

DuBrin

Leadership:

Research Findings, Practice, and Skills

LEADERSHIP

Research Findings, Practice, and Skills

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Preface

Leadership has always been a key topic in management, organizational behavior, and industrial and organizational psychology. In recent years, however, leadership has become an important new course in schools and colleges of business, business administration, and public administration. Teaching and research about leadership have surged for two key reasons. One is that many business school faculty are convinced that effective leadership is required to meet most organizational challenges. Without effective leadership at all levels in private and public organizations, it is difficult to sustain profitability, productivity, quality, and good customer service. In dozens of different ways, researchers and teachers have demonstrated that leadership does make a difference. Many business school curricula therefore now emphasize the development of leadership skills.

An equally important reason behind the burgeoning study of leadership is that colleges of business and management are responding to environmental demands. Private and public organizations themselves, along with the business media, have placed renewed emphasis on the importance of leadership. Work organizations are unswerving in their belief that effective leaders are necessary to achieve such goals as improved profitability, productivity, quality, and customer service. Top management and other stakeholders believe that without effective leadership, the organization cannot remain competitive.

More so than previously, business organizations recognize that leadership transcends senior executives. As a result, they require people with appropriate leadership skills to inspire and influence others in small teams, task forces, and units at all organizational levels.

PURPOSE OF THE TEXT

The purpose of this text is implied by its title—*Leadership: Research Findings, Practice, and Skills*. It is designed for undergraduate and graduate courses in leadership that give attention to both stable research findings about leadership, the practice of leadership, and skill development. The text is also designed to fit courses in management development that emphasize the leadership function of management. It can also serve as a supplement to organizational behavior or management courses that emphasize leadership.

The student who masters this text will acquire an overview of the voluminous research literature about leadership. In addition, the student will acquire a feel for how leadership is practiced and also gain insights and information to enhance his or her leadership skills.

What the text is *not* also helps define its nature and scope. This book does not attempt to duplicate the scope and purpose of a leadership handbook by integrating theory and research from several thousand studies. At the other extreme, it is not an evangelical approach to leadership espousing one leadership technique. I have attempted to find a midpoint between a massive synthesis of the literature and a trade book promoting a current leadership fad. *Leadership: Research Findings, Practice, and Skills* is designed to be a mixture of scholarly integrity, examples of effective leadership in action, and skill development.

It is important to note that this book is not intended to duplicate or substitute for an organizational behavior text. Because almost all organizational behavior texts are survey texts, they will mention many of the topics covered here. My approach, however, is to emphasize skill development and prescription rather than duplicating basic descriptions of concepts and theories. I have tried to minimize overlap by emphasizing the leadership aspects of any concept presented here that might also be found in an organizational behavior or management text.

One area of intentional overlap with organizational behavior and management texts does exist: a review of all basic leadership theories. In such instances, however, I emphasize skill development and ideas for leadership practice stemming from these older theories.

FEATURES OF THE BOOK

To accomplish its purpose, this text incorporates nine features into each chapter in addition to summarizing and synthesizing relevant information about leadership:

1. Self-assessment exercises relating both to skills and to personal characteristics
2. Leader in Action inserts describing the leadership practices, behaviors, and personal attributes of real-life leaders
3. Boldfaced key terms, listed at the end of the chapter and defined in a glossary at the back of the text
4. Real-life and hypothetical examples throughout the text
5. Skill development and application exercises, including role plays, to emphasize the activities and skills of effective leaders
6. Discussion questions and activities suited for individual or group analysis

7. End-of-chapter Guidelines for Action, giving additional suggestions for improving leadership skill and practice
8. End-of-chapter summaries that integrate all key topics and concepts
9. Leadership Case Problems, which illustrate the major theme of the chapter, for individual or group analysis
10. Learning objectives to help focus the reader's attention on major outcomes

FRAMEWORK OF THE TEXT

The text is a blend of description, skill development, insight development, and prescription. Chapter 1 describes the meaning, importance, and nature of leadership including leadership roles. Chapter 2 identifies personal attributes associated with effective leaders, a subject that has received renewed importance in recent years. Charismatic and transformational leadership, an extension of understanding the personal attributes of leadership, is the subject of Chapter 3.

Chapter 4 surveys behaviors and practices associated with effective leadership in a variety of situations. Chapter 5 shifts to a description of various approaches to classifying leadership styles. Chapter 6 extends the style approach to leadership by describing the contingency and situational aspects of leadership. After Chapter 7 describes how leaders use power and politics, Chapter 8 extends the topic through an analysis of tactics leaders use to influence others. Chapter 9 describes how leaders foster teamwork and empower team members.

The next five chapters deal with specific leadership skills: motivating and coaching skills (Chapter 10), which constitute the basics of many leadership positions; creative problem solving (Chapter 11); communication (including nonverbal and cross-cultural communication) and conflict resolution skills (Chapter 12); leadership skills and attitudes required for providing effective leadership in international and culturally diverse settings (Chapter 13); and enhancing quality and capitalizing on technology (Chapter 14).

Chapter 15 concludes the book with an overview of approaches to leadership development and learning. In addition, it covers a group of leading-edge and future challenges facing the leader, such as providing leadership in a reengineered workplace and in a virtual corporation.

SUPPLEMENTS

An instructor's manual with text bank accompanies the text. Among its features are chapter outline and lecture notes, possible answers to discussion questions and case questions, comments on exercises in the text, and

a comprehensive list of leadership videos. The instructor's manual also describes how to use Computer-Assisted Scenario Analysis (CASA). Especially designed for helping students develop a contingency point of view, CASA is a user-friendly technique that can be used with any word-processing software. It allows the student to insert a new scenario into the case and then re-answer the questions based on the new scenario. CASA helps to develop an awareness of contingency factor in making leadership decisions, as well as creative thinking. A briefer version of CASA was published in the October 1992 issue of *The Journal of Management Education*.

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