Leadership and Communication

Improving leadership and communication Skills for Municipal Managers and Supervisors


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Executive Summary

The primary focus of my research paper will be to examine two main areas of management – leadership and communication as it applies in the municipal setting.

Leadership

What is leadership in a municipal environment or for that matter in any workplace?

“Managers are people who do things right, and leaders are people who do the right thing”¹

Leadership is a process, not necessarily a position of power. Leadership is action orientated, not just by virtue of a title or a certain rank.² We all at some point have become leaders in any given situation. We have influenced the actions of others, have had personal input and involvement, and have taken responsibility for our actions. All of these situations can be considered as taking a leadership role. Leadership does not always consist of being at the forefront or creating grand gestures. Leadership can be summed up by all the small gestures or decisions we make everyday as municipal managers.

The primary objective of this section of my research paper will be to evaluate the different styles of leadership and their effects on the general day to day operations in the workplace. My research will also include the theories and research behind the development of leaders. Although the theories of leadership will mainly focus on the municipal management sector; they are certainly applicable to all workplaces.

My research will also include methods of self-assessment to determine the style of leadership that an individual presently utilizes. I believe self-assessment is critical in determining where one’s weaknesses are in relation to leadership.

The paper will provide some tools and methods for improving leadership and managerial skills. The strategies for self improvement are easily practiced and are measurable through self-monitoring, feedback from colleagues, and supervisory assessment.

Communication

What is Communication?

Communication is a very complex process of sharing information, ideas and feelings, through the intricate use of a myriad of elements. This includes verbal utterances (words), written or pictured text, graphics, gesticulations, tone, expression and specific actions to name a few.³

Communication between supervisors and staff is essential on many levels, from the top down, laterally or from the bottom up. Communication can effectively increase morale in the workplace.

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² Helga Abbot, Georgian College, Leadership and Communications Theory, (course documents), 28.
³ Helga Abbot, Georgian College, Leadership and Communications Theory, (course documents), 89.
But it can also increase dissent and worker dissatisfaction. Communication can be critical depending on the situation, for instance during a large scale emergency, when effective communication is necessary for the restoration of safety and the saving of lives. Hopefully we will never find ourselves in this sort of situation, but our daily responsibilities can still benefit greatly from practicing effective communication skills.

My research on communication will, as with leadership, provide some easy and short self-assessment surveys and techniques. Once a communication self-assessment is completed, I will provide the necessary tools and techniques for improvement. Again the techniques offered for improvement will be measurable, practicable, and easily monitored to track progress.

I hope through my research to explore several theories which will provide the tools to empower managers to become effective leaders and communicators in an increasingly demanding municipal workplace environment.
Scope and Methodology

The primary objective of my research paper is to review the leadership and communication styles utilized by municipal managers and supervisors. It is also my goal to provide the necessary tools to managers and supervisors to help identify their current leadership and communication styles. I believe that as managers once we become aware of our leadership styles, only then can we endeavor to improve. Through my research I will describe and categorize the major types of leadership and communication styles, traits and characteristics of each.

The initial examination of this topic began with the review of materials taken from a leadership and communication course from Georgian College, which forms part of a Fire Department Officer training program. Further information was sought from the AMCTO Municipal Managers Course, of which this paper forms part of the curriculum. Additional information was reviewed from other sources, including articles, books, and online information. There is a significant amount of information in written text on the subject of leadership and communication.

A number of websites were also found to contain useful articles and research on the subject of leadership and communication. The links provided on these websites provided additional relevant information and further areas of research.

In addition to the aforementioned areas of research, surveys were given to a sample of the Town of Greater Napanee managers and staff with the intention of identifying their leadership and communication styles. The information gathered forms part of this paper and the surveys themselves are located in the appendix. The intention of the surveys is to expose areas of weakness and strengths to work or build upon.
Introduction

What is leadership and how can it be defined?

Leadership is not easily defined, but there are many definitions in the literature to assist in describing it. Sadly, leadership is most recognizable when there is a lack of it. Leadership is not something that can be pigeonholed or definitive; it has many faces and styles. Leadership is a process through influence of others by example, discussion, or direction to accomplish goals or tasks, or to achieve the vision of an organization or team. Leaders also inspire individuals to become the very best they can be as people, as well as good team members or employees.

Good leadership is honorable and trustworthy, dedicated to a particular cause or organization. Leaders create trends and characteristics within organizations or teams in which employees or colleagues will emulate and follow; thereby leading by example. Good leaders are not self-serving but apply methods to achieve goals without misusing authority. In other words the objective is to lead and not just have employees simply obey commands. Good leaders want to empower their staff and colleagues and not only give orders.

There are a countless methodologies and theories concerning leadership practices and styles that have been documented and discussed. Leadership styles are often chosen based on the situation or the group you are involved with, or in some cases we are driven into certain situations which dictate the need for variations in a particular style.

Leaders also have to handle diversity in the workplace. Working with people that do not share your values can lead to conflict. Strong leadership can promote a bias free environment, without prejudice, and thus reduce the need for conflict resolution.

Communication for Municipal Managers

Communication is critical in the workplace, particularly for management. When dealing with diversity and leadership, communication can prevent conflict from occurring by clearly conveying your views and vision to the staff. Communication can also aid in workplace morale and improve job satisfaction for everyone.

There are many types and levels of communication that managers can adopt for any given situation or occurrence. My research paper will review the communication tools best applied in a municipal management environment.
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Types of Leadership Styles

Theories/Models of Leadership

There are many challenges for those who are expected to be leaders in today’s municipal environment. Part of the challenge is to determine your strengths and weaknesses through self-assessment.

Self Assessment

Some leaders may find it easy to determine their style of leadership while others find it difficult. Through self-assessment we can understand ourselves and in turn gain the tools necessary for improvement. When we observe leaders around us we can often determine their strengths and weaknesses before the individual does. These people are in a sense an open book, remaining consistent with their style and behavior, only slightly wavering for the given situation or role.

The concept of self-monitoring is critical for municipal managers in the sense that we need to adapt continually in an environment that is similar to any other workplace. Municipal leaders must deal with a myriad of challenges and tasks, and continue to monitor progress. Municipalities are a form of government that is not just public, but local and therefore very accountable. On any given day a municipal manager may be dealing with a ratepayer, member of Council or even a member of parliament on a myriad of issues. Municipal managers have to adapt to individual needs while always remaining at the forefront and in the public eye. We are continually reminded of our roles as leaders and we must continue to monitor our progress in this regard and understand our strengths and weaknesses, in order to build on or improve upon them.

Many leadership theories rely on the assumptions that leaders have the ability to evaluate various situations, and alter their behavior to match the requirements of the situation. With this in mind those leaders that can instantly adjust their style (given the situation) will be, and are recognized as the most effective leaders.

Type ‘A’ Behavior

I would like to focus my self assessment section on the characteristics of a Type A leader, as this appears to be the most often used behavior by municipal managers, at least in my experience. Type A’s can be generally described as trying to accomplish more in less time, which as mentioned earlier is a part of daily municipal management. This type of behavior generally leads for a need to control or micromanage staff or a given situation.

There are four main sets or categories of behaviors characteristic of a Type A leader.

The first behavior is Type A’s tend to be concerned with time and a sense of urgency. This I feel comes from the sense that ratepayers want action, resolution, and they feel that their concern should be at the forefront.

The second *Type A*’s behavior is competitiveness. *Type A’s* tend to be highly competitive at work in addition to recreational and other personal situations. They tend to keep records for tracking performance. They continually measure their performance against others, and that of their staff. Coming ahead and winning is the major concern.

The third *Type A* behavior is polyphasic, which involves doing several tasks at once. We as municipal managers have all had to undertake several tasks at once, sometimes several times in a day. However the Type A characteristic behavior tends to take on several tasks and responsibilities even when it may not be necessary to do so. This behavior is typical of highly motivated municipal managers and leaders, who tend to take on more even when not called upon to do so.

The fourth and final *Type A* behavior is hostility. Taking into consideration the three previous characteristic behaviors, we can see why when faced with delays or glitches, this type of municipal manager may become hostile. This type of leader is intolerant of mistakes and delays, aggressive and sometimes malicious. This type of manager may also be very loyal to his or her municipality and therefore deem it as a failure to make mistakes or be questioned on a decision.

These sets of behaviors are all necessitated by the *Type A*’s need for control over his or her environment. *Type A’s* need an increasing amount of control over the events that they have internal power over. *Type A’s* tend to be poor at delegation, and generally prefer to work alone. They like to maintain control over all aspects of their work.\(^5\)

*Type A’s* tend to set high performance standards for themselves and those around them. From a leadership standpoint high expectations may lead to high performance and quality, but may lead to overworked and burnt out staff. They tend to be dedicated hard workers, and look down upon those who are not. *Types A’s* tend to feel threatened by their environment, and set up the workplace in ways so they still maintain control.\(^6\)

Municipal government tends to have many responsibilities and liabilities. Most Directors and Chief Administrative Officers of organizations have high standards because of the presence of public scrutiny and public perceptions, not to mention the extensive list of liabilities. The *Type A* personality lends itself to municipal management, because of the demand for high quality and timely completion of tasks. *Type A’s* want to please the public at any cost, because as municipal managers it is our responsibility to do so.

The trend in today’s municipal environment is for self-understanding and self-improvement, which is a major factor in organizational effectiveness.

In times of continuous change and increasing pressure on leaders to be flexible, and deliver high quality and performance, we must be more aware of ourselves, the situations we find ourselves in and the skills that we bring to the challenge.

There is a self-assessment survey in Appendix A, which can be completed to give the reader a better sense of their leadership style, and areas of strengths and weakness.

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Identifying Your Leadership Style

“Leadership is a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow”

Situational Leadership Styles

The main focus of this paper with respect to leadership, is to determine what factors effect the direction that a manager or supervisor may choose to lead and with what style.

Leadership had not been thoroughly researched until fairly recently, roughly the beginning of the twentieth century, and certainly not municipal leadership until much later. However the concept of leadership has been written about and studied since ancient times. This paper will key in on the main type of leadership that is most often used by municipal managers. Due to the diversity of the work force and the general public at large managers must be flexible and adaptable, depending on any given situation. Therefore the type of leadership most used by municipal managers might possibly be situational.

Situational leadership suggests that because of the complicated world of organizations and society that we live in, focusing on the given situation is the best leadership approach. There are many internal and external forces that guide specific situations and responses to those situations. Theory suggests that leadership is not something definable without the specific context of the situation in which leaders seem to emerge.

Situational leadership was researched by Hershey and Blanchard in the late 1960’s and proved that the most important factor in this type of leadership was the employee’s level of development. The development level is based on one’s competence and commitment to the job or task.

The situational leadership styles fall into four basic categories:

1. **Directing**
   Tends to be directive and concentrates on telling people what to do, when and how. This leadership style is characterized by giving clear instructions and specific direction to employees that have a “low competence and high commitment”.

2. **Coaching**
   This style tends to have a strong commitment to achieve goals and direct employees toward those goals. This leadership style is characterized by expanding two-way communication and helping employees with “some competence and low commitment” build confidence and motivation.

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3. **Supporting**
This style perceives that the relationship of the group is more important than any individual task. This leadership style is characterized by active two-way communications such as asking and encouraging employee input, suggestion, and involvement in some decisions. This style is beneficial with employees that have “moderate to high competence and low commitment”.

4. **Delegation**
This style of leadership is hands off characterized by giving responsibilities for carrying out plans and making task decisions to “high competence and high commitment” employees.

The following diagram illustrates clearly the theory and working of a situational leader model.

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Other Leadership Styles

Municipal managers may make use of a number of leadership styles which incorporate portions from the situational leadership model. There are three broad and general styles of leadership which may be utilized by municipal leaders – Autocratic, Democratic, and Laissez-faire.

Autocratic Leadership

This is a style of leadership that is common with hierarchical organizations, such as monarchies, oligarchies and theocracies – upon which our military leadership is built. The leader in this style has the full power and authority and makes all the decisions. This style is useful for emergency situations that require quick thinking and direct results.

This style also assumes that people are lazy and incompetent. Autocratic leadership can be very effective in certain situations, but can also be abused. This style of leadership is also the most likely to cause resentment and poor attitude amongst employees.

Democratic Leadership

This style of leadership is the opposite of autocratic. The democratic leader is employee centered and makes use of the team in decision making, problem solving and planning. This leader encourages participation and delegates appropriately. This leader promotes teamwork and involvement but is still responsible for the outcomes.

The downside to this style would be in an emergency situation that would require immediate decision-making, such as in an autocratic style of leadership.

Laissez-faire

The best way to characterize this type of leadership would be the “hands off” approach.

There is little control over the group with this style of leadership. Generally employees are left to sort out issues on their own. This style works best with a highly competent and motivated group. This type of leadership can empower the group to achieve goals not possible with a more hierarchical type of approach.

Municipal managers must decide which style is best for their workplace, depending on the nature of the employees and the situation. An effective leader will use all three of the above styles and adapt according to the situation that they face.

The survey included in Appendix B will aid the municipal manager in determining the leadership style that they currently use, and may provide some insight into areas of strength and improvement.
Types of Communication Styles

Identifying your communication Style

When we identify our personal leadership styles and put them to use, we must still convey our feelings and wishes. That’s where communication becomes the critical component of any workplace relationship. According to a recent study, successful use of situational leadership “relies on effectiveness in four communication components; communicating expectations, listening, delegating, and providing feedback”.  

“People who understand how to communicate functions in an organization, who have developed a wide repertory of written and oral communication skills, and who have learned when and how to use those skills seem to have more successful careers and contribute more fully to their organizations than people who have not done so.”

So what is communication?

“It is simply the process in which people share information, ideas, and feelings. It can be either in the spoken word, written word, or in non-verbal ways, such as facial expressions, gestures or body stance. It can even be pure silence. The communication process is made up of various elements: sender and receivers, messages, channels, noise, feedback, and setting.”

Types of communication

There are many types of communication as noted above, however for municipal managers the focus of this research paper will be on only five types; intrapersonal, interpersonal, small group, public, and intercultural. The following is a short synopsis of the communication styles most commonly used by managers and leaders.

- **Intrapersonal communication** involves how we see ourselves and what lies inside each of us as managers and leaders. This type of personal communication is self centered, as we are the sender and receiver. We often will review past experiences whether positive or negative, and will self talk to ourselves regarding these past experiences. We have the power to choose to listen to the inner voices. We have control over this type of communication.

- **Interpersonal communication** occurs when we communicate on a one-to-one basis, face to face, and for the most part in an informal setting. This type of communication offers the greatest opportunity for productive two-way discussion and feedback. The persons involved in interpersonal communication have the greatest chance that the message will be received correctly and understood. Performance appraisals are a good example of this type of communication.

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11 Conrad and Poole, 1998
12 Helga Abbot, Georgian College, Leadership and Communication Theory, (course documents), 89
13 Helga Abbot, Georgian College, Leadership and Communication Theory, (course documents), 89
14 Helga Abbot, Georgian College, Leadership and Communication Theory, (course documents), 89
• **Small Group communication** occurs when a small number of persons are involved to discuss or resolve an issue. This type of communication involves more individuals and can lead to confusion because the group will include more senders and receivers than in an interpersonal discussion. This type of communication would be utilized for a team meeting or a weekly/monthly review with staff or to update or review workplace issues.\(^\text{15}\)

• **Public communication** is essentially when a sender or presenter sends a message to an audience. This is usually a structured message to a larger group. The presenter’s speech is louder and tends to be more animated or gestured. The opportunity for feedback or two way communication is limited, and usually occurs at the end of the presentation or speech. This type of communication is typical of a staff presentation to Council.\(^\text{16}\)

• **Intercultural communication** occurs when we interact with two or more different cultures. We may have a setting were there are different beliefs or values than our own which can make effective communication difficult. Differences can sometimes also increase our awareness and lead to an increased intolerance when dealing with individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds. Working in a municipal environment brings us exposure to all types of beliefs, values, and languages. We gain tolerance and understanding through the daily interactions with the general public.\(^\text{17}\)

**The importance of listening when communicating**

The importance of listening during a conversation is paramount, and part of every good two-way communication.

Listening and hearing are also different. Hearing someone speak is a physical action and only part of the listening process. Listening is a mental process or action that requires receiving and absorbing the speaker’s message. Listening is not without effort and concentration.

Effective listening can increase one’s ability to learn and relate to a speaker’s message. It can increase one’s knowledge in your job, and help make effective informed decisions. Listening allows you to gain acceptance and popularity as a manager by relaying a feeling of genuine concern and interest in your employees. You will increase your influence over employee attitude and behavior, and their belief that you are a worthy leader.

To become an effective listener you must first understand the stages listening that one must go through: *receiving, understanding, remembering, evaluating and responding.*

• **Receiving** is the start of the listening process. It is the absorbing of the verbal and non-verbal messages being conveyed. Some effective ways of receiving a message are to focus your attention on the speaker’s verbal and non-verbal message, avoid distractions, focus on the speaker and not what your response will be, and avoid interrupting.

\(^{15}\) Helga Abbot, Georgian College, Leadership and Communication Theory, (course documents), 89
\(^{16}\) Helga Abbot, Georgian College, Leadership and Communication Theory, (course documents), 89
\(^{17}\) Helga Abbot, Georgian College, Leadership and Communication Theory, (course documents), 89
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- **Understanding** occurs when you interpret and learn from the speaker’s message. It also includes the expressed feelings and emotions of the speaker. To better understand the speaker we need to avoid judging the message until we fully comprehend, relate to the speaker through past knowledge and understanding of the topic, rephrase and ask questions for clarification.

- **Remembering** is the ability to recall the speaker’s message at a later time. Often when we remember a message we tend to reproduce what we interpret was trying to be transferred, rather than what was actually said. We can become better at remembering an individual’s message if we concentrate on the central ideas, summarize the message, and repeat key points or concepts. This skill is crucial in the municipal environment due to the fact that often we are held accountable for our actions and responses well beyond the initial contact date or conversation.

- **Evaluating** consists of breaking down or judging the message. Often when evaluating a person’s conversation we evaluate the message to determine the intent. We are sometimes suspicious of the message and thereby cause miscommunication, and distrust. We can avoid miscommunication of the message by taking the time to fully understand the speaker. Give the speaker the benefit of doubt and address concerns you have. Avoid bias or prejudice and focus on the facts, not opinions or personal feelings.

- **Responding** occurs in two phases, one while the person is still speaking, and one when the person has stopped talking. Responding while the speaker is talking consists of non-verbal and verbal cues that indicate you are interested in what they are saying. Responding after the speaker has stopped speaking may include clarification, agreeing, challenging, or even empathy for the message or topic. When responding to the speaker one should be supportive using verbal and non-verbal cues.

Using the aforementioned stages municipal leaders can adapt their listening styles to achieve respect and trust from their employees and peers. So what is the best type of listening for the day-to-day work environment and the large group meeting?

**Active Listening**

Active listening is a mixture of many listening skills. Active listening in relation to leadership was developed and studied by Thomas Gordon (1977)\(^{18}\). It is a type of listening that is important when a person has a particular issue or problem that is important to them. They want the listener to be supportive and understanding.\(^{19}\)

“Active listening does not necessarily mean long sessions spent listening to grievances, personal or otherwise. It is simply a way of approaching those problems which arise out of the usual day-to-day events of any job”\(^{20}\)


Active listening provides three important functions to a leader/manager and staff relationship.

The first function enables the listener to understand the speaker by paraphrasing, and reflecting back to the speaker the perceived message.

The second function is the expression of the speaker’s feelings through confirmation and clarification, and by conveying an understanding of the emotions in the message. With this function we must remember that the speaker’s feelings may be hurt if we are too critical or unreasonable. However by giving feedback to the speaker they can correct any emotional misperceptions and it also indicates you have an interest in what they are saying.

The third function stimulates and encourages the speaker to express their feelings and thoughts. Speakers are more willing to open up and express themselves if they know that you are interested and listening to them.

Active listening encourages two-way communication and a mutual understanding. There is less of an attack and defense mode of dialog. When the speaker is allowed to take the time to fully explore their thoughts and feelings the active listener helps the speaker deal with them, as well as builds a trusting and positive relationship.21

In learning the process of active listening, it’s useful to apply three simple techniques: paraphrasing, expressing understanding, and asking questions.

“Communication is like a phone number. If you leave one number out (only ten percent of the number), the call will not go through. If you dial the area code at the end as an after thought, the call does not go through. You need all the digits to get through. And you need them in the right order.”22

Effective feedback

The final part of the vast topic of communication I would like to touch on is effective feedback.

Effective feedback consists of two parts - constructive and positive. Constructive feedback guides the employee in the right direction or path. Positive feedback praises and encourages the employee when they complete a task well.23

Managers have long failed to give effective feedback to their employees. There are many reasons – conflict avoidance, not wanting to hurt someone’s feelings, wanting to be liked and/or not having the skills necessary to deliver the challenging feedback in a way that doesn’t flatten or demoralize the employee. We cannot be effective at leading individuals unless we freely provide feedback. Giving feedback on an employee’s performance is intended to point out their strengths and encourage improvement of their weaknesses.

“Leaders need to pay attention to what is being done and praise their people when things are done right.”24

21 Helga Abbot, Georgian College, Leadership and Communication Theory, (course documents), 101
22 R. Brinkman and R. Kirshner in “Dealing with Difficult People”
23 Helga Abbot, Georgian College, Leadership and Communication Theory, (course documents), 101
24 Lyle Quan., Meeting workers needs through leadership, Firefighting Canada, article, May 2009
The following are some key points and strategies to improve feedback skills for municipal managers.

- **Deliver feedback in an appropriate location.** Feedback should be given in private away from others, unless positive or praising. You do not want to center out or embarrass an employee.

- **Develop and maintain your credibility.** Employees will be more attentive and positive if they feel that their manager has credibility. Developing and maintaining technical skills, as well as interpersonal skills will make you credible in the eyes of others. Employees are more likely to follow someone with more experience or education in a particular field. Managers who take the time to update skill levels related to their employment field will set examples for employees to follow.

- **Deliver feedback directly and immediately.** To be effective feedback should be given as close to the event or occurrence as possible. Feedback should always be given by the employee’s manager or supervisor, not another employee or second hand. Managers need to be consistent in delivering feedback thereby improving relationships with their staff. Staff will be more likely to receive feedback favorably if they know what’s coming and when.

- **Be specific and descriptive.** It is difficult as an employee to correct a behavior if the feedback is not specific or is too general. Descriptive feedback involves using visible facts that can be proven.

- **Give feedback honestly.** All feedback, constructive or positive, should be given honestly. Employees rely on feedback and usually can see through someone being superficial or condescending.

- **Avoid blame or embarrassment.** Feedback is meant to develop employee’s skills, not to create conflict.

- **Focus on behavior not the person.** By focusing on the behavior you avoid embarrassing the employee by not centering them out. Feedback should be directed at the situation, behavior or action, thus avoiding direct conflict.

- **Develop a supportive working relationship.** Research has shown that the most important contributing factor to employee success and performance is their relationship with their managers and supervisors.

Feedback can be considered a tool that guides employees to a performance that meets the standards and expectations of a manager. By reviewing the areas of strength and improvements, employees can understand what is expected of them and how to meet a manager’s expectations.²⁵

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**Conclusion**

Though being a manager in a municipal environment can be tough at the best of times. Many individuals seek out the opportunity to challenge themselves with the responsibility of being that kind of person who leads his/her people with a vision and purpose. Municipal managers are asked to be the people that wear many hats and yet also be proficient if not expert in many fields. They need to be accountable not only for their actions but also the actions of their staff.

Do municipal managers need to be continually trained? Is this something that is expected and assumed, and should managers be seeking out training on leadership and communication? In looking at the amount of information available on the topic of leadership and communication it certainly would appear as though more education and training is suggested. It seems at times that all the experts have somewhat common ideas and suggestions on the topics of leadership and communication, more likely because it has been studied extensively in the last few decades.

As my research paper has shown by focusing on the basics of leadership and communication municipal managers can improve those skills which are vital in workplace harmony and morale. By focusing on the tools necessary to effectively be a leader to individuals, managers can gain the respect and trust of their employees.

Managers must skillfully lead by example. Employees are always watching and looking for a leader that they can emulate and take guidance from.

This report has given direction to municipal managers aspiring to improve the necessary leadership and communication skills.

Normally, some of the best leaders operate out of the participative mode and use the other two modes as needed. An example of an exception would be a leader who has a new crew or temporary work-force. That leader would probably need to be operating out of the authoritarian mode by giving clear direction, detailed observations and positive feedback at every turn. On the other hand, a leader who has a crew of professionals or a crew that knows what they are doing, then they may allow them more freedom to proceed, support them as needed and delegate as their skill and interest level allows.

> "if your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."\(^{26}\)

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\(^{26}\) John Quincy Adams
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1. Abbott, Helga, Georgian College, Leadership and Communications Theory, course documents and material, JUST0010 (CO/FPO 201), April-June


Appendix A - Leadership Self-Assessment Activity

This survey is designed to provide you with feedback about your level of preference or comfort with leadership characteristics and skills.

If you have NOT performed a task before, estimate how difficult the task would be for you to learn to perform.

Circle the number on the scale that you believe comes closest to your skill or task level. Be honest about your choices as there are no right or wrong answers – it is only for your own self-assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Strong</th>
<th>Moderately Strong</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Moderately Weak</th>
<th>Very Weak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I enjoy communicating with others.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am honest and fair.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I make decisions with input from others.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My actions are consistent.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I give others the information they need to do their job.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I keep focused through follow-up.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I listen to feedback and ask questions.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I show loyalty to the company and to the team members.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I create an atmosphere of growth.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I have wide visibility.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I give praise and recognition.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I criticize constructively and address problems.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statement</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>I develop plans.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>I have a vision on where we are going and set long term goals.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>I set objectives and follow them through to completion.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>I display tolerance and flexibility.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>I can be assertive when needed.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>I am a Champion of change.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>I treat others with respect and dignity.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>I make myself available and accessible.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>I want to take charge.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>I accept ownership for team decisions.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>I set guidelines for how others are to treat one another.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>I manage by “walking around” (the front line is the bottom line).</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>I am close to the business and have a broad view of where we are going.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>I coach team members.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>I determine manpower requirements for my department and write job descriptions for them</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>I interview and select the most qualified candidate for an open job position</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>I provide new employees with on-the-job training.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>I determine resources, material, and supply requirements for my department</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>I developed a budget for my department.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>I can respond to an employee who is upset with me or someone else in the organization</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Leadership and Communication: Improving leadership and communication Skills for Municipal Managers and Supervisors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>I have counseled employees who have personal problems (family, health, financial).</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>I react to situations in which the quality of an employees work goes into a decline.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>I deal with employees who have performance issues, such as suspected of substance abuse or chronically late.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>I reward employees for good.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>I conduct formal employee performance appraisals.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>I can make a presentation to a group of peers and/or seniors.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>I write reports to be distributed to a group of peers and/or seniors.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>I have a deep-rooted understanding of the functions of my organization.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>I am curious.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>I know how to sell.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.</td>
<td>I am a good learner.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44.</td>
<td>I know how to influence people and get support.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45.</td>
<td>I admit my mistakes and take responsibility for my actions.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46.</td>
<td>I like to talk to people and I am a great listener.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47.</td>
<td>I am a good delegator.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48.</td>
<td>I can separate the important issues form the inconsequential ones.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49.</td>
<td>I have integrity and can be trusted.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50.</td>
<td>I am political only when needed.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL**

Total score for all 5 columns: ________________ Final Score

**Scoring**

Total each of the five columns and then add the five columns together for your final score. The maximum score is 250 while the minimum score is 50.
As mentioned earlier, there are no right or wrong answers. This means there are no right or wrong scores. This survey is designed to show you the areas you need to improve in. Your lowest scoring answers are the areas you need to improve. See your supervisor or training department for resources to help you to become more proficient in your weak areas.

Use the following as a general guideline of where you stand.

- 175 and above – You are well on your way to becoming a leader.
- 125 to 174 – You are getting close.
- 124 and below – Don’t give up! Many before you have continued with their studies to become some of the finest leaders around.

Use this assessment to help you determine what skills and abilities you can continue to improve (strengths) and what skills and abilities you need to develop (opportunities for growth).
Appendix B - Leadership Style Survey

This questionnaire contains statements about leadership style beliefs. Next to each statement, circle the number that represents how strongly you feel about the statement by using the following scoring system:

- Almost Always True – 5
- Frequently True – 4
- Occasionally True – 3
- Seldom True – 2
- Almost Never True – 1

Be honest about your choices as there are no right or wrong answers – it is only for your own self-assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Almost Always True</th>
<th>Frequently True</th>
<th>Occasionally True</th>
<th>Seldom True</th>
<th>Almost Never True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I always retain the final decision making authority within my department or team.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I always try to include one or more employees in determining what to do and how to do it. However, I maintain the final decision making authority.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I and my employees always vote whenever a major decision has to be made.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>I do not consider suggestions made by my employees as I do not have the time for them.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I ask for employee ideas and input on upcoming plans and projects.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>For a major decision to pass in my department, it must have the approval of each individual or the majority.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>I tell my employees what has to be done and how to do it.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>When things go wrong and I need to create a strategy to keep a project or process running on schedule, I call a meeting to get my employee’s advice.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>To get information out, I send it by email, memos, or voice mail; very rarely is a meeting called. My employees are then expected to act upon the information.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statement</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>When someone makes a mistake, I tell them not to ever do that again and make a note of it.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>I want to create an environment where the employees take ownership of the project. I allow them to participate in the decision making process.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>I allow my employees to determine what needs to be done and how to do it.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>New hires are not allowed to make any decisions unless it is approved by me first.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>I ask employees for their vision of where they see their jobs going and then use their vision where appropriate.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>My workers know more about their jobs than me, so I allow them to carry out the decisions to do their job.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>When something goes wrong, I tell my employees that a procedure is not working correctly and I establish a new one.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>I allow my employees to set priorities with my guidance.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>I delegate tasks in order to implement a new procedure or process.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>I closely monitor my employees to ensure they are performing correctly.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>When there are differences in role expectations, I work with them to resolve the differences.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Each individual is responsible for defining their job.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>I like the power that my leadership position holds over my subordinates.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>I like to use my leadership power to help subordinates grow.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>I like to share my leadership power with my subordinates.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Employees must be directed or threatened with punishment in order to get them to achieve the organizational objectives.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the fill-in lines below, mark the score of each item on the questionnaire. For example, if you scored item one with a 3 (Occasionally) then enter a 3 next to Item One. When you have entered all the scores for each question, total each of the 3 columns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>_______</td>
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<td>_______</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>_______</td>
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<td>_______</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Authoritarian Style (autocratic) | Participative Style (democratic) | Delegative Style (free reign) |
This questionnaire is to help you assess what leadership style you normally operate out of. The lowest score possible for any stage is 10 (Almost never) while the highest score possible for any stage is 50 (Almost always).

The highest of the three scores indicates what style of leadership you normally use. If your highest score is 40 or more, it is a strong indicator of your normal style.

The lowest of the three scores is an indicator of the style you least use. If your lowest score is 20 or less, it is a strong indicator that you normally do not operate out of this mode.

If two of the scores are close to the same, you might be going through a transition phase, either personally or at work, except if you score high in both the participative and the delegative then you are probably a delegative leader.

If there is only a small difference between the three scores, then this indicates that you have no clear perception of the mode you operate out of, or you are a new leader and are trying to feel out the correct style for yourself.