My leadership philosophy

As complex and encompassing the subject of leadership maybe, having completed the course Managing Human Capital under Professor Susan Schell gives me a slight advantage in understanding leadership. The course requirements included reading Stephen Young's book, Micromessaging, taking the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, and Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Inventory. This exposure has provided me with a clear perspective on this subject. To present my personal leadership philosophy, I will discuss these areas: my view of leadership, my LPI profile summary, and my leadership development plan.

My View of Leadership Know Thyself The knowledge I gained by taking Susan Schell's course provided me with sources of information that helped me derive at my view of leadership. As a result, I strongly feel that by obtaining a total understanding of me is essential in becoming an effective leader. Taking the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and the Multiple Intelligences Inventory were necessary assignments because they both gave accurate views of my strengths, weaknesses, and development needs.

I know that it is imperative that I engage in regular self-assessment so I can constantly learn, expand upon my strengths, and address my weaknesses because the more I know about myself the better I can lead others. Thus, I have whole heartily adopted Schell's belief that knowing thyself is the first rule of leadership. (Schell, 2012) Know Others My assumption about acquiring great leadership skills is partially based on Schell's belief that knowing others is the second rule of leadership. Schell, 2012) I firmly believe that by knowing my subordinates, I will be able to communicate with them

on a more productive level because I will know their educational background, work experiences, and other pertinent information they bring to the table.

Furthermore, I will become tuned in to their needs such as the need for genuine concern and respect; to be recognized and rewarded for a job well done; and to experience the joy of carrying out a goal to a tangible end. I also think that I must display my true values and beliefs because if there is a gap between what I say I will o, and what I do, could easily compromise my trustworthiness and creditability. I conceive that the bottom line for being the best leader ever is to know others to point where they are inspired by you and will be self-motivated to do the right thing. Using Positive Micromessages Reading Young's book was enlightening and brought clarity and perspective to my view of leadership. I feel that I can understand human behavior in a more precise way by observing and analyzing the subtle micromessages that I am sending to or receiving from my subordinates.

My goal of mastering positive micromessages and becoming a leader that others will want to follow was validated by Young's statement, " Micromessaging is the soul of leadership and leadership is the primary driver of performance. " (Young, 2007) Modeling Company Culture In my opinion, another vital part of being an effective leader is being aware of the company's culture and to model it daily. Since the culture of a company begins with the leader, I must generate strong values and principles similar to that of the company.

I'm positive that my subordinates will embrace the company's culture after seeing how strongly my values align with the company values, and how I communicate them clearly and fairly. The culture of the company may

change through innovation and the hiring people of diverse personnel. Therefore, I am certain that to be a productive leader, I must always stay abreast of the company culture. How My Views Impact My Leadership My repertoire of knowledge on the topic of leadership has impacted my current leadership role in a positive way and hopefully my future role.

I realize my commitment to develop a harmonious work environment and to foster a rapport between myself and by subordinates can be accomplished by being aware of the importance of observing micromessages and avoiding sending mix-messages. Some of my subordinates are responding positively to how well I am learning, embracing, modeling and clearly communicating the company culture. I have the desire to become a people oriented person by showing sympathy for the concerns of others. I must continue to grow by adjusting some of my shortcoming and capitalizing upon my strengths.

One of my first osses was instrumental in shaping and impacting my view of leadership as well. He exhibited all the values, assumptions, and beliefs I hold dearly. He had thorough knowledge of the company culture; communicated clearly and modeled the goals of the company; respected and rewarded desired performance; gave timely and constructive feedback; and was a risk taker just to name a few of his principles. I can still visualize his actions, and they were actions of a great leader. Even though I have a tendency to imitate his style, I must keep on developing an effective leadership style of my own.

Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) Profile Summary Overall Assessment I believe that having the entire LPI package consisting of the feedback report, participant workbook, and leadership development planner in addition to

understanding the five practices will lead me on my journey of becoming an ideal leader. The feedback report was rather intimidating at first because it contained an elaborate amount of facts and figures. Once I dissected the detail, I was able to discern my initial reactions of relief, surprise, and a sense of pleasure.

Since the exercise was new, I didn't know what to expect, and I anticipated receiving much lower average scores. I was surprised and relieved to see I was exhibiting high leadership qualities. After reviewing the summary charts and graphs, I noted inconsistencies between my ratings and the ratings of my observers. Of all my five practices, my observers rated me higher than I did. The largest gap was 22. 4 points with the Encourage the Heart practice. The closest gaps were 8. 2 and 8. 4 points for the Enable Others to Act (Enable) and Challenge the Process (Challenge) practices respectively.

I think this occurred due to two factors: my tendency to be stricter on myself and one direct report observer gave me the maximum score of 60 in all practices. Strengths Rankings Of the six leadership behaviors relating to the Enable, I scored in the 8 to 9 range for five of the behaviors. I only scored high in one behavior associated with the Challenge practice. My five highest scores were the following behaviors: (1) treats others with dignity and respect 9. 8, (2) actively listens to diverse points of view 9. 4, (3) gives people choice about their work 9. , (4) develops cooperative relationships 9. 3, and (5) makes sure all the goals, plans, and milestones are set 9. 3. (Kouzes, 2003) Observation It's surprising to me that one of the characteristics from the Challenge practice is strength because the practice is also an area of improvement. I feel setting goals and plans fit perfectly

with my personality. From the Myers-Briggs (Myers, 2005)assessment, my last indicator preference was judging. I prefer order and organization at home and in the office, which explains my habit of making daily tasks lists at work and having an agenda when vacationing.

Gap Analysis The Enable practice was my highest scoring practice with a self-rating of 47 and an observer rating of 55. 2, which makes this practice my most consistent between myself and the observers. I think there was congruence due to two main factors: I place high value on enabling others, and I am considered an extrovert. As a result of my exposure to leading others, I have developed an admiration for the act of enabling others. I feel it's important to give people the opportunity to make choices.

If leaders fail to enable others, he/she may be guilty of holding others back and not allowing them to achieve to their highest potential. My Myers-Briggs (Myers, 2005) assessment classified me as an extrovert, which means I'm talkative, enthusiastic, and gregarious. I feel these traits allow me to develop meaningful relationships. As a result, my interactions with others are always conducted with dignity and respect. Areas of Improvement Rankings The feedback revealed I need to develop a plan for improving the Inspire and Challenge practices. This trend is obvious from reviewing my 10 lowest leadership behavior rankings.

Most of my scores were in the 6 to medium 7 ranges. My lowest scores from Inspire and Challenge practices included the following behaviors: (1) experiments and takes risk 6. 9, (2) challenges others to try new approaches 6. 9, (3) talks about future trends 7. 1, (4) describes a compelling image of the future 7. 2, (6) asks " What can we learn? " 7. 6, (7) appeals to others to

share dreams of the future 7. 7, (9) searches outside organization for innovative ways to improve 7. 9 and (10) shows others how their interest can be realized 8. 1. (Kouzes, 2003) Observation

Scoring low on the Inspire practice is not surprising to me. With the Accounting profession, we're constantly reviewing and reporting past results. This doesn't allow much time to look forward and try to predict the future. Seeing the big picture has always been a challenge for me because with my role I'm more interested in the details. This behavior was noted on my Myers- Briggs (Myers, 2005)survey. I was deemed a sensing individual, which is someone who prefers concrete information opposed to seeing the abstract that might led to future possibilities. Gap Analysis

The Challenge practice was my lowest scoring practice with a self-rating of 39 and an observer rating of 47. 4, which yields a gap of 8. 4. This makes Challenge the most consistent of all the other practices. I think this consistency is mainly due to me being new at my current employer. Both my manger and direct reports, can sense I'm still working on the job fundamentals and this makes it hard to focus on providing suggestions for new approaches. The Inspire practice was my second lowest average score with a self-assessment of 35 and a score of 48 from my observers.

I think the gap is primarily due to me not seeing me myself as forward thinker and preferring facts and not what ifs. . The Five Practices Bar Graphs This bar graph (Kouzes, 2003) provides an overall view of my LPI. My highlights are: (1) my self-scores are much lower than my observers, (2) my highest scores are in the Enable practice, and (3) my lowest scores are in the Inspire practice.

Percentile Ranking This percentile ranking graph (Kouzes, 2003) is very informative. My highlights are: (1) there are differing views of my leadership ability between myself and the observers, (2) my Manager provided the highest ercentile ranking for 4 of the 5 practices, and (3) the Challenge practice showed the most consistency among all of my observers. Leadership Development Plan Activities to Improve my Need Areas Improving my lowest ranking practices will be a major endeavor, and it require time, discipline, and a commitment to learn new things. As described in the LPI development planner, I agree you learn best my using the three E's of learning: (1) Experience that equates to doing, (2) Example which involves watching others, and (3) Education that entails formal training.

I will employ all three activities when constructing my development plan. (Kouzes, 2003) Using Experience to Develop the Inspire and Challenge Practices Actions to Take, Milestones and Deadlines Since I'm in a leadership role, I have the opportunity to interact with my staff. I can establish monthly meetings to describe my vision for the department and ask them to share their dreams and aspirations. This will give me the platform to actively share my picture of the future and enlist others to discuss their hopes. These meeting can also serve as forum to make improvements with the Challenge practice.

My staff can voice their opinion about how to make minor changes in their role and discuss any mistakes. We can collaborate and introduce new procedures to save time and minimize errors. I think a monthly frequency will be adequate. I would like to first introduce the Inspire questions to the meeting sometime during October 2012. To avoid overload of new concepts,

I would add the Challenge topics in January 2013. It seems reasonable to continue both of these discussions as an ongoing monthly event and not assign a deadline for completion.

Using Examples to Develop the Inspire Practice Actions to Take, Milestones and Deadlines Since I'm an admirer of classical music, I have decided to observe the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. I will be able to see the conductor inspire the orchestra members to put on a grand performance. Another good way to enhance my leadership skills is conducting an interview with my former Chairman of the Board, Larry Gerdes. I will be able to inquire about his remarkable ability to inspire 3, 500 followers. The upcoming Atlanta Symphony Orchestra season opens in October 2012.

I intend to purchase tickets for the November 2, 2012 performance featuring the music of Mozart. Around mid-month October 2012, I will contact Larry Gerdes in order to schedule an interview. I hope to conduct the interview during November 2012. Using Education to Develop the Challenge Practice Action to Take, Milestones and Deadlines It's been my yearning to learn a foreign language. Since my native language is English, learning another language will allow me to experiment and be a risk taker. I will purchase the Rosetta Stone Spanish Level 1 software.

This is a practical decision because I am likely to encounter Spanish speaking people in the workplace, and this general knowledge will enhance communication. I'm only taking one course during the summer of 2013, so learning Spanish will be feasible. I intend to purchase the software in June 2013 and set weekly deadlines of lessons to complete. This will allow me to complete Spanish level 1 before I begin the fall semester. Using my

Strengths to Develop the Inspire and Challenge Practices In order to make progress with developing my Inspire and Challenge practices, I will need to leverage some of my top ranking leadership behaviors.

I scored high within the Enable practice, which allows me to use my ability to develop cooperative relationships and treat other with respect to enlist help with my development plans. My high marks with the Encourage practice will prompt me to appreciate and praise my staff and others who agree to help me with my development strategies. Since I follow through on commitments and enjoy setting goals, making plans, and reaching milestones, I feel confident I will take on this challenge with the intent of accomplishing my goals.

Overcoming Obstacles and Obtaining Support I'm certain I will encounter some obstacles along my journey in becoming an exemplary leader. I will need to solicit the support from my subordinates and higher management in order to be successful. This leadership development plan will require a significant amount of my time to implement. Occasionally, I will not have enough time to focus on the plan. Most of the activities require me to try something new, which entails uncertainty and the fear of not achieving a favorable outcome. Measure Progress

As with all plans, one has to monitor his/her progress to ensure they're on target and that they are making acceptable progress. Using both informal and formal reviews will be beneficial. To track my informal review, I will use my mobile phone's calendar application to record my observations. The formal review will entail obtaining feedback from my staff, revising my development plan, and retaking the LPI assessment. By employing all these

measures, I will be able to accurately track my advancements. Conclusion It has been an eye-opener in arriving at my personal leadership philosophy.

I realize that there is no magic formula for being an effective leader nor is there only one way to define leadership. These resolves prove that I have captured the essence of leadership: I resolve to put to use the results obtained from the assessments, survey, and profile to become a more caring, trustworthy, and productive leader; seek opportunities to make process improvements by staying abreast of company innovations and by being a risk taker; strive to inspire my staff to embrace change and share the company vision; and to follow my development plan to embark upon my journey to becoming a better leader.

As I travel on my journey to becoming an effective leader, I will reference Warren Bennis' definition of leadership because it expresses my view. Bennis states, " Leadership is a function of knowing yourself, having a vision that is well communicated, building trust among colleagues, and taking effective action to realize your own leadership potential. "