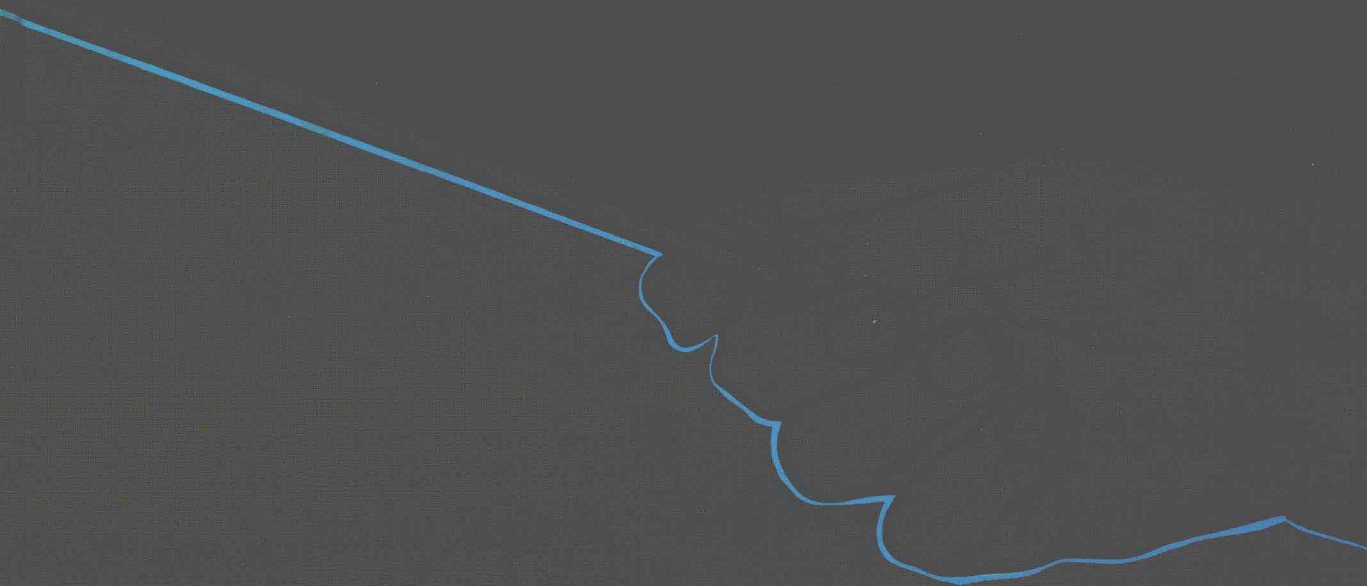


# LEADERSHIP IN RECREATION AND LEISURE SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Christopher R. Edginton  
Phyllis M. Ford



# LEADERSHIP IN RECREATION AND LEISURE SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

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This book is dedicated to John G. Williams, Director of Parks and Recreation, Sunnyvale, California. John is an individual with great strength of character, who has a commitment to high ideals and values and to the development of others. It was John who supported my initial interest in writing and who continues to inspire my efforts.

**C.R.E.**

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This book is also dedicated to Janet R. Mac Lean, professor emerita, Department of Recreation and Park Administration, Indiana University, who personifies the definition of a leader as “One who has a compass in the head and a magnet in the heart.” It is she who, by example, enthusiasm, and excellence in leading, sparked my initial interest in writing about leadership in leisure services.

**P.M.F.**

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# PREFACE

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Leadership is the single most important factor in the success of any recreation and leisure service organization. The satisfaction of participants and fellow professionals, as well as the stature of a recreation and leisure service organization within a community, is directly tied to the type and quality of leadership evidenced within an agency. Leadership is pervasive at all levels of organization. It is required of individuals in managerial, supervisory, and direct face-to-face positions. Although leadership is important at all levels, it is the direct face-to-face leadership level where the critical participant-leader exchange occurs. With this in mind, this book focuses on leadership at this level.

Recognizing that the responsibilities of an individual providing leadership at the direct face-to-face level in recreation and leisure service organizations are many and varied, this book provides the reader with a basic introduction to the competencies needed to succeed at this level. This book is divided into two sections and presents a blend of conceptual, theoretical, and practical content. The conceptual and theoretical information presented can be applied to leadership at all levels, including managerial and supervisory levels. The practical or “hands on” content of the book is directed toward providing the reader with the information necessary to serve effectively as a face-to-face leader.

Part One of the book presents an overview of the conceptual and theoretical components that are central to the leadership process. Included are discussions of leadership styles, models and processes, group dynamics, communication, and participant motivation. Fur-

thermore, a chapter discussing leadership roles and principles applicable to the direct face-to-face leader is also included. The assumption in presenting this initial material is that the reader should have an understanding of the underlying principles, theories, concepts, and values of the profession and of leadership in order to apply them in a practical sense.

The second section of the book, Part Two, contains chapters that describe practical application of various leadership methods and procedures in a cross section of recreation and leisure service settings. The material is presented in a “hands on” practical manner. This information can be applied in a number of settings, and can be used to organize, promote, and lead successfully given recreation and leisure activities and programs.

We enjoyed writing this book! The authors share a strong belief in the value of hands-on, direct, face-to-face leadership. Although all the authors have served in administrative or supervisory positions, our exuberance and excitement are for the role that the direct face-to-face leader plays. When conceptualizing this book, we authors discovered that not only had we all been face-to-face leaders in the past, but that we all *currently* are involved in direct, face-to-face leadership roles in our extracurricular activities. Chris Edginton is a scoutmaster; and Phyllis Ford serves as an interpretive naturalist, leading community groups on weekend tours; We continue to enjoy the direct face-to-face leadership role and pursue opportunities to engage in it.

Chapters 1 to 5 of this book, dealing with leadership in recreation settings, leadership

theories, group dynamics, participant motivation, and communication were prepared by Christopher Edginton. The author of Chapter 6 was Phyllis Ford. Phyllis Ford also wrote chapters dealing with risk management, social recreation, tournaments, arts and crafts, songs, leading in the out-of-doors and games and contests. Susan Edginton wrote the chapter dealing with value development. Kathleen Halberg wrote two chapters: "Leading Older People" and "Working with People with Disabilities." Karl Cloninger contributed to the chapters dealing with tour and travel programs, officiating, dramatic activities, aquatic activities, organizing and leading clubs, coaching youth sports, volunteers, festivals and pageants, meetings, and working with community groups. Chris Edginton also prepared the chapter on the leader as an instructor and contributed to chapters dealing with leadership roles and principles, organizing and leading meetings, coaching youth sports, officiating, leading community groups, leading volunteers, festivals and special events, leading dramatic activities, aquatic activities, clubs, and travel and tour programs. The chapter dealing with leading self-directed activities was coauthored by Ford and Edginton.

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**Christopher R. Edginton**  
**Phyllis M. Ford**

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# PART ONE

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Part One of this book contains six chapters and presents a conceptual and theoretical overview of the topics of leadership, group dynamics, communications, and motivation. Why present and discuss theories and conceptual ideas? A theory or conceptual idea helps us to organize our knowledge and facts regarding phenomena into meaningful and useful information that enables us to explain, describe, and predict behaviors and events. Furthermore, theories and conceptual ideas are generalizable; that is, they can be applied to many different settings, situations, and individuals. Once general conceptual and theoretical knowledge has been learned, it can be adapted to specific situations.

Our goal in this portion of the book is to set forth concepts and theories that can be related to the recreation and leisure profession and that can be widely applied to many different settings within the field. An understanding of the conceptual and theoretical ideas presented should increase the reader's awareness of the impact that the leader can have on the recreation and leisure environment and those within it. An effective leader is able to provide dynamic recreation and leisure services that meet the needs, wants, and interests of participants. The pathway to successful leadership is based on a strong conceptual and theoretical foundation. An individual with this base of knowledge has the tools to become a leader who is confident, competent, and committed and whose efforts are recognized, appreciated, respected, and enjoyed.



# LEADERSHIP IN RECREATION AND LEISURE SERVICE SETTINGS

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Having fun at Family Vacation College, University of Oregon. This leader enjoys her role and is appreciated for her efforts.

As the amount of leisure available to individuals has increased, there has been a corresponding growth in the organization and provision of recreation and leisure activities in the form of programs and services by public, private, and commercial agencies. These

types of organizations require the involvement of professionally trained individuals to provide leadership for the host of functions that take place within them. Leadership is found at all levels of organization within agencies providing recreation and leisure services. It is required of individuals serving in management, supervisory, and direct, face-to-face roles.

The responsibilities of individuals providing leadership are varied and diverse. For the individual working as a counselor in a camp setting, leadership may involve teaching and leading songs; for the playground leader, it may require coaching skills; for the aerobics dance instructor, it may demand knowledge of motivation techniques; for the supervisor, it may focus on his or her ability to resolve conflict; and for the manager, it may be reflected in his or her skills to promote and interpret effectively the program of the agency to the community as a whole. In any case, a knowledge of leadership, leadership styles, communications, group dynamics, and motivational techniques and processes are essential general skills or concepts that should be mastered by the leader. Furthermore, the leader should have a knowledge of the specific technical skills that can be used in select recre-

ation and leisure service settings. For example, the step-by-step processes involved in organizing a campfire program, leading an organized game or song, organizing a tournament, or planning a retreat are specific technical skills that may be acquired and applied by the leader.

## RECREATION AND LEISURE IN NORTH AMERICAN SOCIETY

Opportunities for recreation and leisure experiences are pervasive within North American society. Increased affluence, expansion of technology, and changing attitudes toward work and play have dramatically affected the life-styles of North Americans. Economically, expenditures for the consumption of recreation and leisure products and services exceed hundreds of billions of dollars per year.<sup>1</sup> This dramatic outlay of money for recreation and leisure services may be directly tied to the changing concept of the nature of work and leisure. Today individuals use recreation and leisure in order to seek self-fulfillment, satisfaction, and self-expression. More and more, individuals are defining themselves and their roles through their leisure. This is a dramatic reversal from a time when individuals identified themselves solely by their occupations or professions. Individuals often identify themselves today according to what they do or experience during their leisure. "The answer to the old question, 'What do you do?' is not as interesting as asking, 'How do you play?'"<sup>2</sup>

**Leisure: What Is It?** There is no universally accepted concept of leisure. It has been defined as a block of time, as a state of mind,

and as an activity. When defining leisure as a *block of time*, we think of it as a time when individuals are free to pursue those things that are of interest to them. Within this block of time, individuals choose what they want to do; they may be active or passive. When leisure is viewed as time, it has been suggested that one's life routine can be divided into three parts: existence, subsistence, and leisure or discretionary time. The second approach to defining leisure is to view it as a *state of mind*. This approach is advocated by many contemporary philosophers and researchers. Viewing leisure as a state of mind suggests that the individual's perception of what constitutes a leisure experience is the central determinant of whether or not a leisure experience has occurred. In other words, if individuals feel or think that they are experiencing leisure, then, in fact, they are. This opens up the possibility for leisure to occur at various times and places and in a variety of circumstances. The last approach to defining leisure is dependent upon an analysis of the types of *activities* in which individuals engage. Leisure is described or defined in terms of such *activities* as arts, sports, games, volunteering, traveling, reading, swimming, and so on.

If we view leisure as a state of mind or something that one experiences, there are criteria that can be used in order to measure and define it. Commonly, these are considered to be precursors to the leisure experience. Three specific criteria have been identified by social psychologists studying this topic: perceived freedom, intrinsic motivation, and perceived competence.

*Perceived freedom* refers to the notion that individuals must feel that they have independence and latitude in order for the leisure experience to occur. An individual who does not feel forced or constrained to participate has a higher degree of perceived freedom than one who is compelled to participate. Also, the individual who does not feel inhibited or limited by the environment has a higher degree of

<sup>1</sup>"Recreation: A \$244 Billion Market," *U.S. News & World Report*, August 10, 1981, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup>Landon Y. Jones, *Great Expectations: America and the Baby Boom Generation* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1980), p. 336.

perceived freedom. Individuals who perceive that they have control over their own behavior, as opposed to those who attribute events in their lives to chance, fate, or luck, also have a higher degree of perceived freedom.

When individuals are motivated from within, they are said to be *intrinsically motivated*. Intrinsically motivated individuals are able to reward themselves and are not dependent upon external rewards. The intrinsically motivated individual has a greater sense of perceived freedom, hence, a greater opportunity to experience leisure. Individuals who are intrinsically motivated achieve feelings of satisfaction, enjoyment and gratification that are inwardly defined and controlled.

Finally, the perception an individual has of his or her competence while engaging in an activity will affect the leisure experience. Individuals must have a *perception of competence* in order to attain a leisure "state of mind." This is not to say that they must *be* competent, but only that they must perceive themselves as such. Knowledge of these three precursors to leisure (perceived freedom, intrinsic motivation, and perceived competence) can be used by the leader to provide a motivating environment that enables individuals to achieve positive leisure experiences.

**Recreation: What Is It?** A common definition of recreation suggests that it is an activity that is engaged in voluntarily that is satisfying to the individual. Many definitions of recreation also suggest that it must have some socially redeeming qualities. The term *wholesomeness* is often used to describe or define this dimension of recreation. Recreation is also frequently viewed as a way of restoring or refreshing oneself for work or as a balance to work activities.

Although the terms *recreation* and *leisure* are thought to be redundant by many, the authors have employed both of these terms in the title of the book and throughout their discussion because it was felt that they capture

the breadth and diversity of the field. Furthermore, the lay person or "person on the street" may relate better to either one of these terms, depending on his or her previous experience, background, or knowledge of the field. Until the philosophers of our field clarify the points of distinction between these two terms more precisely and until the perceptions of the public are more clearly focused on one term or the other, the authors feel that the use of both terms interchangeably is appropriate.

### ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING RECREATION AND LEISURE SERVICES

There are many organizations that create and distribute recreation and leisure services. They range from nonprofit, governmental agencies to profit-oriented commercial ones. Such organizations may be involved in travel and tourism, entertainment services, food and hospitality services, and the provision of areas and facilities. Some organizations target their services toward one particular age group whereas others have a broader focus. Organizations may be very specialized in nature, providing a few specific activities and programs, or they may attempt to cater to a broader segment of the population. All organizations depend upon efficient and effective leadership in order to serve those individuals at whom their services are targeted.

Sessoms, Meyer, and Brightbill have suggested that there are three general types of organizations involved in the creation and delivery of recreation and leisure services: public, private, and commercial.<sup>3</sup> Public agencies are funded primarily by taxes and provide recreation and leisure services at the local, county, state, and federal levels of government. Private agencies, also referred to as voluntary agencies, are nonprofit organizations that receive their support from donations, fund-raising

<sup>3</sup>H. Douglas Sessoms, Harold D. Meyer, and Charles K. Brightbill, *Leisure Services: The Organized Recreation and Park System* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975), pp. 13-15.

ing activities, and membership fees. Agencies in this category include the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs, YWCAs and others. The last category—commercial organizations—includes those agencies that have profit as their primary motive. This category may include amusement and theme parks, resorts, fitness and tennis centers, racquetball centers, travel agencies, movie theaters, and so on. Professional leadership is found in all these types of agencies and at all levels of organization.

## LEADERS AND LEADERSHIP

There are many different types of leaders in our profession. Consider the playground leader, coach, leisure counselor, activity instructor, Boy Scout leader, outreach worker, guide, interpretive naturalist, lifeguard, and others. In organized recreation and leisure services, the leader plays the key role in assisting individuals to achieve the leisure experience. Leaders serve as facilitators, teachers, moderators, encouragers, and motivators, providing direction to individuals and groups.

### WHAT IS A LEADER?

*A leader can be thought of as an individual who guides, directs, and influences the attitudes and behavior of others.* A leader guides participants toward goals that are intended to meet their individual needs, wants, and interests while, at the same time, achieving the goals of the recreation and leisure service organization. Providing guidance to individuals may involve presenting, directly or indirectly, the path that the participant should follow in order to achieve desired ends. For example, a leader might suggest that “*leisure in one’s life provides balance.*” This is a form of guidance. The leader may also guide an individual by suggesting various activities in which the individual can become involved to meet his or her leisure needs. In this sense, the leader *guides* the participant.

As the participant becomes involved in a program or activity, the leader may also provide *direction*. Direction can be thought of as, or is often equated with, giving commands to others. The leader will give direction to others in the form of instructions and orders and by example. For example, the lifeguard provides direction to individuals by ordering them not to run on the swimming pool deck. The activity instructor provides direction to class members by assigning and explaining tasks. Direction need not be viewed negatively, but rather can be viewed positively depending upon the perceptions of the participant and his or her willingness to take direction. We also equate directing with the idea that the leader “shows the way.” In other words, the leader provides direction by helping individuals determine “what to do, how to do it, and where to do it” in order to accomplish individual and group goals.

Lastly, the leader *influences* the behavior of others. In fact, many authors have written that “leadership is influence.” Influence is the power to affect the behavior of others without force. For example, a leader may use his or her influence to persuade individuals to engage in a certain activity. Often influence is based upon the use of motivational principles. In most recreation and leisure settings, the leader must lead by the influence of his or her personality, knowledge, or attractiveness to others rather than by the authority of his or her position within the organization.

Specifically, what do leaders do? There are a number of functions and responsibilities that leaders carry out.<sup>4</sup> Some of these include the following.

1. *Building Comradery and Cohesiveness.* Leaders help individuals within the group to feel a part of the group and help the group as a whole to feel like a unit.

<sup>4</sup>Adapted from H. Douglas Sessoms and Jack L. Stevenson, *Leadership and Group Dynamics in Recreation Services* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1981), pp. 6, 7.



2. *Identifying and Defining Goals.* Leaders help individuals and groups identify, define, and clarify their goals and objectives. This involves helping individuals understand what they are trying to achieve (their aims) as well as their needs, interests, and wants.
3. *Developing Methods and Procedures to Achieve Goals.* Often the leader will work with individuals and groups to identify and clarify the methods and procedures that can be used to achieve their goals. Frequently individuals know where they want to go, but not how to get there.
4. *Organizing the Work of Others.* An important responsibility of the leader is the process of organizing. It involves the establishment and creation of roles, a group or organizational structure, as well as a reward system. Organizing also often involves the establishment of a network of communication.
5. *Motivating Others.* The leader is often the energizing or motivating force within the group. In this role, the leader encourages individuals to participate, act, and demonstrate other behavior conducive to the attainment of group goals.
6. *Evaluating the Work of Others.* The leader is often the individual who determines whether or not goals and objectives have been met. He or she does this by measuring the discrepancy between actual performance and the standards initially established by the group. In the event that there is a discrepancy, the leader would suggest or take corrective action.
7. *Representing the Group.* The leader may be the individual that represents the group to others, speaking on the behalf of group members. The leader may represent the group's needs, interests, and wants to other organizations or to groups within the community.
8. *Developing Group Members.* A key responsibility of the leader is the development of

others. In recreation and leisure service organizations, the development of the leadership capabilities, skills, knowledge, and attitudes of others is consistent with the philosophy of the profession. In this role, the leader encourages self-help, self direction, and voluntary involvement.

9. *Establishing the Group Atmosphere.* The leader is responsible for establishing the climate of the group. Individuals may sometimes find that their relationships within a group are pleasant and productive whereas in other situations they may find the reverse to occur. The leader plays a key role in establishing a *positive* group climate.
10. *Promoting the Ideals of the Profession.* Recreation and leisure service leaders are often in a position to promote the ideals of the profession. Such ideals as protection of the environment, for example, may be promoted by the leader within the context of his or her role.

As one can see, there are numerous functions and responsibilities that are carried out by the leader. Many are carried out simultaneously, adding to the complexity of the leader's role. A group cannot function effectively or meet goals without a leader. A leader facilitates the achievement of goals by guiding, directing, and influencing the actions and behavior of others.

#### ASSUMING THE LEADERSHIP ROLE

A question that may be asked is, "How does the leader assume this role?" Shivers has suggested that there are four possible ways in which a leader assumes his or her position: by appointment, by election, by emergence, or as a result of charisma.<sup>5</sup> The following list discusses each of these avenues for assumption of the leadership role.

<sup>5</sup>Jay S. Shivers, *Recreational Leadership: Group Dynamics and Interpersonal Behavior* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Book Co., 1980), pp. 103-113.