

Ways to develop leadership

[Business](#), [Human Resources](#)



There are many different approaches to developing leadership in an individual. The people who back the various methods are just as numerous and thus it can be said that the best method has yet to be found with perfect concreteness. (Saratoga Institute, 1998) This can be explained by the variability of leadership. Leaders can possess a wide range of personality types, dispositions and leadership styles and be equally effective. (Saratoga Institute, 1998) Thus it can be implied that the techniques for developing these leaders are equally varied, and possibly effective. The following essay will look at three different leadership development approaches.

Individual Development

The first way of developing leadership that will be explored is through experiential learning. Experiential learning is exactly what the name implies: putting a potential leader in a leadership position (or close to a leadership position) so they can learn through experience. (London, 2002) Because they are in a situation, they learn what to do and what not to do first hand. This type of learning relies heavily on mistakes and constant evaluation of oneself and the surrounding circumstance. Experiential learning for leadership follows the four stages proposed by David Kolb. (London, 2002) First of all, concrete experience must take place. Next, the individual should evaluate and reflect on this experience to analyze exactly what has taken place and how their actions impacted the situation. This reflection can also include an evaluation of alternative actions that could have taken place. Next, the individual becoming a leader should internalize this knowledge by forming abstract concepts of leadership methods. This will shape their leadership style as it forms the underlying basis for their leadership. Finally, the leader

should test their new knowledge in different situations to determine efficacy and evaluate their style if needed. This leadership development style places learning through experience in a highly revered place. (London, 2002)

Another method for developing leadership is through coaching the individual. Having an experienced leader who can foster leadership abilities in an individual has been shown to be effective in many situations. (Saratoga Institute, 1998) Coaching a leader on an individual-to-individual medium must do two things. First of all, the individual should feel a sense of self-efficacy. This means the individual should not only understand how their actions and words will have resounding effects among the people they lead, but also that the individual should understand how effective they have the potential to be. A leader recognizing their potential is one of the most important parts of building an effective leader. Secondly, the individual should understand the power of visioning. (Saratoga Institute, 1998) Leaders must have a clear view of where the company is going, how they can contribute to that direction in a positive way, and the steps that must be taken to achieve this contribution. Visioning is extremely important to the individual coaching process.

Group Development

The final method for developing a leader is about developing leaders collectively. While the individual does not get as much focus in a collective environment, this can still be equally effective at building good leaders and bringing out leadership qualities in people that might have otherwise been overlooked for positions of leadership. (London, 2002) By fostering an environment where employees can collaborate, communicate, and lead one

another without any formal positioning, supervisors can effectively identify and promote individuals who show natural leadership skills and clear direction among the employees.

Conclusion

As was previously stated, no one method heralds over the others but they all do their own individual strengths and weaknesses. One should fully analyze the types and quality of leaders needed before jumping into one of the leadership development methods as leaders will ultimately determine the success or failure of a company. (London, 2002)