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## LEADERSHIP FOR PROGRESS IN ACADEMIC CAREERS

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*Abstract: Leadership styles naturally emerge in global networking nowadays. Progress in academic careers is facilitated by wise and practical leadership capitalising on specifically regional or national features. Current opportunities or challenges should be analyzed in detail for drafting effective frameworks of approaching events without negative impacts on staff productivity or creativity. Specific behaviour codes and cultural heritage issues are taken into account in developing certain schemes for competence levels in contemporary universities. This article is dedicated to the modalities in which didactic processes and professors as role models contribute to business engineering students' professional development, by periodically providing favourable contexts for sharing best practice. Professors do the same, readily and widely implementing what they teach, in response to the groups' needs: certain teams value trust over creativity; others prefer clear communicators to a great organizers; building strong teams is easier when knowing the values and goals of each individual, as well as what they need from their academic leaders in order to make fast and sustainable progress. Professional leaders know the organization's overall purpose and goals, and the agreed-upon strategies to achieve such targets; they also know how their team fits into the big picture, and the part they play in helping the organization grow and thrive. Good leaders develop schools of dedicated followers by using interpersonal leadership techniques: giving feedback to subordinates in order to succeed in their roles; honestly communicating, encouraging dialogue, and remaining open to suggestions; persuading by framing ideas and solutions in trustworthy modalities; convincing others to take action based on credibility; allowing team members to take risks and*

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*correct mistakes by providing the tools they need to succeed. All great leaders were followers at some point, so leadership skills can be found at any level of an organization. Trust and responsibility are major ingredients in academic leadership, built through authenticity, integrity, transparency, and respect. One does not have to be a manager to be a leader.*

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*Keywords: leadership, progress in academic careers, global networking strategies, competence levels in contemporary universities, professors as role models, sustainable development*

Proficient leadership does not stem from chance or the right connections to get to the highest level of an organization, and it has very little to do with opportunity. True leadership involves management and knowledge in the field, certain traits of character and temperament – role model assets, and hard work with vision. Effective leaders prove extensive life experience and abilities to focus the teams' interests away from conflict and towards results, providing progress opportunities as well as constructive approaches. Business Management and Engineering Universities should simultaneously give scientific training, life-long learning abilities, character building and systematic cultivation of effective and persuasive communication skills.

Leadership styles naturally emerge in global networking throughout universities nowadays. Specifically regional or national features, together with current opportunities and challenges must be analyzed in detail, thus leading to frameworks for approaching events without negative impacts on academic staff productivity or creativity. There are numerous modalities in which didactic processes and professors as role models contribute to business

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engineering and management students' professional development, by providing periodical favourable contexts for sharing best practice. Here follows the Leadership Chart of EU-agreed competences for business engineering universities, we all strive to implement in the academic environment as a guiding reference point for efficient professional relationships across all ranks and levels of experience or expertise.

Leadership Chart							
Leadership Theories	Strengths:	Weaknesses:	Personal Reaction	Implications for:			
				Self	Team	Org	Culture
<b>Path-Goal Theory</b>	Using a Path-Goal Theory approach to leadership has several positive features. Firstly, this theory attempts to incorporate the motivation principles of the expectancy theory and second its model is practical and easy to use.	Although there are several positive aspects of Path-Goal Theory, it fails to explain the different roles of leaders and managers.  The time constraints to effectively deploy is very narrow.	Although in an attempt to clearly visualize the vision, I sometimes get caught up in the overall progress and save little time to consider the individual.	In order to employ this approach effectively, it would be helpful to create a questionnaire for staff, in order to uncover some of their motivators. Communication between myself and team member is vital for success.	Teams are strong because they know what the goal is and have a clear roadmap to accomplish the mission.	The theory allows for building. Teams goals become departmental goals, departmental goals become organizational goals.  For the organization this theory helps push forward organizational initiatives.	The culture of the organization when using the path-goal theory suggests that motivation of employees is a strategic direction, and is used as a method for production.
<b>Situational Theory</b>	Situational leadership provides a straightforward approach and is easily used. Another strength of this approach, is the fact that it teaches leaders flexibility.	Situational leadership has been criticized for several reasons, one the lack of evidence in its reliability. Second, it does not fully address interaction of groups verse individuals.	The situational approach has flexibility and allows leaders to place individuals into a workflow where they will accomplish the most, or be most productive.	In order for this approach to be most successful, I must conduct a task analysis in order to be sure that all of the events necessary to produce have been accounted for prior to setting up the team members.	In general the team will have a feeling that everyone has a part and is contributing to the assigned mission. Team motivation can be developed when all team members feel successful and are good at there task.	At an organizational level, the situational approach allows for change and flexibility. This approach looks at the task at hand and produces the qualified resources to accommodate it.	The culture of the organization seems to be accommodating and supporting, they don't set their employees up for failure.
<b>Transformational Theory</b>	Transformational leadership theory provides a broader view of leadership, it places a strong emphasis on followers needs, values, and morals.	Some suggest that this approach treats leadership as a personality trait rather than a behavior. It is also unclear as to whether or not this leader is a visionary.	I am able to communicate the positive and the negatives about implementing new technologies. I offer to staff the reasons why we need to change and how it will effect them.	This approach is one I use often, in order to gain the respect of others you need to value them and their thoughts as well. Communication is a key tool for using this approach.	Open communication between leaders, team members and staff are utilized with this approach. Acceptance of ideas from team members occurs during the decision making	Teams, team members, departments and all staff alike feel as though they are a part of the decision making during change.	The organization is lead by someone staff trust, he/she has buy-in from stakeholders.

Fig. 1. Leadership Chart of EU-agreed competences for business engineering universities

Effective leaders believe that people want to excel, so they create an environment in which success is not only possible, but also contagious. They think that putting the right person in the right position is essential and that diverse teams are more innovative than homogeneous teams. Efficient leaders also believe in change, so they strive to learn and grow hence acknowledging that organizations often need to renew themselves. The best leaders also comply with personal values. In the ever-changing world of academic research and business challenges, it is essential to use guiding ethics in all decisions. Specific behaviour codes and

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cultural heritage issues are taken into account in developing certain schemes for competence levels in multinationals. Leadership skills can be developed and professors aim at enabling students to implement them.

Here follow the most significant targets:

- Taking responsibility for the direction and actions of a team.
- Setting objectives.
- Organising and motivating others.
- Taking the initiative.
- Persevering when things are not working out.
- Taking a positive attitude to frustration and failure.
- Accepting responsibility for mistakes or wrong decisions.
- Being flexible: prepared to adapt goals in changing situations.
- Knowing what followers need.

Leadership in academic careers should facilitate progress & productivity in both research and didactic activities. It increasingly resembles the multinationals' leadership profile far away from the 'good/bad boss' dichotomy in use a few decades ago. It relied on emotional perceptions and on a simplistic black/white transcription of reality. Hence, nowadays, such attributes have changed:

- The functional boss is a good coach.
- Empowers the team and does not micromanage.
- Expresses interest & concern for team members' success and personal wellbeing.
- Is productive and results-oriented with a clear vision and strategy for the team.
- Is a good communicator.
- Helps with career development.
- Has important technical skills that help advising the team members.
- Mistakes are seen as learning stages.

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Leadership skills at academic levels are evaluated by studying relevant data (output, costs, productivity, and profitability) as well as by having teams provide feedback, corroborated with self-assessment instruments. By implementing interviews, focus group discussions and questionnaires, professors and researchers can gauge each others' levels of engagement, pride, and team goal focus. Such valuable information may lead to more effective leadership in the next classes of graduates as well. All leaders should be responsive to the group's needs. Certain teams value trust over creativity; others prefer a clear communicator to a great organizer; therefore building a strong team is easier knowing the values and goals of each individual, and what they need from their leader.

A more conceptually rigorous approach based on authority levels yields the following classification of the 7 styles of leadership which I find appropriate for colleagues and students alike:



Fig. 2. The seven styles of leadership

#### The Authoritarian Style

- Amount of control: high(telling, directing, controlling).
- Characteristics: autocratic, transactional:the organization pays the teams in return for their work and compliance. The leader has power over all team members and the right to reward performance or punish them if they do not reach the agreed standard. They say

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what they want done and how, without asking for team members' advice or opinion; there is little opportunity to make suggestions, even if it might be in the team's interest. It should be used occasionally. Focused on short-term tasks, it is more a managerial means rather than a true leadership style.

- Circumstances of use: when the team is short of time but well motivated; good for routine and unskilled tasks, in a crisis, or with difficult employees.
- Advantages: the most productive, with fast results, but if the leader is gone, it all ends.
- Disadvantages: teams do not use the members' creativity and knowledge; hence no teamwork benefits. Staff cannot improve job satisfaction, and resent the way they are treated, so there is high absenteeism & staff turnover. Sometimes perceived as bullying, it has serious limitations, but it still is widely used.

#### The Procedural Style

- Amount of control: high (telling, directing, controlling).
- Characteristics: it is task-oriented, bureaucratic and managerial. Work is done by the book so team members follow procedures precisely. It focuses only on getting the job done, and it can be quite autocratic. Little thought is given to the team members' wellbeing. Task-oriented specificity is complemented with relationship-oriented focus: procedural and transformational leaders are usually needed since managers focus on tasks while leaders focus on people.
- Circumstances of use: tasks requiring great attention to detail; appropriate for work involving safety risks (with machinery) or where large sums of money are involved.
- Advantages: clear definition of tasks/roles; structures set by planning/organizing/monitoring.
- Disadvantages: exerted inflexibility and high levels of control demoralize teams and reduce the organization's ability to react to changing contexts. Issues are similar to autocratic leadership: difficulty in motivating and retaining team members.

#### The Transformational Style

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- Amount of control: medium (selling, reasoning, persuading, delegating).
- Characteristics: charismatic leadership relying on personal charm or energy to inspire the staff. The leader motivates teams with the vision of what will happen, supplying the main goal, but allowing members to choose their own way of reaching it. S/he is absorbed in organizing, supporting and developing the team, always looking for ideas consistent with organization's vision. Transformational leaders are very visible, and spend much time communicating to focus the group on the required aim. They often delegate responsibility.
- Circumstances of use: this is the most common modern leadership style.
- Advantages: motivates the team to be effective; leads to good teamwork; gets creative collaboration. Enthusiasm and energy of transformational leaders are infectious.
- Disadvantages: procedural and transformational leadership are symbiotic. Procedural leaders (managers) make sure that routine work is done well, while transformational leaders focus on initiatives that add value. The transformational leader focuses on the big picture, but must be surrounded by people who take care of the details. Taken to extremes, it leads to team failure.

#### The Participative Style

- Amount of control: medium (selling, reasoning, persuading, delegating).
- Characteristics: democratic or consulting, it builds consensus through participation: the leader makes the final decision, but the team contribute to the process. The leader elicits team's ideas and uses them to make decisions. Team members are kept informed and are allowed to discuss or propose policy changes. As the leader cannot know everything, skilful team members are hired. This style is not a sign of weakness, but one of strength, respected by all team members.
- Circumstances of use: when organizational flexibility and individual responsibility are needed, where teamwork is essential, when quality is more important than speed or productivity.

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- Advantages: mutual benefits, allowing members to feel part of the team and the leader to make better decisions. Members feel in control and motivated to work hard, which develops staff's skills. It increases job satisfaction by involving all in decision processes. It also seems to be the most consistent style in point of quality and productivity.
- Disadvantages: this style may result in indecision, and some team members may feel confused and leaderless. As participation takes time, things may happen more slowly than in autocratic approaches, but often the end result is better.

#### The Laissez-faire Style

- Amount of control: low(advising, counselling, participating, observing, joining).
- Characteristics: delegative, a leader who is not formally recognized and leads just by meeting the team's needs. The whole team is involved in decisions, but the leader still is responsible for them, asking for their opinions. Team members may be left to take their own decisions which can subsequently be sanctioned by the leader. The leader participates in discussions as a normal team member and agrees in advance to carry out whatever decision the group makes. The team members are left to get on with their tasks. It is effective if the leader monitors what is being achieved and regularly communicates this back to the team.
- Circumstances of use: when trusting the team, where team members are experienced & skilled, when they can analyze the situation and determine what needs to be done and how to do it.(e.g. teams of research scientists).
- Advantages: increasingly necessary in a world where leaders get power on basis of their ideals and values. As one cannot do it all, one sets priorities and delegates tasks.
- Disadvantages: less effective in quality & productivity; not good in competitive situations;

Our fast developing and stressful society has generated two further styles: the narcissistic leadership and the toxic one. The first focuses inward, being exclusively interested in own priorities at the expense of all other people or team members. This leader, quite

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common, unfortunately, exhibits features like: arrogance, dominance, hostility, self-absorption and egotistic needs for power or admiration. The second type has responsibility over a group/organization, and abuses the leader-follower relationship leaving the organization in a worse condition than it was when s/he joined in.



Fig. 3. Key competences for leaders and managers, cf. the Centre for Creative Leadership

Leadership for progress in academic careers should display the following characteristics:

- **Motivation:** a successful leader should set a good example and act as a role model for the team, not being afraid to help out when needed. Motivation is best done by example and guidance, not by issuing commands. If the leader contributes, the team will respond well. A leader should work to be the motivator, an initiator, a key element in the planning and implementing of new ideas, programs, policies, and events. Enthusiasm is contagious. When a leader is motivated and excited about the cause, people will be more inclined to follow.
- **Respect:** show respect for colleague, by thanking them for their work and by complimenting them on their success; they will be more likely to respect the leader in return. Treating others with respect will earn respect. Being well educated on community policies, procedures, and organizational norms will grant success in interactions at all levels. Confidence is not attained without consistent leadership. People need to know that their opinions are heard and valued.

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- **Communication:** active listening so as to set excellent work relationships. Active listeners focus on what the speaker is saying, regularly paraphrasing to check that they have received the intended message. Body language must match the spoken words, as people trust gestures and eye contact, being far more responsive if the speech matches posture, and the subsequent movements. The good leader asks many questions, considers all options, and leads in the right direction, with effective feedback. Leaders must be good public speakers in running effective meetings, discussions, and debriefing sessions, as dialogue and negotiation skills are required at every level of business, but leaders should possess outstanding communication skills.
- **Learning** is crucial for leaders as is granting information access to all staff. Leaders who think they have no knowledge or observations to acquire limit progress and adjustment to change.
- **Analytical skills:** decision makers need to understand and analyze the data presented to them before making any decisions. Leaders' guidelines impact the future prospects of the academic activity, as changing a process or fixing a problem affects other areas, further down the line.

Traditional Mindset	Network Mindset	PROCESS	MANAGEMENT	LEADERSHIP
Firmly controlled and planned	Loosely controlled and emergent	<b>Vision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plans &amp; budgets</li> <li>Design the process steps and decides upon a timeline</li> <li>Has an impersonal attitude towards vision and goals</li> <li>Keeps an eye on the bottom-line</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sets the direction and creates the strategic plan</li> <li>Is passionate about achieving the goals and realizing the vision</li> <li>Keeps an eye on the horizon</li> </ul>
Strengthening individual efforts	Weaving connections and building networks	<b>NETWORKING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staffs and Organizes</li> <li>Maintains structure</li> <li>Delegates responsibility and authority</li> <li>Displays low emotion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aligns organization</li> <li>Communicates the vision, mission and direction</li> <li>Influences creation of teams, coalitions and partnerships</li> <li>Displays drive and high emotion</li> </ul>
Procuring deliverables (e.g., programs)	Stimulating activity (e.g., platforms)	<b>EXECUTION OF VISION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Controls processes, identifies problems, solve problems and analyze results</li> <li>Takes low risk approach to problem solving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Motivates, energizes and inspires employees to overcome barriers to change.</li> <li>Takes high risk approach to problem solving</li> </ul>
Proprietary information and learning	Open information and learning	<b>VISION OUTCOME</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides expected results consistently to stakeholders and leaders and manages vision order and predictability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotes useful and dramatic changes such as introduction of new products or new approaches to improving labor relations</li> </ul>
Decision making concentrated	Decision making shared			
Insight from individual, "expert" actors	Collective intelligence			
Effectiveness linked to concrete outputs (e.g., a policy win, a measurable increase in community prosperity)	Effectiveness also linked to intangibles (e.g., trusting relationships, information flows)			

Fig. 4. The necessary shift from the *Traditional Mindset* to the *Network Mindset*

- **Adaptability:** to be in step with changing circumstances in fluid contexts. Successful leaders constantly anticipate, assess and stay open-minded and flexible, eliciting

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innovative ideas, and taking advantage of new technologies. They reflect on personal performance to improve and change out-dated policies, programs, or habits which are no longer beneficial to the group.

- **Organizational skills:** consistent and systematic in organising projects by setting adequate expectations, delegating tasks, setting deadlines, and evaluating alternatives.
- *Proactive* versus *Reactive* attitudes: the exceptional leader always thinks 3 steps ahead, working to rule the environment with the goal of avoiding issues before they arise.
- *Flexible* versus *Adaptable*: leaders are energetic, involved, and flexible in approaches, never downsizing goals; in unexpected/uncomfortable situations they adapt to new contexts and surroundings, facing the challenges so as to progress towards feasible and reasonable targets.
- Learning negotiation, team building, motivation and goal setting skills: today's professionals know that, in order to achieve success, they must commit to lifelong learning & skill building.
- Team building: assembling strong teams who work well is a trait of good leaders. The opposite is also true: if a team is weak and dysfunctional, it is generally a failure in leadership. Leaders must understand group processes and dynamics, acknowledging others' efforts and reinforcing those actions, thus instilling followership and empowerment. Sub-skills include: ethical approaches, facilitator attitudes, conflict management, reasonable and periodic rewards.
- Assess risk and run scenarios for best ideas. Good leaders take the right risks at the right time.
- Delegating: exceptional leaders realize their incapacity to accomplish everything, so, knowing the talents and interests of people around, they delegate tasks accordingly.

Effective leaders periodically assess their own strengths & shortcomings. Knowing personal weakness does not make the leader weak; on the contrary, it allows delegating responsibilities to others who have those abilities, in order to achieve the common goal.

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Acknowledging weaknesses will improve the leadership ability and will make the person in question look more human. Efficient leaders should hire people who complement, rather than supplement, their skills.

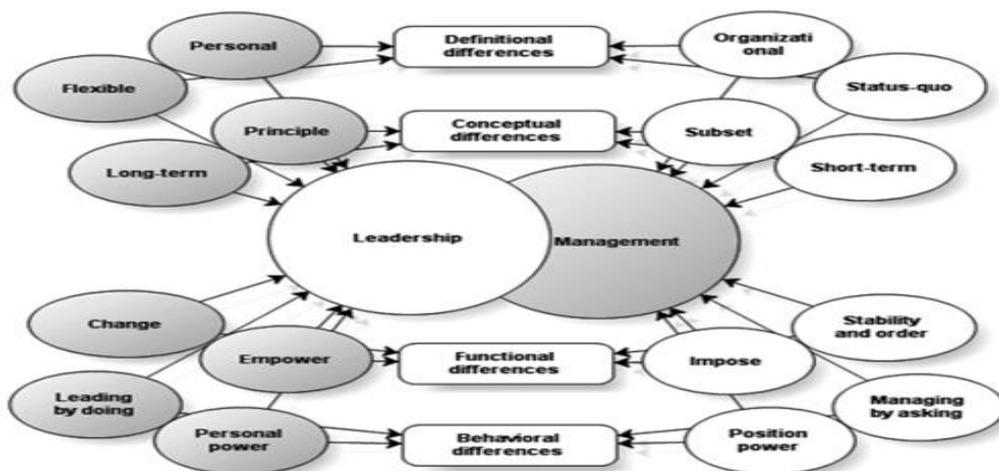


Fig. 5. Leadership competences and how they assemble in proficient teamwork and management

Efficient leaders have honest communication with their teams & peers, as well as a thorough understanding of how they are perceived. Testing others' perception can be as simple as observing their behaviour. Professional leaders know the organization's overall purpose and goals, and the agreed-upon strategies to achieve such targets; they also know how their team fits into the big picture, and the part they play in helping the organization grow and thrive. Full knowledge of the organization is vital to becoming a leader.

Good leaders develop loyal followers by using four interpersonal leadership techniques:

- listening and giving feedback to subordinates in order to succeed in their roles;
- communicating, telling the truth, encouraging dialogue, staying open to others' suggestions;
- persuading by framing ideas and solutions in a way that makes teams trust them;
- convincing others to take action is a key leadership skill, based on credibility; collaborative leaders trust their followers, allow them to take risks and make mistakes,

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and give them the tools they need to succeed; they use influence rather than authority to make things happen.

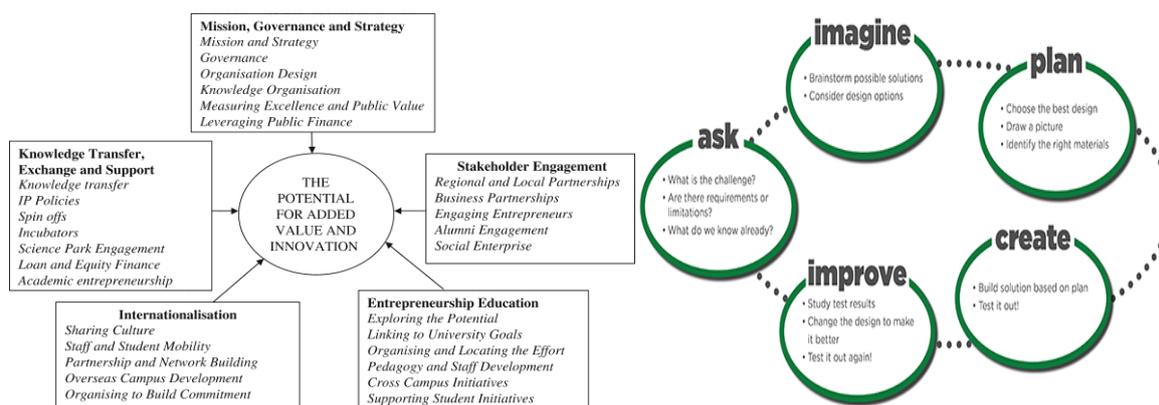


Fig. 6. Academic leadership action cycles

To a certain extent, the capacity for great leadership is innate. However, learning how to be a more effective leader is within everyone's grasp – whether you lead multiple teams, an entire firm or just one staff member. All great leaders were followers at some point, so leadership skills can be found at any level of an organization. Trust and responsibility are major ingredients in leadership, built through authenticity, integrity, transparency, and respect.

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