culture.
Create better performance through customer-oriented and productivity-oriented behaviour and more effective management and leadership.

Kotter's model of change is criticized by Chris Argyris.¹²³ He says that it reflects 'Model 1' behaviour (command-and-control) that is aimed at getting compliance from people rather than Model 2 behaviour that is genuinely people-centred. Moreover, he questions whether creating a new sense of urgency would lead to desired outcomes and whether people in these circumstances would fully understand what they have to do and produce new ideas for overcoming obstacles.

Moreover, unrealistic expectations associated with a sense of urgency are very frequently dashed, with consequent demoralization and embarrassment. Leo Apotheker, who was appointed CEO of the Hewlett-Packard Company in November 2010, was asked by the *Wall Street Journal* why he wanted organizational change to happen so fast. He answered:

There was a debate in the Swedish parliament in the 1960s about whether they should move from driving on the left side of the road to the right side of the road. True story. One member said jokingly we could do it gradually: on Monday the trucks, on Tuesday the bicycles, and Wednesday the cars. If a change has to happen why wait and do it gradually?¹²⁴

Malcolm Higgs and Deborah Rowland report a study in seven organizations that found emergent change was more successful than master change or directive change.¹²⁵ The most effective change leadership behaviour was framing change rather than shaping behaviour or creating capacity. In fact a leader-centric shaping of behaviour impaired the implementation of change.

During strategic change a consensus appears to develop, but less through gaining strength and more through increasing scope, according to Livia Markoczy.¹²⁶ A consensus during the early stages of successful strategic change tends to appear mainly not in the top management team but in the key interest groups, such as product development or marketing.

Today change that is continuous or discontinuous and not stability is the order of the day. Alvin Toffler, in his disturbing and challenging book *Future Shock*, says: 'Change is essential to man ... Change is life itself' and that 'a strategy for capturing control of change' is essential to avoiding future trauma and to the future well-being of the human race.¹²⁷ As Warren Bennis says, 'Change is the only constant.'¹²⁸

Change must be well managed. This entails planning; organization in terms of roles and responsibilities, procedures and adequate resources and know-how, monitoring and control; and compatible and supportive corporate policies, systems and practices. Raymond Caldwell, using a Delphi process with change agents, found that managing and leading changes were two distinct but complementary processes.¹²⁹ Effective leadership is necessary for change to be successfully introduced and sustained. Rosabeth Moss Kanter notes how there has been a shift of emphasis from managing change to leading change.¹³⁰

Change requires not only good management but also good leadership.¹³¹ What is our vision for change: what or where do we want to be? Why do we want or need to change anyway? What is important to us in the change process: what values and ethical principles will guide us? How are we going to change: what are our strategies for change? How will we empower people to *be able to do* what needs to be done? And how will we influence, motivate and even inspire them to *want to do* what needs to be done?

For the chief executive this means 'developing a vision of the future, crafting strategies to bring that vision into reality [and ensuring] that everybody in the organisation is

mobilising their energies towards the same goals ... the process we call “emotional alignment”, say Alan Hooper and John Potter.¹³² Their model of leadership proposes seven competencies: setting the direction, making decisions, communicating effectively, creating alignment, setting an example, getting the best out of people, and acting as a change agent.¹³³ It can be argued that the most difficult challenges facing leaders today are making sure that people in the organization can adapt to change and that leaders can envisage where the organization is currently placed in the market and where it should be in the future.¹³⁴ Change is now driven by a global orientation and customer needs and demands. It requires, Manfred Kets de Vries says, an ‘authoritative (or respect-based) leadership rather than authoritarian (position-based) leadership’.¹³⁵ Peter Drucker says:

To survive and succeed, every organization will have to turn itself into a change agent. The most effective way to manage change successfully is to create it. But experience has shown that grafting innovation on to a traditional enterprise does not work. The enterprise has to become a change agent. This requires the organized abandonment of things that have been shown to be unsuccessful, and the organized and continuous improvement of every product, service, and process within the enterprise (which the Japanese call *kaizen*). It requires the exploitation of successes, especially unexpected and unplanned-for ones, and it requires systematic innovation. The point of becoming a change agent is that it changes the mind-set of the entire organization. Instead of seeing change as a threat, its people will come to consider it as an opportunity.¹³⁶

The most frequently mentioned key to successful change, according to an American Management Association survey of 259 senior executives in *Fortune 500* companies in the United States, is leadership (see Table 1.2).¹³⁷

Table 1.2 Keys to Successful Change

	<i>% mentioning this as important</i>
Leadership	92
Corporate values	84
Communication	75
Teambuilding	69
Education and training	64

Leadership for change requires competencies that can span the cognitive, emotional, cultural, spiritual, moral and behavioural domains of our being. And in the end, to change anything, perhaps we have to change ourselves in the process. In the words of an African proverb:

**When I was a young man, I thought I would change the world.
When I was middle-aged, I thought I would change my village.
Now that I am an old man, I think I will change myself.¹³⁸**

The Impact and Importance of Leadership

The rulers of ancient China studied leadership at great length. They were preoccupied with change and its associated chaos and uncertainty, as indeed we still are today. The writings on leadership of the general Sun Tzu in *The Art of War* and the philosopher Confucius in *The Analects* have endured over some two and a half millennia and are still quoted far and wide today. One lesson from Sun Tzu is that even the most brilliant strategy requires effective leadership to be successful.¹³⁹ This is a lesson that receives scant attention from strategy theorists and eludes many business school texts on business strategy, or is at best treated *en passant*. The importance of strategy to leadership is discussed in chapter 7.

Leadership is the crucial issue, Rosabeth Moss Kanter says, when a company is failing and its survival is at stake.¹⁴⁰ It matters most in respect of an openness and honesty in dialogue, mutual respect, collaborative problem solving, and the encouragement of initiative. She says that withholding information from employees and the public compounds a financial or strategic mess: the cover-up can be worse than the mistake. 'Leadership is the ultimate advantage', says Nikos Mourkogiannis. 'When it's present, it makes all other advantages possible. And poor leadership can turn even the best advantage into a disaster.'¹⁴¹

Mutual respect is not gained by punishing those responsible for mistakes. It is gained through recognizing what people have to offer and involving them in problem solving and decision making, for example in strategy formulation. And problem solving and a commitment to solutions in turnaround situations require collaboration across organizational boundaries. Moss Kanter quotes as an example how Greg Dyke, on taking over as Director-General of the BBC in 1999, used this approach in his 'One BBC: Making It Happen' strategy to rehabilitate a demoralized organization. Initiative can be encouraged by empowering employees to take action, again something that had been missing at the BBC and which Dyke introduced. Creating such a culture is key for leaders in turnaround situations. In the words of Moss Kanter: '... this is the true test of leadership: whether those being led out of the defeatism of decline gain the confidence that produces victories'.¹⁴²

The Industrial Revolution, starting in the UK, shifted the emphasis from political and military leadership to business and economic leadership – building industrial enterprises, opening up markets, and innovation.¹⁴³ Such leadership, however, was ascribed to the relatively few ('born' leaders?) who were usually autocrats. As Douglas McGregor stated in his seminal book *The Human Side of Enterprise*:

Traditionally, leadership has tended to be equated with autocratic command and there are still many who see leadership mainly in terms of the issuing of orders which are eagerly obeyed by followers whose loyalty is largely determined by the charisma of the leader.¹⁴⁴

Over half a century later, this is still true.

Research by the Council for Excellence in Management and Leadership, set up by the British government in April 2000, revealed a need to 'increase the commitment of organisations of all sizes, in both the private and public sector, to develop better managers

and leaders'.¹⁴⁵ The Council acknowledged a 'direct link between leadership capability and sustained high performance'.¹⁴⁶ Its research findings included the following:

- ✨ There are still shortages in the quality and quantity of people with leadership skills. Yet the need for those with leadership skills is increasing all the time. There need to be some 400,000 new entrants to management and leadership positions each year.
- ✨ Larger organizations prefer customized leadership development programmes.
- ✨ Few professional associations require any management learning prior to membership and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements, despite a recognition by professionals of the importance of leadership development.
- ✨ There is a lack of data on leadership development for benchmarking purposes.

The CEML research was the basis for proposals and an agenda for action on leadership development. However, according to research carried out in 2010 by the Kenexa Research Institute, an American talent management consultancy, surveying some 29,000 employees in 21 countries, the UK was ranked 17th on a leadership effectiveness index.¹⁴⁷ The UK lagged behind the United States and Germany and also behind China and India, who ranked joint first, but was ahead of bottom-ranked Japan. Kenexa identified two key priorities for leadership development in the UK:

1. *Building trust by employees in their leaders.* Jack Wiley, executive director of the Institute, says:

The abilities to inspire trust [in leaders] and to remain trustworthy are essential qualities for any leader ... We found that certain actions and behaviours are important for developing leadership trust. These include working ethically and with integrity, supporting whistleblowers, 'walking the talk' and giving credit where it is due.

2. *Engaging in open, honest, two-way communication.* Wiley says:

There's also a need to communicate openly, to listen and to remain approachable. Direct reports need to feel safe enough to tell their leader the truth.

We discuss the values underlying leadership in Chapter 6 and leadership development in Chapter 11.

The importance of leadership is commonly judged in terms of its impact on the *effectiveness* of an entity that is led. 'The ultimate measure of effectiveness for leaders', according to Bill George, 'is the ability to sustain superior results over an extended period of time'.¹⁴⁸ However, leadership is a more widely pervasive phenomenon than this. Its primary significance, according to some scholars, is not economic, rather it is its importance in stemming the loss of meaning associated with 'modernity', for example the moral collapse of firms.¹⁴⁹ Richard Hackman also believes that the leadership role is best seen not in terms of its economic impact but in terms of its shaping of the organizational context, such as goals, membership, incentives and culture.¹⁵⁰

In addition Nitin Nohria and Rakesh Khurana argue that its scope and importance need to be addressed not only in terms of their impact on performance effectiveness but also, and more importantly, in terms of their influence on organizational life – such as meaning, morality and culture.¹⁵¹ They also argue convincingly that these require urgent attention with respect to leadership education and development in institutions of higher education – and, I would add, in business school MBA programmes especially.

Leadership throughout the Hierarchy: Individual, Shared and Distributed Leadership

Until recently many of the texts on leadership had assumed that leadership was ‘a solo act – a one-person undertaking – regardless of whether the organization being led ... [was] a nation, a global corporation or a scout troop’.¹⁵² The conventional view of leadership is that individual leaders make a significant and even crucial impact on the performance of their organizations, though research findings are inconsistent.

For example, Alan Berkeley Thomas in a study of large retail firms in the UK found that individual CEOs *do* make a difference.¹⁵³ More recently Noam Wasserman and colleagues also found in their study that, while industry structure and company history may explain a greater variance in company performance over time, the influence of CEO leadership is also substantial, although it may vary across industries.¹⁵⁴ However, Bruce Pasternack and colleagues claim there is little correlation between CEO leadership behaviour and organizational performance.¹⁵⁵ And Richard Wellins and Patterson Weaver Jr quote a study of 83 leadership successions in 1997 and 1998 by Margaret Wiersma that showed little relationship between the loss of a CEO and company performance.¹⁵⁶

The ‘heroic’ model of solo leadership that attributes greatness, charisma and near-infallibility to a single leader is flawed: ‘both dangerous and dangerously naïve’ according to Keith Grint.¹⁵⁷ Totalitarian regimes ‘led’ by a single leader – whether in countries or companies – are testimony to this view. What CEOs who are effective leaders themselves do is to create a ‘leadership culture’ that is characterized by collective or distributed leadership and therefore a multitude of leaders throughout the organization. In the words of Henry Kissinger, former US Secretary of State, ‘A leader becomes great if he institutionalizes a system, if it doesn’t become totally dependent on one person.’¹⁵⁸ British supermarket chain Tesco’s long-serving chief executive Sir Terry Leahy’s announcement in June 2010 that he was to retire in nine months’ time led to a significant fall in the share price, suggesting just such a dependency.

This dependency has been reinforced by executive education and leadership development programmes that emphasize the individual leader:

The parsing of leadership styles has become de rigeur in American business schools. Professors teach students to adopt the right leadership style for themselves, using ‘360-degree feedback’ to make them aware of how they are perceived by others – and how to manage those perceptions. A growth industry called executive coaching caters to the leadership-impaired.¹⁵⁹

Dennis Tourish and colleagues studied transformational leadership education in 21 leading business schools and found a confusing conflict between the widely posited purposes of leadership and an undue emphasis on the individual 'heroic' leader.¹⁶⁰ This conflict concerns the 'unresolved tension between two ... ideas': the purpose of a collective interest and common purpose that characterizes transformational leadership and the purpose of self-interest (derived from agency theory) in which transformational leaders exert a top-down influence over the activities of others in pursuit of their visions, missions and objectives. Each purpose or aim undercuts the other. And Tourish and colleagues say: 'Business school educators tend ... to uncritically exaggerate the contribution [individual] leaders make to business success' and 'use stories which chronicle how powerful and charismatic leaders routinely rescue organizations from the precipice of failure'.

New 'post-heroic' ideas, however, have emphasized the value of more collaborative and less hierarchical practices that are enacted through fluid, multi-directional interactions, networks and partnerships.¹⁶¹ While these ideas about 'shared', 'distributed', 'collaborative' and 'networked' leadership are not necessarily interchangeable, they all imply a more collaborative and shared notion of power and authority.

Individual Leadership

Solo leadership is not necessary, not desirable, and probably impossible in today's organizations, according to James O'Toole and Bruce Pasternack and colleagues.¹⁶² The new view of leadership is that the traditional role of a single leader who 'leads' by command-and-control can no longer work because the challenges and problems facing organizations today are too complex and difficult for one person or even a small group of executives to handle on their own.¹⁶³ 'Contextualists' argue that many situational factors constrain solo leaders.¹⁶⁴ What is needed, Wilfred H. Drath says, is a 'relational dialogue ... people making sense and meaning of their work together... [creating] a world in which it makes sense to have shared goals or shared knowledge'.¹⁶⁵

The 'heroic' model of leadership attributes greatness and infallibility to individual leaders, according to Keith Grint, which, to repeat, is 'both dangerous and dangerously naïve'.¹⁶⁶ Business leadership that depends on one all-powerful leader, Pasternack and colleagues say, is 'unstable in the long run'.¹⁶⁷ The examples they give are the disintegration of the ITT Corporation after CEO Harold Geneen's retirement and the way in which General Motors after Alfred Sloan, Polaroid after Edwin Land, and Coca-Cola after Roberto Goizueta seemed to lose their way.

There are many examples of once-lauded heroes falling out of favour: *The Economist* quotes Bernie Ebbers of WorldCom, Diana Brooks of Sotheby's, Jean-Marie Messier of Vivendi Universal, Percy Barnevik of ABB, Kenneth Lay and Jeffrey Skilling of Enron, and even the iconic Jack Welch of General Electric.¹⁶⁸ Stefan Stern cites Tony Hayward, former CEO of BP, whose star waned over the disastrous Gulf oil spill in 2010 owing to his inflexibility and lack of dynamism, his appearance as 'a rabbit in the headlights of a car' and, above all, his ill-considered and clumsy public statements.¹⁶⁹ Stern says that Hayward's 'pleasing self-effacing' style when he took over from Lord Browne in 2007 'didn't cut it at the height of the crisis of 2010 ... A reminder that the best leaders do not simply adopt one fixed (heroic) [style], but are

able to adapt to suit the circumstances' (as we will see in Chapter 2 when we discuss situational leadership).¹⁷⁰ Tony Blair, as a former UK prime minister, is another example of a heroic leader eventually falling out of favour.

One problem is the celebrity status that is accorded to solo leaders which feeds their egos and reinforces their ambitions. The result is that:

Nearly all CEOs think of themselves as the sort of all-knowing, tough, take-charge leader whose photo appears on the cover of *Forbes*, and they find irresistible the temptation to centralize authority in their offices, making all important ... decisions themselves.¹⁷¹

This phenomenon is not limited to 'heroes' in the business world of capitalism. It is apparent in communist cultures too. For example, personality cults developed around communist leaders like Jiang Zemin and Zhu Ronji in the People's Republic of China. Says Susan V. Lawrence of the Beijing Bureau of the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 'China's state media [are] increasingly given over to paeans to Jiang', and he has engaged in adorning public buildings with his calligraphic inscriptions 'with enthusiasm'.¹⁷²

Individual leadership, nevertheless, still has a place. It is necessary in small and start-up companies and in organizations where inspiration is needed to bring about transformational change, say Pasternack and colleagues.¹⁷³ But they also add:

CEOs of large companies should ... see that it is more productive and satisfying to become a leader of leaders than to go it alone.¹⁷⁴

Shared and Distributed Leadership

Various references in the literature have been made to leadership that is shared, distributed, distributive, dispersed, collective, or (not a pre-existing term) institutional. *For clarity's sake, distributed leadership may be regarded as the (hierarchically) vertical dispersal of authority and responsibility and shared leadership as the 'horizontal' aspects of these phenomena.* House and Aditja say:

The process of leadership cannot be described simply in terms of the behavior of an individual: rather, leadership involves collaborative relationships that lead to collective action grounded in the shared values of people who work together to effect positive change.¹⁷⁵

Burdening the lexicon, they distinguish among 'delegated leadership', 'co-leadership' and 'peer leadership'. And co-leadership itself is interpreted in different ways, for example in terms of one co-leader 'playing second fiddle' to another¹⁷⁶ or as two leaders working side by side with equal managerial responsibility.¹⁷⁷ Others use the term to mean the same as leadership that is shared among many individuals. Shared leadership is nothing new, having been recorded in ancient times:

Republican Rome had a successful system of co-leadership that lasted for over four centuries. This structure of co-leadership was so effective that it extended from the lower levels of the Roman magistracy to the very top position, that of consul.¹⁷⁸

A survey by the Manufacturing Foundation found that leadership in successful middle-market manufacturing firms in the UK tended not to reside in one person at the top but existed as a shared role among the top management team.¹⁷⁹ Shared leadership reflects a shared ownership of problems; an emphasis on learning and development (empowerment) to enable sharing, understanding and contribution; and a culture of openness, mutual respect and trust. Michael Kocolowski suggests that healthcare and education (in the United States), where most studies have been conducted, are two sectors that are especially open to shared leadership.¹⁸⁰ The successful recovery of British supermarket Asda as part of Walmart in the 1990s was overseen by co-leaders Archie Norman and Allan Leighton.

Michael Useem found that 'The best projects [by MBA students] come from the teams that learn to act together and exercise shared leadership.'¹⁸¹ Shared leadership is characterized by:

- * The quality of interactions among people rather than their position in a hierarchy.
- * The effectiveness with which people work together in solving a problem rather than a solo performance by one leader.
- * Conversations rather than instructions.
- * Shared values and beliefs.
- * Honesty and a desire for the common good rather than self-interest, secrecy and spin.

In 2001 Bruce Pasternack and colleagues, in collaboration with the World Economic Forum and the University of Southern California, surveyed over 4,000 people in leadership roles in 12 large organizations on three continents and interviewed 20 to 40 in each one. They found that many successful companies – such as the Intel Corporation, Motorola, and the Hyundai Electronics Industries Company in South Korea – were developing an institutional leadership capacity rather than depending on a charismatic CEO: 'Rather than an aria, leadership can be a chorus of diverse voices singing in unison.'¹⁸² The measure they developed is known as the Leadership Quotient (LQ). Leadership, James O'Toole says, is an 'organizational trait'.¹⁸³

However, O'Toole and colleagues reported on the indifferent reception these findings had at the 2000 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, despite evidence being provided of a sufficient number of cases of shared leadership that could attest to its success:

... this resistance to the notion of shared leadership stems from thousands of years of cultural conditioning [starting perhaps with Plato's views]. We are dealing with a near-universal myth: in the popular mind, leadership is always singular.¹⁸⁴

Marianne Döös and Lena Wilhelmson reported on a study showing that two-thirds of Swedish managers had a positive attitude towards shared leadership (or co-leadership).¹⁸⁵ They studied four pairs of leaders in four Swedish organizations that were concerned with product development, management consulting, communications and soccer. Their common characteristics included shared values, mutual confidence, shared approaches to planning and visualizing, capitalizing on differences and a receptivity to

new ideas, and a joint recognition of setbacks and successes. The Amana Corporation's CEO Paul Staman commented:

[Shared leadership] allows more time for leaders to spend in the field; it creates an internal dynamic in which the leaders constantly challenge each other to higher levels of performance; it encourages a shared leadership mindset at all levels of the company; it prevents the trauma of transition that occurs in organizations when a strong CEO suddenly leaves. [What makes this work is] a shared set of guiding principles, and a team in which each member is able to set aside ego and 'what's in it for me' thinking.¹⁸⁶

Jay Carson and colleagues, studying 59 consulting teams, found that shared leadership predicted team performance as rated by clients.¹⁸⁷ They also found that external coaching and the internal team environment, consisting of a shared purpose, social support and a voice, were associated with the emergence of shared leadership.

Leadership involving two people can, however, prove very dysfunctional despite its lasting many years. For example, during the period 1997–2007 in the UK the relationship between the then prime minister Tony Blair and his Chancellor of the Exchequer (finance minister) Gordon Brown was, *The Times* said, seriously flawed, with a consequential 'terrible, wasteful cost in allowing governance to play second fiddle to psychodrama'.¹⁸⁸

The idea of distributed leadership (also known as institutional or dispersed leadership) takes shared leadership further. It was first described by Philip Selznick in 1957.¹⁸⁹ Jeff Gold and Alma Harris highlighted a study of distributed leadership in two schools and how it occurred through 'mediation in the form of [dialogue] and representational symbols' with the aim of identifying actions for improvement and monitoring any subsequent progress.¹⁹⁰

Peter Gronn, in his meta-analysis of empirical studies in 20 organizations with distributed leadership, observes that this often begins spontaneously but eventually becomes institutionalized.¹⁹¹ He identifies two features of distributed leadership: interdependence and coordination. Interdependence is characterized by an overlapping of leaders' responsibilities and the complementarity of responsibilities. Coordination and alignment among co-leaders are key to success, but not only at the top.

O'Toole found that 'many of the key tasks and responsibilities of leadership [are] institutionalized in the systems, practices, and cultures of the organization'.¹⁹² Institutionalized leadership is characterized by an empowerment to act like owners and entrepreneurs rather than 'hired hands'; to take the initiative and accept accountability; and to create and adhere to agreed systems and procedures. O'Toole and colleagues suggest that the reason for the continued success of companies under the successive tenure of several CEOs – and for the failure of previously successful CEOs in new companies – is to do with organizational variables like systems, structures and policies, 'factors that are not included in research based on a solo leadership model'.¹⁹³

Flexible distributive leadership is required to cope with the increasing volatility, complexity and variety of organizations' external environments, according to Michael Brown and Denny Goia.¹⁹⁴ And distributive leadership, in Peter Gronn's view, has emerged as a result of the development of new organizational forms – such as flatter structures that are more organic and virtual organization – that require greater interdependence and

coordination.¹⁹⁵ The current interest in institutional leadership reflects a post-industrial division of labour that is characterized by distributed workplaces, which include such phenomena as 'hot-desking' and working from home. This kind of working has been made possible by developments in IT. But Keith Grint warns that, 'In attempting to escape from the clutches of heroic leadership we now seem enthralled by its apparent opposite – distributed leadership: in this post-heroic era we will all be leaders so that none are.'¹⁹⁶

Yet a study of 12 universities in the UK by George Petrov of the University of Exeter's Centre for Leadership Studies found that distributed leadership was being used as 'a cloak to hide an increasing lack of consultation with staff ... used by those in positions of real power to disguise power differentials, offering the illusion of consultation and participation while obscuring the mechanisms by which decisions are reached and resources distributed'.¹⁹⁷ Petrov sees distributed leadership not as a successor to individual leadership but as a parallel process.

Bruce Pasternack and colleagues suggest that whether (and how) a CEO builds institutional leadership, as did Jack Welch at General Electric and Yotaro 'Tony' Kobayashi at Fuji Xerox, can make a difference to organizational performance.¹⁹⁸ Pasternack says:

Too much is being written about the CEO as the great leader and not enough about organizations that demonstrate leadership capacity throughout the organization ... Really good leaders take their skill and abilities and build into their organizations the capacity for leadership all the way down the line.¹⁹⁹

And Mary Curnock Cook, chief executive of UCAS, the UK's university and college student admissions service, sees distributed leadership as the organization's DNA:

Leadership can and should take place at all levels in an organisation. It's not something that comes only from the top. I like to think of leadership being the DNA of a company.²⁰⁰

Hierarchical Level and Leadership

If distributed leadership is important, then it would be interesting as well as useful to explore the similarities and differences in leadership behaviour and effectiveness across the various levels of an organization's hierarchy. Most early empirical research studies of leadership focused on first-line or middle-level managers owing to the availability of access and large enough sample sizes.²⁰¹ However, in line with the growing acceptance of qualitative research, in more recent times we have seen many more studies of CEOs that have been based on interviews with them – indeed there has been a plethora of such studies.

Organizational hierarchy is associated with 'command-and-control' leadership. On the one hand, Robert Fuller says, authority and hierarchy are associated with inflexibility, slow decision making and a lack of responsiveness towards customers, and, on the other hand, if 'rank matches with experience, expertise and judgement ... [these] ensure that the person who is best qualified to make the decision is the one with the

authority to make it'.²⁰² Fuller makes the point that 'the problem is not hierarchy *per se*, but the abuse thereof', such as self-aggrandizement and self-preservation.²⁰³ Frances Hesselbein says 'when people move into a circular system, enormous energy is released'.²⁰⁴ But many organizations will probably always have hierarchies, and leadership in relation to organizational level is therefore a worthwhile consideration.

Leadership has been traditionally conceived as a top-down, hierarchical and formal role.²⁰⁵ Clearly there are many people with formal leadership titles throughout hierarchical organizations – not just CEOs – who are effective leaders, however we would choose to define what 'effective' means here. Nevertheless, Scott DeRue and Susan Ashford correctly question why some people in formal leadership positions are not seen as leaders and why some people are seen as leaders even though they do not hold formal leadership positions.²⁰⁶ Leadership theory has come to encompass more than formal, traditional leadership, namely a broader relationship of mutual influence 'composed of reciprocal and mutually reinforcing identities as leaders and followers [that] is [dynamic and] endorsed and reinforced within a broader organizational context'.²⁰⁷ In other words, according to several scholars, leadership is a socially constructed and reciprocal relationship between leaders and followers.²⁰⁸

However, traditional, hierarchical and formal organizations with leadership of one kind or another in evidence do still exist today, and they do so in abundance. For example, leadership for Scott Goodwin, CEO of Voxclever, an IT and telecoms company founded in 2008, is 'to provide a clear framework for the business and make it abundantly clear to my managers what their roles and responsibilities are'.²⁰⁹ And in such organizations we can indeed find effective leaders – and effective and happy 'subordinates' who may or may not be 'followers' in the currently fashionable sense. Are work situations commonplace where 'individuals "claim" an identity and others affirm or "grant" that identity as the underlying process by which leader and follower identities become socially constructed and form the basis of leader-follower relationships'?²¹⁰ I have yet to witness any CEOs or indeed any managers throughout an organizational hierarchy 'claiming' their leadership role and their staff 'granting' it. In formally *leaderless* groups, where leaders may emerge because of their value, contribution and esteem in a group, as described by Bernard Bass in his classic 1954 article,²¹¹ what DeRue and Ashford describe certainly makes sense.

But such democracy in commonplace conventional organizations is still a long way off for many if not most corporate cultures and national cultures. Indeed in some cultures 'democracy' is a deception, an illusion, wishful thinking, or is even regarded as subversive. And yet the uprisings in many Arab countries in early 2011 would seem to signal an accelerated change in this unhappy state of affairs towards a more truly democratic, inclusive and participative form of leadership that resonates with the self-actualization of humanity.

Any comprehensive theory of leadership therefore would need to encompass leadership – its nature, occurrence and development – both in formal organizations and in informal groups. Moreover, such a theory must not lose sight of what the word 'leadership' means – 'showing the way and drawing people with you' – and eschew fanciful and impertinent constructions of what one or another academic *wants* it to mean. This is the approach that this book takes.

Likely hierarchical differences in leadership behaviour were pointed out long ago by Philip Selznick.²¹² According to Robert Lord and Karen Maher, 'the perceptual processes that operate with respect to leaders are very likely to involve quite different considerations at upper versus lower hierarchical levels'.²¹³ Top-level leaders are responsible for the vision and mission of the organization – where it is heading, the development of appropriate strategies and strategic goals, and creating and promoting shared values throughout the organization. Lower-level leaders are responsible for formulating plans to implement strategies, accomplishing routine tasks and encouraging individual involvement and team working. Amatai Etzioni sees top management as being concerned with ends rather than means, middle management with means rather than ends, and first-level management with daily operations.²¹⁴ At all levels, however, there are two needs: to empower people – to *enable* people to do what needs to be done – and to engage them – to get them to *want* to do what needs to be done.

Richard Wellins and Patterson Weaver Jr argue that first-level and middle managers are:

... the leaders who really make or break a company, and who offer the greatest return on a development investment ... Working daily on the front lines, these people see problems, opportunities, and challenges. They are the most visible level of leadership to employees and customers. They bear the brunt of the responsibility for engaging the workers, building morale, and retaining key players ... [They] are the lynchpin between the strategy set at the top and the execution of that strategy through the ranks.²¹⁵

At lower organizational levels, Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn, however, suggest little leadership as such is required, as the focus is on administrating to maintain effective operations.²¹⁶ This is contentious: leadership is needed wherever there are subordinates or followers. And administrative tasks are a means by which objectives and performance standards are achieved: plans have to be formulated to carry out tasks and achieve objectives. Katz and Kahn say that, at middle levels, administrative procedures are developed and implemented, and human relations skills are important. At the top level of an organization these administrative procedures are initiated to reflect new policy. Executives with overall responsibility for an organization will practise *strategic leadership*,²¹⁷ which we discuss in the chapter on leadership and strategy.

However, any division, department or section in a company can have a vision of where or what it needs to be. It can, and ought to, have the strategies to pursue this. And, while it may – and hopefully does – share the core corporate values, it can also define additional values, for example the performance standards that are particularly important to that part of the company and guide its members' behaviour. Examples are external or internal customer service, production quality and data accuracy. Conversely, CEOs must also be concerned with individual involvement and team working among their board members and senior management. Stephen Zaccaro and Richard Klimoski argue that a leader's position in the organizational hierarchy determines the choices available to him or her, the impact of those choices, and the requirements of the leader.²¹⁸

In addition to a critical review of the major theories and models of leadership, we explore in Chapter 3 how transformational and transactional leadership – an

important and useful current model of leadership – is distributed throughout organizational hierarchies.

The collective leadership capacity of an organization is the sum total of distributed leadership at all hierarchical levels. And, as Peter Drucker says, this is the basis for its survival and success: it provides an organization's ability to act as its *own* change agent.²¹⁹ When the collective leadership capacity of an organization is strong, we may say that that organization has a strong *leadership brand*. Dave Ulrich and colleagues state:

Leadership brand occurs when leaders at every level are clear about which results are most important, develop a consistent approach to delivering these results, and build attributes that support [their] achievement ...²²⁰

Creating and sustaining a leadership brand²²¹ is a way to build employee engagement and commitment to the company,²²² just as a product or service brand is a way to build client or customer loyalty. Brand loyalty, in the case of leadership, requires employee engagement and commitment.



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Discussion Questions

1. Why is there no agreed paradigm for leadership?
2. 'Leadership is showing the way and helping or inducing others to pursue it'. Discuss.
3. What is 'good' leadership?
4. 'Leaders are people who do the right thing; managers are people who do things right' (Warren Bennis). Discuss.
5. 'And when we think we lead, we are most led' (Lord Byron). Discuss.
6. Why is the study of followership useful to understanding leadership?
7. Change management or change leadership? Which is more important?
8. Do leaders behave differently across hierarchical levels in organizations?
9. Is the day of the individual, 'heroic' leader giving way to the age of collective leadership?
10. How might collective organizational leadership enable an organization to be its own 'change agent'?