

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

Factsheet 6

To be an effective leader, you need to know the difference between management and leadership, and understand the special demands and features of the latter. Although there is considerable overlap between the two, an organisation needs both. Inspiring leaders must be balanced by someone with management skills who can convert the vision into action; and in today's environment of constant change, an efficient manager may only mark time without someone who can raise people's sights.

A manager can be seen as focussing on planning, improving today, and organising the future, whilst a leader would focus on vision, shaping tomorrow, and creating the future. A leader can be responsible for innovation within an organisation, and is more able to take risks in their thinking than a manager.

In a large VCSE organisation, the chief executive often focuses on leadership, with their deputy as the key manager (sometimes called chief operating officer). In a smaller organisation, you don't have that luxury - the director may be dealing with strategy in the morning and reorganising the files in the afternoon!



NCVO identify five essential features that make up a leader:

1

Building trust. This includes being a role model for your organisation's values, and remembering that trust is a two-way process.

2

Demonstrating courage. A leader has to take firm action where necessary, and make difficult or unpopular decisions.

3

Challenging. People's views should be challenged when needed, but with the focus on raising the bar and encouraging individuals.

4

Providing focus. It's the leader's role to help your team focus on priorities, and strive towards the vision for the organisation.

5

Communicating effectively. Communicating is about listening as well as talking. Consulting people before you make decisions can gain commitment from the wider team, but be clear what you are asking for – fine-tuning, or completely different options?

Similarly, the charity Clore Social Leadership has developed a Social Leadership Capabilities Framework to underpin their beliefs that good leadership is essential for social change, and that 'being a social and ethical leader requires certain capabilities:.

Empowering Enabler



- Empowers others to take on new challenges and training
- Role model to others, pursues continuous self development
- Cultivates an environment where others can excel
- Exhibits a growth mindset, with a readiness to learn

Focused Strategist



- Continuously seeks organisational improvement for the people they serve
- Reflective and utilises complex information
- Delivers on outcomes
- Resourceful and strategic, considers wider systems and context

Passionate Advocate



- Cause passionate, committed to the mission and people they serve
- Strong moral compass
- Wide civic responsibility, engages in debate and activities
- Looks within and beyond sector to find solutions for social change

Generous Collaborator



- Establishes and grows collaborative partnerships and relationships
- Generously shares information, assets and time
- Builds trust through seeking and giving feedback
- Invites inclusive contribution, valuing skills and knowledge, respecting diversity

Courageous Changemaker



- Courageous and drives change
- Responsible risk taker
- Develops innovative solutions with and through others
- Curious, has foresight and asks why

Inspirational Communicator



- Relates to others with authenticity
- Influential and confident
- Clear expression of mission and values
- Agile, able to modify approach and reframe based on feedback

This framework is designed to outline the attributes, behaviours and skills required for successful social sector leadership, whilst also making it clear how and what these skills and behaviours look like in action. Having a framework enables leaders to reflect and assess their current skills, empowers them to identify leadership gaps and plan their personal and professional development.

Information provided by NCVO and Clore Social Leadership

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