



Leading Self-Organizing Teams

*If you want to build a ship, don't drum up the people to
gather wood, divide the work, and give orders.
Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea.
- Antoine DeSaint-Exupery*

Robbie Mac Iver, Agile Consultant & Coach



Build a Tower

- ◎ Form Small Groups
- ◎ Build a Tower
 - Using only supplies provided
 - Free standing structure
 - As TALL as you can
- ◎ In 10 minutes or less



What Kind of Team Were You?

Self-Organizing

- ◉ Manager sets goals
- ◉ Team determines how to achieve them
- ◉ Manager provides whatever the team needs

Manager Led

- ◉ Manager knows best
- ◉ Directs all the work
- ◉ Team follows instructions



Self-Governing

- ◉ Team sets goals
- ◉ Team determines how to achieve them
- ◉ Manager provides whatever the team needs

What Did it Mean to be Self-Organizing?



Self-Organizing Team Members



- ⦿ Make Accountability Clear and Public
 - ⦿ Trust in Each Others' Competency
 - ⦿ Work Toward Shared Outcomes
-
- ⦿ Make Decisions as a Team
 - ⦿ Give and Take – Help Each Other
 - ⦿ Are Open and Transparent
 - ⦿ Learn from Failures – Open to Failure
 - ⦿ Share the Glory
 - ⦿ Believe They Can Accomplish Anything

Why Do Self-Organizing Teams Work?



...on complex problems, groups of ordinary people who are cognitively diverse routinely outperformed groups of like-minded experts.

...the diverse groups got stuck less often than the like-minded experts, who tended to think in similar ways.

Scott Page - [The Difference: How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools](#)

Cognitive Diversity “Wins”

Why Do Self-Organizing Teams Matter?



“In today’s world of global competition and continuous change, a firm that isn’t delighting its clients and turning them into active promoters of its goods and services is unlikely to endure.”

Stephen Denning – Radical Management

Continuous Innovation



**Customer
Delight**

Requires



**Continuous
Innovation**



**Self-Organizing
Teams**

Best Supported By

Focus Beyond Teams



Why Talk About Leadership?



Self-organizing teams
without a compatible
leadership model...

And, so do the associated
continuous improvement
initiatives...

What Do I Mean By “Leadership”?



Leadership is NOT...



Leadership IS...



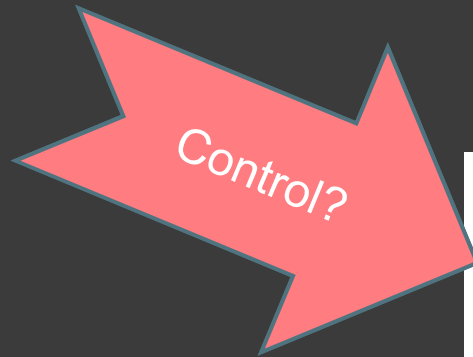
Leadership Defined



***Leadership** is action taken with a proactive attitude and the intention to change something for the better.*

Source: Leadership Agility: Five Levels of Mastery for Anticipating and Initiating Change – Joiner & Josephs

What is Your Leadership Intent?



As A Team Leader I...

- ⦿ Set the Scope of the Work Stream
- ⦿ Set All Milestone Dates
- ⦿ Approve the Work Plan
- ⦿ Confirm Who Does What
- ⦿ Request Daily Status Updates
- ⦿ Determine How the Team Should Improve

Is This Control or Influence?

As A Team Leader I...

- ⦿ Set the Scope of the Work Stream
- ⦿ Define the Key Delivery Goals
- ⦿ Ask About the Team's Work Plan
- ⦿ Observe Who Does What
- ⦿ Ensure the Team Coordinates Frequently
- ⦿ Ask About Improvement Opportunities

Is This Control or Influence?

My Team...

- ⦿ Is New to the Business Domain
- ⦿ Has Limited Understanding of Procedures
- ⦿ Has Command & Control History
- ⦿ Are Really A Group of Individuals
- ⦿ Take Little Initiative On Their Own

Which Team Leader Should I Be?

My Team...

- ⦿ Is Well Versed in the Business Domain
- ⦿ Had a Good Understanding of Operations
- ⦿ Works Well Together As A Team
- ⦿ Takes the Initiative to Improve
- ⦿ Readily Identifies Issues

Which Team Leader Should I Be?

Control versus Influence

Control

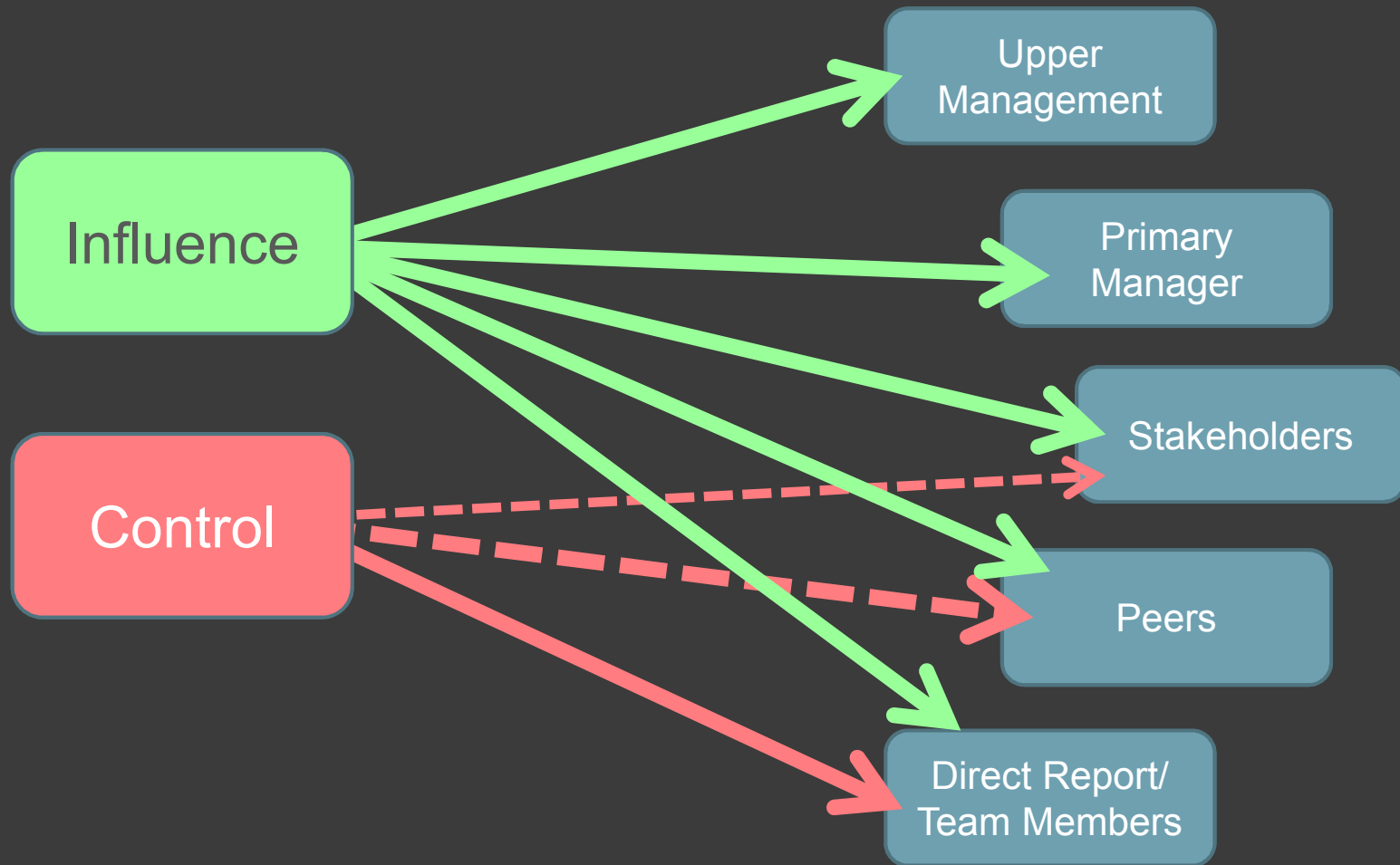
Assumes sole responsibility for setting their organizations objectives, coordinating the activities of their subordinates and managing their performance

Influence

Retains ultimate accountability and authority, but work to create highly participative teams and organizations characterized by shared commitment and responsibility

Source: Power Up: Transforming organizations through shared leadership – Bradford & Cohen

Leadership Opportunities



When to Use Control versus Influence

Control

- ❖ Conformance to standards
- ❖ Efficiency
- ❖ Clear Role Definition
- ❖ Quick Resolution
- ❖ Introduction of New Rules/Policies
- ❖ Clear Authority

PEOPLE
USING

Influence

- ❖ Build Engagement
- ❖ High Growth Potential
- ❖ Creativity/Innovation
- ❖ Stronger Agreements
- ❖ Discovery

PEOPLE
BUILDING

How Can We Influence Others?



One Approach to Influence



- Listen
 - Other perspectives
- Be a mirror
- Confirm outcomes
- Paint broader vision
- Provide information
- Ask questions
- Raise concerns
- Ask about alternatives
- Drive to agreements

Upper
Management

Primary
Manager

Stakeholders

Peers

Direct Reports/
Team Members

How Does This Happen?

My Team...

- ❖ Is New to the Business Domain
- ❖ Has Limited Understanding of Procedures
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Grows Into


My Team...

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- ❖ Readily Identifies Issues

Dreyfus Learning Model

Progression of Learning and Growth



Level 1 Behaviors	Level 2 Behaviors	Level 3 Behaviors	Level 4 Behaviors	Level 5 Behaviors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Only feel responsible for following the rules. ❖ Have no sense of context. ❖ Apply specific rules for specific circumstances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Recognize new situations. ❖ From experience, start to see rules applied to related conditions ❖ Make decisions by rule application ❖ Do not yet feel personally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Start to feel like there are too many rules ❖ Start to categorize rules into principles or 'perspectives', that helps sort information by relevance ❖ Ownership → Improve their own Process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Diagnose through intuition ❖ Have an approach driven by real-world experiences ❖ System is perceived as a complete system instead of a set of individual parts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Don't make conscious decisions ❖ Don't explicitly solve problems ❖ Do what works ❖ Don't break down situations into separate elements ❖ Recognize patterns for planning as well as diagnosis
				

Leadership Challenge

- ⦿ Read the Leadership Challenge
- ⦿ Contrast the 3 approaches
 - Overall impression?
 - Perspective taking?
 - Balance of Control vs. Influence?
 - Focus on growth?



Levels of Leadership

Progression of Learning and Growth

Tactical, problem-solving orientation

Believes that leaders are respected and followed by others because of their authority and expertise.

Expert (45%)

Strategic outcome orientation

Believes that leaders motivate others by making it challenging and satisfying to contribute to larger objectives.

Achiever (35%)

Visionary, facilitative orientation

Believes that leaders articulate an innovative, inspiring vision and bring together the right people to transform the vision into reality. Leaders empower others and actively facilitate their development.

Catalyst (5%)

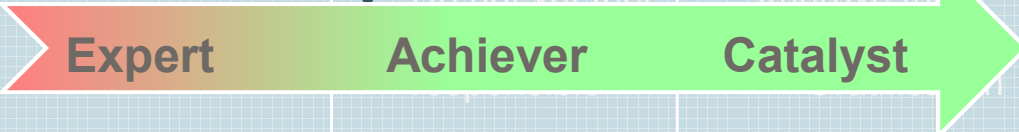
Source: Leadership Agility: Five Levels of Mastery for Anticipating and Initiating Change – Joiner & Josephs

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Expert	Achiever	Catalyst		

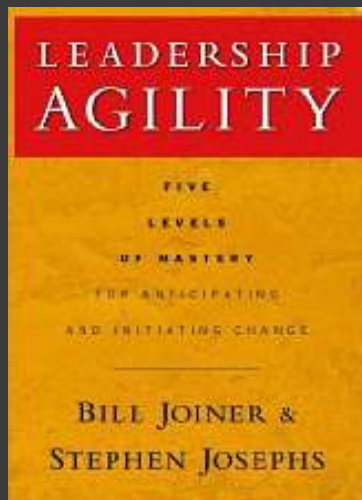


Set Moveable Boundaries



Levels of Leadership Agility

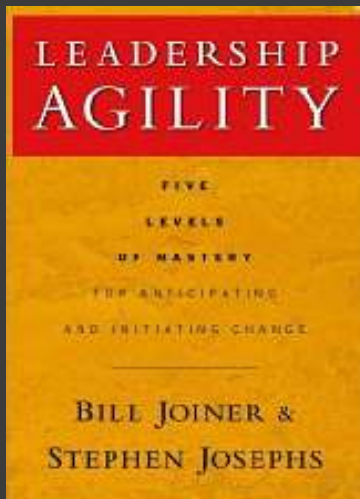
- ⦿ The ability to lead effectively under conditions of rapid change and mounting complexity



Why is it Important?

- ⦿ The pace of change will continue to increase, and the level of complexity and interdependence will continue to grow

Levels of Leadership Agility



- As leaders grow into more advanced stages they become:
 - More adept at responding to change
 - More visionary & collaborative
 - More proactive at learning from their experiences





What is your level of leadership agility?

How do you advance?

Leadership Agility 360™ Assessment

Improving Team
Performance



Pivotal
Conversations



Leading
Organizational Change



Personal
Development Plan

Gathering Feedback



LA360 Leadership
Coaching Support

Based on Observed Behavior

Leadership Challenge

- No Clear Guidelines
- Leadership is Learned Behavior
- Assess Situation
 - Awareness
 - Attentiveness
 - Mindset of Growth
- Determine Intent
 - Control?
 - Influence?
 - Walk Away?
- Take Action

**BE A PEOPLE
BUILDER**

A photograph of a man in a suit standing in a room, placing a large white puzzle piece onto a wall. The wall is covered with other puzzle pieces, and the man is focused on fitting the new piece into place. The room has a wooden floor and a white wall.

Don't Expect to Get It Right All the Time

Robbie Mac Iver



- Consulting ▪ Coaching ▪ Mentoring
- Agile Adoption ▪ Agile Leadership ▪ Product Management
- Leadership Agility 360™ Assessment

10+ Years Agile Techniques ▪ 10+ Years Project Leadership
▪ 20+ Years Information Technology



- Past President/Advisor National Board of Directors
- Founder Houston Chapter



- Stage Producer – Agile 2010, Agile 2011
- Presenter – Agile 2010
- Stage Producer – Agile Executive Forum 2011

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