

Leadership and Trust

Leadership is “the ability of an individual to *influence* [emphasis added], motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organization.”¹ Influence is conceptualized as a change in behavior, opinions, attitudes, goals, needs, or values of a “target” person as a consequence of an action by another “agent” person.² In this sense, leadership cannot be reduced to a leader-follower relationship (i.e., the hierarchical position given by an organization). Influence is independent from an organizational position (not just downwards toward a follower), and each individual who influences someone else plays a leadership role.

Within the leadership paradigm, trust plays an important role. The level of trust in leader-follower relationships determines the amount of influence that followers and leaders would accept willingly from each other and, therefore, affects performance.³ For a leader attempting to be a role model, ethical behavior is paramount, as followers tend to emulate ethical leaders’ behavior because such leaders are engaging and sincere role models who set the standards for appropriate behavior.⁴ Further, authentic behavior and an authentic leader-follower relationship, characterized by transparency, openness, and trust are also pieces in the puzzle of effective leadership.⁵

Leadership

Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do
and they will surprise you with their ingenuity.
—General George S. Patton

Two major leadership behaviors are discussed herein: transformational leadership and transactional leadership.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership originates from the trait approach of charismatic leadership. The concept is based on the Greek word charisma, which translates into “divine gift” and signifies the leader’s considerable influence over the follower and the ability to transform the follower’s performance toward a desired outcome.⁶ Eminent leadership scholars Dr. Bernard Bass and Dr. Ronald E. Riggio stated that “transformational leadership has much in common with charismatic leadership, but charisma is only part of transformational leadership.”⁷

Transformational leaders are theorized to achieve superior results with their followers compared to other

leadership behaviors.⁸ This may be, in part, because they are proactive, shift follower perception and attention beyond known boundaries for collective interests, and motivate followers to obtain stretch goals.⁹ Transformational leaders are capable of having a significant influence on people by causing changes in beliefs, needs, and values, leading to effective leader development—they increase self-efficacy in followers by empowering them. They challenge the status quo and transform the organization by creating the need and readiness for change by presenting a powerful, yet attainable, view of the future. They create new visions and goals and engage followers in achieving them. They develop higher order needs for followers such as competence, achievement, autonomy, and relatedness (affiliation). Four distinct components of transformational leadership have been identified by leadership experts, which are often referred to as the “four I’s.”¹⁰

- **Idealized Influence (II)**

The leader serves as an idol and example for followers. He or she is admired, respected, and trusted. There are two aspects to II: behavioral and attributed.

- **Inspirational Motivation (IM)**

The leader inspires and motivates followers by providing meaningful work that challenges the follower. The leader helps the follower envision an attractive future state, communicates clear expectations, and shows commitment to goals.

- **Individualized Consideration (IC)**

The leader actively cares about the needs and feelings of his or her followers. He or she acts as a coach and mentor and provides learning opportunities to the followers and supports them as needed.

- **Intellectual Stimulation (IS)**

The leader promotes innovative and creative behavior. The leader questions assumptions, revisiting old situations with a new approach and reframing problems. No public criticism is performed of any follower’s mistake. Followers are encouraged to try new approaches.

Engaging in these leadership behaviors leads to the follower’s identification with the leader, internalization, and intrinsic motivation. Internalization is defined as “people taking in values, attitudes, or regulatory structures, such that the external regulation of a behavior is transformed into an internal regulation and thus no longer requires the presence of an external contingency”—in other words, people work even when their boss is not watching.¹¹ Intrinsic motivation means someone is doing an activity because of the interest in the activity itself. The activity leads to spontaneous satisfaction and, therefore, is performed at one’s own volition and not because of an external influence (e.g., reward or punishment).

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership is a processoriented approach and originates from the social exchange perspective.¹² It recognizes “the implicit social exchange or transaction over time that exists between the leader and followers, including reciprocal influence and interpersonal perception.”¹³ Transactional leadership entails an exchange and typically means that a follower gets a form of reward from the leader in return for successfully fulfilling expectations, which represents a form of a transaction. The reward could be positive (e.g., a bonus or compliment) or the avoidance of something negative.¹⁴ A transactional leader clarifies what needs to be done; provides goals and objectives; facilitates efficient interaction between human, physical, and fiscal resources; recognizes and rewards achievement; and gets followers to achieve expected results. Bass mentioned two forms of transactional leadership: contingent reward and management by exception. Contingent reward leadership sets clear expectations to a follower and offers rewards if the expectations are achieved, while the management by exception approach is more corrective and involves disciplinary actions, if needed. The leader specifies what is considered ineffective performance, sets standards for compliance, and monitors compliance to the standards and may discipline followers for noncompliance with those standards.¹⁵

Transformational and transactional leadership are neither mutually exclusive nor contradictory. In fact, research has shown that they can complement each other.¹⁶ Transactional leadership can be seen as the foundation that transformational leadership builds upon. To maximize effectiveness, leaders should incorporate both transactional and transformational components.¹⁷ Noted organizational psychologists Dr. Edwin P. Hollander and Dr. Lynn R. Offermann mention that “transformational leadership can be seen as an extension of transactional leadership, but with greater rewards in leader intensity and follower arousal.”¹⁸ Research and practice has shown that both leadership behaviors are necessary to maximize performance and that the best leaders are both transformational and transactional.¹⁹

Trust

Character is like a tree and reputation like a shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing.
—Abraham Lincoln

Trust between the leader and the follower leads to better performance and less counterproductive behaviors.²⁰ In the absence of trust, the relationship between the leader and the follower, and, therefore organization, pays a “trust tax” due to a lack of truthfulness and honesty, which may lead to dysfunctional behaviors. Trust is important for sustaining individual and organizational effectiveness.²¹

Trust is conceptualized as “the willingness to be vulnerable to another party.”²² Risk is an essential part of the willingness to be vulnerable. Nothing is at risk in order to trust; however, risk taking is required in order to engage in trusting actions and behaviors. Therefore, the implication between trust and trusting behaviors is differentiated by the “willingness” to assume risk and actually “assuming” risk. If the level of trust exceeds the threshold of perceived risk, then a person will engage in risk taking (i.e., trusting behavior); if the level of trust is lower than the level of perceived risk, then a person will not engage in risk taking.

To gain trust, the trustee needs to be trustworthy, which is defined as characteristics and actions of one who will lead that person to be more or less trusted by another. But what leads to the perception of trustworthiness? The concept of trustworthiness includes three components: (1) ability, (2) benevolence, and (3) integrity.²³

- **Ability/Competence**

The trustee possesses (and demonstrates) a group of skills or competencies representing a form of mastery in a specific field.

- **Benevolence/Caring**

A benevolent person is someone who genuinely cares about the other and conveys authentic concern in relationships. Loyalty, openness, caring, and availability are essential factors of benevolence. Benevolence suggests that the trustee has some special connection to the trustor (e.g., a mentor-protégé relationship).

- **Integrity/Character**

Integrity involves (a) the trustee consistently following a set of principles (e.g., good character) and (b) that this set of principles is deemed ethically correct by the trustor. Both the adherence to and acceptability of the principles are important. Factors of integrity are consistency, discretion, fairness, promise, reliability, and value congruence.

Research has shown that these three components are essential in building trustworthiness.²⁴ The trustor’s trust propensity, which is a “general willingness to trust others,” is another aspect worth mentioning.²⁵ It can be seen as a filter that alters the perception of trust. Trust propensity is a stable within-party factor based on someone’s experiences and personality.

Leadership Behavior and Trust

Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character.
But if you must be without one, be without the strategy.

—General H. Norman Schwarzkopf

In Hollander’s idiosyncrasy model of leadership, he outlined leadership as a dynamic process of interpersonal evaluation and the “credit” a leader has to have to be able to influence others.²⁶ In his model, credits are a form of status that originate from multiple sources (e.g., perceived competence).²⁷ The basic concept of the model is that the leader’s source of credits and, therefore, influence is based on his or her behavior as it is perceived by the follower. The earned credits give the follower a higher tolerance for the leader’s deviations from typical norms and roles. Hollander stated “the idea of credit is embedded in everyday language, in terms such as receiving credit, taking credit, and being discredited.”²⁸ Trust is a form of credit the leader receives from the follower based on the leader’s behavior. This model has validity in a leader-follower relationship, as well as between peers—mutual trust among team members contributes to the overall team performance.²⁹

There are classic leadership behaviors that lead to higher performance. For example, as outlined previously, demonstrating transformational leadership behaviors that are perceived as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration will lead to higher performance.³⁰ However, there may be other leadership behaviors that lead to trustworthiness and trust and, subsequently, to even higher levels of performance. Research shows that ethical and authentic leadership behaviors are the main contributors to trustworthiness and trust.³¹ Specifically, ethical leadership behaviors show the strongest relationship to both trustworthiness and trust. Typical leadership behaviors for ethical and authentic leaders include the following:

- **Ethical Leadership Behaviors**³²
 - » Demonstrate what “right looks like”
 - » Infuse ethics into systems and processes
 - » Inspire others to go beyond expectations regarding ethical behavior
 - » Share stories about ethical heroes
 - » Describe how values look in action
 - » Share rationale for ethical decisions
 - » Discuss how ethics is part of a person’s identity and provides purpose
 - » Communicate clear ethical standards and norms
 - » Enforce ethical standards
 - » Reward ethical behavior
- **Authentic Leadership Behaviors**³³

- » Know one's values, purpose, strengths, weaknesses, passions, and talents
- » Understand one's own emotions, triggers, and motives
- » Share true thoughts and beliefs when communicating
- » Clearly state intentions for actions
- » Admit mistakes when made
- » Align actions with espoused beliefs
- » Be willing to challenge one's own assumptions
- » Demonstrate moral courage to lead and live by own and the organization's values
- » Listen attentively to different perspectives before coming to conclusions

A leader demonstrating these behaviors may achieve high levels of trustworthiness and trust as exhibiting these behaviors may lead to “credits” by the follower. Ethical and authentic leadership behaviors tend to multiply the leader's ability to execute influence.³⁴ Therefore, these behaviors may also lead to increased performance-related behaviors among followers.

Leadership in Extreme Contexts

Luck is where preparation meets opportunity.
—General Dwight D. Eisenhower

There are many professions (e.g., police officer and firefighter) that operate both in a normal context and in an extreme context—an environment of danger and risk. Contextual factors such as environmental risk have an influence on leadership.³⁵ Adaptive leaders lead more effectively in a rapidly changing environment, as they are more able to select an appropriate response to the challenge.³⁶ According to U.S. Army doctrine, transformational leadership is central to adaptive leadership.³⁷ However, Bass and Riggio stated that, in situations where safety is of paramount importance and the presence of high environmental risks exist, transactional leadership may be required.³⁸ Research suggests that both transformational and transactional leadership of U.S. Air Force leaders led to higher levels of motivation, cohesion, and performance in their followers. In sum, both transformational and transactional leadership are an essential part of effective leadership in extreme contexts.³⁹

Considering the dangerous and unpredictable environments encountered by police officers, assuming risk and engaging in trusting actions are imperative parts of effective operation. Military research, specifically in combat situations, shows that trust—not only in the leader, but also between leaders and subordinates—is essential to achieve objectives under the risk of injury or death.⁴⁰ Furthermore, trust plays an important

role in performance-related behaviors, especially in extreme contexts involving unpredictable and dangerous situations. Research shows that the three components of trustworthiness (i.e., competence, benevolence, and integrity) have different importance depending on the context. In non-extreme (normal) contexts, the perception of trustworthiness is mainly based on benevolence.⁴¹ In extreme contexts, integrity is the main component for perceived trustworthiness.⁴² Military research found that soldiers reevaluate trust before combat (before entering an extreme context) based on the levels of competence and abilities.⁴³ Recent research shows that a lack of trust in non-extreme (normal) contexts may lead to withdrawal (e.g., leaving the work situation for unnecessary reasons, spending work time on personal matters, thinking of leaving current job) and, in extreme contexts, a lack of trust may lead to physical symptoms (e.g., trouble sleeping, headache, loss of appetite, heart pounding).⁴⁴ This underlines once more the important role of trust. In both non-extreme and extreme contexts, trust, preceded by appropriate behaviors that lead to trustworthiness, is the antecedent to effective performance. ♦

Notes:

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³Patrick Sweeney, “Do Soldiers Reevaluate Trust in Their Leaders Prior to Combat Operations?” *Military Psychology* 22, no. 1 (2010): 70–88.

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⁵Dana Yagil and Hana Medler-Liraz “Feel Free, Be Yourself: Authentic Leadership, Emotional Expression, and Employee Authenticity,” *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies* 21, no. 1 (2014): 59–70.

⁶Edwin Hollander and Lynn Offermann, “Power and Leadership in Organizations,” *American Psychologist* 45, no. 2 (1990): 179–189.

⁷Bernard M. Bass and Ronald E. Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 2nd ed., (New York, NY: Psychology Press, 2006), 5.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Sinem Aydogdu and Baris Asikgil, “The Effect of Transformational Leadership Behavior on Organizational Culture: An Application in Pharmaceutical Industry,” *International Review of*

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¹²Hollander and Offermann, “Power and Leadership in Organizations.”

¹³Ibid., 181.

¹⁴Bernard M. Bass et al., “Predicting Unit Performance by Assessing Transformational and Transactional Leadership,” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 88, no. 2 (2003): 207–218.

¹⁵Bernard M. Bass, *Leadership and Performance beyond Expectations* (New York: Free Press, 1985).

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¹⁸Hollander and Offermann, “Power and Leadership in Organizations.”

¹⁹Oke, Munshi, and Walumbwa, “The Influence of Leadership.”

²⁰Jason Colquitt, Brent Scott, and Jeffrey LePine, “Trust, Trustworthiness, and Trust Propensity: A Metaanalytic Test of Their Unique Relationships with Risk Taking and Job Performance,” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 92, no. 4 (2007): 909–927; Vicki L. Goodwin et al., “Moderator or Mediator? Examining the Role of Trust in the Transformational Leadership Paradigm,” *Journal of Managerial Issues* 23, no. 4 (2011): 409–425.

²¹Daniel McAllister, “Affect- and Cognition-Based Trust as Foundations for Interpersonal Cooperation in Organizations,” *Academy of Management Journal* 38, no. 1 (1995): 24–59.

²²Roger Mayer, James Davis, F. David Schoorman, “An Integrative Model of Trust,” *Academy of Management Review* 20, no 3. (1995): 709–734.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Colquitt, Scott, and LePine, “Trust, Worthiness, and Trust Propensity.”

²⁵Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman, “An Integrative Model of Trust.”

²⁶Edwin Hollander, “Conformity, Status, and Idiosyncrasy Credit,” *Psychological Review* 65 (1958): 117–

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²⁷Hollander and Offermann, “Power and Leadership in Organizations.”

²⁸Edwin Hollander, “The Essential Interdependence of Leadership and Followership,” *American Psychology Society: Current Direction* 1, no. 2 (1992): 71–74.

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³⁰Bass and Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*.

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³²Brown and Treviño, “Ethical Leadership.”

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³⁵Sean Hannah et al., “A Framework for Examining Leadership in Extreme Contexts,” *The Leadership Quarterly* 20 (2009): 897–919.

³⁶Bass et al., “Predicting Unit Performance”; Hannah et al., “A Framework for Examining Leadership.”

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³⁸Bass and Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*.

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⁴¹Jason Colquitt et al., “Trust in Typical and High-Reliability Contexts: Building and Reacting to Trust Among Firefighters,” *Academy of Management Journal* 54, no. 5 (2011): 999–1015.

⁴²Ibid.; Sweeney, “Do Soldiers Reevaluate Trust in Their Leaders Prior to Combat Operations?”

⁴³Sweeney, “Do Soldiers Reevaluate Trust in Their Leaders Prior to Combat Operations?”

⁴⁴Colquitt et al., “Trust in Typical and High-Reliability Contexts.”

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