Module 7 – IDENTIFYING PERSONAL LEADERSHIP STYLES

The Leadership Academy is a learning and action programme for mayors, senior officials and elected representatives of local government.

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1 MODULE OVERVIEW

1.1 BACKGROUND

- This module builds on what already experienced in Module 5 on self–awareness. Self-awareness in fact is key to be able to identify the most appropriate leadership style for each person, and in specific situations.
- This module illustrates different styles of leadership and guides participants to the understanding of their own preference, as well as the appropriate context for their implementation.

1.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To develop an accurate understanding of different leadership styles.
- To match own strengths and weaknesses to choose the appropriate leadership styles for different situations.

1.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Participants further develop their own self-awareness.
- Participants recognize their own preferred leadership preferences.

1.4 DURATION

- 90 min

2 MODULE STRUCTURE

2.1 INTERACTIVE INTRODUCTION
- Participants are asked to work in small groups (3-4 people) to identify characterising traits of self-awareness.

2.2 INDIVIDUAL EXERCISE – SELF-ASSESSMENT SURVEY
- Participants individually fill in the Section 5.1 survey.

2.3 GROUP EXERCISE 1 – LEADERSHIP STYLES: STRENGTHS, RISKS AND CIRCUMSTANCES
- Participants are introduced to the different leadership styles.

- Participants work in small groups (3-4 people) to fill in Section 5.2 Table.

2.4 GROUP EXERCISE 2 – PERSONAL LEADERSHIP STYLES
- Participants work in pairs to support each other in recognising more 'natural' leadership styles for each of them, according to the results of survey, the information they share and on the knowledge they have of each other.

3 WORKING DEFINITIONS

3.1 LEADERSHIP STYLES

For the purpose of LAP, leadership styles refer to different approaches to exercise leadership. They are based on the work systematised by Daniel Goleman[1] on emotional intelligence related to leadership.

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[1] Goleman, D. et al. (2013). Primal Leadership, Harvard Business School Publishing, Boston.

4 KEY CONCEPTS

4.1 LEADERSHIP STYLES

Leadership requires a good capacity of relation, of being bale to work within a team.

In leadership-oriented approach, all team members should aby by certain rules of good conduct, that empower the group relations' (ref. Module 8) and in turn allow for the achievement of desired results.

When giving feedback within a team, each member should make sure that:

- The person towards whom the feedback is directs is willing to listen (i.e. asking for permission);
- The feedback is given close to the event on which one wants to comment, and referred only to the action performed, not to the person that did it;
- No personal matters are involved in the feedback; it has to be merely related to work;
- The feedback is short and to the point, avoiding long preambles and introductions.

While these might function as golden rules to be applied in almost all team working contexts, where a positive leadership attitudes is deploied, they are also the core structure of a so called 'coaching' style of leadership. There might in fact be different leadership styles that shape specifically different organisation environments.

Using the right leadership style on the right occasion can make the difference between average and outstanding performance within an organisation. Finding the right balance is part of the repertoire of 'emotional intelligence' (see Module 4).

There are 6 core styles of leadership[2]:

[2] Goleman, D. (2000). Leadership that gets results, Harvard Business Review, available online at https://hbr.org/2000/03/leadership-that-gets-results, Goleman, D. et al. (2013). Primal Leadership, Harvard Business School Publishing, Boston.

- Visionary – pointing the direction where the team should be going, but not defining the operative steps for achieving the goal. This style could be useful where new ideas and insights are needed within an organisation.
- Team working (or affiliative) – creating emotional bonds and harmony within the team. This style shows to be particularly effective when trust needs to be created or reinforced, or when team collaboration is essential for the achievement of the goal.
- Coaching – focusing on individuals, rather then on team working as a whole. The focus is helping individual team members developing their own skills and connecting their own goals to those that the organisation pursues. This style could be useful in a working environment where certain members of team are particularly eager to contribute on their own initiative.
- Pace setting – setting very high achievement standards within the team. This might be needed in very poorly performing teams, to raise the standard of working effort. Once this objective has been achieved, this style should be changed with another.
- Democratic - building consensus through participation, assigning responsibilities to team members. This style is very useful when the organisation's direction is unclear, and a collective gathering of ideas and insights in needed to define more clearly objective and results.
- Commanding style – ordering and commanding team members what to do. The power is in the hands of one or few people. This style should only be used in circumstances of crisis or in cases in which urgent action is required.

Each style has its own strengths and risks; these need to be understood so that a judgement can be

made as to what particular style should be employed in a specific circumstance.

Using a specific style for a specific occasion is a function not just of the mind but also of the emotions. To use a team-working style, for example, requires the delegation of responsibility. If a person finds it difficult to delegate responsibility, he/she may find this style also difficult. A person with a difficulty to delegate (i.e. lack of trust, ref. Module 4) may want to micro-manage (i.e. using a coaching style) to ensure to get the desired results. On the other hand, such micro-management might not strengthen the capacity of the team to take responsibility themselves for delivering high standards of performance. To delegate, a person might have a perception to lose power. This could be psychologically hard, especially if the person has an authoritarian background.

5 EXERCISES

5.1 EXERCISE 1 – INDIVIDUAL EXERCISE – SELF-ASSESSMENT SURVEY

This survey is designed to provide you with feedback about your traits so to identify the leadership style that is more 'natural' to you.

Using the scale below, circle the number next to each question that you believe comes closest to your natural preference. Be honest about your choices as there are no right or wrong answers - it is only for your own understanding.

Scoring:

Very Strong – 5; Moderately Strong – 4; Adequate – 3; Moderately Weak – 2; Very Weak – 1.

1. I enjoy working on teams.	5 4 3 2 1
2. I am able to speak clearly to others.	5 4 3 2 1
3. I enjoy relating to others on an interpersonal basis.	5 4 3 2 1
4. I am good at planning.	5 4 3 2 1
5. I can interpret rules and regulations.	5 4 3 2 1
6. I feel comfortable asking others for advice.	5 4 3 2 1
7. I enjoy collecting and analysing data.	5 4 3 2 1
8. I am good at solving problems.	5 4 3 2 1
9. I am comfortable writing memos to others.	5 4 3 2 1
10. I can delegate work to others.	5 4 3 2 1
11. I want to take charge.	5 4 3 2 1
12. Giving directions is comfortable for me.	5 4 3 2 1
13. I know how to develop goals and carry them out.	5 4 3 2 1
14. I am comfortable at implementing new techniques.	5 4 3 2 1
15. I enjoy appraising performance and giving feedback.	5 4 3 2 1
16. If I made a mistake, I would admit it and correct it.	5 4 3 2 1
17. I am curious.	5 4 3 2 1
18. I believe in diversity in the workplace.	5 4 3 2 1
19. I thrive on change.	5 4 3 2 1
20. I love using my leadership capacities.	5 4 3 2 1

Total each column   __ __ __ __ __

Total score for all 5 columns   _____

Scoring

Total each of the five columns and then add the five columns together for your final score. The maximum score is 100 while the minimum score is 20.

As mentioned earlier, there are no right or wrong answers. This means there are no right or wrong scores.

This survey is designed to help you:

a) *Identify the areas you might want to develop (i.e. your lowest scoring answers);*
b) *Determine what abilities you can build on (strengths).*

What are your strengths?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What are your areas for development?

_____

_____

_____

_____

5.2 EXERCISE 2- GROUP EXERCISE 1 - LEADERSHIP STYLES: STRENGTHS, RISKS AND CIRCUMSTANCES

Consider the list of leadership styles below. The right style at the right time sets the climate and improves performance. Managers with a wide portfolio of styles are likely to be more flexible. Consider the strengths and risks of each style and set out the circumstances when the style might be best used.

STYLE	STRENGTHS	RISKS	CIRCUMSTANCE
1. Visionary			
2. Coaching			
3. Team-working			
4. Democratic			
5. Pace-setting			
6. Commanding			

- What obstacles prevent people from making good use of specific styles?
- When you have completed this table (not before), look overleaf to compare responses.

5.2.1   Completed Template

Consider the list of leadership styles below. The right style at the right time sets the climate and improves performance. Managers with a wide portfolio of styles are likely to be more flexible. Each leadership style has strengths and risks; these must be understood. Also, there are circumstances in which particular leadership styles will be more effective than others.

STYLE	STRENGTHS	RISKS	CIRCUMSTANCE
Visionary	Builds resonance, sense of purpose; basis for team-work and standards.	Does not work if leader is less experienced or appears pompous; risks flexibility.	When a clear sense of direction is required
Coaching	Can help staff achieve short-term goals; good for longer term development; builds vertical team-work.	Micro-management if focused too much on task rather than person; may create disharmony if favouritism suspected.	When delegation requires support to ensure its effectiveness
Team-working	Connects people with each other in shared endeavour; maximises use of individual talents; can manage conflict.	Difficult to take personal initiative. Harmony and direction can be upset by personal ambition unless managed well; team leader must manage team emotions.	When the challenge is cross-cutting and it is important to cross boundaries, bring in ideas and bring coherence to the organisation
Democratic	Creates trust and engagement; gives confidence in uncertain situations; generates ideas; makes it safe to speak up.	Potential for dithering and being indecisive; can undermine sense of direction; platform for the incompetent.	When staff need to get involved and own the challenge and response
Pace-setting	Generates high standards; weeds out poor performance; gets short-term results.	Might push too hard, ignore context, cause second-guessing, create anxiety; pressure can be debilitating. Staff may just wait to be told, before taking action; less focus on quality; may sacrifice quality for task.	When there is a need for decisive action after poor results When there is a deadline
Commanding	Best in crisis or when hard decisions have to be driven through.	Can lead to impatience, resentment and micro-management; may focus on what is wrong rather than what needs to be developed; May fail to give sense of direction or harness all available expertise.	When urgency is paramount and when serious obstacles to change have to be overcome.

See overleaf for a deeper insight into the risks involved.

6 REFERENCES

Goleman, D. (2000). Leadership that gets results, Harvard Business Review, available online at https://hbr.org/2000/03/leadership-that-gets-results

Goleman, D. et al. (2013). Primal Leadership, Harvard Business School Publishing, Boston.