

Introduction

The six domains of leadership represent our attempt to capture the full range of leadership action and effect. When we began to design our own leadership course, it became evident to us that various scholars and popular authors were often describing and analyzing quite different aspects of leadership. It seemed to us that leadership scholars were not unlike the six blind men in the famous poem by John Godfrey Saxe:

*It was six men of Indostan, to learning much inclined,
who went to see the elephant (Though all of them were blind),
that each by observation, might satisfy his mind.*

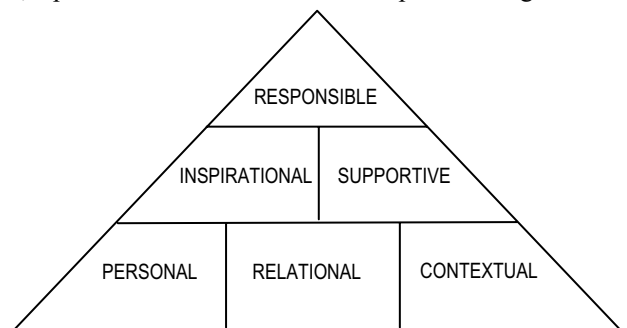
In the poem, each of the blind men touches a different part of the elephant, and each believes that his own experience with the beast captures its essence. Thus one blind man touches the elephant's trunk and proclaims that elephants are like snakes, another touches the leg and concludes that elephants are like trees, and so forth. The six blind scholars fall into endless academic arguments about who is right:

*And so these men of Indostan, disputed loud and long,
each in his own opinion, exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right, and all were in the wrong!*

We wanted to do something more than just contribute another limited view of leadership, so we decided to step back and try to generate, from work on leadership in organizational behavior, social psychology, sociology, and political science, a picture of the whole of leadership. As we read and thought about what it is that makes a person a leader or that makes a leader effective, six distinct areas of leadership action emerged, each with its own behaviors and its own effect on followers. We have labeled these six domains “personal leadership,” “relational leadership,” “contextual leadership,” “inspirational leadership,” “supportive leadership,” and “responsible leadership.” In this paper we

will describe briefly each of these concepts, behaviors, and skills associated with the domain, as well as the effects that one can expect if one is effective in each type of leadership.

As we pursued our studies, it became evident that the six domains of leadership were interrelated in particular ways, so that some were founded on others. Three of the domains—personal, relational, and contextual—are so much involved in the successful execution of the other three that they seem to us to be the necessary foundation of the rest of leadership. Two of the remaining three domains—inspirational and supportive, build on the foundational domains to provide additional aspects of leadership, and the sixth domain—responsible—builds on all five of the others. This pattern of interrelationships among the domains led us to portray our six-domain model as a triangle or pyramid, as shown below. As we describe the domains, we will comment on their relationship to the domains upon which they are based. In the end, a picture of the whole of leadership will emerge.



The Leadership Pyramid

Leadership versus Management

Before we begin to describe the six domains of leadership and their interrelationships, we need to clarify what leadership is and what it is not. There is a longstanding distinction in organizational studies between “leadership” and “management”. The distinction began with the observation that there is something fundamentally different between the sort of authority that one sees, for example, in a charismatic social or religious movement (such as the American civil rights movement in the 1960’s under Martin Luther King) and the sort of authority that one sees in successful bureaucratic institutions (such as IBM under Thomas J. Watson).

We view the distinction between leadership and management as turning on different motivational bases for these two forms of authority. On the basis of our own research and that of other scholars, we believe that leadership works through the connection that people feel to social groups (i.e., to the team, the organization, or the institution within which the leadership is being exercised), while management works through the reward and punishment or other behavior- and attention-channeling systems. In other words, leaders exert their authority by using their words or actions to convince people to accept their vision of where the team or organization should be going, while managers exert their authority using incentive or other control systems that make individuals do what the manager wants as they follow their individual self-interest.

These differences in how leadership and management work make each type of authority better for particular organizational functions. Leadership tends to be especially important at times of creation and change, and it tends to be critical in times of crisis, while management tends to be more important in the day-to-day functioning of procedures and processes that systematize and sustain organizations.

There is certainly nothing wrong with management. (Indeed, our view is that effective management is as important for modern organizations as is effective leadership. We teach our students that they need to master both forms of authority.) But management alone can lead to serious problems in any organizational context. Management systems tend to resist change, and they make people focus on individual rather than communal interests. For this reason, using management alone makes it difficult or impossible to create new organizations, change existing organizations, inspire exceptional accomplishments, or shepherd organizations through crises. All of these situations call for leadership more than management.

One thing to understand from the outset is that, since leadership is about persuasion and influence rather than authority and control, it is possible to lead without being in a position of power within a team,¹ organization, or institution. Leadership can,

¹ In this paper we use the term “team” most often to refer to the group being led, but we believe that the same leadership processes apply whether one is leading a three-person learning team in an MBA class or a multinational corporation. The way these processes are executed might differ (so that one has to

and certainly should, flow down the organizational ladder, but it can also flow sideways (toward peers) and up (toward bosses). One can and should lead direct reports, but one also can and should lead peers and teammates and even supervisors. “Leading up” can be difficult because it flows against the lines of managerial control, and leading laterally can be difficult because of status and identity challenges, but both are possible. Indeed, for an organization to be at its best, it needs leadership on all levels and in all directions, so that it has a pool of leadership ready to be energized when innovation, change, exceptional effort, or response to crisis is needed.

The six domains provide a framework to talk about and teach leadership. They address the full range of skills that are needed to exercise leadership. These skills include knowing how to build a leadership persona from your own personality and values (Personal Leadership), how to forge sound relationships with those you lead (Relational Leadership), how to provide coherence and team identity (Contextual Leadership), how to motivate exceptional effort (Inspirational Leadership) while protecting your people (Supportive Leadership), and how to make sure your leadership works for balance and ethical conduct (Responsible Leadership). Now let’s turn to a description of each of the domains in turn.

Personal Leadership

Personal leadership begins with the leader’s own particular personality. For leaders to have credibility, they must be seen as having a persona, a character, an identity—they must help others see the kind of person they are. For example, do the people you lead have a sense of what you really believe in and what you value? Some people anger easily, while others always see the humor in a situation. Some make a specific practice or value their ‘personal mission’ such that others can anticipate how they will react to particular events. When a leader is effective in projecting his or her persona, we hear ‘in our mind’s ear’ the leader’s tone of

find, for example, symbolic ways to express concern to tens of thousands of employees in leading the multinational corporation, whereas one could show concern more directly to two colleagues in a small team), but the concepts are the same.