

## Leadership

Before being able to function as a leader it is necessary to be very clear about two important factors:

- Clear and complete understanding of the group's objectives.
- Clear and complete understanding of the overall organisation structure as it affects the group.

## Organisation Structure

Should determine not only who the Leader reports to and who reports to him but also the degree of delegated authority and responsibility. Before starting to function as a Manager he should be able to say with confidence:

"I know what my objectives are, I know my position in the organisation, I know my boss's position in the organisation, and I know the extent of authority my boss has delegated to me".

If you cannot answer all of these questions, then you cannot manage effectively. Without a clear understanding of these factors, you are working from a difficult position.

## The Qualities of a Leader/Supervisor

Leadership is not an exact science, but a quality, which is peculiar to the way it is exercised by an individual. It is a reflection of their personality tempered by understanding of the personalities of those working for them.

## Acceptability

A leader must be able to create and maintain an effective and productive team regardless of circumstances.

A leader must therefore be accepted and respected by the team. To do this they need to make an effort to know and understand their team members on a personal basis. At the same time the leader cannot afford to be "one of the boys" or show favouritism to any individual at a personal level.

## Decisiveness

The next quality required is the ability to be decisive and have the courage to make the right decisions at the right time. The 'right' decisions will not always be the traditional or expected ones but it will be an instinctive feeling of what is right for that situation for those people for that time.

The right decisions will not always be the most popular but the good leader will have the personality and respect to make the group appreciate and accept why it is necessary. The good leader instinctively knows whether or not to involve the group in decision making and how to use this involvement to advantage. However in accepting the group's advice this should never be used against them if it proves to be wrong, the leader cannot abdicate from responsibility for the decisions.

### **Confidence and Enthusiasm**

The good leader must exude confidence and enthusiasm at all times, particularly when there are problems within the group. The leader who admits to the group that they share their feelings of doom and despondency may gain a temporary bonus of group involvement, but in the long term, it will only increase the group's downward spiral.

At the same time enthusiasm and optimism must not become overplayed and seen by the group as an irresponsible lack of concern.

### **Humility**

The true leader will take all the blame for the mistakes of the group and give them all the praise for what was right. It is tempting to blame a group member behind their back when reporting upwards on the problem, but even if the Leader is able to report that their instructions were disobeyed, the answer should be to admit failure in obtaining that person's loyalty and co-operation.

The poor leader not only blames the group for their mistakes but also blames them for the leaders own mistakes. The leader's humility of publicly admitting their own mistakes not only enhances the team's respect but it can even have them clamouring to share the blame.

### **Give Praise**

Many leaders are good at admonishing their staff but bad at praising them. All people respond well to praise and no one likes being taken for granted. However the praise must be genuinely earned and correctly given; false, 'gushing', praise can do more harm than good if it leads to embarrassment or ridicule.

### **Summary**

The leader is a person who approaches their work with an understanding of people's feelings and responses, with genuine sensitivity and with the appreciation that leadership is a matter of humanity.