

## THE QUALITIES OF AN EFFECTIVE TEAM LEADER

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*There have been few systematic studies of the success factors underlying effective team leadership. Analysis of ten focus group transcripts from five companies revealed twenty important team leader qualities. These qualities were defined and compared to previous findings in both general leadership and team leadership literatures, supplementing existing taxonomies. The conflict between the accountability expected of team leaders and the authority granted them emerged as an important issue. Implications for team leader recruiting, selection, and training are discussed.*

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### Introduction

Although the use of teams has become pervasive in all segments of industry (Manz & Sims, 1993), many team efforts have failed (Lawler, 1986, 1988; Saporito, 1986). Often, team leadership, or lack of it, has been used to explain team failure (Klein, 1984; Letize & Donovan, 1990; Manz & Sims, 1987). The team leader is typically a member of the team who provides guidance and support and has ultimate responsibility for the outcomes of the team. As such, the success of a team leader is often measured in terms of both the cohesiveness of the team as well as producing some tangible outcome. Interestingly, little systematic research has been conducted on the success factors underlying effective team leadership. Although there have been several articles on the topic of team leaders, many of them were anecdotal in nature rather than based on empirical research. Others focused on a narrow portion of team leadership, without considering the broad spectrum of requirements for effective team leaders or have developed broad theoretical frameworks that have yet to be tested in the field. To overcome some of the above deficiencies, the following study

analyzes the results of ten focus groups with team leaders and team members across five organizations to determine what is required for effective team leadership.

### Research on Leadership

To provide a context in which to understand the literature on team leadership, it is important to acknowledge the literature on leadership in general. There have been four general approaches to studying leadership in the past. Table 1 provides a summary of some of the key contributions of each of the approaches. This summary is intended to be illustrative, not exhaustive. Behavioral/Functional approaches (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Fleishman, 1953; McGrath, 1962; Stogdill, 1974; Yukl, 1998) have discussed leadership in terms of the things leaders do (i.e., behaviors/skills) or the function they serve in the organization. Trait approaches (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; House, 1977) have discussed leaders in terms of the special characteristics they uniquely possess that enable them to lead. Charismatic and transformational leadership theories are just two examples. Social psychological approaches (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; French & Raven, 1959; Hackman & Walton, 1976) have viewed leadership

as a relationship or a social influence process. This approach has been influenced greatly by the work in areas such as social facilitation/loafing (Latane, Williams, & Harkins, 1979), group cohesiveness (Berkowitz, 1954), group polarization (Pruitt, 1971; Stoner, 1961), and groupthink (Janis, 1972). Finally, situational leadership approaches (Evans, 1970; Fiedler, 1967; Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; House, 1971) have viewed leadership as strongly contingent upon the environment in which leadership is to occur. In such a case, leadership is viewed as a complex interaction of leader, follower(s), and context.

### Research on Team Leadership

Many of the studies of team leadership have employed a behavior-oriented approach, derived from job analytic methods. In some of the earliest research on team leaders, McGrath (1962) outlined several functions the team leader should serve. Leaders perform a diagnostic function by monitoring team performance (and comparing it to accepted standards) and a remedial function by taking action to improve group performance. Leaders also perform a forecasting function by watching environmental conditions (and their potential effects on team performance) and a preventive function by attempting to avert the negative effects of a volatile environment.

Zenger, Musselwhite, Hurson, and Perrin (1994) also took a functional approach to team leadership and used questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups to outline the practices and skills of successful team leaders. According to their findings, team leaders must:

- (1) build trust and inspire teamwork,
  - (2) facilitate and support team decisions,  
and
  - (3) expand team capabilities.
- They must also:
- (4) create a team identity,
  - (5) make the most of team differences,  
and
  - (6) foresee and influence change.

Komaki, Desselles, and Bowman (1989) investigated sailing teams in developing an operant conditioning approach to team leadership. They outlined a series of monitoring, feedback, and team coordination behaviors that the leader must carry out in order to maintain team performance.

Stewart and Manz (1995) proposed a model of four team leader styles: overpowering, powerless, power-building, and empowered leadership. Overpowering leadership (coercive, punishing, autocratic) and powerless leadership (intermittent, distant, directionless) were viewed as ineffective styles. In evaluating the four styles, they posited that power-building leaders allowed teams to be self-managing by using behaviors such as guidance and encouragement, delegation, reinforcement, and culture development. Similarly, empowering leaders used behaviors such as modeling, boundary-spanning (i.e., networking outside the team), and assisting (i.e., coaching and mentoring) that allowed teams to be self-leading.

Other researchers have taken a social psychological approach to the study of team leadership, guided by previous work on group processes and dynamics. Expanding on their earlier work in social psychology, Hackman and Walton (1986) outlined the knowledge and skills required of leaders to respond appropriately to the team and the environment. For instance, knowledge of team processes, data gathering skill and diagnostic skill were all important. In order to take action, team leaders needed to have knowledge of the change process, creativity, negotiation skill, and decision-making skill to carry out planned actions. Ultimately, Hackman and Walton (1986) described team leaders as monitors of and actors within a larger social system.

Morgeson (1997) proposed a model of team leadership as event management. Using an open-systems

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Table 1

Major Leadership Approaches

Approach	Contribution
<u>Functional/Behavioral</u>	
Blake & Mouton (1964)	The managerial grid (concern for people vs. production)
Fleishman (1953)	Initiating structure vs. consideration (2-factor model)
McGrath (1962)	Leader functions (diagnostic, remedial, forecasting, preventive)
Stogdill, et al (1962)	Leader behavior description
Yukl (1998)	Taxonomy of managerial (leader) behavior
<u>Trait Approaches</u>	
Bass (1985)	Charismatic/Transformational Leadership
Burns (1978)	“” “”
House (1977)	“” “”
<u>Social Psychological Approaches</u>	
Dansereau, et al (1975)	Leader-member exchange theory
French & Raven (1959)	Power and influence theories
Hackman & Walton (1976)	Leadership processes in groups
Hughes, et al (1996)	Social influence processes in leadership
<u>Situational Approaches</u>	
Evans (1970)	Path-goal theory
Fiedler (1967)	Contingency theory
Hersey & Blanchard (1969)	Situational leadership theory
House (1971)	Path-goal theory

approach, Morgeson stated that team leadership revolves around managing events in the team's internal and external environments. For instance, if a key supplier to the team fails to fulfill obligations, the team leader's role entails helping the team overcome this obstacle (i.e., event). Morgeson outlined various assessment and intervention activities team leaders must engage in to maintain a functioning team in a demanding environment. Assessment activities included monitoring and diagnosis. Intervention activities included team establishment (establishing boundaries, providing direction, etc.), developing skills and competencies, motivation, boundary management, and developing a base of influence.

Some of the team leadership literature focused on the situational requirements created by specific team environments. Kozlowski, Gully, McHugh, Salas, and Cannon-Bowers (1996) studied the role of team leaders when the primary role of the team was decision making. They stated that the team leader served two primary roles: developmental and task-contingent roles. The developmental behaviors consisted of creating a cohesive whole, defining social structure, modeling self-disclosure, coaching, defining team functions, and emphasizing goals and performance objectives. The task-contingent behaviors consisted of instruction (goal-setting, monitoring, feedback) and intervention (action to get the team back on track).

Manz and Sims (1987) studied the behaviors of leaders of self-managing work teams (SMWTs). Instead of focusing on the behaviors of the leader, they discussed the role of leader as one who encouraged the team members to engage in certain activities themselves (i.e., manage themselves). They found that in order to promote self-management, leaders must encourage rehearsal, self-goal-setting, self-criticism, self-reinforcement, self-expectation, and self-observation/evaluation among the

team members.

### **The Present Study**

The current study arose out of the need to develop training materials for team leaders. A common belief existed that manager training would not be entirely appropriate for team leaders. There was significant overlap between the two roles (and the skills required for each), but team leaders needed a slightly different set of skills. Prior to the current study, team leaders in several organizations mentioned that although they had much of the accountability and responsibility of managers, they did not have the same authority as those managers. The team leaders did not wield the reward and punishment power of managers and as a result reported needing to rely on interpersonal and persuasive skills to a greater extent.

Although previous research has identified a number of the behaviors and skills needed by team leaders, factors such as responsibility and authority have received little attention. Studies have also outlined the effects of certain contexts (i.e., decision-making and self-managing teams) on the requisite behaviors and skills. Others have used existing social psychological theory to develop a theoretical framework for the study of team leadership. However, work is still needed that broadens the context and types of teams studied. Manz & Sims (1987) studied self-directed teams and Kozlowski et al. (1996) studied decision-making teams. Although the specificity of these studies is informative, it excludes more common team leaders. Therefore the intent of this study was threefold. First, this study broadened the types of teams investigated to determine if the factors identified in previous work generalize to other team contexts. Second, this study determined if the traits studied in general leadership also apply to team leaders. Third, this study explored if team leaders and members identify the accountability/authority dilemma faced

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by team leaders.

By analyzing the results of ten focus groups representing more than 47 work teams from five organizations, this study attempted to meet some of these research needs. It developed a comprehensive taxonomy of the qualities required for effective team leadership, which includes the key traits mentioned often by team leaders and members. Also, this study extends previous findings beyond self-directed teams by studying a broader array of work teams. Given that the systematic development of the construct of team leadership is still in its early stages, this study also has practical implications. By more clearly delineating the requirements of effective team leadership, the criteria for recruiting and selecting team leaders can be enhanced. Also, the training of existing team members to become team leaders is facilitated by clear definitions of the success factors of team leaders.

#### Method

##### Sample

The sample for this study consisted of 10 focus group transcripts collected in five different organizations. The companies in the study all used teams extensively and represented services (banking and insurance), manufacturing (technology and consumer products), and food-product industries. Two companies were located in the northeast, one in the southeast, and two in the southwest. Two sessions were conducted in each organization, one consisting of individuals with team leader responsibilities and the other with employees who were team members. Only one member per team was allowed to participate in the study, but because separate focus groups were conducted for team leaders and members, it was possible for a member and a leader of the same team to participate in the study. Focus groups ranged in size from 6 to 13 members with two researchers present.

Fifty-three males and 39 females participated in the study and ages ranged from early twenties to the sixties. The 92 focus group participants (47 team leaders and 45 team members) were selected by company representatives based on several criteria. Participants must have had at least six months experience on an active team (average length of team experience was 7.5 years). The amount of team training provided to participants was not assessed. Participants were also selected to provide representation from all of the major functions and multiple management levels within each company. Focus group participants represented teams from functions such as production, shipping, maintenance, human resources, senior administration, and customer service. As a result, participants represented teams as small as 6 members and as large as 40 members. Study participants were members of semi-autonomous teams that were responsible for major processes and made significant decisions internally but were controlled by an external layer of management. Many of the teams were permanent cross-functional teams or long-term project-based teams. Team leaders were members of the team, which they led, and in most cases were appointed by management and not nominated or selected by their team members.

##### Interview Procedure

A researcher with at least one year of focus group experience moderated the groups and a second researcher took detailed notes of the sessions. A standard protocol was used in all of the sessions and each lasted approximately 90 minutes. Following introductions and a statement of ground rules, a team leader was defined as a person who was a member of the team and yet had leadership responsibility for that team. The next questions addressed the skills and experiences of good team leaders, the obstacles or inhibitors to being a good team leader (personal as well as

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environmental), and the training topics/activities considered critical to prepare good team leaders. Specific and consistent probes were offered if participants did not understand the questions.

### Content Analysis Process

The comprehensive notes taken in each session (8-12 pages each) served as the source materials for content analysis. Consistent with Holsti (1969) and Krippendorf (1980), the analysis process began with coder training, followed by category development, coding, and verification.

#### Coder Training

In order to get a cursory knowledge of the content of the group sessions and to begin identifying some of the common themes in the transcripts, two coders read through the notes from all of the sessions. Following this, two of the session records were chosen randomly for training. Each coder read through the records, first highlighting the comments relevant to the topic of team leadership. Once relevant comments had been highlighted, coders placed each comment into a self-created category. For instance, if a new comment corresponded to a new and unique team leader characteristic, a new category was created. Each comment was categorized in this manner until the first two transcripts had been completed. After coding the first two training transcripts separately, the trainer and coders discussed their categories and the rationale for their categories. This preliminary step was taken to ensure that coders were using similar sorting rationales before moving on to the remaining transcripts.

#### Category Development and Coding

The next eight focus group transcripts were analyzed by each coder independently. Following all coding, approximately 60 detailed categories were established. Each rater's categories were discussed to create a common set

of categories. Disagreements regarding the categorization of any specific comment were discussed between coders and the comment was placed into a mutually agreed upon category. Condensing the 60 specific categories yielded twenty core qualities of team leaders. As a final step, the twenty qualities were sorted into broad themes based on similarity to each other. Two of the authors did a qualitative sort of the qualities based on their overall purpose in team leadership and qualities that were similar in leadership function were placed in the same theme.

#### Verification

A final check of the reliability of the 20 categories was conducted. Three new coders sorted each of the original comments into the categories developed. Ninety-two percent of the comments were placed into the same category by at least two of the coders and 82% of the comments were placed into the same category by all three coders. Following the initial sorting, comments that were not placed in the same category were discussed and placed into a mutually agreed upon category or discarded if no agreement was reached (10 of the original 450 comments were discarded, yielding the final 440).

### Results

The 440 comments yielded 20 categories of team leader characteristics. The comments of team leaders and team members were combined because chi-squared analyses demonstrated a high degree of similarity in how frequently the qualities were mentioned by each group. This similarity between leaders and members may develop as a result of the common goals within a team. Perhaps these common goals create a shared perception of the role of the team leader that is held by both team leaders and members.

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The 20 qualities identified in this study were organized into six themes to simplify presentation: Background and Expertise (10.5% of all comments fell into this category), Task-Oriented Skills (31.1%), Interpersonal Skills (22.7%), Communication Skills (17.5%), Liaison Skills (7%), and Personal Characteristics/Traits (10.9%). Table 2 provides the name of each quality, the percentage of all comments that addressed the quality, a working definition (based on critical incidents or behaviors mentioned by participants), and verbatim comments to more colorfully illustrate the meaning of the qualities.

#### Background and Expertise

The first theme contained one team leader quality, Background and Expertise. Although participants noted that the leader's job knowledge played a role in team success, knowledge of organizational issues (i.e., politics, etc.) was also important.

#### Task-Oriented Skills

The second theme, the task-oriented skills required to get the job done, consisted of six qualities: Planning/Organizing, Decision-making, Delegating/Sharing Power, Problem-solving, Facilitating the Process, and Motivating. Several team members in this study mentioned that at times teams failed to move forward and the leader needed to step in with a decision. In this study, delegating was the task-oriented skill mentioned most often, thus suggesting that team leadership is an empowerment-based, "hands-off" process. Motivating was discussed almost exclusively as a task-related process rather than an interpersonal process. That is, motivation was usually discussed in terms of getting the job done rather than feeling good about how things went.

#### Interpersonal Skills

The third theme, interpersonal

skills, consisted of Conflict Management, Persuasion and Influence, Coaching/Mentoring, and Understanding/Supporting. Table 2 provides more detail.

#### Communication Skills

The fourth theme, communication skills, consisted of Listening Effectively, Communicating Information, Providing Feedback, and Communicating a Vision. Although these two skills were often subsumed under the broader category of interpersonal skills in previous research, participants in this study emphasized the importance of these two skills to such an extent that they warranted individual attention. In fact, Communicating Information was one of the most frequently mentioned qualities across all categories.

#### Liaison Skills

The fifth theme, liaison skills, consisted of Networking/Boundary Spanning and Accountability/Responsibility. Accountability/Responsibility referred to the fact that the team leaders shared in the team's successes, but were also the one person most accountable for the team's failures.

#### Personal Characteristics/Traits

The last theme consisted of the personal characteristics of effective team leaders including Self-Confidence/Emotional Stability, Consistency/Trust, and Flexibility. These personal characteristics will be discussed in more detail below.

### Discussion

Altogether, one may see that an effective team leader serves several purposes for the team. Not only is the team leader ultimately responsible for the performance of the team, but the leader must focus on the interpersonal dynamics of the team as well. In fact, the task-oriented themes (training/experience and task-oriented skills) and the relationship-oriented themes (interpersonal and

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**Table 2**  
**Team Leader Qualities, Percentage of Comments, Working Definitions, and Representative Quotes**

Quality	%	Definition	Representative Quote From Groups
<b>Background and Expertise</b>			
Background and Expertise	10.5	Subject matter expertise; knowing the informal organization based on experience in the company.	"If we're not experts, it is going to make it difficult for us in that we're not accepted by our group and we can't command our people's respect."
<b>Task-Oriented Skills</b>			
Planning/Organizing	7.5	Doing preliminary set-up for project(s) by setting clear, challenging, and realistic goals for the team, setting priorities, and finalizing logistics.	"A leader needs the ability to assess situations, assign people and assign people in the right situations."
Decision-Making	2	Knowing when the team is unable to make a decision and making it for them.	"In a lack of consensus, the team leader should make the call—with their [team members'] input. Don't forget the leader part of team leader."
Delegating/Sharing Power	9.3	Delegating decision-making responsibility and giving up power to the team.	"You need to empower and give up some of the things that you've done alone."
Problem Solving	4.1	Removing obstacles, trouble-shooting, and translating complex issues into manageable issues for the team.	"[The] team leader is the first resource for the team rather than bringing all of the questions to the members."
Facilitating the Process	5	Ensuring the team stays on track, monitoring progress, maintaining schedules, and supervising projects.	"[The leader must] be able to sense that the team is about to go off track before it goes off."
Motivating	3.2	Encouraging and moving the team in the right direction on the task.	"a combination of a pat on the back and a firm hand when things weren't going right."



**Table 2 Continued**  
**Team Leader Qualities, Percentage of Comments, Working Definitions, and Representative Quotes**

Quality	%	Definition	Representative Quote From Groups
<b>Interpersonal Skills</b>			
Conflict Management	1.6	Channeling interpersonal team conflict to produce positive results.	"There will be conflict along this path--keep it functional, not dysfunctional."
Persuasion and Influence	4.1	Exerting authority to get team members involved in group tasks, pulling together diverse teammates, using interpersonal skills to engender cooperation.	"A team leader exercises more of the soft orientation, schmoozing, much more than because [team leaders have] no ultimate :
Coaching/Mentoring	8.2	Providing task and career guidance, enabling skill acquisition, helping team move toward its goals.	"As a manager, your team was there to se Now your [the team leader's] job is to se
Understanding/ Supporting People	8.9	Treating team members as equals, understanding their perspectives, providing interpersonal support, and being sensitive to their needs.	"A team leader has to understand, at diff the people with whom they're working: \n their background story, and if not, you ca major calls that are inappropriate."
<b>Communication Skills</b>			
Listening Effectively	2.7	Being open to team member suggestions and listening actively to their input.	"Be an active listener."
Communicating Information	8.9	Presenting task-related knowledge/ideas in verbal or written formats.	"End results but also progress along the \n communicated."
Providing Feedback	3.9	Giving team members positive/negative feedback on task performance, recognizing team members for accomplishments, and using constructive criticism.	"Sharing information, whether it's positi reinforcement, acknowledging accomplis or addressing areas that need improve a constructive discussion rather than an a a member's self-esteem."

**Table 2 Continued**  
**Team Leader Qualities, Percentage of Comments, Working Definitions, and Representative Quotes**

Quality	%	Definition	Representative Quote From Groups
<b>Communication Skills (continued)</b>			
Communicating a Vision	2	Providing foresight to the team on how the team fits into the larger organization, translating organizational issues into team terms, and ability to understand the long-term impact of decisions.	"[Communicating] where we are trying organization so they [team members] can conceptualize where the piece of their team fits in."
<b>Liaison Skills</b>			
Networking/ Boundary Spanning	2	Acting as the advocate for the team and being the link to important members of management.	"Team leaders should act as an informant between team and manager, serve as an advisor, and be a bridge between the team and management."
Accountability/ Responsibility	5	Taking ultimate responsibility for the outcomes of the team.	"You have to let go of the work, but not responsibility. Your employees' failure successes are yours too."
<b>Personal Characteristics/Traits</b>			
Self-confidence/ Emotional Stability	3.4	Confidence in one's abilities, remaining even-tempered, patient, and dependable.	"Team leaders cannot be judgmental, quick to anger. Be open to them [team members] and let them know they can come in."
Consistency/Trust	5	Responding to situations in a consistent manner, keeping one's word, and meeting commitments in order to build trust among team members.	"Consistent and dependable—the same interest every day. Being very open and listening to what they have to say."
Flexibility	2.5	The ability to "roll with the punches" and respond to changing requirements with ease.	"Change constantly as priorities change, you have to go with the flow sometimes"

communication skills) account for nearly equivalent percentages of comments made (41.6% vs. 40.2%). Within team leadership, there appears to be a balance between what the early leadership theories termed initiating structure and consideration (Fleishman, 1953) or concern for people vs. concern for production (Blake & Mouton, 1964).

In fact, the results of this study, with the exception of the personal characteristics/traits, are consistent with much of the previous research on leadership that took a functional approach (McGrath, 1962; Stogdill, 1962; and Yukl, 1998). The personal characteristics/traits, however, are also consistent with research on charismatic and transformational leadership scenarios (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Conger & Kanungo, 1987; House, 1977). The importance of persuasion and influence among team leaders is consistent with French and Raven's (1959) concepts of referent and personal power. Team leadership is also a function of leader-member exchanges (Dansereau, et al., 1975) and other social processes in leadership (Hackman & Walton, 1976; Hughes, et al., 1996). Situational approaches to leadership (Evans, 1970; Fiedler, 1967; Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; House, 1971) however, are a ripe area for study in team leader situations.

The consistencies between the qualities suggested in this study and work in previous team leader studies are outlined in Table 3. Many of the issues raised by study participants are consistent with prior research. However, this study provides new perspectives on the personal characteristics of team leaders, the conflict between accountability and responsibility, and the unique interpersonal nature of team leadership.

#### **New Perspectives**

This study verifies many of the team leader skills and behaviors mentioned in previous research while also

illustrating some of the unique qualities of team leadership. For example, the personal characteristics of stability, trust, and flexibility that have received scant attention previously emerged as important qualities of effective team leaders. General leadership literature had examined such qualities, but team leadership research had yet to explore this arena in any detail. Although Hackman and Walton (1986) mentioned personal characteristics of the team leader, the identification of these specific team leader traits in the present study may be particularly useful in the context of team leader selection.

The accountability and responsibility of team leaders also emerged as an important issue because team leaders are often in a position of high accountability with little real authority. They are given a title and responsibility, but little administrative power to exert. Although this paradox has received attention in the popular press (even in the comic strip Dilbert), its salience in the results of this study is another indication of why it was mentioned as a significant stressor by many of the team leaders in this study.

This study also provides new perspectives on previously studied team leader skills. For instance, delegating was mentioned in most of the previous studies as a means of enhancing efficiency. Participants in this study, however, emphasized that delegating also served as a means of empowerment and esteem building. Understanding/supporting was not mentioned explicitly in previous research, yet participants mentioned it often as an important element of interpersonal skills. Members in each organization consistently emphasized that treating team members as equals and supporting them in non task-oriented ways was a critical component of the team leader's responsibilities.

In fact, the highly interpersonal nature of team leadership is very consistent with the lack of true authority in the position. Given that team leaders

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Table 3

**Team Leader Qualities Mentioned in Previous Team Leader Research**

Quality	Previous Research Mentioning Quality
<b>Background and Expertise</b>	
Background and Expertise	Hackman & Walton (1986)
<b>Task-Oriented Skills</b>	
Planning/Organizing	Hackman & Walton (1986); Kozlowski et al. (1996); Morgeson (1997)
Decision-Making	Hackman & Walton (1986); Kozlowski et al. (1996); Morgeson (1997); Stewart & Manz (1995); Zenger et al. (1994)
Delegating/Sharing Power	Manz & Sims (1987); Stewart & Manz (1995); Zenger et al. (1994)
Problem Solving	McGrath (1962); Zenger et al. (1994)
Facilitating the Process	Hackman & Walton (1986); Komaki, et al. (1996); Morgeson (1997)
Motivating	All previous team leader studies
<b>Interpersonal Skills</b>	
Conflict Management	Kozlowski et al. (1996); Manz & Sims (1987); McGrath, 1962); Zenger et al. (1994)
Persuasion and Influence	Manz & Sims (1987); Morgeson (1997)
Coaching/Mentoring	All previous team leader studies
Understanding/Supporting People	No previous team leader studies mention this directly

Table 3 (continued)

**Team Leader Qualities Mentioned in Previous Team Leader Research**

Quality	Previous Research Mentioning Quality
<b>Communication Skills</b>	
Listening Effectively	Hackman & Walton (1986)
Communicating Information	All previous team leader studies
Providing Feedback	McGrath (1962); Hackman & Walton (1986); Komaki et al. (1989)
Communicating a Vision	Hackman & Walton (1986); Kozlowski et al. (1996)
<b>Liaison Skills</b>	
Networking/Boundary Spanning	Hackman & Walton (1986); Morgeson (1997); Stewart & Manz (1995)
Accountability/Responsibility	No previous team leader studies address this directly
<b>Personal Characteristics/Traits</b>	
Self-confidence/Emotional Stability	Hackman & Walton (1986) discuss emotional maturity
Consistency/Trust	No previous team leader studies address this.
Flexibility	Alluded to by Hackman & Walton (1986) as inventive skill Zenger et al. (1994) in discussion of managing diversity

have significant responsibility and accountability but little authority, they must be able to achieve compliance among team members through something other than rewards or punishments. As a result, effective team leaders use the interpersonal skills mentioned above (conflict management, persuasion/influence, and understanding/supporting) to help the team achieve its goals. Therefore, traits such as consistency, emotional stability, and flexibility will also play a significant role for team leaders.

### Implications and Limitations

Employees who work in teams every day provided the rich data in this study. As such, our results have implications for both managers and researchers who deal with selecting or training team leaders. For instance, this taxonomy outlines many of the criteria that may be used in training programs for team leaders. Skills such as planning/organizing, motivating, or even conflict management can be trained and many companies offer training programs to address them. Some of the qualities mentioned most frequently (understanding/support, communicating information, and coaching/mentoring) emphasize the highly interpersonal nature of team leadership. If team leadership is somewhat different from classic leadership, as this study suggests, training must reflect this difference.

However, some would argue that personal characteristics such as emotional stability, trust, and flexibility would be difficult or impossible to train. Selecting people who already possess these characteristics may be the most effective approach to staffing team leader positions. The taxonomy presented in this study could potentially be used to develop team leader selection tools. The 20 categories provide an initial framework for an instrument and the verbatim comments from the groups provide the critical incidents that could

comprise the individual items. This information could also be used to create questions for structured interviews or exercises for assessment-center style activities.

There are some limitations that warrant discussion, however. The small number of focus groups may limit the generalizability of the results. However, participants represented at least 47 (the number of team leaders in the study) different teams in multiple functions in five different companies, from varied geographic regions. Although the qualitative and descriptive data collected are an important first step in quantifying the domain of team leadership, more research is needed to test the validity of this taxonomy and to determine how these qualities are related to team effectiveness. Future research needs to assess how well each of the 20 qualities predicts overall team leader performance.

Following validation of the taxonomy, research must address the situations in which specific qualities would be needed most and when they would be most effective. Situational leadership theory suggests that the organizational situation (hierarchy, technology, etc.) may influence which qualities would be appropriate for the team leader in a given situation. Similarly, studies are needed to assess whether selection or training would be the most effective way to fill team leader positions. Also, the issue of team leader accountability with little authority mentioned earlier makes team leadership a natural environment in which to study the various bases of power (i.e., legitimate, personal, referent, etc.).

In conclusion, the disparate pieces of the team leadership puzzle begin to come together in this study. It outlines the type of skills and traits typical of team leaders and illustrates that the requirements for effective team leadership entail more than the

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behaviors or skills previously prescribed. The paradox faced by most team leaders, significant accountability with little authority, was also a clear message from participants. The results of this study support the complex nature of the role of team leader: an employee who must bridge the gap between the roles of team member, leader, and manager.

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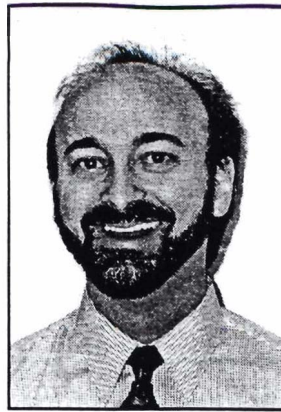
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#### Footnotes

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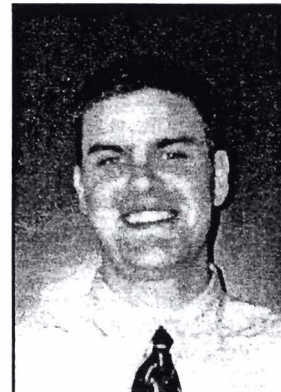
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**Allison Elder**

CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS AND PAPERS

for

THE 20TH ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT WORLD CONGRESS

July 17-22, 2000 at the Renaissance Goa Resort in Goa, India

You are invited to make a presentation at The 20th Organization Development World Congress being planned for July 17-22, 2000 at the Renaissance Goa Resort in Goa, India. Goa is a former Portuguese colony with beautiful beaches. Medieval sailors nicknamed Goa "The Pearl of the Orient". It is located on the west coast of India south of Bombay and is one of India's most important tourist destinations. We invite you to come and share with us the exciting things you are doing and your suggestions as to how we can be most helpful to you. Our usual format is twenty minutes for your presentation and ten minutes for a discussion of your ideas with the audience. We have found this provides a maximum opportunity for you to share your ideas with the group and for those attending to hear a wide variety of ideas from others. We encourage the development of panel presentations by you and the consumers of your services.

The 20th O.D. World Congress will start on Monday evening July 17th with an Opening Session and a community building exercise organized by Pritam Vachani, RODC Chairman of The 20th O.D. World Congress. We will end Saturday noon July 22nd following the meeting of O.D. Networks Worldwide. (The Saturday morning meeting is free and open to anyone interested in O.D., especially those interested in helping organize local O.D. networks.) Pritam has offered to organize a Spirituality/Meditation Workshops for 40 people, price US\$135. Friday night we hope to locate a band for dancing. Registration for The 20th O.D. World Congress is US\$230 for members of The O.D. Institute and US\$290 for nonmembers. A membership is US\$110. It is a big help if people will register early. In order to register, please send your Congress registration check to The O.D. Institute. We will need a check in order to register you. A room at the Renaissance Resort Hotel with breakfast, lunch, and dinner and coffee breaks is US\$30/person/day in a double room and US\$48/person/day in a single. Reservations at the Renaissance Goa Resort can be made by fax or E-mail. Fax is: 91-834-745225 and E-mail is RMDA.GOA@RML. SPRINTRPG EMS.VSNL.NET.IN The contact person at the Renaissance Resort is Mr. Allen Viegas. To make a reservation, they require one night's payment in advance. Reservations cancelled prior to July 1, 2000 will get a full refund. A copy of your room reservation request should be sent to Pritam Vachani, RODC at: pvachani@aol.com in case follow up is necessary. Pritam is exploring many exciting possibilities for us including contacts with local businessmen and the organization of a meditation workshop prior to the Congress. In the land of Ghandi there is now a war going on with Pakistan. We have offered to see if there might be some way we could help resolve this conflict. We would appreciate your comments on things you would like to do prior to the Congress. In Harare it was suggested that people would like a pre-Congress workshop on "O.D. for People New to O.D."

Registration for The 20th O.D. World Congress July 17-22, 2000 in Goa, India

- I plan to attend The 20th O.D. World Congress July 17-22, 2000 in Goa, India. Enclosed is my registration fee of US\$230 for members of The O.D. Institute and US\$290 for nonmembers. (A membership is US\$110.)
I would like to reserve a room at the Renaissance Goa Resort. (US\$30/person/night in a double and US\$48/night in a single).
I have contacted the Renaissance Goa Resort for a reservation.
I would like to attend a two day pre-congress Spirituality and Meditation Workshop July 15th to 17th (\$135).
I would like to attend a pre-congress workshop on "O.D. for People New to O.D." Other suggestions
I would like to attend the free 10th Annual Meeting of O.D. Networks Worldwide on Saturday morning July 22nd.
I would like to make a presentation. The title of my presentation is:

Name E-mail address:

Address Telephone:

(Please send your registration check to: The O.D. Institute, 11234 Walnut Ridge Road, Chesterland, OH 44026 USA. Tel: 440/729-7419, E-mail: DonWCole@aol.com Homepage: http://members.aol.com.odinst in order to register, we need a check.)