10

Applying Leadership Principles

CHAPTER

OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

1. List and discuss the myths of leadership.

2. Discuss current thinking about leadership.

3. Describe the administrative duties leaders are expected to perform and explain how leaders can perform these effectively.

4. List and explain six tips for leading group discussions.

5. Explain how establishing a climate of trust, developing teamwork, and promoting cooperation can help develop the group.

6. Explain what is involved in managing the group's written communication.

7. Describe *distributed leadership* and discuss what it means to encourage it.

8. List and explain the ethical guidelines for group leaders.

The College Service Club

TerryAnn was so envious of the close, cohesive executive committee of her service club that she decided to run for office so she could be part of the team. When she was elected president as a junior, she was thrilled. She wanted the club and the executive committee to continue experiencing the same success she had witnessed as a member. Unfortunately, things wouldn't turn out that way. TerryAnn and the rest of the executive committee met soon after the spring election to make plans for the upcoming fall. Although many good ideas surfaced at this meeting, no one wrote them down. TerryAnn was somewhat intimidated by all the seniors on the executive committee, and she was reluctant to assign tasks or even ask the other members to do things. No one else picked up the ball either. Consequently, no one remembered what they had decided or knew who was supposed to do what. Committee members lost valuable summer planning time because they weren't organized. When fall came, they had to scramble to catch up.

TerryAnn's reluctance to take charge affected both the executive committee and the regular organizational meetings. She made no effort to start the meetings on time, so members got into the habit of coming late. Because there was no agenda, members did not know what they would be discussing or what materials they should bring to the meetings. Discussion was haphazard, jumping from one topic to the next without ever finishing a single subject. No meeting minutes were ever compiled or distributed, so members weren't sure what actions had been decided or who was assigned to what tasks. As a result of the disorganization in the executive committee, service club members became disenchanted with the organization. Membership decreased. As the frustrating year drew to a close, TerryAnn was increasingly depressed because her high hopes for the club had not come close to being realized.

This story could have had a different ending if TerryAnn had known what the other members expected of her. Because she was afraid to be seen as a dictator, she did the exact opposite. But the group members were practically begging for TerryAnn to give them structure and organization so that the club's jobs would get done. TerryAnn's "leadership" did not match what the group needed and wanted from her.

In this chapter we will discuss myths about leadership and current thinking about effective leadership, and explain the typical duties of designated small group leaders. In addition, we suggest guidelines to encourage distributed leadership and describe ethical leader behavior.

Myths about Leadership

Students usually say that leaders "control the actions of the other members," "give orders," and generally "tell people what to do." In this section we examine several other pervasive myths about leadership.

1. **Leadership is a personality trait that individuals possess in varying degrees.**

   From Plato to the 1950s, the study of leadership consisted of a search for the traits that make people leaders. These traits included intelligence, attractiveness, psychological dominance, and size. However, strict trait approaches to studying leadership are flawed in several ways. First, there is no trait or set of traits that leaders have but followers do not. There is no trait that differentiates leaders from members.

   A second flaw in the trait approach is the underlying assumption that all leadership situations call for the same trait or set of traits. Think about this for a moment. Does the leader of a classroom discussion group need the same traits as the leader of a military platoon? Do both situations require the same approach? No single set of traits will identify the best leader for any given group or situation.

   A third flaw in the trait approach relates directly to the concept of *trait* as something innate. In other words, "Leaders are born, not made." If you aren't born with the characteristics of a leader (whatever those may be), you will not become a leader. Instead, leadership consists of *behaving in ways that can be learned* (at least up to a point). Consider, for a moment, Candy Lightner, the woman who developed MADD, Mothers Against Drunk Drivers. Ms. Lightner was an ordinary single parent, not a recognized leader, before a drunken driver killed her daughter. Nothing in her previous background or experience could have predicted that she would become the leader of a national organization. But she cared enough to do the hard work of learning to lead. So can you.

2. **There is an ideal leadership style, no matter what the situation.**

   Since the 1950s, a number of researchers have examined the behaviors associated with leadership, including the styles displayed by various leaders. Several studies indicated that leaders perform both *task-oriented* and *relationship-oriented* behaviors.[1] Leaders rated high on either one, neither, or both of these dimensions. Many people believed that the ideal style of leadership was one rated high on both task and relationship dimensions, so many organizations instituted training programs to teach their employees how to be simultaneously task- and relationship-oriented.

   Other researchers have examined three general styles of people in leadership positions: autocratic (authoritarian), democratic (participatory), and laissez-faire (noninvolved). *Autocratic* leaders are primarily task-oriented people who personally make the decisions for the group and control the group's process. They say things like, "Here's what I've decided we'll do." They alone decide the group's

agenda, select procedures the group will follow, and decide who will speak when. Highly authoritarian leaders can stifle group members who are expert, creative, and enthusiastic.

Democratic leaders want all the group members to participate in decision making, and so are more relationship-oriented than autocratic leaders. They say things like, "What ideas do you have for solving our problem?" Democratic leaders suggest but do not coerce. They try to discover the wishes of the group members and help them achieve their common goals. They encourage members to develop the group's agenda as well as to determine what procedures the group will use. Discussants can speak freely within the group. When members propose ideas, they are considered to be the property of the group as a whole. Democratic leaders see their function as helping the group accomplish what the members want, as long as it is part of the group's purpose or the charge given to the group by the parent organization. Members of groups with leaders who function democratically tend to be more satisfied, to participate more actively in meetings, to demonstrate more commitment to group decisions, and to be more innovative than members of groups with either autocratic or laissez-faire leaders.[2]

Laissez-faire "leaders," who consider themselves to be no different from the other members, display a hands-off style that really does not provide much leadership. They say things like, "Do what you want; it doesn't matter to me." They create a void that forces the other members to step in or flounder without coordination. This is the mistake TerryAnn made, but the others weren't able or willing to step into the void she created. Occasionally the other members of groups led by laissez-faire leaders blend their efforts to lead the group successfully, but more often such groups end up wasting a lot of time or following the structure provided by an autocratic leader who emerges and takes charge. Only groups of highly motivated experts tend to be more productive and satisfied with laissez-faire leaders than democratic leaders.[3]

Research looking for an ideal leadership style came up with inconsistent findings. While most group members prefer the democratic rather than the autocratic style, some groups composed of authoritarian members actually prefer the more authoritarian style. Plus, autocratic groups sometimes complete more work than democratic groups. About the only consistent finding was that groups prefer either the democratic or the autocratic style to the laissez-faire style.

A recent review of studies of democratic and autocratic leadership suggests that several factors in combination with leadership style influence a group's productivity.[4] Democratic leadership seems to be more productive when it occurs in natural, real-life settings and when the group's task is a complex one. In addition, member satisfaction with democratic leadership is not automatic.

The styles approach oversimplifies the complexities of groups as open systems. For example, consider the following two groups: (1) an advertising agency's creative group, in which the members have worked together successfully for two years, and (2) an outdoor survival group of young adolescent boys, strangers to each other, none of whom has ever been camping. Would you recommend the same style of leadership to the coordinator of the creative group and to the adult

adviser of the survival group? Everything suggests a democratic approach with the creative group and a more controlling approach with the young boys. Most of us would agree that no one style is right for all situations.

The styles approach also assumes that a particular group will have the same needs over its lifetime. But just as different groups vary in their needs for different leadership services, a single group's needs will change greatly over time as well. Early in a group's history the more inexperienced members may appreciate a take-charge leader, but as group members become more experienced, they may prefer less control.

Most people today discredit the idea that there is an ideal leadership style no matter what the occasion. Rather, a number of factors such as the experience of the members, how long they have been together, how successful they have been in the past, how interesting the job is, and whether or not there is an impending deadline all contribute to determining the most appropriate style.

3. **Leaders get other people to do the work for them.**

When some students are elected or appointed to leadership positions, they assume that their job is to tell other people what to do and often seem surprised that it doesn't work. Recently, the president of a campus organization was disgusted that a colleague failed to complete an assignment for the organization. "I told her what to do, and I told her we needed the information for today's meeting," she said. She didn't understand that just telling someone to do something doesn't ensure that it will happen. If you think your position as leader makes your job easier, think again. As we saw with TerryAnn, her laid-back style may have prevented her from being perceived as a dictator, but expecting others to do the work without providing them any direction or guidance wasn't effective either. Effective leaders expect to provide service to the group rather than expecting the members to serve them.

Current Ideas about Leadership

Now that you know that small group leadership isn't a trait, a style, or bossing people around, let's discuss what it *does* involve. Several contemporary ideas about leadership will help you be more effective as a group leader. The ideas we discuss next complement each other.

THE FUNCTIONAL CONCEPT OF GROUP LEADERSHIP

GLOSSARY

Functional Concept

Groups need to have certain functions performed, and all group members can and should perform needed functions

The **functional concept** of leadership contains two premises. First, this concept assumes that certain important functions must be performed if the group is to be successful in reaching its goals. We pointed out in Chapter 7 that these functions are usually classified as task-related or people-related functions. Task-related functions, such as *initiating* discussion or action, *offering opinions, making suggestions*, and *elaborating* on other members' ideas, are behaviors directly related to getting the group's job done. People-related functions, such as *harmonizing, gatekeeping*, and *relieving tension*, help members work as a team.

Another important premise of functional concept is that performing the needed functions is the responsibility of all the group members, not just the individual who is designated as the group's leader. In addition to the group's leader, other members of a group

can and must provide leadership services needed by the group. One individual cannot perform all the services a group needs. We haven't seen anyone with all the knowledge and skills a group may need. Also, having only one person—the leader—supply everything a group needs deprives the other members of the chance to develop their skills and talents. Remember, people want to contribute and to be appreciated for their participation. Every member of a group needs to know that he or she is valued. When that occurs, members tend to be committed and loyal, and group cohesiveness is high.

The abilities of all members are needed in a group. In one committee, the chair summarized the discussion and kept the group's work organized. Another member was particularly good at devising compromises that all members could support. Yet another member's irreverent sense of humor helped the committee relieve tension when conflicts threatened to get personal or out of hand. The functional concept applied to group leadership encourages members to use their unique strengths in supplying needed leadership for the group, yet it puts a special responsibility on designated leaders to provide essential functions that aren't being provided by another member.

If all members are responsible for providing needed leadership functions, what is your job as a group's leader? As we stated in Chapter 1, the leader's job is *completing* the group by supplying any needed functions (services) that other members are not providing or at least seeing that someone supplies them.[5] This gives the designated leader a lot to do. The leader must constantly monitor the group's progress, identify what the group needs at any time, decide whether those functions are currently being performed adequately by other members, and, if not, provide them or encourage someone else to do so. For example, if the leader sees that one member has not offered an opinion about an important issue, the leader could gatekeep by asking that member's opinion. If the group seems confused, the leader should summarize, clarify, and reorient the group or ask that someone else do so. If secondary tensions are mounting, the leader should try to relieve them before they cause harm, perhaps by joking or suggesting a 10-minute break.

This approach requires the leader to figure out what functions are needed as well as to supply them. You have to be both smart and flexible! You must constantly be aware of what is happening in the group. The functional concept assumes that people can learn a variety of leader behaviors and that all of us should learn to function as leaders in certain circumstances.

THE CONTINGENCY CONCEPT OF GROUP LEADERSHIP

Related to the functions approach, the **contingency concept** holds that appropriate leadership behavior depends on the situation. As we noted earlier, it doesn't seem reasonable that the same leadership style should be used for a classroom discussion group as for a platoon during a firefight. TerryAnn's laid-back manner of leading did not work in her particular service club, but with a group of experienced pros, it may have proven quite effective. There are several contingency approaches; we will focus on those developed by Hersey and Blanchard.

Contingency approaches suggest that leaders should consider several factors before deciding the specific leadership services appropriate for the group. Among these factors are the type of task, how well the members work together, and how well members work with the leader.[6] A major factor that affects the way a leader should act is the maturity level, or readiness, of the followers.[7] Hersey and Blanchard have provided a model,

GLOSSARY

Contingency Concept

*Features of the situation determine appropriate leadership behavior*

shown in Figure 10.1, to help match appropriate leadership behaviors to the readiness level of the followers. In general, the more experienced, interested, and motivated the members are, the less direction is needed from the leader.

You should be able to adapt your behavior in a way that is appropriate for your group. Hersey and Blanchard's model, tempered with your common sense and knowledge of group leadership, helps you know how to adapt.

If group members are unable, are unwilling, or don't have enough information to complete the task on their own, they are low in readiness. *Telling* can be an effective leadership style. The leader needs to give them specific instructions and provide close supervision of their work: "Our goal is to increase sales by 15 percent, and here's what I want you to do . . ." The leader tells the members what, how, and when to do something, and the members have little say in the matter. Telling demonstrates high-task and low-relationship behavior.

With low to moderate readiness, group members are usually willing but do not have the skills or experience necessary to perform well. In this case, the leader takes a *selling* approach by providing much of the direction but seeking members' enthusiastic support

FIGURE 10.1   Model of Situational Leadership
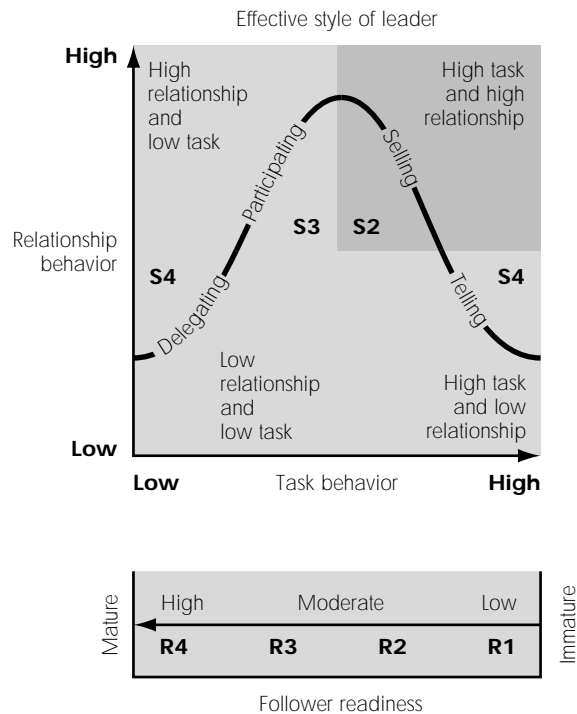
SOURCE: Based on Paul Hersey/Kenneth Blanchard, *Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources,* 4th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall). Reprinted by permission.

for this direction: "One of our goals is to increase sales by 15 percent, and I'd really like your input about how we can do that." Two-way communication occurs as the leader encourages members to ask for explanations and additional information. The leader's goal is to promote member enthusiasm while providing guidance needed to complete the task well. Selling is both high-task and high-relationship oriented.

With members of moderate to high readiness, the leader can pay less attention to the demands of the task and concentrate instead on the relationships among members: "How is the sales campaign going? What can I do to help you?" Here, followers have the skills to perform the job but may feel insecure about taking action or need coordination to work out a set of roles and division of labor. The leader's supportive, democratic style is called *participating* because decision making is shared and the leader's role is mostly one of facilitation and coordination. All members share in leading the group. When members reach this level of readiness, anyone in the group could probably serve as its designated leader.

In a fully ready group, members are both able and willing to perform. They need little task-related supervision or encouragement. In this situation, the *delegating* style is appropriate; the leader turns the responsibility for the group over to the group: "Let me know if you need anything." All members (including the leader) are equal in responsibility. This relatively low-task, low-relationship style is appropriate where a more active leadership style might be perceived as interference. However, even when the group is fully ready, the leader must still monitor the changing conditions of the group and be ready to step in to perform additional services the group may need. This was TerryAnn's style, but her followers were not at this level of readiness.

Most of us have styles of leading and small group services we prefer to perform. We are not infinitely capable of altering our behavior, and some of us are more flexible than others. Some leadership experts advise us to look for situations that need our preferred styles or to encourage supportive and capable members of the group to assist the leaders.

A theme unites the contingency and functional approaches to leadership: leadership is a property of the *group,* not of the individual who happens to have the title of "leader." This is called **distributed leadership,** which explicitly acknowledges that each group member should perform the communication behaviors needed to move the group toward its goal. The democratic values on which our society was founded suggest that participation by everyone is a healthy and desirable goal. Gastil, making a case for democratic leadership, argues that "democratic group leadership amounts to giving group members responsibility, improving the general abilities and leadership skills of the other members, and assisting the group in its decision-making process."[8] This is precisely what the functional approach to leadership suggests: All group members are capable of performing the variety of functions a group needs, even though no one person is capable of supplying the variety of functions needed. In addition, in a recent study, overall leadership activity was found to be more related to group productivity than activity of the designated leader alone.[9] Distributing the leadership functions may be good not only for the members themselves but for the group as well. We talk more about how to encourage distributed leadership later in this chapter.

We have discussed major myths surrounding group leadership, presented current thinking about leadership, and promoted the idea of distributed leadership. It is now time to investigate what behaviors members expect from their leaders.

GLOSSARY

Distributed Leadership

Each group member can and should provide leadership services to a group

10.1   Which Contingency Style Is Most Appropriate?

You have been asked to conduct a workshop on group leadership for a major corporation in your city. You have selected the contingency approach to leadership as the focus of your workshop. The corporation has asked that your workshop contain several activities to give the participants "hands-on" experience with current thinking about group leadership. You have decided that one of those activities will involve application of the contingency model to several different kinds of groups. Your task now is to construct the activity. To do so, you need the materials to set up the activity and the answers to the activity.

You first will ask the participants to create a matrix that lists the four Hersey and Blanchard leadership styles (participating, selling, delegating, and telling) across the top. Under each style, list the contingencies that make that style appropriate, along with how each contingency is likely to affect the style. Next, you will give participants a list of situations and ask them to determine what style is most appropriate using their matrix. The list of situations includes the following:

1. A group of college students studying together for a final exam.
2. A heart transplant team.
3. A task force of neighbors trying to rid the neighborhood of crack dealers.
4. A group of student senators planning the senate agenda for the following month.
5. A self-managed work group of employees assembling an automobile.
6. A group of four grown children planning their parents' 50th wedding anniversary party.

You will ask participants to use their matrix to determine the appropriate style for each of these. To be prepared to direct discussion after the participants have finished this part of the activity, you must first participate in the activity yourself.

1. Construct the matrix, as you will ask the participants to do.
2. Apply the matrix to the six situations listed.

What Groups Expect Leaders to Do

We emphasized in Chapters 1 and 7 and in this chapter that the leader has a lot of work to do, sometimes more than any other member of the group. In the United States, most groups expect their designated leaders to provide several specific services. Four major categories into which these services fall, described briefly in Table 10.1, are performing administrative duties, leading group discussions, developing the group, and managing

TABLE 10.1	Major Duties Leaders Are Expected to Perform
PERFORMING ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES	Planning and preparing for meetings, keeping members informed, following up between meetings
LEADING GROUP DISCUSSION	Starting discussions and keeping them on track, encouraging participation, stimulating members' creative and critical thinking
DEVELOPING THE GROUP	Fostering a productive and supporting climate; developing teamwork, cooperation, and trust
MANAGING THE WRITTEN COMMUNICATION	Making sure the group keeps accurate records and copies of all written communication used and produced by the group

the group's written communication.[10] The following information can serve as your concise leader's manual whenever you find yourself elected or appointed leader of a group.

PERFORMING ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES

Leaders should help a group run efficiently by performing administrative duties such as planning for meetings and following up on members' assignments. TerryAnn's performance was particularly weak in these areas.

Planning for Meetings.   As leader, you must plan meetings so you don't waste other members' time. Here is a set of guidelines you can follow:

1. **Define the purpose of the meeting and communicate it clearly to the members.**

    Don't have a meeting if there is no reason for it. If a meeting is needed, state the purpose clearly. "To talk about what we're going to do this year" is too vague; "to establish a list of priorities we want to accomplish within the next six months" is clear and specific. Tell the members exactly what outcomes should be produced at the meeting, such as a written report, an oral recommendation, plans for a party, a decision made, and so forth. Highly successful groups have clear goals that are understood and supported by every member.[11]

2. **Make sure members know the place, starting time, and closing time for the meeting.**

    Let members know this ahead of time. Make sure you stick to those starting and ending times. Consistently starting meetings late or running overtime kills enthusiasm and lowers attendance. In addition, state the meeting place exactly. "At the library" is vague and confusing. Some members may go to the lobby, while others to the student lounge. "In room 302 of the library" eliminates confusion.

"How about some little pads and pencils?"
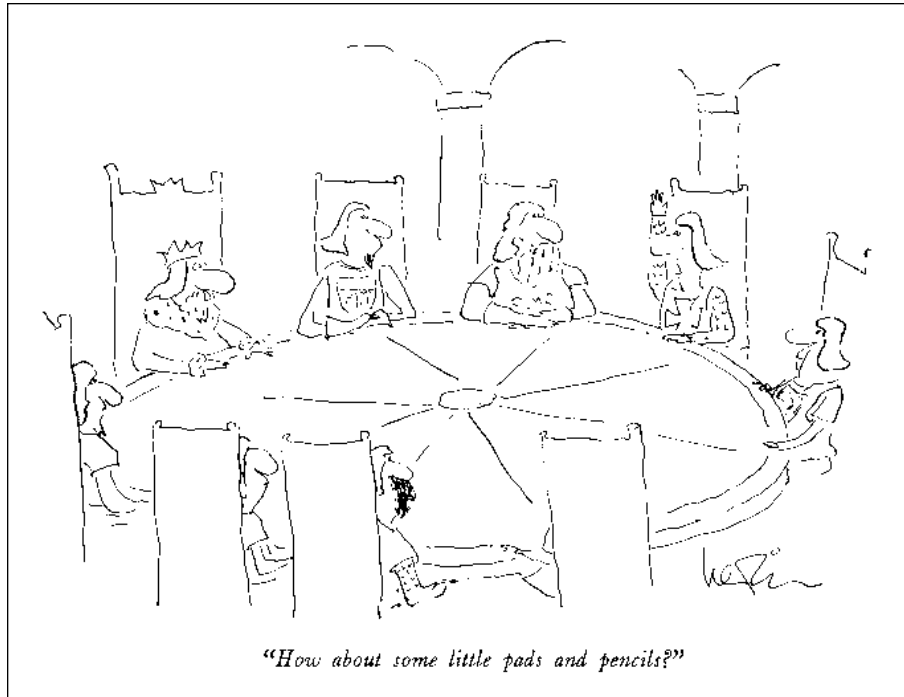
It's the leader's responsibility to make sure members have all the supplies they need. (© The New Yorker Collection; 1985 Arnie Levin from cartoonbank.com. All Rights Reserved.)

The leader is responsible for communicating this information to members, though this task can be delegated to someone else (i.e., a secretary). Still, it is the leader's responsibility to be sure everyone knows when and where to meet.

3. **If special resource people are needed at the meeting, advise and prepare them.**

Groups often need information and advice from specialists. A personnel committee may need the advice of a psychologist or lawyer; a student group may need to consult with the parking services manager before recommending changes in parking policies. Make sure invited guests know what to prepare and what to expect at the meeting.

4. **Make all necessary physical arrangements.**

Reserve the room, arrange the seats properly, and bring needed materials (e.g., notepads, pencils, microphones, tape recorders).

Following up on Meetings.   Generally two kinds of follow-up are needed: reminding group members of assignments and serving as liaison with other groups.

1. **Keep track of member assignments.**

The leader must make sure that members know what their assignments are and when they are due. The group should keep written records of assignments, perhaps as part of the group's regular minutes. (Keeping written records is so important that it is dealt with separately later.) In addition, as leader you should keep in touch with members by telephone or e-mail to monitor their progress. Had

TerryAnn done these things throughout the summer following her initial planning meeting as president, her term might have been memorable for positive rather than negative reasons.

2. **Serve as liaison with other groups.**

   The leader is the group's spokesperson. Usually this means the leader represents the group to other groups, answers questions about the group and its work, and keeps the parent organization informed. For example, the chair of each subcommittee working on the Ozarks Public Television merger with the university, described in Chapter 6, was simultaneously a member of the steering committee overseeing the merger. This made liaison and coordination easy. The leader also makes all reports and motions for a committee at meetings of its parent organization and is sometimes interviewed by public media.

LEADING GROUP DISCUSSIONS

One of your most important duties as designated leader is to coordinate discussions so that they are productive. You should plan how you will initiate the meetings, keep the discussion organized, encourage all members to participate, and stimulate both creative and critical thinking. You also should monitor the group so that what is not accomplished at one meeting can be addressed at the next. This was TerryAnn's most crucial failing.

Initiating Discussions.   Opening remarks set the stage for the meeting and help members begin to focus on the group's task. Here are guidelines for you to follow:

1. **Help reduce primary tensions, especially with new groups.**

   Members may need to be introduced to each other. Name tags may be needed. An icebreaker or other social activity may be used to help members get to know one another.

2. **Briefly review the purpose of the meeting, the specific outcomes desired, and the area of freedom of the group.**

   Members should have been informed of these before the meeting, but some members may want clarification. Discussing them early helps prevent misunderstandings later. Food helps! It's amazing what coffee and snacks can do to relax people.

3. **Give members informational and organizational handouts.**

   These may include informational sheets, an agenda, outlines to guide the discussion, copies of things to be discussed, and so forth.

4. **See that special roles are established as needed.**

   Decide what roles are needed and how they will be handled. Most groups appoint a recorder to keep written records of meetings. Decide whether these positions will be rotated or handled by only one individual.

5. **Suggest procedures to follow.**

   Members should know whether decisions will be made by consensus or majority vote, and whether the group will follow the small group procedures recommended by *Robert's Rules of Order Revised* or another group technique. We recommend that you suggest procedures to the group, then ask the members to accept, modify, or suggest alternative procedures. (If bylaws or other laws impose specific procedures on the group, such as on a jury, you won't have this flexibility.)

6. **Ask a clear question to help members focus on the first substantive issue on the agenda.**

   This helps launch the group into the substantive portion of the meeting. You may want to review the examples of discussion questions in Table 4.2. A group leader might open the group's meeting this way: "At this meeting, we must decide which two of our five job applicants we should interview in person. You all received copies of the résumés prior to the meeting. Unless you'd rather proceed in a different way, I suggest we go in alphabetical order and assess each person's strengths and weaknesses against the criteria we adopted at our last meeting. After we've talked about each one, we can compare them to determine our top two. Does that seem OK? [Wait for feedback.] Fine, then let's look at James Adams's résumé first." Such a statement makes the meeting's goals, procedures, and desired outcomes clear from the beginning.

Structuring Discussions.   Once the group members are familiar with each other and oriented to the task, the leader should organize the discussion. Effective leaders help maintain productive relationships among the members, but their primary focus should be on the group's task. This is what most group members expect.[12] That includes constantly monitoring the group's process and making needed adjustments. Following are some suggestions:

1. **Keep the group goal-oriented; watch for digressions and topic changes.**

   Be sure the members understand and accept the goal. A certain amount of digression is normal and desirable because it can foster team spirit. You don't want to stifle every digression, but if a lengthy digression occurs, you should help bring it back on track: "We seem to be losing sight of our objective," or "We're getting off track. What we were talking about was . . ." Topic switches are common, so be on constant watch for them. When you notice one, point it out and suggest that the group finish one topic before going on to another: "We're jumping ahead. Let's finish our parking recommendation before we start talking about scholarships." When a change of issue, irrelevant topic, or premature solution crops up, ask if that person would mind waiting until the group has finished its analysis of the current issue.

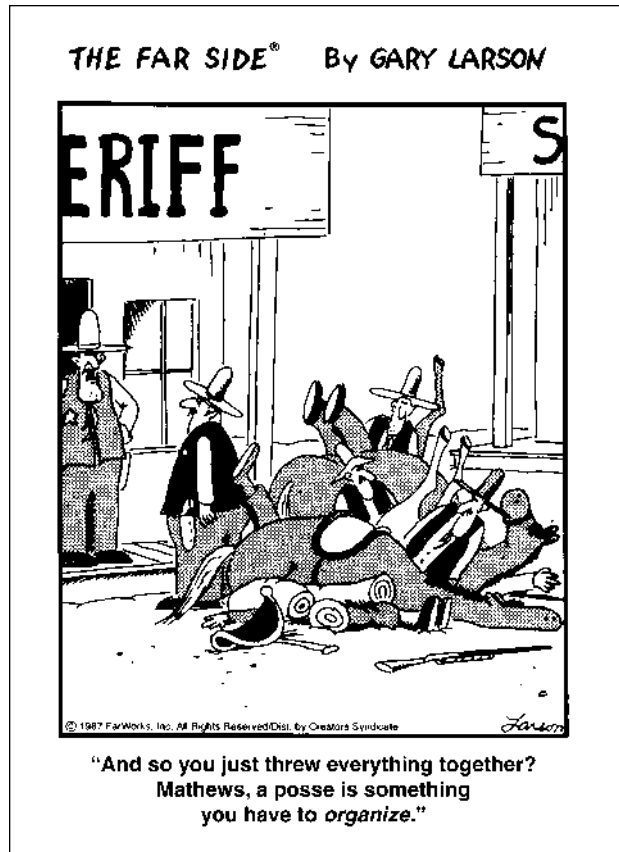2. **Put the discussion or problem-solving procedure on the board or in a handout.**

   If the group is using a procedure such as brainstorming, help the group remember the steps by summarizing them briefly in writing. This helps keep comments to the point.

3. **Summarize each major step or decision.**

   It is easy for members to lose track of what the group is doing. Before the group proceeds to the next issue or agenda item, help all members keep track by summarizing and asking members for feedback. In many cases, a secretary can help summarize. This also helps make a clear transition to the next step in the discussion.

4. **Structure the group's time.**

   Nothing is more frustrating than running out of time before you have a chance to discuss an issue important to you. Since members often get caught up in a discussion, it is up to the leader to keep track of time and remind the group of what still needs to be done and how much time is available.

THE FAR SIDE® BY GARY LARSON

ERIFF

© 1987 FarWorks, Inc. All Rights Reserved/Dist. by Creators Syndicate

"And so you just threw everything together?
Mathews, a posse is something
you have to *organize*."

The main thing a leader does is help the group get organized. (THE FAR SIDE ©
FARWORKS, INC. Dist. by UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE. Reprinted with permission.
All rights reserved.)

5. **Bring the discussion to a definite close.**

    Do this no later than the scheduled ending time for the meeting, unless all mem-
    bers agree to extend the time. In your conclusion, include a brief summary of
    progress the group has made, a review of assignments given, a statement of how re-
    ports of the meeting will be distributed to members and others, comments about
    preparation for the next meeting, commendations for a job well done, and, period-
    ically, your evaluation of the meeting to improve the group's future interactions.

Equalizing Opportunity to Participate.   Along with keeping the group's
discussion organized, the leader is responsible for seeing to it that everyone has an equal
opportunity to speak. This is central to democratic participation discussed earlier in the
chapter. You can do several things to produce such equality:

1. **Address your comments to the group rather than to individuals.**

    Unless you are asking someone for specific information or responding directly to
    what a member has said, speak to the group as a whole. Make eye contact with
    everyone, especially the less-talkative members. It is natural to pay the most atten-
    tion to those who talk a lot, but this may further discourage quiet members.

2. **Control dominating or long-winded speakers.**

   Occasionally a member monopolizes the discussion so much that others give up. This imbalance can destroy a group. The other members expect you to control domineering members and will thank you for it. You may have to try several techniques. First, avoid direct eye contact. Second, sit where you can overlook them naturally when you ask questions of the group. Third, cut in tactfully and say something like, "How do the *rest* of you feel about that point?" Fourth, help the group establish rules about how long someone may speak; then establish a timekeeper to keep track of members' remarks. Fifth, describe the problem openly to the group and ask the members to deal with it as a group. Sometimes even more drastic measures are needed, such as talking with the offending individual privately or even asking the person to leave the group. This is a last resort; use it only when other measures have failed.

3. **Encourage less-talkative members to participate.**

   Quiet members may feel overwhelmed by talkative ones. Encourage less-talkative members: "Roger, finances are your area of expertise. Where do you think the budget could be cut?" or "Maria, you haven't said anything about the proposal. Would you like to share your opinion?" Make a visual survey of members continuously to look for nonverbal signs that a member wants to speak, seems upset, or disagrees with what someone else is saying. Give such members a chance to speak by asking a direct question such as, "Did you want to comment on Navida's suggestion?"

   Other techniques for increasing the participation of quiet members include assigning them to investigate needed information and reporting back to the group or inviting them to contribute with their special areas of knowledge or skill. You might say, "Kim, you're a statistical whiz. Will you take charge of the data analysis for the project?" Listen with real interest to what an infrequent participant says and encourage others to do so as well. Nothing kills participation faster than the other members' apparent lack of interest.

4. **Avoid commenting after each member's remark.**

   Some discussion leaders comment after each person has spoken. This produces a *wheel* network of verbal interaction. Eventually members start waiting for the leader to comment, and this inhibits the free flow of conversation. Listen, speak when you are really needed, but as a rule don't repeat or interpret what others say.

5. **Bounce questions of interpretation back to the group.**

   Some groups follow the designated leader's opinions. Especially in a new group, hold back until others have had a chance to express their views. Then, offer yours only as another point of view to be considered. If a member asks, "What do you think we should do?" you can reply, "Let's see what everyone else thinks first. What do the rest of you think . . . ?"

6. **Remain neutral during arguments.**

   If you are heavily involved in an argument, you will have a harder time being objective, encouraging others to participate, and seeing that each point of view is represented. If you stay neutral, you can legitimately serve as a mediator for resolving disputes. Of course, feel free to support decisions as they emerge and encourage critical thinking by all members.

Stimulating Creative Thinking.   Many problem-solving groups create mediocre solutions. Sometimes inventive solutions are needed. Chapter 5 discussed the importance of creative thinking. Here we elaborate further on how to encourage group creativity:

1. **Suggest discussion techniques that are designed to tap a group's creativity.**

   Several techniques, such as brainstorming, are designed especially to help a group create inventive solutions. Many techniques employ deferred judgment—the group postpones evaluation until all possible solutions are presented. When people know their ideas will not be judged, they feel freer to suggest wild and crazy ideas, many of which may turn out to be useful.

2. **When the flow of ideas has dried up, encourage the group to search for a few more alternatives.**

   Often the best ideas appear late in a period of creative brainstorming. You might use these idea-spurring questions: "What else can we think of to . . . ?" or "I wonder if we can think of any more possible ways to . . . ?"

3. **Discuss the components of a problem one at a time.**

   For instance, ask, "Is there any way to improve the appearance of . . . ?" or ". . . the durability of . . . ?"

4. **Watch for suggestions that open up new areas of thinking and then pose a general question about them.**

   For example, if someone suggests putting up signs in the library that show the cost of losses to the users, you might capitalize on that idea by asking, "How else could we publicize the cost of losses to the library?"

Stimulating Critical Thinking.   Chapter 5 also covered critical thinking in detail. We remind you here of your responsibility as leader for ensuring that group members carefully evaluate the decisions they make. Here are specific suggestions:

1. **Encourage group members to evaluate information and reasoning.**

   Ask questions to make sure the group evaluates the source of evidence ("Where did that information come from?" "How well respected is Dr. Gray in the field?"), the relevance of the evidence ("How does that apply to our problem?"), the accuracy of the information ("Is that information consistent with other information about the issue?" "Why does this information contradict what others have said?"), and the reasoning ("Are the conclusions logical and based on the information presented?"). Bring in outside experts to challenge the views of the group or to help evaluate information.

2. **See that all group members understand and accept the standards, criteria, or assumptions used in making judgments.**

   Fair, unbiased judgments are based on criteria that are clear to all members. You might ask, "Is that criterion clear to us all?" "Is this something we want to insist on?" or "Do we all accept this as an assumption?" Criteria were discussed in Chapter 6.

3. **See that all proposed solutions are tested thoroughly before they are accepted as final group decisions.**

   Make sure group members discuss tentative solutions with relevant outsiders, that pros and cons of each solution have been evaluated, and that members have had a chance to play devil's advocate in challenging proposals. For a major problem, propose holding a second-chance meeting, where all doubts, concerns, or untested assumptions can be explored.

10.2   Red Ribbon Committee and Sober Graduation

APPLY NOW

The Red Ribbon Committee is a community group in California's central valley. The committee develops, plans, and presents several community events each year that promote a sober and drug-free lifestyle. Each year the committee debates whether or not the sober graduation party should last all night or end at 2 or 3 A.M. Students, noting that their parents would not approve of an all-night event, have said they'd be willing to go even if it was not all night. Lupe (a 50-year-old Hispanic woman with strong community ties) and Tracy (a divorced Caucasian woman in her late 40s who is quite vocal about how things should be done) argue that it should end early because the students and chaperones get too tired. In addition, they note that the majority of problems usually happen after 2 A.M. They suggest that the main goal of sober graduation is to get as many students as possible to attend and that means guaranteeing their safety. The other four members of the group (a Caucasian female and former school board member; a wealthy female Portuguese dairy owner who is feared in the community; a Portuguese man who is very active in the community; and a young Caucasian man employed by the school district) argue that the goal is to ensure the kids are safe *all* night. Traditionally, they add, these events have been all-night affairs. Lupe and Tracy have become increasingly adamant; they want the others to try their idea at least once to see how it would work.

You are the leader of this group. At this point, how would you stimulate creative and critical thinking in this group?

1. Offer suggestions, relevant to this committee, about how members can stimulate creative thinking.

2. Offer ways the group can critically examine the suggestions generated by their creative thinking.

Fostering Meeting-to-Meeting Improvement.   Effective group leaders spend time evaluating each meeting to discover how it could have been improved. You might ask the group itself to participate in evaluation. Usually you will privately review your notes to determine whether the major meeting goals were met and how smoothly the meeting went. Then, establish your goals for improving future meetings and adjust your own behavior accordingly to meet the group's goals.

Several studies of effective leaders have shown that good leaders adjust their behavior from one meeting to the next, depending on the specific goals of the meeting. Good leaders monitor their own and the other members' behaviors so they can modify their actions to help the group.

1. **Review personal notes of the meeting.**

    Keep personal notes of important happenings during the meeting. After the meeting, ask yourself, Did we accomplish our purpose? Did everyone have a chance to participate? Did anyone hog the floor? Was the group both creative and critical in

its thinking? and, most important of all, What could I personally have done to ensure a better meeting?

2. **Decide how the meeting could have been improved.**

   The answers to the previous questions will guide you. For example, if Sonya believes that the group jumped on an early solution without carefully assessing the problem just to get the meeting over with, then she might decide that the group needs to look at the problem again. If TerryAnn had evaluated her meetings, she would have discovered that the group needed more direction and guidance than she was providing.

3. **Establish specific improvements as goals for the next meeting.**

   After determining where the meeting could have been improved, incorporate this information into planning for the next meeting. Sonya, for example, could place the problem back on the agenda, explain to the group that she perceived a lack of critical thinking, and invite the group to assess the problem again.

4. **Adjust behavior accordingly.**

   Once you, as leader, have diagnosed areas of group communication where improvement could occur and have decided what needs to be done, then you should adjust their behavior to help ensure improvement. For example, TerryAnn needed to be more clear, direct, and concise in her communication. She also needed to keep the group on track instead of letting them digress. Notice that these are *communication* behaviors (not personality characteristics) that TerryAnn should change.

We now consider specific areas in which the designated small group leader can help group members develop, a topic we explored in detail in Chapter 7.

DEVELOPING THE GROUP

One of the most important functions of the leader is to assist in the development of the group from a collection of individuals to a productive unit. This involves such things as establishing a climate of trust, promoting teamwork and cooperation, and evaluating the group's progress.

Establishing a Climate of Trust.   Groups perform more effectively when members trust one another. The following suggestions help establish a climate of trust.

1. **Establish norms that build trust.**

   Norms building trust encourage respectful active listening, cooperation, confidentiality, the timely completion of assignments, and the freedom to disagree without being considered deviant. Many leaders are far too slow to speak to members who are manipulative, do poor work, or act out of self-interest harmful to the group.[13]

2. **Function as a coordinator rather than a dictator.**

   Foster a climate of trust by serving the needs of the group, not by ordering people around to serve your personal interests. That way, members feel free to express themselves and to develop skills needed by the group. Ask for volunteers to do jobs for the group rather than ordering: "Cal, get the . . ."

3. **Encourage members to get to know each other.**

   Usually, members trust each other and feel safe in the group if they know one another as individuals. Sometimes an unstructured social period helps create a sense of teamwork. Graduate teaching assistants in one department have a tradition of planning a float trip at the beginning of each fall semester. Social gatherings like this help people get to know each other.

10.3   Marcos and His Fraternity

Marcos was appointed chair of the service committee of his college fraternity. He and Luis were the only experienced members on the committee; the other three members were new to the fraternity. His committee was responsible for organizing the fraternity's service projects and recruiting frat members to participate. The inexperienced members were excited about working on the committee, but they were not aware of all the fraternity's activities, procedures, and past efforts. Marcos faced a challenge. He did not want to stifle the enthusiasm, dominate the group, or do most of the work for the group. On the other hand, he did not want to lose valuable time while the new members felt their way along. He preferred working on a committee where all members could contribute equally, but he believed that, at least at first, these members weren't ready to contribute fully—they needed strong direction.

He and Luis worked together between the committee meetings to establish an agenda and select some of the early goals and service activities for the committee. During these meetings, Marcos kept close control over the agenda and the discussion. He assigned specific tasks, always making sure the tasks were acceptable to members. He also encouraged newer members to contribute to the group until they could speak on their own. As he recognized that the newer members were becoming capable of acting on their own, he began to encourage members to take over more planning and decision-making responsibilities. He eventually became less involved in the details of committee work, focusing more on the process of discussion and decision making during meetings. He moved from functioning as a director to functioning as a coordinator.

Marcos recently heard about TerryAnn's problems with her service club from a disgruntled committee member. Concerned that he may not be as effective as he thinks he is, he comes to you, a buddy, for advice. He knows you are taking a small group communication course.

1. What are his strengths and what may be his weaknesses?

2. Given the information Marcos has provided and the material you have read about performing administrative duties, leading group discussions, developing the group, and managing the group's written communication, devise a list of specific questions you think are important to ask if you want to get a good handle on Marcos's situation.

Developing Teamwork and Promoting Cooperation.   Although the leader's principal responsibility is to see that the group accomplishes its task, the development of teamwork can help group members work productively. Here are suggestions you can use:

1. **Speak of *us* and *we*, rather than *I* and *you.***

   Calling the group members *we* implies commitment to the group and its values. Ask what it means if another member speaks of the group as "you."

2. **Develop a name or another symbol of group identification.**

   Such items as T-shirts, logos, "inside" jokes, and slogans can display shared identification. For example, a successful advertising agency creative group called itself the "Can-Do Team."

3. **Watch for evidence of hidden agenda items that conflict with group goals.**

   If you suspect a hidden agenda item is interfering with the group's agenda, promptly bring it to the attention of the group. Avoiding such problems makes them worse, not better.

4. **Use appropriate conflict management approaches and procedures.**

   Conflict that is allowed to proceed too long or to become personal can cause lasting damage. Help prevent this by keeping arguments focused on facts and issues and by immediately stopping members who attack another's personality or character. Look for a larger issue that can bring together two or more competing subgroups. Find a superordinate goal—one that is more important to members than their individual subgroup goals and behind which they can rally.

   Sometimes, despite the best intentions of the leader, a group becomes deadlocked. If this happens, look for a basis on which to compromise. Maybe you can synthesize parts of one person's ideas with parts of another's to create a compromise or consensus solution. Perhaps you can serve as mediator. If you have been performing your job well as the group's leader, you have remained detached from the fray. This gives you a broader perspective from which to see a solution all parties can accept. It also helps your credibility—you'll be seen as more objective and fair. We discussed conflict in detail in Chapter 9.

5. **Share rewards with the group.**

   Leaders often receive praise from the group's parent organization, but wise leaders give credit to the group. Your comments about what *the group* has done, your pride in membership, and your acknowledgment of the service provided by members foster cohesiveness and team spirit.

6. **Lighten up; share a laugh or joke with the group.**

   Don't let the discussion get so serious that people can't enjoy themselves. Humor and fantasy help reduce tensions and make people feel good about each other. Most groups take mental "work breaks" in which they digress from the task. Wise leaders let the group develop fantasy chains that enrich the group's life and that help establish shared beliefs and values. The result can be more concerted work effort in the long run. Bring the group back to the task once the joke is over or the fantasy has chained out.

MANAGING THE GROUP'S WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Although most communication among members of a small group is oral, the group needs written messages to provide continuity from meeting to meeting, to keep the parent organization informed about its activities, and to coordinate activities with other groups. As leader, you may not actually carry out these activities, but you are responsible to see that someone performs them. The four basic categories of a group's written messages are personal notes, group records, written notices and visuals, and group reports and resolutions.

Personal Notes.   During meetings, taking notes helps the leader (and other members) keep track of what is going on. Making brief notes helps you focus your listening so you won't forget what the group is discussing. Your notes may include important facts about a problem, proposed ideas, major interpretations the group has decided on, assignments you and others have accepted, and anything else that may be important to the discussion. Figure 10.2 is an example of personal notes made during such a problem-solving discussion.

FIGURE 10.2   Example of Personal Notes

November 12, 2002—Everyone present

DISCUSSION TOPIC
  What topics should we include in our class presentation on group polarization?

MAIN CRITERIA
  Judy & Bill—to get an "A", info must be accurate

  Bart—has to have practical application

  Bev—Dr. Adams wants innovative presentation

  Everybody should have a part in presenting the topic to the class

TOPICS
- Definition of group polarization (all agreed)

  Risky shift (Hal says can become a cautious shift w/ cautious members—the term is outdated)

- Exercises to demonstrate when group takes risks & when it becomes cautious—Judy says there's a bunch of these in a book she has

- Need to show how this applies in real life

- Decision Made

  Assignments: Me (applications); Judy & Bill (library research); Hal & Bev (exercises—w/ Judy's book)

Next meeting—Mon, November 18, 2002

Group Records.   A committee chair should keep careful notes, or **minutes,** of what occurs during each meeting so that accurate information can be distributed to members. A secretary or volunteer is often designated to perform this duty. In some organizations, a professional secretary attends the group's meetings specifically to take notes and prepare minutes.

Written records of each meeting are essential for all continuing groups. Otherwise, as with TerryAnn's group, members find they are redoing work, forgetting important information, failing to consider some proposals, and not completing assigned work. Without written records, members will misremember what was reported and disagree about what they decided.

Minutes of small group meetings should contain a summary of pertinent information shared during the meeting, all ideas considered by the group, any criteria agreed upon, all decisions, all assignments, and any plans or procedures for future action. Minutes begin with a heading in memo form, the time and place of the meeting, and a report of attendance. The writer signs them and a copy is sent to each member as soon as possible after the meeting. Examples of two different minute formats are shown in Figure 10.3.

Because members need to express themselves freely, some things should not be included in minutes or reports. Confidentiality should be protected. Don't report sensitive information, who proposed a course of action, how anyone voted, or who provided what information. Do include all conclusions, decisions, and assignments.

Written Notices and Visuals.   Meeting notification should go to each member in plenty of time for each to prepare. Meeting notices include the following information (see Figure 10.4):

1. Name of group and person to whom the notice is being sent.
2. Name of person sending the notice or calling the meeting.
3. Place of meeting.
4. Time meeting will begin and end.
5. Purpose of meeting and specific outcomes that must be achieved.
6. Agenda, if more than one item will be discussed, and whether the agenda is open for additional topics or problems.
7. Any specific facts, reading sources, or other preparation members may need, and special techniques or procedures to be followed.
8. If this is a one-meeting conference, a list of all who will attend (if available).

When subcommittees or individual members conduct special research for a group, they give a copy of their major findings (including a list of all sources) to all members. This may include tables of statistics, graphs, duplicated copies of print material, lists, and drawings. All are easy to produce in this age of computers and fax machines. Such visual aids are best distributed in advance of a meeting or handed out during an oral summary at the meeting. These visual aids enhance any oral report. The reports themselves can be attached to the minutes.

Reports and Resolutions.   Frequently groups must prepare written reports of their work. A president's task force may investigate and make recommendations about

FIGURE 10.3   Examples of Group Minutes Using Two Different Methods

Minutes of November 13, 2002, Meeting of Committee A (Version 1)

Committee A held a special meeting at 1:30 P.M. on Wednesday, November 13, 2002, in room 14 of the Jones Library.

Attendance: Walter Bradley, Marlynn Jones, George Smith, Barbara Trekheld, Michael Williams

Absent: Jantha Calamus, Peter Shiuoka

1. The minutes of the November 6 meeting were approved as distributed.

2. Two nominations for membership in the graduate faculty were considered. A subcommittee of Bradley and Trekheld reported that their investigation indicates that Dr. Robert Jordan met all criteria for membership. It was moved that Professor Jordan be recommended to Dean Bryant for membership in the graduate faculty. The vote was unanimously in favor.

   The nomination of Professor Andrea Long was discussed; it was concluded that she met all criteria, and that the nomination had been processed properly. It was moved that Professor Long be recommended for appointment to the graduate faculty. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Encouragement of grant activity. Discussion next centered on the question of how to encourage more faculty members to submit proposals for funding grants. Several ideas were discussed. It was moved that we recommend to President Yardley that

   a. A policy be established to grant reduced teaching loads to all professional faculty who submit two or more grant proposals in a semester.

   b. Ten percent of all grant overhead be returned to the department that obtained the grant for use in any appropriate way.

This motion was approved unanimously.

Minutes of November 13, 2002, Meeting of Committee A (Version 2)

Attendance: Walter Bradley, Marlynn Jones, George Smith, Barbara Trekheld, Michael Williams (chair)

Members absent: Jantha Calamus, Peter Shiuoka

Topic	Discussion	Actions/ recommendations
Minutes of 11/4/99	None	Approved as distributed
Nominations for graduate faculty membership	Subcommittee of Bradley and Trekheld reported that both Dr. Robert Jordan and Dr. Andrea Long meet all criteria and should be recommended to Dean Bryant for membership.	Recommendation passed unanimously, for Drs. Jordan and Long
Grant activity	Discussion centered on how to encourage faculty members to submit proposals for funding grants. After discussion of several proposals, motion was made to recommend to President Yardley that	Motion to submit the two recommendations to Pres. Yardley passed unanimously

1. Professional faculty who submit two or more grant proposals in semester be given reduced teaching loads.

2. Ten percent of all grant overhead be returned to the department that obtained the grant, to use in any appropriate way.

Respectfully submitted,

George Smith, Secretary

FIGURE 10.4   Example of a Meeting Notice

Date: Thurs, October 24, 2002

To: Curriculum Committee (Drs. Berquist, Bourhis, Drale, Jackson, Persky, Shanker, Stovall, Spicer)

From: Dr. Galanes, Chair

Re: Curriculum Committee meeting

The next meeting of the Curriculum Committee will be on Thursday, November 7, at 11:00 A.M. in Craig 320.

Purpose of meeting: We need to (1) decide what our departmental assessment's focus will be (student outcomes, student perceptions, alumni perceptions, or something else), (2) decide what areas of the department will be assessed, and (3) establish subcommittees for each area.

Bring: The assessment guidelines provided by the Center for Instructional Assessment and any other material you think is relevant.

---

national problems such as health care, ocean pollution, and the quality of public schooling. The end product is usually a major written report accompanied by a brief oral report, often given to the CEO and a group of executives.

The designated leader is responsible for submitting the group's report by a certain deadline, but normally one or two group members actually write the report. A first draft is given to all members for suggestions and revisions, followed by discussion and agreement on the final version. Each committee member signs the final report.

Sometimes the final written product is a resolution or motion the committee's chair makes during a meeting of the parent organization. For example, a committee to study faculty morale develops recommendations; the committee's chair moves that the faculty senate accept the recommendations. Often, members of the committee accompany the chair to the meeting of the parent organization to answer questions, make supporting speeches, and counter objections. A common format for motions and resolutions can be found in any comprehensive parliamentary manual, such as *Robert's Rules of Order Revised,* or the organization may have its own manual for such reports.

As you can see, any group's designated leader is expected to perform a variety of duties associated with the title *leader.* Far from being the person who orders others around, the leader serves the group by making sure it has what it needs.

Encouraging Distributed Leadership

In Chapters 1, 7, and this one, we encouraged you to think about group leadership in a way that may be different from how you've thought about it in the past. We suggested that you as leader encourage other group members to assume responsibility for leading the group. Distributing the leadership in this way helps you, in the long run, by using all members' abilities and talents to the fullest. It helps the other members develop leadership skills and also helps the group by making a wider scope of abilities available to serve the group.

At first, our support of distributed leadership with a democratic focus may seem to contradict our earlier support of the contingency concept of leadership. We see distributed leadership as being an ideal to strive for, but it requires a certain maturity and self-confidence on the part of members. That takes time to develop, as Marcos recognized. You can't assume, as TerryAnn did, that members are fully ready to take over and run the group! Until they achieve this high level of skill and maturity, you'll need to be astute in supplying just the right amount of direction, particularly as members try to grapple with the initial ambiguity that typically faces a newly formed group. As you can see, to be an effective leader in a variety of situations, you must perceive what is happening with the individual members and the group as a whole, and adapt your behavior accordingly. Being perceptive requires listening ability, knowledge of group processes and procedures, and analytical ability. Adapting your behavior requires mastering a variety of leader skills.

10.4   The Great Leader

APPLY NOW

The following quote is attributed to Chinese philosopher Lao Tse:

The wicked leader is he whom the people despise.

The good leader is he whom the people revere.

The great leader is he about whom the people say, "We did it ourselves." *

What do you understand this quote to mean? How can a leader lead, and still have people say, "We did it ourselves"?

Peter M. Serge, "The Leader's New Work: Building Learning Organizations," *Sloan Management Review Reprint Series* 32 (fall 1990) p. 22.

We think distributed leadership is the ideal. Most groups you belong to will have a designated leader, and we are not suggesting doing away with designated leaders. We are saying that, even if a group has a designated leader, the other members have capabilities that should be developed and used in service to the group. You may not be able to reach the ideal right away; you may never even see a group that has achieved that ideal. However, distributed leadership is the best way of ensuring that everybody's talents are used and that the group receives all the leadership functions it needs to perform well.

TABLE 10.2	Guidelines for Encouraging Distributed Leadership

- Be perceptive; analyze the needs of the group.
- Adapt behavior to fit the needs of the group; be a completer.
- Focus primarily on task needs rather than social relationships.
- Balance your active participation with good listening.
- Express yourself clearly and concisely.
- Be knowledgeable about group processes and group techniques.

This section contains several suggestions for leading effectively in a group where leadership is distributed (see Table 10.2). These suggestions do not ask you to change your personality. Instead, they ask you to focus on your *communication behavior* and adapt it appropriately.

1. Be perceptive; analyze the needs of the group.

Effective leaders understand people. They know how to help others motivate themselves to contribute their best. In part they do this by listening carefully—actively—to what is going on in the group. For example, if group members appear confused, you know that the group should spend some time clarifying the discussion. Consider the following dialogue:

Jerry:	Yeah, we've got to finish everything Monday night, the charts and all, with the easel, and get the stuff to Maryann. Our presentation on Tuesday should be pretty good.
Maryann:	[Becoming agitated and visibly upset] That's not going to give me nearly enough time to type them! I have to have them by Friday at the latest! How can you expect me to type the charts, fix the table of contents, copy the paper, and have it ready to turn in by Tuesday if I don't get the stuff before Monday night?
Sheri:	[Trying to calm Maryann but also somewhat annoyed at her tone of voice] Lighten up, Maryann. It won't take that long—we've only got two charts to do, and I can help you.
Terrell:	[The group's coordinator, sensing this argument stems from a misunderstanding] Hold on, guys. I think we're talking about two different sets of charts. If I remember right, we promised we'd get the data tables that are supposed to go into our written report to Maryann by Friday so she can type them over the weekend. But I thought Sheri and I were supposed to make the two chart posters for our class presentation on Monday night. Isn't that what we decided?

In the preceding example, Terrell senses that the argument is over a misunderstanding and attempts to clarify it for the group. Notice that he states his clarification ("If I remember right" and "Isn't that what we decided?") provisionally, so others can disagree or improve on his understanding if he has been mistaken. Terrell can perform this function for the group only because he has been paying attention and listening actively.

2. **Adapt your behavior to fit the needs of the group; be a completer.**

   Groups need different things at different times. In addition to being able to analyze your group's needs, you must be able to adapt your behavior to perform a variety of functions, but it doesn't make sense to perform functions that others are already performing well. In the previous example, if Sheri had clarified Maryann's and Jerry's misunderstanding, there would have been no reason for Terrell to do so. Terrell jumped in because clarification was needed and no one else was providing it. He served as a completer by "plugging in the holes" for the others.

3. **Focus primarily on task needs rather than social relationships.**

   The person most likely to emerge as a leader is a task-oriented individual who clearly helps the group achieve its goal. This doesn't mean you should never tend to relationship issues, but it does mean that keeping one eye on the task should be your main focus as designated leader. This helps you make the best use of the members' time and provide the appropriate amount of coordination and structure for your group.

4. **Balance your active participation with good listening.**

   Emergent leaders are active group participants; your fellow members expect you to take an interest and contribute. However, balance your talking with good listening so you don't dominate the group. Don't feel you have to comment on everything. Let the discussion flow freely without overcontrolling it. Be a role model for effective group participation.

5. **Express yourself clearly and concisely.**

   When you do talk, get to the heart of the matter being discussed, clarify, and summarize what is being said. Don't ramble; be well organized, coherent, and relevant. The ability to verbalize the group's goals, procedures, ideas, values, and ideals is an important leadership skill.

6. **Be knowledgeable about group processes and group techniques.**

   This point may seem obvious, but many designated group leaders are clueless about how to lead a group. Too often, a committee head is appointed without ensuring that the individual has had adequate training to perform well. You may be willing to do the job but, if you don't know what you are doing, you, like TerryAnn, can make a shambles of what could have been a productive group. To be effective, know what to expect and what types of functions groups need to perform well.

You also should be familiar with a variety of small group techniques, including computer-based group support systems, and suggest them when appropriate. Using GSS successfully depends on several factors, such as whether the group has good facilitative leadership with a leader sensitive to group dynamics.[14] Sometimes members can become

caught up with the "bells and whistles" of GSS and lose sight of its purpose. Effective group leaders use these computer programs wisely and help members overcome their anxiety or lack of interest in computer technology.

Ethical Guidelines for Group Leaders

As a leader, your behavior should serve as a model for other members to follow. Hackman and Johnson suggest that leaders be held to the highest possible ethical standards.[15] We offer the following guidelines to help you maintain the highest ethical standards as a group leader (see Table 10.3).

1. **Do not lie or intentionally send deceptive or harmful messages.**

   Not only should leaders tell the members the truth, but they should hold truth to be the standard for the group's decision making. That means, for instance, that you should welcome all relevant information in the group, whether it supports your preference or not. It also means you must be willing to subject your ideas to the same standards of evaluation as the others' ideas.

2. **Place your concern for the group and for others ahead of your own personal gain.**

   In addition to willingly committing your time and energy to serving the group, never take advantage of your power as leader for personal gain or advantage. Leaders' hidden agendas are as counterproductive to the group as members' hidden agendas are.

3. **Be respectful of and sensitive to the other members.**

   Groups are effective problem solvers because several heads are better than one, but only if the members feel free to share their thoughts and ideas within the group. Never do anything intentionally to ridicule members or their ideas or to discourage their participation.

TABLE 10.3   **Ethical Guidelines for Group Leaders**

- Do not lie or intentionally send deceptive or harmful messages.

- Place your concern for the group and for others ahead of your own personal gain.

- Be respectful of and sensitive to the other members.

- Stand behind the other members when they carry out policies and actions approved by the leader and the group.

- Treat members with equal respect, regardless of sex, ethnicity, or social background.

- Establish clear policies that all group members are expected to follow.

- Follow the group rules, just as you expect the others to do.

4. **Stand behind the other members when they carry out policies and actions approved by the leader and the group.**

Don't try to enhance your own position by betraying your fellow members. If something goes wrong with a decision the group has made, assume personal responsibility for the decision.

10.1 Your Needs or the Team's Needs?

In 1971, after the *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* decision that permitted busing to achieve racial integration, schools were required to become integrated immediately.* In Alexandria, Virginia, the previously all-white high school was closed and students were absorbed into the previously all-black school. Bob Yardley, who had been the winning, successful head football coach of the all-white school, expected to be named head football coach of the integrated school. However, Horace Bond, a young African-American coach new to the community, was offered the position. At first reluctant to accept the offer, Bond was encouraged by town leaders; he eventually accepted. Bond considered for a long time what he might do to bring his black and white players together—particularly when neither set of students wanted to be brought together! He offered an assistant coaching position to Bob Yardley.

If you were Bob Yardley, what would you do? You think you should have had the head coaching spot, and it's not fair that you didn't get the offer. But you also think that achieving racial integration is a positive step and you want to help the school achieve it. You have several choices.

- You could accept, refuse, accept and try to sabotage Coach Bond's efforts, and so forth. List at least 5 options in this situation.
- Assume you decided to accept Coach Bond's offer. What would be your communication behavior toward him? Respectful? Disdainful? How would you show your feelings through your communication behavior?
- You truly believe the top spot should have been yours, but assume that you've decided you want to make a positive contribution here. What would you do? How would you behave toward Bond and the players?
- How would you describe the ethical dilemma you face and on what basis would you make your ethical decision?

*This story is used with permission of Robin Swanson. Names of the schools and individuals have been changed. The actual outcome was positive—the coaches found a way to work together, the players were forced to operate as a team (although they initially resisted), and the team won the regional championship in an undefeated season.

5. **Treat members with equal respect, regardless of sex, ethnicity, or social background.**

   Respond to members without regard to their sex, ethnicity, social background, age, or other personal or social attributes. Members should be valued for their contributions to the group, not their sex or race. As an ethical leader, minimize status differences to encourage everyone's participation.

6. **Establish clear policies that all group members are expected to follow.**

   Group rules and procedures should be clearly understood. Group members should be encouraged to participate in establishing the group's procedures and policies.

7. **Follow the group rules, just as you expect the others to do.**

   Because of your status as the group leader, you may be given some leeway to violate rules others are expected to follow. Do not abuse this privilege. If others are expected to arrive on time, so should you. If you reprimand members for failing to complete assignments, make sure your own assignments are completed well and on time. As much as possible, be a model member for the group.

As Lao Tse said: "The great leader is he about whom the people say, 'We did it ourselves.' " Will you be that kind of leader?

10.1   Group Leaders and the Use of Technology

MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY

This chapter has introduced a number of leadership functions. The leader must facilitate communication before, during, and after meetings; must ensure that appropriate materials are provided to group members; and must ensure that a historical record of the meeting, usually in the form of minutes, is kept.

A variety of forms of technology can help group leaders manage information. For example, e-mail can be used to disseminate agendas and other written material before meetings; Web pages can be used to display minutes of previous meetings; and computer networks can be used to store documents and other materials used by the group.

For groups with virtually unlimited access to technology, the leader or a knowledgeable group member must help coordinate how technology will be used. If you were designing a "wish list" of technology resources for a group you belong to (for example, a study group, a student group, a work team, etc.), what would you want? You group may already have access to e-mail, for example. How would you advise group members to use e-mail? What other technology resources would be useful for your group and how would you suggest using them?

SUMMARY

- Three common myths about leadership are that leaders have special traits that followers don't, that there is an ideal leadership style, and that leaders get other people to do all the work for them.

- The functional approach to leadership encourages all group members to perform whatever functions a group needs and the contingency approach assumes that the type of leadership a group needs depends on the group's situation.

- Both approaches suggest that the leader serve as a completer, supplying whatever necessary functions the other members are not providing.

- Group members expect leaders to perform four broad types of tasks: providing administrative services for a group, structuring a group's discussions, helping a group develop as a team, and managing a group's written messages.

- Distributed leadership, in which each member takes responsibility for providing leadership services to a group, is an ideal worth striving for.

- Ethical leaders tell the truth, are sensitive to and respectful of others, support the other members, establish clear rules that they expect to follow themselves, and put group concerns ahead of their own personal gain.

EXERCISES

1. View Part 1 (Leadership) of the videotape "Communicating Effectively in Small Groups" and discuss the following questions:

   a. What functions did the leader perform?

   b. How effective was each function? How appropriate?

   c. Were there any points during the discussion where the leader failed to supply needed leadership service? Did anyone else step in to provide it? Was the group hurt?

   d. On a scale of 1 to 10, how effective was the leader? Why do you say this?

2. Select five members from your class to act as a problem-solving group. Assign one of the members to be the leader of the group. Ask the group to tackle the following problem:

   The Teacher's Dilemma
   An English teacher in a consolidated, rural school has had extensive dramatic experience. She was chosen by the principal to direct the first play in the new school. The play will be the first major production for the school. Its success may determine whether there will be any future plays pro-

duced at the school, and, if well done, it could bring prestige to both the teacher and the school. As a result, the teacher is exhausting every means available to her to make the play an artistic success. She has chosen all the cast except for the leading female part. The principal's daughter wants the part, and the principal told the teacher he really wants his daughter to have it. But she is a poor actress and would jeopardize the success of the show. Tentatively, the teacher has chosen someone who should do an excellent job in the role, but the principal has implied that if his daughter is not selected, he will appoint another director in the future. What should she do?

Place the group of five in the middle of the class and surround it with the rest of the class members. They are to watch this group's discussion and to evaluate the leader on his or her ability to lead the group discussion. How well did he or she do? On what do you base your evaluation?

3. Form small groups of four to six members. Discuss the "ideal" group leader. Each group is to address not only the specific duties leaders should perform, but also the communicative

skills leaders should exhibit and the ethical principles they should both exhibit and uphold. Each group should create a "Guidelines for Group Leaders" manual that could be distributed to student leaders at your school. Discuss each group's guidelines to determine which ones tend to be common to all groups. Why do you think these tend to be the most common?

Go to **www.mhhe.com/adamsgalanes** and **www.mhhe.com/groups** for Self-Quizzes and weblinks.

KEY TERMS and CONCEPTS

contingency concept	functional concept	minutes
distributed leadership		

www.mhhe.com/adamsgalanes
Use the flashcards and crossword puzzles on the Online Learning Center to further your knowledge of these key terms.