

Critical analysis of leadership essay sample

[War](#), [Intelligence](#)



There are many definitions of leadership. Joseph Rost defined leadership as an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes and outcomes that reflect their shared purposes. Richard L. Daft & Andrew Pirola-Merlo (2009). *The Leadership Experience, Asia Pacific Edition* 1 page 4.

Leadership today has many challenges and with changes to technology, e-business, virtual teams and budget cuts organisations need to change the way they do things. Strong leaders are needed in these situations. The paradigm for 21st century leaders focusses on change and crisis management, empowerment, collaboration, diversity, higher purpose and humility. In today's environment leaders need to move with change, help others grow, focus on people, create emotional connections and display courage and integrity. Concepts of leadership have evolved over time. Major research approaches include Great Man theories, trait theories, behaviour theories, contingency theories, influence theories and relational theories. Richard L. Daft & Andrew Pirola-Merlo (2009). *The Leadership Experience, Asia Pacific Edition* 1 page 27.

The personal traits and behaviours of people relate to leadership style and effectiveness. There are a number of personal traits linked to good leadership – among the traits considered essential are self-confidence – assurance in one's own judgements, decision making, ideas and capabilities; honesty and integrity – truthfulness and acting in accordance with moral values; and drive – high motivation, energy, ambition and initiative to achieve goals.

Honesty and integrity are important leadership characteristics. I believe trusting, involving team members and giving them responsibility creates an environment where people are more motivated. Trust needs to be developed over time. In one of my previous roles I was starting in a new department and managing a team responsible for providing ministerial and parliamentary support to the department. I had little previous experience with ministerial and parliamentary products. Coming in as an outsider and with little knowledge of the team's processes I could have met a lot of resistance which would have impacted on the team being able to deliver.

As part of my approach to build trust with team members I set up regularly fortnightly meetings with each team member. It was important for me to discuss what was working well and what wasn't working well, what their individual goals were and how I could support them to achieve those.

Meeting with each team member was the start of developing relationships with each person in the team. I was able to gain valuable insight into personal and team dynamics through those discussions. In a short period of time I had built good relationships with members of the team.

As my knowledge of parliamentary processes was limited I also used collaboration with other agencies so that I could quickly get an understanding of other approaches to delivering products. I met with a couple of partner agencies and had discussions on how they managed their processes and relationships to deliver work that was of a high standard and on time. These discussions provided valuable insight into how I managed and implemented changes to the current processes.

Shortly after I commenced as team leader, the team successfully delivered our task on time and received an above and beyond reward in recognition. I relate this to the story of Dr Colin White who took over the team leadership role on the Geo-Discovery project which was half-way towards completion and running behind schedule. Although Dr White lacked in-depth knowledge of the project, he engaged with team members and encouraged discussion about the difficulties they faced, sought input from people outside the team with relevant expertise, showed sensitivity to team members' concerns and acknowledged how important each team member was to the team's success. Essentially Dr White led with heart and mind (emotional intelligence).

Richard L. Daft & Andrew Pirola-Merlo (2009). *The Leadership Experience*, Asia Pacific Edition 1 page 126.

I believe self-confidence is one the most desirable traits in a leader. Without confidence there is no leadership. A leader who believes in themselves and their abilities project a purpose that inspires people and gets them motivated and on board. These leaders can identify the strengths and abilities of other people. This ensures that the right people are in the roles best suited to them which is an important factor in the team achieving success.

When I think about strong leadership I relate to people who can confidently make a decision and stick by it. Building trust within the team is also important by regularly sharing information and creating a plan. I believe that this creates motivation and confidence in the team and people will generally want to work with, listen to and follow someone who is sure of themselves. If a team is not kept in the loop with all the relevant information – good and

bad – it will affect their engagement to complete the task. I have worked with people in leadership positions who have been both motivating and demotivating. When I have worked with people that show trust, treat people with kindness and respect and delegate tasks I am engaged as a member of the team.

On the other hand when I work with people that are unable to share tasks, control all situations and show little interest in the people then I am demotivated and do not perform to the best of my ability. I believe the personal traits and behaviours of people play a role in the type of leader a person is as well as how effective they are as a leader. I believe in the public sector a democratic leader creates a better team environment. Involving team members in decisions builds flexibility and responsibility and during this process people can identify different ways of doing things and bring new ideas to problems. One of the negatives of this though is that it takes time to consult and discuss options. In cases where there are time constraints an autocratic approach may need to be taken to ensure a successful end product as autocratic leaders make decisions without input.

I have experienced both democratic and autocratic leaders. I believe that democratic leadership creates greater collaboration amongst the team but recognise that there are times when the leader needs to be autocratic. I was working in a team delivering a project and the main team member who had solely managed most of the process was unable to come to work and we needed to re-evaluate how to meet the deadline. In this case the team leader needed to adopt an autocratic approach and direct people on the

decision that they had made on how the project would be completed.

Additional team members were brought in and because of the low skill level and time pressures the team leader needed to make all the decisions. In this case being adaptable and changing for a usually democratic leader to an autocratic leadership style was invaluable.

Emotional intelligence refers to a person's abilities to perceive, identify, understand, and successfully manage emotions in self and others. Being emotionally intelligent means being able to effectively manage ourselves and our relationships. Richard L. Daft & Andrew Pirola-Merlo (2009). *The Leadership Experience, Asia Pacific Edition 1* page 138. Emotional intelligence is understanding how your emotions impact your reactions and how they show in your interactions with people. Important components of emotional intelligence are self-awareness - the ability to recognise and understand you own emotions and how they affect your life and work, self-management - the ability to control disruptive or harmful emotions, social awareness - the ability to understand others and relationship management - the ability to connect with others and build positive relationships. These components relate to how you see yourself and how others see you.

Being able to adapt our emotions in a given situation leads to successful outcomes. Leaders can harness and direct the power of emotions to improve follower satisfaction, morale and motivation, and to enhance overall organisational effectiveness. Richard L. Daft & Andrew Pirola-Merlo (2009). *The Leadership Experience, Asia Pacific Edition 1* page 138. I have experienced leaders who have led with love and those that have led with

fear. I was working for a manager who led with love. They genuinely cared for others, demonstrated trust and support and encouraged people to grow and succeed. Although I only worked for this manager for a short period of time it was a good environment to work in, the team was prepared to go above and beyond and worked hard to ensure that our work was delivered on time. A number of months later this manager moved to another position. The new manager was very different and led with fear. A number of situations came up where the team offered suggestions for change and they were not supported due to fear of change and not wanting to go against the norm. Within a number of months a number of the team members left.

Part of transformational leadership is inspiring a vision for change and motivating followers to achieve it, which requires using all the components of emotional intelligence. Richard L. Daft & Andrew Pirola-Merlo (2009). *The Leadership Experience, Asia Pacific Edition* 1 page 143.

The contrast between transformational and transactional leadership is similar to the contrast between love-based motivation and fear-based motivation. Both transformational leadership and love-based motivation result in people investing themselves in the goals or vision because they want to make a difference.

Staff development, commitment and job satisfaction can be improved by using transformational leadership skills. These are motivation, inspiration, empowerment, building a trusting relationship between the leader and the staff, sharing power and decision-making, and rewarding staff for quality and excellence of job achievement. Leadership is very much dependent on the

situation and a good leader is able to change depending on the environment. Leading, managing, and working in teams have one thing in common - people. There are hundreds of emotions and they play a big part on who a person is and how they behave. I believe that people who are aware of and can adapt to their emotions are more successful leaders.

Effective teams have leaders who consciously build a team identity, actively involve all members, act as coaches and facilitators rather than managers, and invest time and "resources for team learning. Richard L. Daft & Andrew Pirola-Merlo (2009). *The Leadership Experience, Asia Pacific Edition* 1 page 304.

Leadership should be situational, depending on the needs of the team. Sometimes the team needs to have direction. Sometimes the team needs to know what they need to do better at. Good leaders choose their leadership style based on the given situation and what would work best at that moment. They adapt to the demands of the situation, the particular requirements of the people involved and the particular challenges facing the organisation.

Communication is a very important part of leadership. Employees need to know what is expected of them and when specific projects or tasks need to be completed. Communication needs to be clear and any questions that arise need to be answered - even the hard ones. Leaders have to make hard decisions sometimes and it is important that they believe in those decisions and confidently communicate them. The ability to communicate with conviction is essential in any leadership situation. Without the ability to

effectively communicate a message or maintain composure when dealing with a situation or crisis, it is impossible to lead. People feel reassured when they have a leader that is committed to their decisions and goals. If leaders show a lack of courage then their reputation will be damaged and they will lose the confidence of the team.

Today's leaders share power rather than hoard it and find ways to increase an organisation's brain power by getting everyone in the organisation involved and committed. Richard L. Daft & Andrew Pirola-Merlo (2009). *The Leadership Experience, Asia Pacific Edition* 1 page 9. Leaders must recognise that their personal traits and behaviour, emotional intelligence, ability to adapt and open communication is essential in today's environment that values change, empowerment and relationships.