



Leading the way



Before commencing to read this chapter, what does the term 'leadership' mean to YOU and what image and/or situation springs immediately to mind?

The significance of leadership

An essential element of organisational behaviour is co-ordinating the activities of people and guiding their efforts towards the goals and objectives of the organisation. This involves the process of leadership and the choice of an appropriate form of behaviour and action. The changing nature of work organisations involves moving away from an emphasis on command and getting results by the close control of the workforce; and towards an environment of teamwork coaching, support and empowerment. This places an ever-growing importance on leadership. Leadership is related to motivation and interpersonal behaviour.¹ A CBI report makes the point that 'Effective leaders, who can inspire their people to realise personal and collective potential, are often the deciding factor between a company being good at what it does and achieving greatness.'²

Leadership and management

The successful manager needs to understand the nature and influence of leadership and factors that determine the effectiveness of the leadership relationship. But what is the relationship between leadership and management? Although the two terms are often used interchangeably, management may be viewed as relating to people working within a structured organisation and with prescribed roles, in order to achieve stated organisational objectives (**see Chapter 10**). The emphasis of

leadership is on interpersonal behaviour in a broader context. It is often associated with the willing and enthusiastic behaviour of followers.

Arguably there are differences between leadership and management. For example, *Zaleznik* explores difference in attitudes towards goals, conceptions of work, relations with others, self-perception and development.³ Summarising the views of scholars who have attempted to differentiate between leading and managing, *Kent* draws attention to the following characteristics:

- managers do things right; leaders do the right things;
- managing is an authority relationship; leading is an influence relationship; and
- managing creates stability; leading creates change.

Kent suggests that although the ideas are provocative and stimulating, they provide a basis for a deeper understanding of the dynamics behind the two processes.⁴

Leadership role not clearly defined

The key point about leadership is that it does not necessarily take place within the hierarchical structure of the organisation. It occurs at different levels and manifested in different ways. Many people operate as leaders without their role ever being clearly established or defined. *Radcliffe* maintains that leadership is not mysterious, it's a completely natural human activity that is part of all of us. Leadership is plain and simple. The only qualification to be a leader is the desire to grow. It absolutely doesn't matter where you are in an organisation. There are only three aspects to leading: Future, Engage, Deliver.

- First, leading always starts in the Future;
- Second, if you want the help of others to create that Future, you need to Engage them;
- Third, in Deliver, you make things happen.⁵

Different perspectives

Despite continuing debate on management and leadership it is not easy to separate them as distinct activities. Many methods of management training can also be used as a means of measuring leadership style. For example, the Leadership Grid® (**discussed in Chapter 10**) was until recently known as the Managerial Grid®.

Mintzberg does not accept a distinction between the manager or the leader nor what any distinction means in the everyday life of organisations and poses the questions: how would you like to be managed by someone who doesn't lead; or why would you want to be led by someone who doesn't manage?⁶ *Moorcroft* maintains there is little evidence to support one perspective over another but suggests overwhelming evidence that people like the idea of being a 'leader' and this may be the reason why the debate still rages, as it fulfils a need for differentiation.⁷



To what extent do YOU like the idea of being a leader? Could you be happy being managed by someone who doesn't lead?

Approaches to the study of leadership

There are many ways of looking at **leadership** and interpretations of its meaning. Leadership might be interpreted in simple terms, such as 'getting others to follow' or 'getting people to do things willingly', or interpreted more specifically, for example as 'the use of authority in decision-making'. It may be exercised as an attribute of position or because of personal knowledge or wisdom. Leadership might be based on a function of personality or it can be seen as a behavioural category. It may also be viewed in terms of the role of the leaders and their ability to achieve effective performance from others. Leadership can also be discussed in terms of a form of persuasion or power relationship.

It is difficult, therefore, to generalise about leadership, but essentially it is a **relationship through which one person influences the behaviour or actions of other people**. This means that the process of leadership cannot be separated from the activities of groups and effective teambuilding. Due to its complex and variable nature there are many different interpretations and alternative ways of analysing leadership. It is helpful, therefore, to have some framework in which to consider different approaches to study of the subject.

One way is to examine managerial leadership in terms of:

- qualities or traits approach;
- functional or group approach, including action-centred leadership;
- styles of leadership;
- contingency theories;
- transitional or transformational leadership;
- inspirational or visionary leadership;
- servant leadership; and
- alternative views (see Figure 9.1).

Qualities or traits approach

This approach assumes that leaders are born and not made. Leadership consists of certain inherited characteristics, or personality traits, which distinguish leaders from their followers. The **qualities approach** focuses attention on the man or woman in the job and not on the job itself. It suggests that attention is given to the selection of leaders rather than to training for leadership. *Drucker* (writing originally in 1955) makes the point that:

Leadership is of utmost importance. Indeed there is no substitute for it. But leadership cannot be created or promoted. It cannot be taught or learned.⁸

However, attempts at identifying common personality, or physical and mental, characteristics of different 'good' or 'successful' leaders have met with little success.⁹ Investigations have identified lists of traits that tend to be overlapping, contradictory or with little correlation for most features. It is noticeable that 'individuality' or 'originality' usually features in the list. This suggests little in common between specific personality traits of different leaders. It is perhaps possible therefore to identify general characteristics of leadership ability, such as self-confidence, initiative,

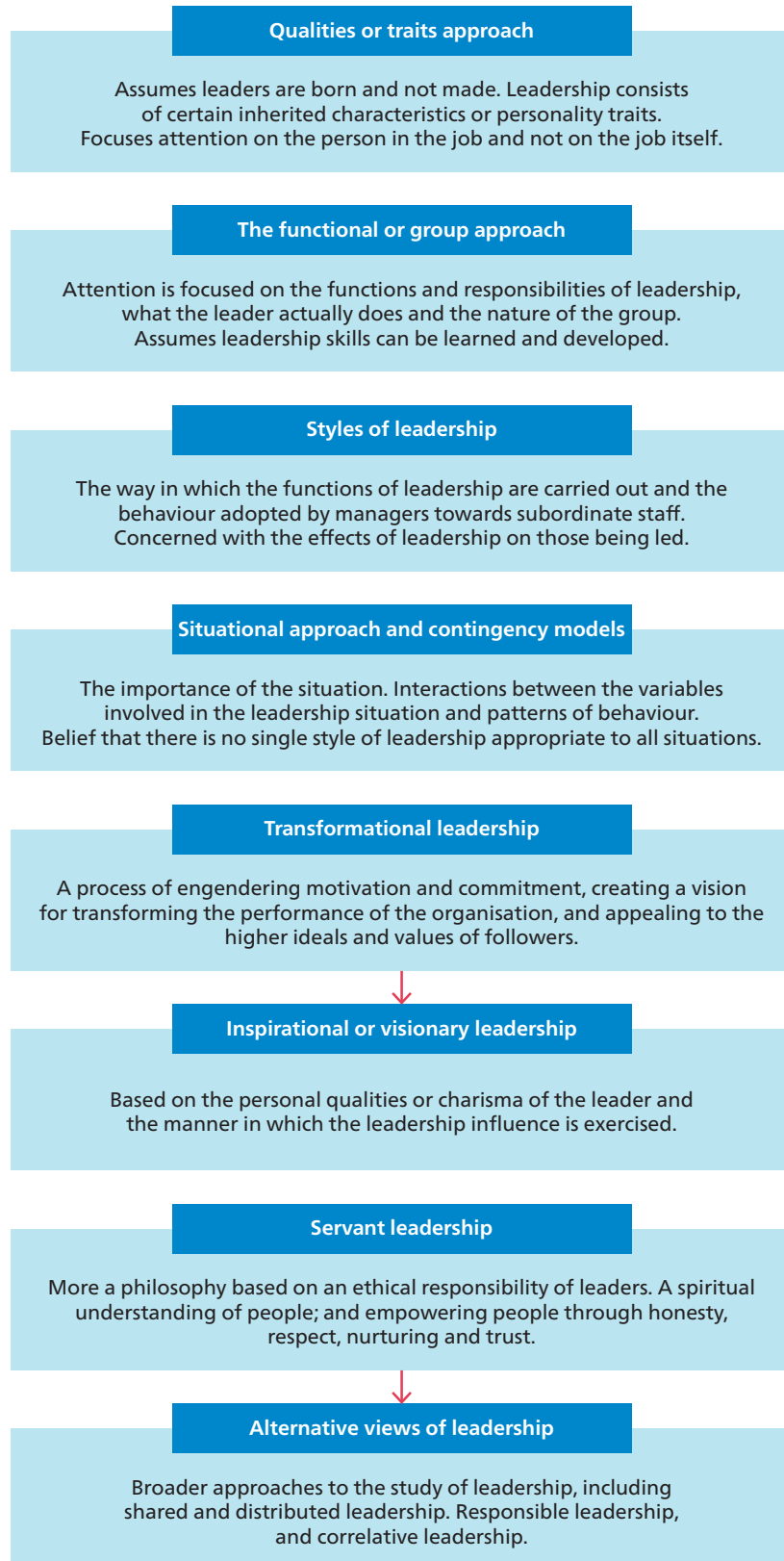


Figure 9.1 Framework for study of managerial leadership