



Leadership Models – Key Points

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When you keep up with contemporary postulations about leadership, you hear everything that the mind's imagination can come up with. Some valid, some not. Great leaders possess courage. Leadership is being an eloquent communicator. Effective leaders surround themselves with top talent. If you want to be a great leader, you must know the art of timing. Leadership is about strategy. On the more outlandish side, you hear that leaders must be transcendentalists or that they don't have to know any of the details of their business.

The truth is that leadership is a lot of things and situational. The context of a situation dictates what leadership competency is needed. In one environment, leadership might require cheerleading and encouraging the team. In another environment, leadership might be having a candid conversation about poor performance. Another might require negotiation skills or listening skills.

Because leadership is contextual, there are many different views of leadership and leadership competency models. The SCOPE of Leadership™ is one of the most widely applicable models I've seen, yet we still continually refine it. There is no single right model for all organizations for all situations. The best you can do is to create a general framework like The SCOPE of Leadership™ and then create custom extensions for particular roles or situations.

While there may not be a single right model, there are wrong ones. I've seen models and scorecards that are not well thought out at all. One can only hope that they are generic platitudes that find little actual use. If you don't have an ineffective competency model, or don't have one at all, consider adopting The SCOPE of Leadership™.

The SCOPE of Leadership™ is based on leadership experience, coaching experience, behavioral correlation with actual business results, and experience in developing competency models. In developing and evaluating leadership competency models, I take into consideration a few key points. Here are the key points I consider and on which The SCOPE of Leadership™ is based.

- **Principles versus Tactics:** Leadership is about employing principles, not tactics. Tactics are specific manifestations of principles. The problem with specifying tactics and techniques is that they negate the utilization of a person's strengths, style, personality, and natural abilities. Effective models specify the *what* rather than the detailed *how-to*. There are thousands of tactics that can be used for a given *what* and so the odds of dictating the right one for every situation is not high. Define principles that offer the flexibility to use the right approach for a given situation. Great leaders and successful people follow principles ... and so do effective leadership models.
- **Definition of Success:** Leadership is about influence. It is about delivering results. It is situational. It is not about making money or being the CEO. It could be for some, but for others achieving results is doing meaningful work or furthering a difference-making cause. Achievement is different for different people, cultures, and organizations. Leadership models must be careful about defining success too narrowly or including competencies that only support a narrow definition of success.
- **Management versus Leadership:** I have yet to see an organization, or an individual in a management position that didn't need competencies in both management and leadership. Of course the most senior leaders are usually not mired in the day-to-day details that stereotypical managers might be, but that doesn't mean that they are only focused on vision and strategy. Successful leaders have both management and leadership competencies. Don't exclude management competencies just because you are focused on "leadership".
- **Practicality:** On any given day, my team and I might be leadership coaches, trainers, consultants, speakers, writers, or practitioners. There is significant difference in content, approach, and style depending on the field of your focus. An experienced industry executive will have a very different view of what constitutes a leader than does a professor in behavioral science. If you are creating a model for a university environment, seek counsel from an academician. If you are building a model for use in a corporate environment, seek counsel from a successful industry veteran. If you want your leaders to be entertaining and inspiring, seek counsel from a professional speaker. Above all though, keep it practical. Leadership research and theories with all their paradoxes and counter-intuitive postulations are very interesting, but they are often not grounded in reality.



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- **Interdependency:** There are many books, articles, and seminars on the core competencies of leadership. Some promote a few competencies. Some promote dozens. Rudy Giuliani has his. Colin Powell has his. Jack Welch has his. Warren Bennis has his. John C. Maxwell has his and so on. The number is not that important. The competencies themselves are important and so are the interdependencies between them. It is too simplistic to promote competencies without understanding their linkages and dependencies. Competencies are not equal and do not stand in isolation.
- **Order:** A part of interdependency is hierarchy. Effective leadership models take into consideration the hierarchy of their competencies. Certain competencies need to be developed before others. When developing a leadership model, consider which competencies need to be developed first, in parallel, or after others.
- **Mindset versus Ability:** Great leadership requires a blend of attitudes and aptitudes. Some competencies are mindsets while others are abilities. It is much easier to develop ability when you have the right mindset to do so. Some can “fake it till they make it”, but it is not a very dependable approach. Effective competency models include the attitudes necessary to create the abilities. Leadership requires character and behavior. Attitude and aptitude. Will and skill. Mindset and ability.