

New Insights from The New Extraordinary Leader

25 Ways to Develop Your Own Leadership

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Being a great leader can be defined by selecting the top 5 or 10 percent from any distribution, but this is artificial. It was done for the sake of ease and objectivity in our research. However, greatness should ultimately be defined against a standard rather than merely comparing people against each other. There is no reason why half the leaders in an organization could not be great if they were developed properly. Better still, why not all? Great leadership is not a competitive activity in which one person's success detracts from another's success.

The following are 25 suggestions for ways in which leaders can improve the attributes or behaviors that are vital in producing extraordinary results. The key thing to remember is that improvement you make on any one-dimension spills over to many others. There is no such thing as working on only one leadership quality or attribute. When you improve one, you will invariably be improving several others.

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1. Decide to Become a Great Leader

This is actually two decisions. First, most people do not think of “leadership” in the same terms as other roles in life. At a young age a person may aspire to become a physician, a lawyer, a molecular biologist, an astronaut, or a rock star, but chances are you have never heard of someone saying, “I want to grow up to be a leader.” We think of leadership as an adjunct or frosting on some other role. Someday that may change. For people inside organizations, however, the first decision is to see that being a leader in an organization is important and worthy of your continued effort.

The second decision is to **be exceptional rather than just mediocre at this role of leadership.** This is the decision to go way beyond the ordinary or average and make a huge difference in the organization.

One positive element of this decision is the fact that it is not a zero-sum game. **Becoming a great leader is something everyone can aspire to, and one person’s effectiveness in no way detracts from others’ success.** In this game, everyone can win and one person’s winning actually helps others to win. **To become a highly effective leader requires a real dedication to that task and a willingness to act with the intensity and focus.**



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2. Develop and Display High Personal Character

The leader walks a difficult line between two seemingly opposing forces. First, the leader must be willing to take the role of leader. That means calling the meeting to order, pushing the agenda along, drawing some people out, and toning others down. It means saying “no” to a budget request that can’t be funded. It also means having to terminate a longtime friend who is not performing effectively. Being a leader means being willing to take charge and make certain that the group performs well.

We have observed a newly appointed dean in a university who wanted to maintain close ties with former colleagues on the faculty and, in fact, did not want anything to change. So, the new dean continued to act exactly like a faculty member and talk like a faculty member (including the inevitable complaints about the university administration). In a few weeks, it became obvious that this person would not succeed in his new role, because he was unwilling to take on the requirements of the new office to which he had been appointed.

The counsel to all leaders is to maintain an attitude of humility. Be willing to laugh at yourself. Do not flaunt the authority you have. Humility will make you approachable. It opens the door to building relationships. The leader needs to find some mirror from which can be learned the way others perceive your character. That mirror may be a good internal mentor. It could be a trusted colleague or subordinate. It could be an effective 360-degree feedback process. Whatever it is, leaders need to have some sense about how people perceive their character. They need to know if they are trusted. Without that, it is not possible to exert strong influence on a work group.

Also, be cautious in the commitments you make, and then always deliver. **Be careful not to overstate or overpromise.** We are sure that some are saying, “But can people just improve their character?” “What’s the best way to make changes in my fundamental personality or character?” The answers to those questions might be surprising to some. There has been a belief that the following chain exists: character, attitudes, behavior.

The fact of the matter, however, is that people make their attitudes and ultimately their character conform to their behavior. The place to begin is with behavior. Thus, participating in powerful skill-building programs designed to improve interpersonal skills will have a decided effect on attitudes of the participants. **When people learn and practice new behavior, there is a remarkable transformation of their attitudes and ultimately their character: behavior, attitudes, character.**

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3. Enroll in Developmental Experiences

There are numerous developmental experiences available to most leaders. These may be available from within their organizations, paid for and sponsored by the organizations, or they may be available from a local university or college. Others may be available from various suppliers of learning and development materials. **The key is for leaders to move outside their comfort zone to do something that will provide some real development. Leaders must be willing to invest in themselves, and many activities require time off from the job.**

One of the authors has an acquaintance who is a legendary example of self-development. Once a year, a group gets together to meet, and the first question people ask is, “Okay, Dick, what have you done this year?” Every year Dick embarks on some new adventure into personal learning. These range from sessions with “healing shamans” to seminars on corporate reengineering. Each adds a new dimension to Dick’s character and understanding. Though everyone would not choose the precise development experiences he chooses, the point is his disciplined approach to taking time every year for his own personal growth.

Attend any development program your organization provides, or those offered by local universities and private organizations. **Constantly develop yourself, whether in the ability to deliver compelling presentations before a large group or the ability to write a concise memo on an important business topic.** We reiterate that every new skill learned and used lifts that specific skill and numerous others along with it.



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4. Find a Coach

Many organizations are hiring professional coaches to work with their key executives. They find that having someone who is capable of providing objective, constructive feedback to a leader is well worth the investment. **The higher people move in the organization, the less apt they are to hear the truth about themselves from other people, so the value of coaches may increase as people move to higher levels in the organization.**

It is instructive to note that world-class athletes pay for coaches to work with them. The great tennis players and golfers usually employ personal coaches. Athletes playing on the best professional teams receive constant coaching from people hired specifically to do that. In professional football, there are specific coaches for the defense, offense, and special teams. There may even be a specific quarterback coach.

Some executives have created their personal board of directors whose function is to give them feedback on the way they are managing their careers and on their current performances in their jobs.

We see the movement toward coaching as one that will continue to grow. It is driven in part by the fact that most executives are not comfortable with, or good at, providing constructive feedback to people around them. **What is especially effective is the coach who calls on a regular basis and discusses the leader's success in taking some agreed-upon action steps.** This process builds strong accountability and produces remarkable behavioral outcomes.



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5. Identify Your Strengths

Peter Drucker argues, “Self-development is making oneself better at what one is already good at. It also means not worrying about the things one cannot be good at.”5 To accomplish this, Drucker advises:

- **List your major contributions over the past two or three years.**
- **Specify precisely the things the organization expects from you and for which you are held accountable.**
- **Be clear about what you cannot do, as well as what you can do.**
- **Look for demanding assignments that make a difference.**

With characteristic wisdom and insight, Drucker gives useful advice to all leaders. Taking time to inventory the major contributions you have made in the past few years is a step that few leaders take. But what better place is there to start to understand your strengths? It also reveals where you are likely to make significant contributions in the future. Listing accomplishments also is a good barometer of your focus on results behavior. **Everyone who is a leader, or aspires to serious leadership, should be able to itemize a list of contributions to the organization. If you are unable to do that, then consider seriously whether you suffer from the fatal flaw of inaction.**

Repeated studies in organizations reveal that people are relatively unclear about what is expected of them, and especially what they are personally being held accountable to perform by their colleagues and bosses. We have argued strenuously that an emphasis on expanding strengths is far more valuable and productive than slogging away at trying to remedy weaknesses.

We begin by appealing to every reader’s own experience. Think back to high school and college experiences. Let’s assume for a moment that you were extremely adept at mathematics and anything quantitative. Your grades in algebra, trigonometry, and calculus were excellent. On the other hand, grammar and composition came hard to you. You neither enjoyed language study much nor did you do well at it. **To continue, you have decided to embark on a path that would have you recognized as an excellent student. Which path should you choose? Do you work hard at becoming better at English? Or do you decide to leverage your head start in mathematics and excel in that arena?**

First, where will your motivation be highest? We think your passion to excel will come in the quantitative arena. You like the fundamental activities involved. Your thought processes immediately gravitate toward quantitative analysis.

Second, where are you likely to feel some constant reward? Again, we argue that you are far more likely to continually receive positive feedback when you are engaged in quantitative activities than in anything having to do with language. It is less likely that people will praise your having gotten to “average” in grammar and composition skills.

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Third, where are you apt to make the greatest amount of progress? You could make the theoretical argument that people could improve more in those areas in which they are weak. There is just a lot more room to move up. However, the ceilings are so high in every discipline that no matter how good a student you are now, there is huge room to grow.

Fourth, what is the best path by which to develop credibility? Becoming good at something creates a halo effect of overall competence. It sometimes goes to ludicrous extremes, as when a movie actress is asked for her opinions on the wisdom of building a missile defense system or a Nobel Prize winner in physics suddenly gets quoted for his or her views on the role of genetics in human intelligence. Why? Because the person is extraordinarily knowledgeable and creative in one arena, we assume those gifts spill over into other areas. Whether warranted or not, being good at one thing creates a perception that a person is good at many things, or everything.

Confidence and Competence: Why Working on Strengths Is More Likely to Build Confidence

It is impossible to overestimate the role of confidence in people developing competence. We frequently witness people who at one level would be deemed to be competent. In a safe, sanitary situation, they are able to make an effective presentation. However, they refuse to make a presentation in front of senior managers or customers. Their lack is not of knowing what to do, or even being able to do it. Their lack is confidence to be willing to try in a more challenging circumstance.

We contend that strengths build confidence, and that this confidence spreads like yeast in a lump of bread dough and everything then rises. Hence, working on strengths will be far more likely to occur. To validate this observation, we conducted a study where we had individual leaders rate their self-confidence using a 10-item index. We then connected that assessment with evaluations from the Extraordinary Leader 360-degree assessment. We matched up 693 cases where overall leadership effectiveness was assessed by all evaluators and 623 cases where overall leadership effectiveness was rated by the manager of the person receiving the 360-degree assessment. Overall leadership effectiveness is the overall average of 49 differentiating behaviors assessing leadership effectiveness. Leaders with high confidence were close to the overall average on leadership effectiveness.

Why Developing Strengths Will Be More Successful

Several forces are at work to make the process of working on strengths more successful than working on deficiencies:

- We have noted that people are more prone to do things they like and are good at. So, an initial willingness to even attempt a behavior is more likely with a strength than a weakness.
- The behavior will come more naturally, whereas something else may feel awkward and uncomfortable.
- Expanding strengths is far more likely to call forth the positive rewards and praise of others than remedying a deficiency.
- The application of a new skill sets into motion a number of forces that often create even further reward.

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6. Identify Your Weaknesses

This was Peter Drucker concept and philosophy. No one can do everything. Through delegation, the use of outside resources, or reallocation of work assignments, ways can be found to make weaknesses irrelevant.

The discipline of defining what things you can do and those you cannot perform (or do not like to do) is of great value. The obvious outcome is to structure your role in the organization to play to your strengths and to find ways to have others fill in the gaps.



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7. Fix Fatal Flaws

If you believe you are the possessor of a fatal flaw, then begin immediately to find ways to repair them. Specifically reflect on your experience:

- What lessons have you learned from your experience?
- Specifically, what did you learn from things that did not go well?
- What have you done differently as a consequence?
- **What will prevent that from happening again?**



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8. Increase the Scope of Your Assignment

In one of the best studies of the powerful developmental experiences that leaders experience, Anna Valerio concluded that the first and most impactful experience on the job was to be given a broader scope in your current assignment. That could come via promotion but could also come as you are given broader assignments that include more functions, greater budget, or more people. **The key is that the new assignment is broader and different from those previously held, and above all, an increase in responsibility.**

Increased scope may be granted to you from senior people in the organization, or it can be self-generated. Applying for a transfer may be one way to increase scope and breadth. The implementation of a new procedure, or the initiation of new project, can also increase scope.

This increased scope provides a good vehicle for the “Focus on Results” cluster of behaviors. To display this even further, leaders willingly accept special projects, in which working alone or with a small team, they work on an important project to a department or the corporation. From this, leaders can learn more about the total organization and achieve greater visibility.



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9. Connect with Good Role Models

Through careful observation, leaders gain business acumen and hone important interpersonal skills. On occasion, the people being used as role models give voluntary coaching. They are most often willing to give counsel when asked. However, a great deal can be learned from merely watching and listening. Observe how children learn. They watch an adult eat with a spoon or fork and imitate them. They watch adults tie their shoelaces and learn by imitating the adults' actions. This concept, known as social learning theory, may be especially powerful in our younger years, but we never lose the ability to learn by watching someone else do something well. In fact, much learning is informal and not obvious to the learner. We just find ourselves adopting some of the effective behavior of another person.

Sometimes the lessons are "what not to do," but lessons are most helpful when they are good examples of the right things to do. That is why it is important to look for strong role models and to pay close attention to how they handle difficult situations.

In interviews with leaders, we nearly always are told about some senior people for whom they worked, who made an indelible impression upon them. Very often, a senior person went out of his or her way to express interest and encouragement. The senior person often took a risk and gave out challenging assignments for which, in retrospect, the person knew he or she was not totally prepared. In some cases, the senior person invited the person to visit an important client or to attend a significant industry meeting. **Unmistakable in these conversations is the intense fondness felt for this senior leader who had become a role model.**



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10. Learn from Mistakes and Experiences

We have earlier noted that one of the “fatal flaws” that causes people to have their careers hit a brick wall is the inability to learn from mistakes. The research is clear that learning from mistakes is a very productive tool for self-development. One category of negative experience may be a difficult boss. Another negative experience may be receiving some tough feedback from subordinates. For a person who is willing to learn, however, these experiences can be powerful developmental tools. **A healthy attitude toward mistakes and negative experiences is crucial to growth and improved performance.** Mistakes are part of the learning process, though some would argue with the following statement written by legendary basketball coach John Wooden: “The team that makes the most mistakes wins.”



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11. Seek Give and Receive Productive Feedback

Most organizations are not good at providing feedback to anyone—regardless of level or function. For people to receive useful feedback a sincere request for it is usually required.

The learning and development process relies heavily on feedback to sustain it. There is often a huge gap between how leaders see themselves and how subordinates perceive them. The best way to close that gap is with feedback. Enormous barriers to feedback exist inside organizations. The good news is that when I am presented with discomfiting information about myself, I will more often change how I act rather than change how I see myself. That is the great power of feedback.

Subordinates are in the best position to provide feedback, and when asked for it, the process creates a more wholesome working relationship. **Accept feedback as the valid perceptions of others, and first seek to understand the meaning.** Assume the givers have pure, positive intent. Keep asking for feedback—it is the golden path to continual improvement.

Time and again we witness people receiving 360-degree feedback from direct reports, peers, and their boss. Often, with nothing else occurring, the individual recognizes what strengths need developing, figures out exactly what needs to be done and how to do it, and proceeds to take the appropriate steps. **Our biggest contribution is often getting out of the way.**



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12. Learn from Work Experiences

As leaders embark on every project, it is useful to make notes of what is expected to be achieved and in what time frame. Then, the leader can periodically see how the actual results are tracking with the original expectations. That way, every activity or project becomes a learning experience. The leader can then seek to find the answer about why it is going much better than had been expected, or why it is costing more, or why it ran into roadblocks with other departments. **An important part of self-development is simply finding the mechanism by which you can learn from every experience.**

We turn again to an example from the world of sports. Most football games are played on the weekend, so there is the classic Monday review of the game films. Why? Coaches want the players to learn from their experience. They are fortunate to have films that record the game from several perspectives. **Leaders have to create that powerful, compelling feedback process, because it is no less valuable as a way to improve performance in every arena.**



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13. Study the Current Reality the Organization Faces

Good development encompasses improving one's character, one's knowledge, and one's behavior. This topic focuses on knowledge. One important leadership development exercise is to step away from your organization and look at it through the eyes of a security analyst. Then look at it as if you were a competitor. Then stand away and see how it would look if you were a supplier. Then do the same thing from the perspective of a customer. Be aware of industry trends and where your organization fits into that. Stay abreast of relevant technology facing your industry.

A key quality of effective leaders is the ability to see reality without blinking. **It is hard to lead an organization in the best strategic paths if you are unwilling to face the reality of where you are now.** Being brutally frank with yourself, and encouraging total candor from others, is the best safeguard to keeping in touch with your organization's current reality.



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14. Learn to Think Strategically

One of the frequent complaints heard from executives about their subordinates is that they are completely tactical in their thinking. They simply do not think in a strategic way. For many, strategic thinking seems a complete mystery, and they see no obvious way to acquire this esoteric ability. In fact, there are good books on strategic thinking that help people understand the basics of strategy. They give a **road map to understanding your own organization's strategic choices, to understanding why organizations choose various strategic paths, and generally to becoming more comfortable in intense strategic discussions.**



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15. Communicate with Stories

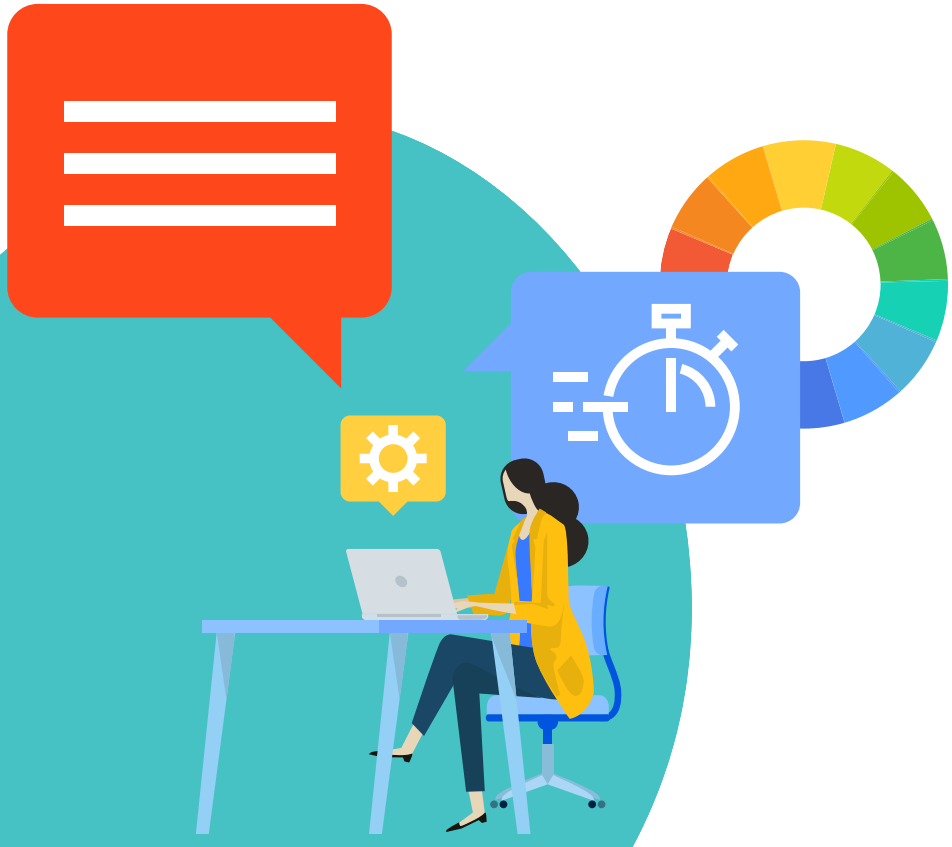
Learn to recount important messages with powerful stories that connect emotionally with those about you. Stories help reduce complexity to manageable simplicity. They are memorable. They connect with the hearer at a more powerful level. The best insight into any organization's culture comes from the collected stories that circulate among the people in the organization. So, the beginning point is to collect important stories and examples that can be used in your dialogue inside the organization. **Then, practice the skill of recounting stories as the best way to convey an important message.** Illustrate the major points you wish to make with appropriate examples and stories.



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16. Infuse Energy into Every Situation

One of the keys of leadership is to understand that leaders bring excitement, enthusiasm, and energy to any endeavor. They ignite other people's passions to move forward. We all know people who are energy absorbers. When they are around, it is as if a giant vacuum sucks the energy from a discussion. Seldom is that person seen as a leader because leaders need to do just the opposite. They need to capture and amplify the enthusiasm of others. **The best way to get that started is to inject your own enthusiasm into any discussion or activity. Watch a videotape of yourself. Listen to a recording of your participation.** Are you depositing or withdrawing energy from the process or project?



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17. Allocate Specific Time to People Development

A powerful tool in your own development process is to become involved in the development of people who report to you, or anyone who would benefit from your tutelage. We noted earlier that one of the keys of good leadership is the ability to obtain good results. Along with that, however, leaders also need to build the capacity within the organization to continually improve its performance and thus be able to produce long-term, sustained results.

The "law of the harvest" talks about reaping what we sow. **For the organization to constantly reap high productivity and innovation from its people, there has to be "sowing."** That means taking the time, putting forth the effort, and possibly spending the money required to get front-line associates trained up.

Some leaders view people development as a frill—extraneous to their real work. Amidst the punishing workload of today's business climate, finding time for people development seems impossible to them. However, taking the time to develop people is an important behavior of a leader, not only for what it does for the recipient, but equally for the impact it has on the leader. **Developing others moves you from being an independent professional person, concerned only with yourself, to the role of the true leader who creates organizational capacity and builds people.**



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18. Weld Your Team Together

Great organizations nearly always have strong teams at the top, composed of people who genuinely like each other and who want their colleagues to succeed. A strong, cohesive team becomes a powerful development tool aiding leaders to constantly improve. Many organizations engage in team-building activities, ostensibly to improve the working relationships of the people on the team, and also to enable the group to be even more productive. **What is often missed is the fact that a good team-building exercise is one of the most powerful learning experiences for the leader. First, the team has fresh, firsthand data about the leader's behavior and results. They are in the best position to provide useful feedback to the leader regarding strengths and any areas of improvement.** Thus, a good team-building session is one of the most powerful and positive development activities that a leader can undertake.



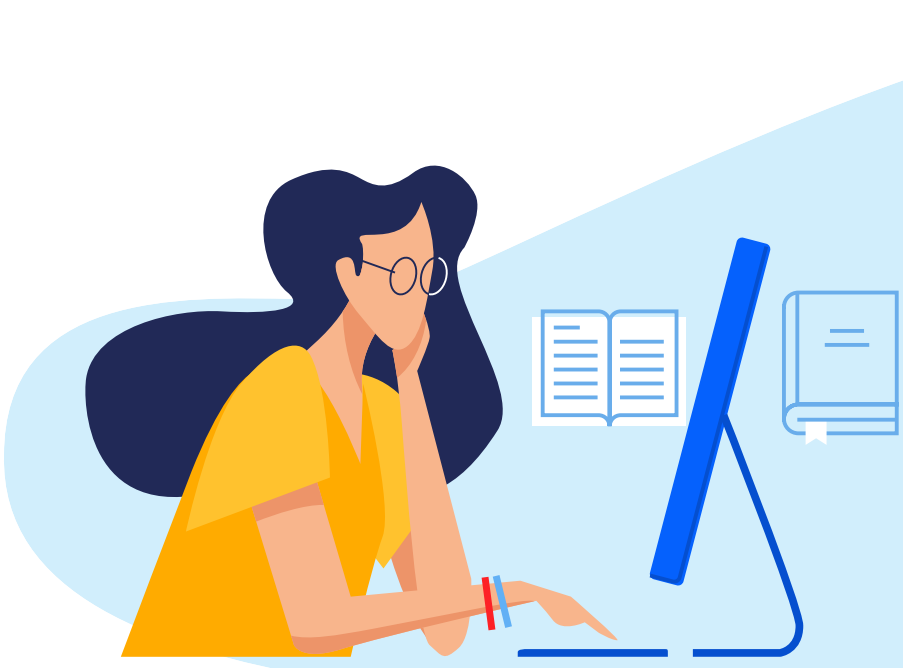
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19. Build Personal Dashboard to Monitor Leadership Effectivness

Good overall measures of leadership do not usually exist in most organizations. How do you know if you are performing well? What objective measures exist that would confirm or deny that? If such measures do not exist now, then an excellent developmental activity is for you to take the initiative and develop them for yourself. These will obviously differ by organization and functional responsibility, but some measures that would be frequently used include:

- **Retention data**
- **Customer satisfaction measures**
- **Productivity measures (e.g., costs to complete a given action or time to complete an activity)**
- **Performance against budget**
- **Results from organizational climate surveys**

Having developed your own “dashboard” with which to monitor your leadership effectiveness, it then becomes possible to take a weekly or at least monthly reading of your effectiveness as a leader. A visit to an Air Force base involved a meeting with a major general, the commander of the base. He was obviously proud of the management information system that had been developed and offered to demonstrate what information it could provide. The general could call up 846 measures of performance, ranging from fuel consumption to productivity measures and the number of arrests on the base in the previous eight hours. Most leaders will be content with far fewer measures, but without some information system, the leader is driving with a windshield made of opaque glass.



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20. Plan and Execute a Change Initiative

A powerful developmental activity for any leader is to define a change that should appropriately be made and then undertake to make that change happen. The change could be as simple as implementing a new reporting system, a new work process, or a new organizational structure. **Whatever the change, a powerful development process involves planning the change, defining the outcomes that will result from the change, implementing the change, and finally evaluating the results.** The real learning and development come from comparing the final results with the predicted outcomes, and then attempting to find out what caused the differences. As Machiavelli noted, “There is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to manage, than to initiate a new order of things.” Centuries later, a noted psychologist, Kurt Lewin, would observe, “If you really want to understand an organization, try making changes in it.”



21. Become a Teacher/Trainer

Approximately 80 percent of all learning and development is delivered with live, classroom instruction. In a large percentage of those cases, the organization has purchased learning systems from an outside supplier, or they have developed training programs internally. Whereas the organization often has a training department, a large portion of that development is delivered by hand-picked managers selected from inside the organization. They are chosen on the basis of several criteria, and these usually include:

- **Well respected by peers, subordinates, and upper management**
- **Perceived as a high-potential person**
- **Articulate and capable of making an engaging presentation**
- **Practices the leadership or management principles being presented in the development program**

The process of being trained on how to deliver a learning and development program to people inside the organization is one that produces real growth in the instructor. Nothing cements a body of information inside someone more than teaching it. In addition to personal growth, it brings the instructor into contact with many people with whom he or she would never have had contact. It educates the instructor on the challenging issues the organization is facing and how the people are reacting to those challenges. From our vantage point of having watched many organizations select and train line managers as in-house instructors, we have seen it consistently enhance their careers and accelerate their development. Stewart Friedman led Ford Motor's Leadership Development Center. He wrote, "Every program features extensive use of teachers. Graduates of our programs serve as leader-teachers, a practice that helps participants and the instructor grow and develop new capacities for leadership. The concept of leader-teacher isn't unique, but Ford places a high emphasis on teaching. The lesson begins at the top."



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22. Study the High Performers and Replicate Their Behavior with Others

In every organization, there are a handful of people who have figured out how to perform a given job in the best possible manner. That is true of customer service representatives, salespeople, factory workers, supervisors, and corporate vice presidents. It will probably remain a mystery why more organizations do not identify who these people are and take the time to study what they do and how they do it. Then, armed with that information, it would seem logical to attempt to get others to perform or behave in that same way. What more valuable process could occur than identifying someone with a job that is a close counterpart to your own and whose performance is recognized as being outstanding? **Through observation and interrogation, find out what that person is doing that makes him or her so effective. Identify which elements of what that person does can be integrated into your own activities.**



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23. Volunteer in Your Community

The ideal leader is one who is complete. Stewart Friedman wrote, “We at Ford are pioneering a new dimension of leadership that seeks to integrate all aspects of a person’s life. We call it ‘total leadership.’ It’s different from many prior leadership models because it starts with your life as a whole: your life at work, your life at home, and your life in the community. T**otal leadership is about being a leader in all aspects of life.**”

It is clear that people’s work life, home life, religious activity, and community service are not as separate as they once were. The formerly sharp lines are now murky. People are striving for work–life balance, and one popular approach is to blend them rather than build walls between them. **By practicing leadership skills in the other aspects of your life, leadership skills can be honed and perfected.** The organization is enhanced financially and organizationally, the community is improved, the church or synagogue gets much needed talent, and the family enjoys the benefits from improved leadership.



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24. Practice Articulating Your Vision for the Firm and Your Group

Leaders describe to a group their vision of the future and often assume it has been understood and internalized. Time passes and people ask questions: “Okay, what is our strategy? I don’t know where we’re going.” The leadership lesson is that communication of complex messages must be repeated over and over. This is especially true when it concerns a topic that carries over a long period of time, and one where people will scrutinize the leader’s behavior to see if it is aligned with the earlier words.

Married people or others in any lasting relationship have learned that you do not express your affection and commitment to the other person once and assume it holds until further notice. With the passage of time, things are said or done that cause the other person to question what was said earlier. And the mere passage of time dims the force and clarity of the words, so they need repeating.

That same phenomenon is at work in any organization. Yes, the leader said we value trust and openness, but look what happened to Ralph when he asked the question in the staff meeting. Or, rumors begin to swirl in the organization and they are quite contradictory of earlier messages. It is for those reasons that messages of vision, values, mission, and strategy need to be repeated over and over. How many times? Some have said that people really do not take a message seriously until the seventh time they hear it. The number is probably different for each of us, depending on the topic and what is happening in our lives. However, **it is clear that the message needs frequent repeating. We advocate that you practice repeating those messages frequently to the associates with whom you work.**



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25. Prepare for Your Next Job: Think Ahead Regarding the Skills You Will Need

One mistake that many leaders make is not to start getting prepared for their next assignment or role. Like the chess player who sees two or three moves ahead, so are wise leaders looking into the future for the roles they will be playing, and then preparing themselves with the skills that will be needed in those new roles. Will the future require more technical expertise? More strategic thinking skills? A different kind of business acumen? Whatever those new requirements may be, **it is never too early to be identifying them and taking active steps to add them to your skill set.**



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It has been estimated that more than 80 percent of what people learn while working in organizations has been gained on the job. No matter how powerful the classroom experience, it pales in comparison with the learning that comes from experience. How much people gain from their experience is nearly all up to them. Regardless of the percentage, it is clear that leaders can make huge strides by taking responsibility for their own development. They should not count on the organization to do that for them.

The 25 suggestions to develop your own leadership abilities were meant to convey the message that all leaders can do a great deal on their own. Do not rely on the organization to make you an even better leader. There are powerful steps you can take to move you down the path to becoming an extraordinary leader. For further information about programs and materials designed to help leaders improve their skills, please go to our website at www.zengerfolkman.com.

Excerpt from Zenger, John H.. *The New Extraordinary Leader*, 3rd Edition: Turning Good Managers into Great Leaders . McGraw-Hill Education.

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