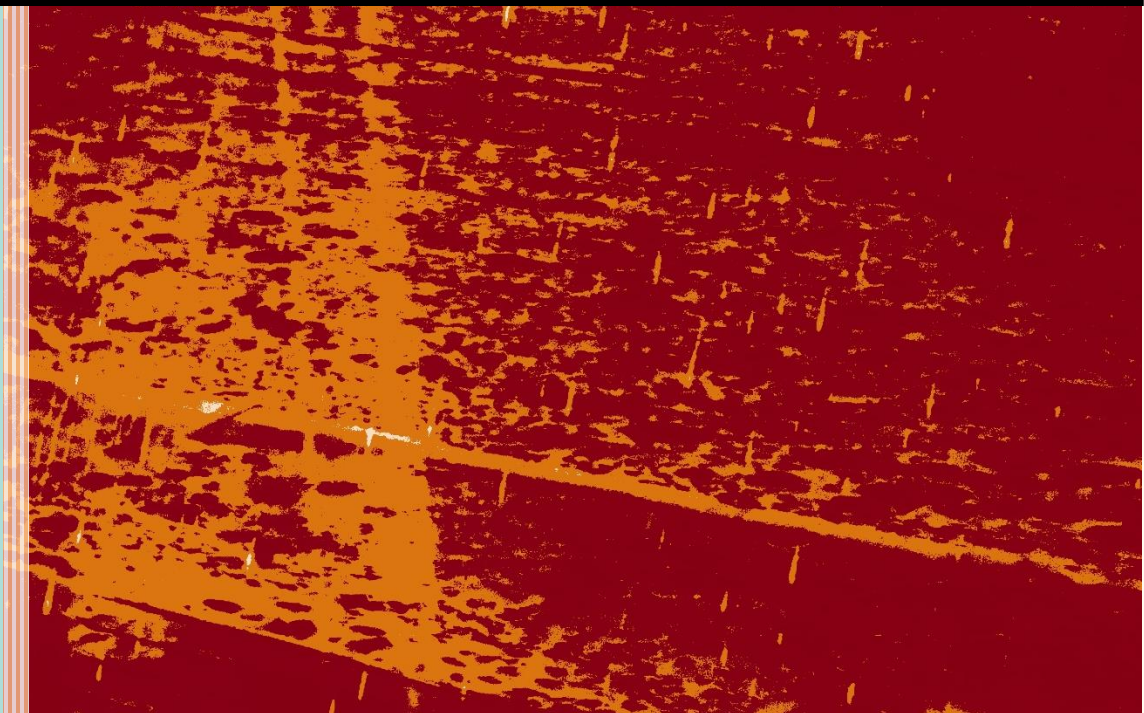




Think like a leader



Michael Colin

THINK LIKE A LEADER

About

Welcome to the exciting world of leadership. In this introductory book we explore what leadership is, the conditions and traits that drive leadership, and some basic functions and tools that leaders use to make a difference. The overview in this book will answer the following three key questions. Could leaders be made? Could leadership occur anywhere (*meaning outside the formal structure of an organization?*), and what does it take to lead? By the time you will be done reading this book, you will understand how leaders think, and perhaps discover your own leadership potential.

My name is Michael, and I hold a Bachelor of Science Degree in Industrial Engineering from the University of Massachusetts, and an MBA from Monroe College in New York. This book is mostly based on my personal and professional knowledge and experience (*16+ years*), and the opinions expressed are not necessarily universal.

I hope you enjoy it!

Michael Colin

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Does everyone have the potential to lead?

It was in one of my elective classes in college that I first heard the term “Diffusion of responsibility”, which struck a chord.

In 1964, the New York Times released an article detailing the murder of Miss Genovese, who was stabbed to death in New York. Apparently 38 witnesses saw or heard the attack and did nothing to prevent it. None came to her rescue, nor called for help.

During emergencies and tough situations, a person is less likely to take action when part of a group, or when others are present. This is because they feel that others could, should, or have already done so. Responsibility therefore is diffused, or “spread”, across the group. The term was coined by two psychologists, *Professor John Darley* and *Professor Bibb Latane*, who studied the incident and its effects in the late 60's.

Following the incident, research revealed that some reporters uncovered inaccuracies in the article, but nevertheless, the point of it all was clear to me:

During an emergency:

Do not be a witness.

Take action and do the right thing.

Act effectively to accomplish the goal.

Similar situations occur all the time, and we never know when we may find ourselves in one. Taking responsibility is regarded as one of the highest attributes of great leaders. The person taking responsibility is actually saying “*It is my duty to make this happen.*”

Emergencies or challenging circumstances have the potential to create opportunities. Opportunities for our leadership qualities to emerge, which could **influence** and **inspire** others by giving them **meaning**. Most of us have these qualities, only some have more. But yes, most of us have them, and can learn how to apply them.

With awareness, followed by desire, knowledge, and practice, one can develop or improve one's abilities to think and act like a leader. Leaders do not have to be born. With the right mindset, within one's own limitations, **leaders could be made**.

Mr. Warren Bennis, a famous American professor, author, and organizational consultant, viewed by many as the father of 'Leadership' said the following in his book "On Becoming A Leader."

✚ *"No leader sets out to be a leader. People set out to live their lives, expressing themselves fully. When that expression is of value, they become leaders. So the point is not to become a leader. The point is to become yourself, to use yourself completely- all your skills, gifts and energies – in order to make your vision manifest. You must withhold nothing. You, must, in sum, become the person you started out to be, and to enjoy the process of becoming.*

Two more famous quotes from *Mr. Warren Bennis* on becoming a leader.

✚ *"The most dangerous leadership myth is that leaders are born – that there is a genetic factor to leadership. This myth asserts that people simply either have certain charismatic qualities or not. That's nonsense; in fact, the opposite is true. Leaders are made rather than born."*

✚ *"Becoming a leader is synonymous with becoming yourself. It is precisely that simple, and it is also that difficult."*

So what is leadership?

Good question... It is not an exact science and there is no firm and clear consensus on the matter. However, there are a few guidelines. Leadership begins with listening to your conscience, your inner voice that dares you to think and act righteously, morally, and ethically.

Acts of leadership should be driven by an **inner moral belief, value, or spark**, in addition to the **practical “value added” motive behind the action taken**, for the purpose of **inspiring and influencing others to achieve a common goal**.

The conditions for an **act of leadership** therefore should include:

- ✓ A moral, righteous, and ethical intent.
- ✓ A value added intent to someone, a group of people, or for a “good” cause through a person or a group of people.
- ✓ People to inspire and influence (including the beneficiary or beneficiaries, and those benefiting indirectly).

- ✓ A sense of purpose and a common goal.

Moral, righteous & ethical Intent

These components need to be fundamental. Some argue that the act of influence, inspiration, and intent alone, in the right capacity should be enough. Others say that the word “*Leadership*” resonates feelings of virtue, trust, and respect. Ask yourself this; Would you trust, respect, and follow a leader who was acting immorally and, or, unethically? I guess the answer would be “*it depends.*”

Albert Einstein once said, “*Never do anything against conscience even if the state demands it*”. Powerful statement, however, some argue that it really depends on the situation. One should respect authority, rules and regulations that protect you and others, and always use common sense.

Certain groups throughout history have followed influential leaders who were immoral and unethical in other people's minds, but mostly not in their own. Therefore acting ethically and morally can be said to be subjective to an extent, however there are some universal truths that guide us to think and act righteously and responsibly. We all know what those are.

The 36th *American president, Mr. Lyndon B. Johnson*, once said “*Doing what is right isn't the problem. It is knowing what is right.*”

Value Added Intent

This intent refers to the thought and action or behavior taken, for the “*common goal*” to achieve it's worth. Leadership functions and behaviors may include: Making decisions, coaching, guiding, delegating and prioritizing. More to come on that later.

The “*common goal*” refers to the benefit achieved for a person, a group of people, or for a “good” cause through others.

People to inspire & influence

The result of your act or behavior must be inspirational and influential. It must be **meaningful**. It should make people want to trust you, believe in you, and believe in your vision. It should make people want to follow you. It should make people feel safe enough and driven enough to become better creative contributors to the common goal, and / or, to become better versions of themselves.

Think of how truly great leaders make you feel.

A common goal

Acts of leadership should result in efforts to achieve a common goal, or to achieve a step closer to the common goal. The common goal could be for example a person who needs guidance and support in life, a group of players on a basketball team who are aiming for a championship, or a group of managers trying to meet their quarterly goals.

Measuring Leadership

When it comes to improvement, we cannot improve unless we measure and establish a starting point or a baseline. We want to be able to measure our leadership habits for the purpose of becoming more **effective** in influencing others to **attain goals**. Effectiveness evaluates the degree to which the goal was attained, in relation to "how", and "what" it took us to get there. Leadership effectiveness with respect to goal attainment is typically the main measure of a leader within an organizational structure.

Good leaders are a rare find. This is because being **consistently effective** and **consistently moral and ethical**, requires substantial amounts of skill and abilities (most of which could be developed), passion, personal sacrifice, extraordinary commitment, and a little bit of luck.

Leadership behavior

Exercising leadership behavior to inspire and influence others does not require one to have a social status, a title, power, or authority. People will follow a leader because of who they are, what they believe in, what they stand for, what they do, what they create, and most importantly because of how they make them **feel**.

According to Mr. *Abraham Zelenzik, an American leadership scholar*, leaders have a lot in common with **artists** and scientists due to the chaotic and uncertain nature of things in the business world, and life in general. Leaders give **meaning** to others and thus are able to **influence** and **inspire**. Managers on the other hand, achieve goals.

The main differences between leaders and managers are the following:

- ✚ Leaders inspire with a vision and preserve morale. Managers meet goals.
- ✚ Leaders see "people" and build relationships by exercising trust, respect, and loyalty. Managers see "titles" and focus on processes.
- ✚ Leaders thrive on change and stand firm during chaos and uncertainty. Managers seek to maintain the status quo, and rely on structure and organization.
- ✚ Leaders seek and give meaning to everything. Managers evaluate tasks.

✚ Leaders coach. Managers direct.

A measure of a truly **good leader** is this: Put him or her under stress and see how they **behave**; How they **treat others**.

Leadership behaviors could emerge unplanned or be situational. Meaning certain types of circumstances and conditions will call for certain types of leadership attributes and behaviors to emerge.

Leadership has different facets and could be non-sanctioned, meaning **outside a formal structure of an organization**. *"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader."* 6th American president, John Quincy Adams.

Within the **formal structure of an organization**, two popular leadership styles are: *Transactional (developed by Max Weber, Germany), and Transformational (coined by James Downton, USA, developed James McGregor Burns, USA).*

Transactional leadership

Transactional leaders achieve results through vision, structure, policies, and compliance. They tend to be well organized, practical, and reactive. They motivate people by exercising fairness, honoring commitments, and recognizing and rewarding them when goals are met.

Transactional leaders are sometimes referred to managerial leaders as they set clear expectations, provide guidance and direction to their subordinates, and evaluate performances. Some notable transactional leaders are Bill Gates, and Vince Lombardi.

Transformational leadership

Transformational leaders achieve results by their convictions and commitment to their cause. They tend to be visionary, passionate, and charismatic. They drive change within an organizational culture through role modeling, intellectual stimulation, and being proactive. They inspire people to put the groups interests first while being sensitive and attentive to their individual needs.

Transformational leaders are creative thinkers who think outside the box, and are not afraid to take risks. Notable transformational leaders were Dr. Martin Luther King, and Mr. Steve Jobs.

What do leaders do?

Previously we discussed the conditions for exercising leadership behaviors (and established that they could take place **outside** the **formal structure of an organization**).

But what are some important things or functions that leaders perform?

Leaders inspire and influence others by first creating an authentic, safe, and trusting environment. Leaders listen, pay attention, empathize, guide, nurture, challenge, advise, motivate, transform, recognize, and reward people. *Mr. Pete Hoekstra*, a famous politician once said a beautiful thing; *“Real leadership is leaders recognizing that they serve the people that they lead.”*

The following are **5 actions** or behaviors that leaders engage in, and do so with passion, determination, and devotion.

1. Make decisions

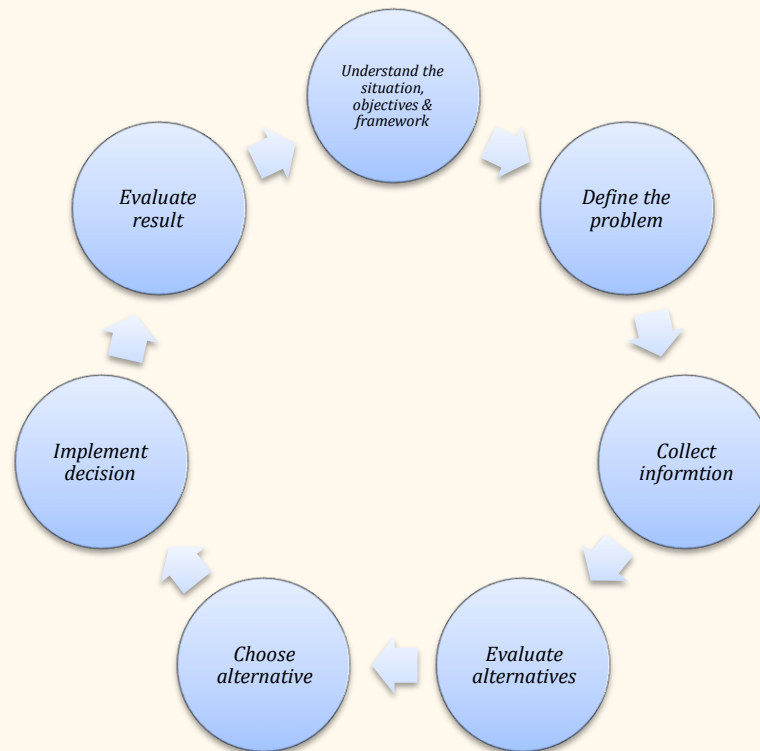
Good Leaders are decisive. They have an excellent grasp of the objectives, an arsenal of resources, and know how to balance reason and logic with emotion and intuition when making decisions.

They have a natural curiosity and like to involve others. They are open to listening to different ideas and perspectives, because they understand their own limitations. They display flexibility, adaptability, agility, and openness, and they encourage teamwork and collaboration.

Occasionally leaders *decide* to empower others to make decisions, and in doing so pave the way for one's growth by putting the ownership on them while, giving them an opportunity to make mistakes, fail, learn, prevail, and grow.

Leaders know how to make tough decisions during uncertainty, and remain calm under stress. They know when to exercise courage, when to take personal risks, and when to make personal sacrifices. Their decisions can have both a practical and an emotional impact on their followers. Their decisions can motivate, elevate, and make others want to become better at what they do.

A seven-step decision-making process common in organizations.



2. Ask challenging and guiding questions

Good leaders understand that asking the right questions sets the focus, direction, and tone. It challenges people to think outside the box and take ownership.

Asking the right questions can be a catalyst for the difference between success and failure. *Albert Einstein* once said, “*If I had an hour to solve a problem, I’d spent 55 minutes thinking about the problem, and 5 minutes thinking about the solution.*”

Asking the right questions is a good tool for fact finding, stimulating ideas, and discovering value. It can lead to effective idea generation and problem solving.

A simple tool for solving problems used by many leaders and managers is “5Y’s”, which helps to unlock the **root cause** to the **problem**. The idea behind 5Y’s is that when posed with a “Why” question, the first answer you will most likely receive will not be the root cause, nor will the second one. Eventually if you keep digging deeper, you will uncover the root cause. It is important to identify the root cause and solve it. Otherwise you will be relieving “symptoms”, and not the “disease”.

An example of the tool in use below.

5Y's example for problem solving.

Tool developed by (Mr. Sakichi Toyoda, Japan, founder of Toyota in 1926)

Problem Statement: Customers are calling in unsatisfied.

1. Why?

Because they are receiving the wrong items.

2. Why?

Because some pickers are picking the wrong sku's.

3. Why?

Because of the new product mix.

4. Why?

Because the new product mix was not assigned fixed locations systemically.

5. Why?

Because Judy was on vacation.

Solutions / action items: Set up fixed locations for the new products in the system. Update the standard operating procedures. Train a back up in the absence of Judy.

Mr. Benjamin Franklin, one of the *founding fathers of the United States* understood that asking questions was a form of science and art. 'The Benjamin Franklin' effect named after him, is a psychological phenomenon that proposes that a person who performs a favor to another, will likely do another favor, explained by *cognitive dissonance*, (maybe even bigger and with a stronger motive), than he or she had received a favor. Asking for a favor is usually a form of flattery, and when being genuine it could be effective. The effect can be used to build rapport with people.

Mr. Benjamin Franklin writes in his autobiography how he earned a rival's fondness, respect, and attention by simply asking to borrow a book the rival wrote, and then returning it a week later with a note expressing his **genuine** appreciation.

3. Put strategic thinking into practice

Having a good strategy in place is one of the key elements to achieving your vision. A good strategy leads to an effective and efficient roadmap with clear and measurable goals. Applying strategic thinking means evaluating every opportunity to assess the **degree of effectiveness** and contribution to the **end goal**. Evaluating every business decision and action. It means planning ahead and predicting problems to develop the required flexibility under conditions of uncertainty. It means building relationships, relying on your teams, empowering them and

trusting them to deliver. As the leader, you are the one in charge. You are that pilot.

A good example of strategic thinking is in the game of chess. Your vision is to win. Your goal is to defeat your opponent. Your strategy (long term plan on how you are going to win), and tactic (step by step evaluation of power, position, etc....) are both dynamic, and will be the deciding components on who will win. With a little bit of luck of course.

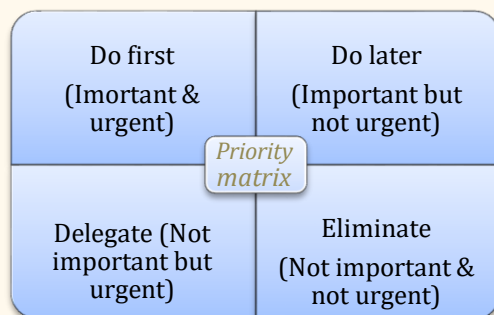
4. Prioritize and delegate

Good leaders are effective because they know when and how to evaluate and prioritize tasks. They know when and how to delegate and hold others accountable. They evaluate a given situation from multiple sources, analyze information, and know how to spread the workload in the best possible way.

Delegation requires really knowing your people. Knowing your people comes from relationship building which leaders typically excel at. Leaders spend a lot of time cultivating and nurturing authentic relationships because they genuinely care about them, and because they understand their exceptional worth.

Below is a simple tool for prioritizing and delegating tasks by importance and urgency.

The Eisenhower matrix (By President Dwight D. Eisenhower, USA).



5. Mentor, coach, and facilitate

Whether through structured routines or unplanned, good leaders often evaluate situations. During evaluations, coaching and mentoring opportunities may arise. As a leader you passionately listen, clarify tasks, ask guiding questions, assess the situation, and share your ideas in such a way that they are educational, practical, and **meaningful**. One of the ways to

achieve that is through building authentic relationships based on mutual trust and respect. Such relationships are essential and require hard work and dedication.

As a leader, part of your responsibility is to constantly develop your team with new skills, tools, and ideas.

Leadership attributes and traits

What sets leaders aside from others are their mindset and attitude, ethical and moral behavior, commitment, and their ability to be effective and efficient in relation to goal attainment. Good leaders understand their purpose, the 'what', and the 'why'. Good leaders show passion not only towards achieving results, but also towards doing the right things while trying to impact the world.

Leaders do so by displaying a certain set of bold **attributes** and **traits**. Both could be acquired within one's own limitations, however attributes / characteristics take longer because they are engraved inside a person's character.

Below are 12 common **attributes** or characteristics that good leaders possess.

- ✚ Integrity
- ✚ Credibility
- ✚ Charisma
- ✚ Courage
- ✚ Empathy
- ✚ Humility
- ✚ Strategic and value driven attitude
- ✚ Positivity
- ✚ Creativity
- ✚ Inquisitive mind
- ✚ Articulate
- ✚ Altruism

Below are 12 common **traits** or habits that good leaders exercise

- ✚ Trust
- ✚ Care
- ✚ Being authentic
- ✚ Being visionary

- ✚ Being Clear
- ✚ Decisiveness
- ✚ Challenge
- ✚ Inspiration
- ✚ Influence
- ✚ Enablement
- ✚ Support
- ✚ Achievement

Attributes produce **traits**. The **chart** below demonstrates the relationship between the two. The way to read the chart is by asking "**what attributes may produce what traits?**" For example if you ask; *What attributes do you need to be "trustworthy"?* The answer would be "integrity" and "credibility". Or if you ask; *What traits could "integrity" potentially produce?* The answer would be trust, care, authenticity, inspiration, influence, and achievement.

		Attributes											
		Integrity	Credibility	Charisma	Courage	Empathy	Humility	Strategic & VD	Positive	Creative	Inquisitive	Articulate	Altruistic
Traits	Trustworthy	▪	▪										
	Caring	▪			▪								▪
	Authentic	▪			▪					▪			
	Visionary							▪					
	Clear											▪	
	Decisive				▪								
	Challenging			▪	▪			▪	▪	▪	▪		
	Inspiring	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
	Influential	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
	Enabling			▪	▪			▪	▪	▪	▪		▪
	Supportive			▪	▪	▪	▪		▪		▪		▪
	Achieving	▪		▪				▪		▪			▪

(Source: Author)

To develop leadership **attributes**, one needs to be able to identify areas for improvement within, set realistic and achievable long term goals, practice, evaluate, and improve.

Assume one decides they would like to improve their integrity.

Research on the web (*Wikipedia.com for example*) reveals that integrity is a characteristic of one's make up. It makes them behave with their moral and ethical beliefs and convictions. Having integrity means doing the right thing no matter what the situation unfolds. It means doing the right thing even when no one is watching.

Further research reveals that to in order to acquire integrity, one has to:

- ✚ Respect, honor, and appreciate it.
- ✚ Do what they say and say what they do, keep their commitments, and keep their word.
- ✚ Take and accept responsibility.
- ✚ Hold themselves accountable.
- ✚ Be trustworthy and act with honesty.
- ✚ Try to avoid people without integrity.

From here the person would develop this attribute by digging deeper in resolution with further research if necessary, while envisioning the end result, establishing measurable goals when possible, involving others for feedback, and evaluating results. There is plenty of literature on how to acquire new skills and attributes, and the anatomy, psychology, and philosophy behind it, and like almost with anything else, practice, focus, and determination will yield results. With acquiring or improving attributes, one can improve their abilities to develop leadership behaviors.

Being Effective and efficient

Good leaders know how to be both. Effectiveness is the measure of goal attainment, while efficient is the measure of the effort, the method/process, and the time & cost of resources it took get there.

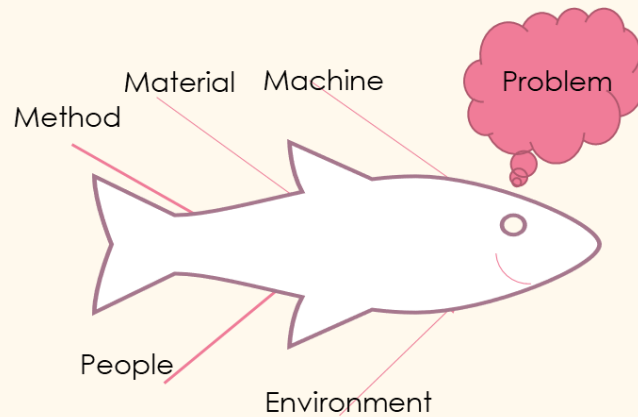
To be **effective**, leaders must be clear on their purpose and vision. They must be laser focused on attaining the goal, and come up with creative strategic and tactical ideas to advance the process. They must act with a high level of emotional intelligence to be able to inspire others to do their best.

To be **efficient**, leaders must weigh the results or progress, in relation to what it "cost" to get there. For that purpose, leaders must think in terms of how to best utilize their limited resources to achieve the goal. Leaders often times use tools from the world of **lean management** and **continues improvement**, to make decisions, or facilitate decision making through **problem solving** and **waste elimination**. Both of which are components leading to **efficient** goal attainment.

Problem solving

A common tool for problem solving used widely in the world of business is a visual cause and effect diagram Fish-Bone.

The Fish Bone Diagram (by Dr. Kaoru Ishikawa, Japan, Professor and famous organizational theorist).



The tool focuses on defining the **problem** and placing it on the **head** of the **fish**. Defining the problem can be a difficult task as there may be multiple point of views, goals, and motives, some of which may be subjective. Nevertheless, this is a very important step as one will not be able to solve the "wrong "problem".

Once the problem is defined, the tool asks to assign the top **factors** that may impact the problem in some way, shape, or form. In the above example the factors chosen were: *Machine, Material, Method, People, and Environment*. These *factors* will differ from problem to problem, environment to environment, industry to industry, etc. The tool then asks to run the 5 Y's model *previously discussed* for each one of the factors, to identify the **root cause**. Once identified, ideas are brainstormed, and action item plans are developed.

Waste elimination

There are 8 types of **wastes** in lean management. Originally there were 7 identified by *Mr. Taiichi Ohno* from **Toyota**. The 8th waste was later introduced when the model was adopted in the western world.

These wastes do not provide value and should be eliminated, however some are necessary but could be minimized.

8 wastes in Lean management using the acronym TIMWOODS (By Taiichi Ohno, Japan, father of the Toyota Production System)

- ☒ **Transportation:** Excess transport of resources such as people, material, material handling equipment, information, etc. from one location to another.

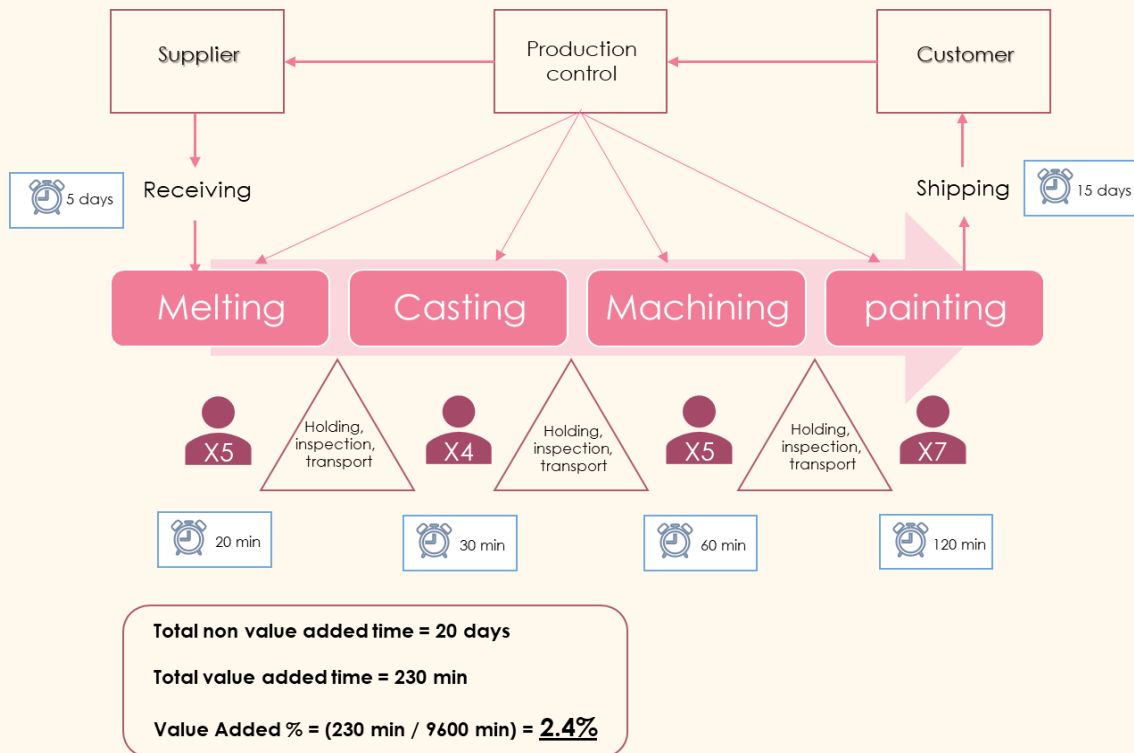
- ☒ **Inventory:** Excess inventory, work in process.
- ☒ **Motion:** Excess motion of people, walking to get things or searching for things.
- ☒ **Waiting:** Delays as a result of parts arriving late. Waiting for authorizations, waiting for information.
- ☒ **Overproduction:** Excess production, more than required.
- ☒ **Over-processing:** Duplicate, redundant, or excess operations.
- ☒ **Defects:** Failing to produce parts the first time right resulting in scrap and rework.
- ☒ **Skills:** Failing to utilize skills and capabilities of team members in the best possible way.

A method widely used in lean management for achieving improvements primarily through **waste** identification is **process mapping** (Original concept by *Frank B. Gilberth*, American Engineer-*time and motion studies*). Process mapping is a visual tool that maps the current and future states of a process with its suppliers, customers, and flow of inputs and outputs. Because of its visual nature, teams often use the map to identify waste, separate value added activities from non-value added activities, brainstorm ideas, and develop solutions.

A popular mapping tool is the **Value Stream Map**. After the objectives and performance measures (cost, time, efficiency %...) are developed, the "current state" is mapped and the activities are then broken into three types:

- ✚ **Value Added:** Activities that the customer is willing to pay for and is done right the first time. In today's fiercely competitive world, the customers set the market price. This means that a customer, with multiple offers from different competitors who only differ in price, will most likely choose to buy from the supplier offering the least price.
- ✚ **Non Value Added but Necessary:** Necessary activities that are needed however may be reduced. For example transportation, inspection, rework.
- ✚ **Non Value Added:** Activities that bring no value to the process. For example waiting, searching for parts, rework, reading sports news on the web at work (arguably). These activities should be eliminated.

Value Stream Map for waste identification (Developed by Toyota).



In this example we have a process that takes 20 days to deliver to the customer from order initiation. The customer puts in an order. It takes 5 days to deliver the parts to the plant, and only 230 minutes to *manufacture* it, and 15 days to ship it. The **value added** activities add up to 230 minutes. The **non-value added** activities add up to 20 days or 9600 minutes (*assume transport within the manufacturing process is negligible*). Therefore The value added activities make up only 2.4% of the total time.

Once wastes are identified, they are analyzed, ideas are brainstormed, the future state is mapped this time excluding wastes, tasks are assigned, improvements are made, and results are evaluated.

Process Improvement methodologies

Two common methodologies that transformational leaders use to facilitate change and drive results within organizations are *KAIZEN* AND *DMAIC*. Both methodologies rely on a variety of lean management and continues improvement tools, a couple of which were previously mentioned.

Both methodologies are widely used in lean cultures in healthcare, manufacturing, supply chain and logistics, IT, software, retail, construction, education, and more.

KAIZEN "Kai Zen" was born in Japan and means "good change", or "change for the better". The method came to be known to the western world via the works of Mr. *Masaaki Imai* who developed it. The method dictates to involve different levels within the organization (especially the people on the floor who know the job better than anyone else), focus on making small incremental changes, and adopt the culture of continuous improvement. Its effectiveness lies in combining the total talents into one platform, while focusing on working on the right things, at the right time.

The KAIZEN method (by Mr. Masaaki Imai, Japan, "father" of Kai-zen).



Discover or identify potential for improvement by focusing on **waste** and **problem solving**. **Analyze** the objectives and study the current state, brainstorm and **Generate** ideas, **Develop** and **Implement** the plan, **Evaluate** results and standardize the process.

Another popular and effective methodology for driving change is **DMAIC**.

The DMAIC method (by Mr. W. Edwards Demming, USA, "father" of modern Quality Control).

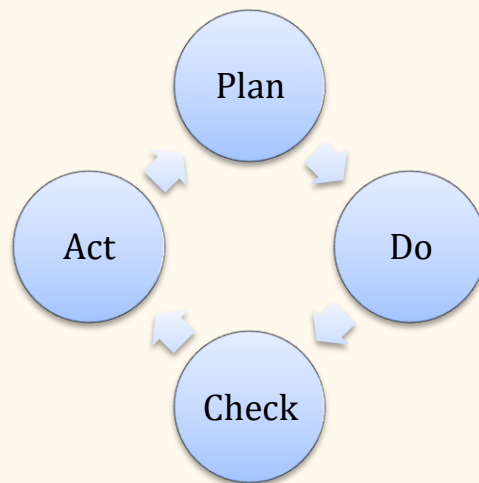


Define the problem, goals, resources, and scope. Develop the performance measures and criteria, the baseline, and **Measure** the current state. **Analyze** the data, develop alternatives, and choose an action plan. **Improve** or implement the plan and develop **Control** measures to attain sustainability.

Both KAIZEN and DMAIC produce results in key areas such safety, customer satisfaction, quality, profitability and cost reduction, however projects driven by DMAIC typically take longer and require more resources.

Both methodologies are carried out within the **continues** process improvement cycle, **PDCA**, which is ever evolving within an organization.

The PDCA cycle (Popularized by W. Edwards Demming, USA, father of modern Quality Control).



The **PDCA** model states that improvement initiatives rely on a continuous cycle with four steps.

- ✚ Plan: Develop the objectives and plan the processes that will get you there.
- ✚ Do: Perform the tasks previously planned.
- ✚ Check: Gather and evaluate results.
- ✚ Adjust (or Act): Improve the issue, solve the problem, or come closer to attaining the goal.

Scientific problem solving

Depending on the nature of the problem, its context, and complexity, some leaders and managers turn to the applied sciences for optimization. Areas such as Industrial Engineering, Economics, and Management Sciences, all constitute components of scientific and optimal problem solving.

A common area of study within Industrial Engineering for example is a topic called Operations Research which is an advanced analytical method for solving complex problems. OR yields the best possible results given a limited set of resources. Some common OR methods are queuing theory, simulation, stochastic, and deterministic mathematical modeling. OR's applications for solving problems can be found in areas such as supply chain & logistics, manufacturing, healthcare, construction, hospitality, aerospace, travel, gaming and many more.

Examples of problems solving using Operations Research methods:

- ✚ Solving the optimal flight trajectory of airplanes to minimize noise during landing, considering flight arrival rates and departures, given a limited number of runways scattered in fixed spatial locations.
- ✚ Solving the optimal routes of raw materials to produce parts at the lowest cost while minimizing scrap, given limited number of man hours, variable degrees of quality control skills, and variable amount of machine efficiencies.
- ✚ Predicting the NBA finals with accuracy in the last five years.

Practicing

Practicing and applying leadership actions and behaviors can take a lot of effort and requires a high degree of motivation and commitment. As mentioned earlier, leadership acts and behaviors should be composed of an ethical component, a value added component, a common goal, and people to inspire and influence. Doing so over time while committing to a person or a group of people, may bring you closer to earning the reputation of a leader.

With putting time and effort, one can practice and develop the attributes required to produce the traits that could result in leadership acts, actions, and behaviors.

People practicing leadership should keep a few pointers in mind.

- ✚ Get into the mindset of leadership.
- ✚ Put others first.
- ✚ Ask "What can I do for them?", " instead of "what's in it for me?"
- ✚ Commit long term.
- ✚ Carry a positive attitude.
- ✚ Keep your moral and ethical compass in check.

A simple model for practicing leadership is the SURFC model. (*source: author*)



The model says to make conscious efforts to **Stop** your activities during the day. **Understand** or reflect on a situation that recently happened, **Recall** relevant leadership attributes and traits, **Formulate** (using your knowledge, creativity, and imagination) what you could or should have said, or how you could or should have acted, and lastly **Commit** the experience to memory.

Thinking and acting like a leader

Imagine the world a better place. Imagine taking part in creating a better world. Good leaders use their sense of purpose, sense of being, and sense of doing, to fulfil dreams that sometimes seem impossible. By exercising leadership traits and behaviors through ideas, words, and actions, one can improve their capacity to think and act like a leader.

It takes courage to become a leader, oftentimes taking personal risks, and making personal sacrifices. No one is perfect, however acting righteously, ethically, and morally are fundamentally important. Ultimately however, earning **leadership reputation** comes through others; That is, when others start seeing you, thinking of you, and referring to you as their leader, because you give them meaning and inspiration. And when that happens it could be very rewarding.

Three inspiring leadership stories

- ✚ Mr. Jack MA, the Chinese business role model and co-founder of the Alibaba Group, showed us how dreams can transform into reality. Mr MA grew up poor, and was countlessly rejected to jobs after college. He describes how he once applied to a job at a chain restaurant, where 23 out of 24 applicants got the job, and he did not. However, with his passion, charisma, and perseverance Mr. Ma became one of the world's greatest business leaders and a gracious humanitarian.

- ✚ Princess Diana of Wales, inspired millions with her charity work and activism. She was known for her gracious heart, strength, and compassion. The BBC reported how in 1987 Princess Diana shook the hands of an AIDS patient without wearing any gloves, at a time when AIDS was still very much unknown. At a time when some believed that AIDS could be contracted by touching someone who carried the disease. At a time when some believed that people with HIV should be quarantined. On that day, Princess Diana's display of courage and compassionate, transformed many people's perceptions about the disease.

- ✚ Miss Rosa Parks, a civil rights leader from Alabama, inspired an entire nation on December 1st 1955. On that day she bravely refused an order from the bus driver to give up her seat to a white passenger. Miss Parks became an iconic symbol in the civil rights movement following the incident, and her courage inspired nationwide efforts in the fight against racial segregation in the United States.

Seven memorable quotes

- ✦ *"Leadership is not a position or a title, it is action and example."* CEO and speaker Mr. Jason Elsom.
- ✦ *"Management is doing things right. Leadership is doing the right things."* Peter F. Drucker, management consultant and philosopher.
- ✦ *"Leaders aren't born, they are made. And they are made just like anything else, through hard work. And that's the price we'll have to pay to achieve that goal, or any goal."* Vince Lombardi, American football coach.
- ✦ *"Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other."* 35th president of the United States, John F. Kennedy.
- ✦ *"Leadership is about making others better as a result of your presence and making sure the impact lasts in your absence."* COO Miss Sharyl Sanberg.
- ✦ *"Do what you feel in your heart to be right, for you'll be criticized anyway."* Miss Eleanor Roosevelt, former first lady of the United States.
- ✦ *"Not everybody can be famous. But everybody can be great, because greatness is determined by service."* Martin Luther King.

Leadership can be found all around us if we look for it. It is sometimes formal, and other times not. There is a misconception that good leaders must be rare. Think of some of the good and righteous men and women who protect us, care for us, inspire us, mentor us, involve us, believe in us, support us, guide us, and make us feel like we matter. They make us feel that way because we do.

Leaders could be made, and the journey to leadership is engraved in the fabric of self-discovery and reflection, played to the tune of one's own set of values and beliefs. As the 'father of Leadership', *Mr Warren Bennis* once put it: "The journey of becoming a leader, comes as a result of going through a process of self-discovery".