PERSONAL LEADERSHIP STYLES

Usage Note

Introduction

The eleven Leadership Stories described in this usage note are part of a collection of 33 short summaries of examples of leadership successes. The focus of these stories is to celebrate the leadership aspect of an organization and its key employees and volunteers, rather than looking at exemplary management techniques or other aspects of organizational development. Each of these 5-7 page mini-cases briefly describes a leadership challenge faced by an organization, the circumstances they addressed, and the successful outcomes they achieved. Examining a variety of examples of leadership strategies allows a teaching approach where several points of view can be analyzed in the same class. Issues can be framed in more flexible and innovative ways than might otherwise be the case.

These Leadership Stories are quite different in format and content than many case studies. Often, case studies are considerably longer and offer greater depth into an organization or process. The format for case studies most often includes a narrative to engage the reader, extensive background information, and a presentation of a fundamental dilemma that leads to a decision point. Students are then asked to analyze the case with specific teaching objectives in mind—such as recommending next steps the organization could take, or considering key points in the case that lead to the dilemma.

Since these Leadership Stories take a different approach, and are all representations of best practices (rather than organizational error or indecision), how one uses them effectively will be different. Instead of focusing on a single Leadership Story, this usage note examines a number of the stories that represent a variety of organizations all with a certain organizational or strategic similarity. By surveying a wide array of responses to various leadership challenges, students can compare and contrast decisions and outcomes.

This usage note was written by Connie Chaplin and David Harrison of the Electronic Hallway at the Evans School of Public Affairs, housed at the University of Washington. This usage note was written under the supervision of Steven Rathgeb Smith, Faculty Director of the Electronic Hallway at the University of Washington, Evans School of Public Affairs. The usage note is intended solely as a vehicle for classroom discussion, and is not intended to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of the situation described.

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The breadth of examples that are presented in the Leadership Stories can be very useful—exemplary groups and organizations can respond to an event or challenge in a variety of ways. Exploring those various responses is a celebration of good people doing good work.

**Teaching Objectives: Personal Leadership Styles**

Leadership can be developed and demonstrated in many different ways. Individuals are motivated to lead for a variety of reasons. They bring with them varying approaches to strategic thinking and planning, and varying skills to help them follow up on their intentions. The culture and community a leader works in directly influences dimensions of their leadership. The Leadership Stories used in this usage note highlight leadership styles and point to examples of leaders who become the prime articulator or motivator for a movement. These examples demonstrate ways that people can deploy, mentor, and inspire others.

- How do leaders bring others to their side?
- What choices do they make in using their time and their skills?
- Are they focused outwardly through the development of partnerships, or inwardly toward their individual development and that of their staff?
- How are they able to change as circumstances warrant?
- Can we add this question: How are they able to develop leadership in others?

As these Leadership Stories demonstrate, leaders also vary in how equipped they were at the outset to become a leader. How did they add (what is meant by ‘add’ – do you mean gain?) skills and experience? How oriented is the leader toward the organization’s longer term goals? Is the leader a strategic thinker (able to deftly respond to immediate challenges) and a strategic planner, who keeps the organization’s mission and goals aligned with budget and staffing?

**A Framework for Leadership**

One of the more widely accepted models for assessing the institutionalizing of a leadership-centered culture (what does this term mean? It is the first time it is referenced) has been developed by John Kotter. Kotter maintains that in order for change to happen successfully within an organization, there must be an active leadership process to guide the change. He identifies eight distinct stages through which a vision for change is translated into action (1).

Oftentimes, analysis of leadership is confused with the analysis of management. Kotter asserts that leadership is not management—management is for complexity, leadership is for change, management enables planning, and leadership sets direction. Management is about organizing, leadership is about aligning.

According to Kotter, the eight steps an organization must take to create a culture of leadership include:

- Establishing a sense of urgency
- Creating powerful coalitions
- Having vision
- Communicating the vision
- Removing the obstacles to the new vision
- Planning for and creating short-term wins
- Not declaring victory too soon
- Anchoring changes in organizational culture

An Expanded Approach

To fully understand the role of leadership in these Leadership Stories, it is important to begin with Kotter’s fundamental framework, or other ways to understand the central approaches of a leader.

A further focus on culture and community will help the student to delve even deeper into the aspects of leadership described in the Leadership Stories. In these stories, individuals both demonstrate fundamental leadership skills and tailor those skills to unique cultural and community circumstances. By richly understanding the cultural and community context, they are able to lead in ways that would otherwise have been impossible. The section below examines leadership in a variety of contexts by describing different leaders and providing short summaries of their organization through the Leadership Story. Leaders are grouped in categories that can lead to some additional provocative classroom discussion themes, including:

- The role of professional managers as leaders
- The value of a previous connection to communities
- The role of culture
- The role of the convert
- Faith and leadership

Professional Leaders

The leaders of the New York Immigrant Coalition and AIDS Housing of Washington are two examples of professional managers as leaders. Neither organizational director had a cultural or community-based connection to the organizations they help lead. Rather, they were highly skilled strategic thinkers and planners. Each carried considerable political clout, offered personal charisma, and had leadership styles that inspired new people as well as sustaining long-standing colleagues. In order to lead effectively, they were required to develop an all new understanding of the communities and cultures they served.
Building Black Leadership on HIV/AIDS Issues: Unleashing the Power of Existing Communities and Organizations: Saving Our Own Lives
Black AIDS Institute (BAI)

The Black AIDS Institute focuses on the impact of HIV/AIDS on the African-American community. BAI identifies black stakeholders and offers them strategic ways to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. (a little more on Phill)

Phill Wilson, Executive Director, BAI

The African-American community has been ravaged by HIV/AIDS, but had not been willing to be engaged. By targeting specific centers of African American culture, Phill Wilson created a form of personal and organizational leadership that maximized success.

Role of Convert/ Personal Circumstances

Unexpected personal circumstance can be a powerful leadership driver. The role of the convert can be extremely inspirational. The ability to say, “I did this, you can too” lends credibility to a leader. These accidental leaders are people who are thrust into situations and circumstances in their personal lives and decide to turn a personal matter into a political movement. Each of the following leaders is an example of the activist leader. One, a former drug abuser, is a powerful role model for people in similar situations. The other, a relative of a person incarcerated under the mandatory minimum drug laws, shares a common history with people otherwise completely unconnected to each other. In both instances, it was necessary for the leaders to develop other leadership skills to make their personal convictions even more resonant. (not sure I understand this sentence)

Building Justice for Immigrants and Refugees by Supporting Local Institutions and Magnifying Their Impact: The Power of Diverse Voices
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)

SEARAC offers technical assistance and coordination to increase the capacity of a national network of 182 mutual assistance organizations. The organization formed in 1979 to serve the needs of refugees from Vietnam and Cambodia.

KaYing Yang, Former Executive Director, SEARAC

KaYing Yang was a Hmong refugee. Her leadership in SEARAC started from her direct cultural experience as a refugee. Yang created forward-looking programs, not just a response to a specific refugee crisis (which would change, shift, and subside). Because she knew the importance of Mutual Aid Associations (MAAs), she immediately tapped into the existing MAA’s, rather than create a new structure. Yang was also sensitive to the animosities among various Southeast Asian groups and worked to create harmony. Her belief was that “we’re bigger when we come together.” Her leadership style focused on empowering immigrants and refugees—“you don’t speak for others, you let other people speak for themselves”—she worked with cultures that did not have a history of
speaking for themselves. She did not believe in the “one group/one leader” mentality, rather, she focused on how best to groom future leaders.

**Changing Mandatory Drug Sentencing Laws on the Federal and State Levels:**
**Putting a Human Face on Injustice: Reversing a Political Juggernaut**
**Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM)**

FAMM works on the federal and state levels to reverse the politically popular trend of mandatory minimums for drug sentences and to allow judges to have discretionary power again. FAMM has 21 staff members, 42 volunteer coordinators in 29 states, and 30,000 members in 30 states.

**Julie Stewart, President, FAMM**

Julie Stewart became a leader because of the personal impact of a family member who had been jailed under the mandatory minimums drug sentences. Prior to that experience, Stewart had no real experience or ambition to be a leader. Her grief and anger fueled a new movement. She had to very quickly develop strategic thinking and strategic planning, both things she had no previous expertise in. Her personal connection to the issue made her an effective leader for other families of people incarcerated under the same laws—a disparate and wide-spread group of people, united by only one thing—having a loved one in jail.

**Role of Faith and Leadership**

Theological guidance to address the issues of public concern is characteristic of all religions and denominations. To use faith-based leadership to address social problems harnesses a system and structure that is already established. Translating that leadership into activism requires challenging ideas and beliefs that some religious followers have, particularly the desire to avoid issues that are controversial.

**Creating Supportive Housing for People Living With HIV/AIDS: Local Lessons, National Strategies: A Place to Call Home**
**AIDS Housing of Washington (AHW)**

The mission of AIDS Housing of Washington (AHW) is to increase and sustain housing for people with AIDS, both locally and nationally. AHW also offers technical assistance to other communities and is a national advocate for effective federal AIDS policy.

**Betsy Lieberman, Executive Director, AHW**

Like Margie McHugh, AHW’s Betsy Lieberman make her leadership possible in part by proving herself to the community she would serve, deftly dealing with numerous disputes surrounding AIDS policy and care. (More needs to be said here so that there is some balance in terms of length with what is said about Margie above).
Community Leaders: Outsider/Insider Connection to Communities

Whether or not a leader is an integral part of a community or a relative newcomer can play a great role in the leadership qualities they exhibit. The following two examples highlight activist leaders trying to make a community better. One leader was an outsider, recently relocated from another state. The other leader had lived in her community her whole life and understood issues from an insider’s point of view. There can be advantages to both types of leaders. The outsider often has a perspective that is not tied to local culture or ways of doing things and can often see opportunities that have been overlooked. The outsider often has fresh enthusiasm and energy but must develop trust and respect which have come naturally to the insider. If this trust and respect is not deliberately sought, it may never materialize.

Developing Leadership and Political Capacity Among Laotian Refugees: Healing a Culture, Building a Community: The Laotian Organizing Project (LOP)

Richmond, CA is one of the most polluted cities in the United States. In 1999, there was a major oil refinery spill. Richmond has a very large newly arrived Laotian immigrant community. The LOP wanted the city to set up a process for Laotians to be notified in their own language when industrial accidents occurred. LOP used this environmental issue to do more broad-based cultural organizing.

Grace Kong, Lead Organizer, LOP

Grace Kong realized that the key to organizing around a major environmental disaster was to overcome traditional cultural/tribal conflicts and beliefs of the Laotian community. In this country, Laotian refugees are seen as a homogeneous group, but refugees from Laos are come from different tribes and groups—Lao, Khmu, and Mien. Kong also looked to younger generations to help bridge the cultural gaps and groom a new group of leaders. Using subtle and savvy cultural understanding, Kong successfully worked to build political and activist capacity and leadership among Laotian refugees.

How a Coalition of Immigration Groups is Advocating for Broad Social and Political Change: The Power of Diversity

New York Immigrant Coalition (NYIC)

NYIC is a coalition of over 150 New York State-based nonprofits, including immigrant rights advocates, immigrant community leaders, social service providers, community-based ethnic and non-profit organizations, as well as leaders from labor, academia and the legal professions.

Margie McHugh, Former Executive Director, NYIC

Margie McHugh was guided by the following motto: “groom leadership, share leadership, give leadership away.” McHugh was a leader who focused on consensus and coalition building. At NYIC, all organizations are equal, and McHugh and the board set
policy. McHugh had strong strategic thinking and planning skills. She intentionally
guided NYIC to create a multiple focus coalition to help ensure organizational
sustainability. By tying together the similar and separate goals of member organizations,
McHugh created a larger sense of empowerment for political change. McHugh
emphasized the commonalities among the wide array of groups, often with very different
interests.

**How North Carolina’s Religious Congregations are Building a Volunteer Network
to Sustain People with HIV/AIDS: Getting to Know You: The Power of Professional
Relationships**

**Regional AIDS Interfaith Network (RAIN)**

RAIN provides volunteer training for a network of congregation-based care-giving teams
to work with people with HIV/AIDS. The mission of the organization draws on
theological imperatives and the organization works to overcome fear and judgment.

**Deborah Warren, Reverend, RAIN**

Deborah Warren strongly believes in the theological imperatives of all religions to help
those who are sick and, as a leader, challenged congregation members about their
attitudes regarding HIV/AIDS. She set up a structure of care teams, across religious
boundaries, to support volunteers and people living with HIV/AIDS. She founded RAIN
in response to profound lack of support by faith communities for people living with
HIV/AIDS. People in the South often turn to religion for guidance on issues. Warren
focused on the power of relationships and the support of teams, and “shared leadership.”
(shall we explain what this is in one sentence)

**Organizing Communities to Protect West Virginia’s Natural Environment: A
Different Source of Power**

**Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition (OVEC)**

OVEC works on a variety of environmental causes in West Virginia. The organization
began in response to an oil spill in the mid-1980’s that shut down municipal water
supplies for 200 miles along the Ohio River.

**Diane Bady, Co-Founder, OVEC**

Diane Bady, an environmental activist from Wisconsin, was outraged at the media’s
coverage of a major environmental disaster in West Virginia. She relocated to West
Virginia and brought media attention to the matter. West Virginians in the area were
socially and economically depressed and had no culture of activism. Bady tapped into the
discontent of residents and acted as a lightening rod. Bady immediately realized she
needed to enlist two other activists—both with closer ties to W. Virginia. Her role as an
outsider brought fresh energy and perspective to a community which, in turn, was moved
to action.
Revitalizing a Community Through Property Ownership: “A Place Worth Saving”
New Road Community Development Group of Exmore, Inc (NRCDG)

The residents of the New Road neighborhood of Exmore, VA, lived in substandard housing and were neglected by the city government. The NRCDG worked to bring water and sewer service to New Road, buy out absentee landlords who were the majority owners in the neighborhood, offer home ownership to residents, and provide economic opportunities and job prospects to residents.

Ruth Wise, Executive Director, NRCDG

Ruth Wise lived in the community of Exmore. Her own empowerment was emblematic of the community’s empowerment. She was the most visible representative of a group of community activists. She was the first to say that any perceived power she might have had was derived from the power of the neighborhood. (again, some balance in terms of length would be great)

Role of Culture

The culture in which a group or an organization forms is a powerful and sometimes invisible force that has tremendous impact on leaders and leadership styles. Strong cultural legacies exist, even within well-established groups. Oftentimes the traditional roles of women and of the younger generation within particular tribes or subcultures can form barriers to creating successful leadership development, requiring an extra level of inventiveness from the leader. Language, history, immigration status, and cultural legacies all influence the ways in which people become empowered.

Serving Connected Needs in Appalachia: Homegrown Help in Appalachia
Hazard Perry County Community Ministries (HPCCM)

Hazard Perry County Community Ministries is committed to individuals, families, and building the community. This commitment is the driving force for the creation of quality, innovative social services in cooperation with the whole community. HPCCM grows civic capacity to address social problems in Appalachia.

Gerry Roll, Executive Director, HPCCM

Gerry Roll reframed issues to fit to rural circumstances, an innovative way to structure a program. Roll immediately brought a competitor for funds into a partnership. Instead of becoming adversaries, they became collaborators. Roll excelled as a strategic thinker and strategic planner. She developed sophisticated program design and planning to offer a “continuum of care” in order to grow civic capacity. Her goal was to get a rural, disenfranchised, community (who had had all kinds of social experiments dumped on them unsuccessfully) to believe it could solve its own problems, after decades of outsiders making the decisions. She redefined homelessness to fit rural circumstances and
gave away ideas, grant application information, funding opportunities with the idea that the more you give, the more you get.

**Using a Social Entrepreneurial Model to Treat Substance Abuse: Building Citizens, Not Just Sober Individuals**

**Triangle Residential Option for Substance Abusers (TROSA)**

TROSA is a residential treatment center for substance abusers, which is based on a social entrepreneurial model. It runs a moving and storage company as well as offering comprehensive substance abuse treatment. They focus on building active, engaged citizens, not just sober individuals.

**Kevin McDonald, President, TROSA**

Kevin McDonald was a drug addict who started a therapeutic residential program with a social entrepreneurial model. As a leader within the therapeutic community of TROSA, McDonald has added credibility because of his personal experience and as the role of the convert. Because McDonald had gone through the process of recovery from drug addiction, he realized the type of support and services other drug users would need. With this personal insight, McDonald created a leadership model that has been highly successful. Residents are mentors to newly arrived members, and each new person gets a mentor immediately. In addition, McDonald has created an organization with a social entrepreneur model, which appeals to the wider community, and which helps gain further social acceptance for people recovering from drug addictions.

**Summary**

These Leadership Stories offer an opportunity to expand and build upon more traditional leadership assessment frameworks. The broader context of the culture and community a leader works in directly influences dimensions of their leadership. In addition to evaluating a leader’s professional skills, it is essential to examine these broader aspects of leadership. The extent to which a leader has a specific connection to a community or culture will directly impact how that leader is regarded. Understanding and respecting subtleties of culture, language, history, gender and generational issues can make a leader more effective. In some cases, a leader’s credibility is bolstered by a connection to faith. In other cases, an unintentional leader who has experienced something first-hand can create an unlikely community and offer the most effective leadership style. Leaders who operate within the context of culture and community, not just within an organization or institution, are able to lead in ways that would otherwise be impossible.
About the Research Center for Leadership in Action

As the leadership research and development hub for the field of public service, the Research Center for Leadership in Action fosters leadership that transforms society.

Founded in 2003 at New York University’s Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, a top-ranked school for public service, the Center’s unique approach integrates research with practice, bridges individual pursuits and collective endeavors, and connects local efforts with global trends. RCLA scholars use innovative social science methodologies to address ambitious questions that advance big ideas in leadership.

Public service leaders rely on RCLA to create customized leadership development and capacity-building programs that facilitate critical reflection, peer-to-peer learning and transformation at the individual, organizational and systems levels.

RCLA collaborates with the spectrum of public service organizations, from government agencies to nonprofits and community-based groups across the country and around the world. Partners include more than 700 social change organizations, universities and leadership centers in the United States and abroad, local and state government leaders, and major foundations and corporations including the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, AVINA Foundation, and Accenture. Learn more at http://www.wagner.nyu.edu/leadership.

About the Leadership for a Changing World Program

Leadership for a Changing World (LCW) is a signature program of the Ford Foundation designed to recognize, strengthen and support social change leaders and to highlight the importance of community leadership in improving people’s lives.

The LCW Research and Documentation Component is housed at the Research Center for Leadership in Action at NYU’s Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. LCW uses three parallel lines of inquiry ethnography, cooperative inquiry and narrative inquiry – to explore questions related to the work of leadership. RCLA is committed to developing participatory approaches to research and uses dialogue with LCW participants as a core of the research process. While the award portion of the program has concluded, RCLA continues to partner with nonprofit organizations to develop together new understandings of how social change leadership emerges and is sustained.


About the Electronic Hallway

The Electronic Hallway at the University of Washington Evans School of Public Affairs is an unparalleled online resource for quality teaching cases and other curriculum materials. University-level faculty and instructors throughout the United States and in many foreign countries use Electronic Hallway materials to create a dynamic and interactive learning environment in courses related to public administration and a variety of policy topics. Learn more at http://www.hallway.org.

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