

(teamwork) and by coaching others for succession planning. He needs to set a new vision for the organization so that everyone can get on the same page (democratic). Unfortunately, this is not happening. Board members are hearing complaints from key customers and water-cooler talk is infiltrating the organization negatively. Having fulfilled my obligation, I left the organization believing that it is a matter of time before he leaves for another crisis or is forced out for not having adequate leadership styles to meet the everchanging environment.

Below is a synopsis of the six leadership styles that should be seamlessly used to ensure effective leadership in any environment.

Leadership Style	Modus Operandi	Style in a Phrase	Underlying EI Competency	When Appropriate	Impact on Climate
Coercive/Commanding	Demands immediate compliance, obedience	"Do what I tell you."	Achievement, drive, initiative, emotional self-control.	In a crisis to kick-start a turnaround, or with problem employees.	Strongly negative
Authoritative/Visionary	Mobilizes people toward a vision	"Come with me."	Self-confidence, empathy, change catalyst, visionary leadership	When change requires a new vision or when a clear direction is needed	Most strongly positive
Affiliative	Creates harmony and builds emotional bonds	"People come first."	Empathy, building bonds, conflict management	To heal rifts in a team or to motivate during stressful times	Highly positive
Democratic	Forges consensus through participation	"What do you think?"	Teamwork, collaboration, communication	To build buy-in or consensus or to get valuable input from employees	Highly positive
Coaching	Develops people and strengths for the future	"Try this.">	Developing others, empathy, emotional self-awareness	To help an employee improve performance or develop long term strengths	Highly positive
Pacesetting	Sets high standards for performance	"Do as I do, now!"	Conscientiousness, achievement, drive, initiative.	To get quick results from a highly motivated and competent team.	Highly negative

Adapted from Daniel Goleman (2000) Leadership that Gets Results, Harvard Business Review, 82-83 and Cary Cherniss and Daniel Goleman (2001) The Emotionally Intelligent Workplace, 42.

[1] Adapted from Daniel Goleman (2000) Leadership that Gets Results, Harvard Business Review, 82-83 and Cary Cherniss and Daniel Goleman (2001) The Emotionally Intelligent Workplace, 42.

[2] See Barbara Kellerman, (2004) *Bad Leadership*, Cambridge: HBS Press.

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440.338.1705 | 440.338.1784 fax | herb@clevelandconsultinggroup.com

George Ambler<<http://www.georgeambler.com/>>



How the Leadership Gurus Define Leadership

By George Ambler<<http://www.georgeambler.com/author/gt76hy89uj65uy49/>>, June 14, 2013

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What is your definition of leadership? Only few people have a solid answer to this question. Few have a clear definition of what leadership means for them personally.

The definition of leadership has been a thorny issue for many years with each author approaching the topic from a different perspective. This is not to say that any of the definitions are right or wrong, rather each attempt exposes a

different and valuable facet on what leadership means and how it's expressed. Therefore it's useful to explore the different definitions, perspective and viewpoints on leadership.

Leadership as Influence

These definitions describe leadership as a process of influencing others. It's the ability of the leader to build relationships and influence people's behaviour as required to execute the vision. The outcome of leadership is about changing the behaviour of people. This perspective of leadership is focused on inspiring and motivating others, with an emphasising the relationship between leaders and followers.

- "Leadership is influence – nothing more, nothing less." – John Maxwell, The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership
- "Leadership is the incremental influence that a person has beyond his or her formal authority" – Vecchio
- "Leadership requires using power to influence the thoughts and actions of other people." – Zalenik, A., Managers and Leaders: are they different?
- "Influencing people – by providing purpose, direction, and motivation – while operating to accomplish the mission and improving the organization." – US Army Manual
- "Leadership is the capacity to influence others through inspiration motivated by passion, generated by vision, produced by a conviction, ignited by a purpose." – Dr. Myles Munroe, The Spirit of Leadership
- "Leadership is the art of influencing others to their maximum performance to accomplish any task, objective or project." – William Alan Cohen, The Art of a Leader

- “Leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes.” – Joseph Rost, Leadership in the 21st Century
- “Leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group in efforts toward goal achievement in a given situation.” – Hersey, P., Blanchard, K., Dewey, E.J., Management of Organizational Behavior

Leadership as Change

These definitions describe leadership primarily as a process of change supported by social influence and persuasion. Change is central to effective leadership. The greater the change the greater the need for leadership. More change demands more leadership. Therefore leadership requires leaders develop vision and future direction, to influence people to move towards the vision to achieve a shared goal.

- “Leadership is the ability to step outside the culture to start evolutionary change processes that are more adaptive.” – Edgar Schein
- “Leadership defines what the future should look like, aligns people with that vision, and inspires them to make it happen despite the obstacles.” – John Kotter, Leading Change
- “Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.” – Northouse, P. G., Leadership: Theory and Practice
- “Leadership is the art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for shared aspirations.” – Kouzes, J.M. and Posner, B.Z., The Leadership Challenge
- “Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality.” – Warren G. Bennis
- “Leadership is the process of persuasion or example by which an

individual (or leadership team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers” – John W. Gardner, On Leadership

- “Leadership is the capacity of individuals to spark the capacity of a human community – people living and working together – to bring forth new realities.” – Peter Senge

Leadership as Service

Then there the definitions of leadership as being about service to others usually referred to as “servant leadership”. This perspective of leadership speaks to the motives and intentions of the leader, proposing that effective leaders act from the desire to be of service to others.

- “Leadership is about service to others and a commitment to developing more servants as leaders. It involves co-creation of a commitment to a mission.” – Robert Greenleaf
- “The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between the two, the leader must become a servant and a debtor. That sums up the progress of an artful leader.” – Max DePree
- “All of the great leaders have had one characteristic in common: it was the willingness to confront unequivocally the major anxiety of their people in their time. This, and not much else, is the essence of leadership.” – John Kenneth Galbraith

Leadership as Character

There are definitions leadership that refer to the importance of the leader’s character for effective leadership. These recognise the important of integrity, trust and the character of the leader. This is the recognition that without

character and integrity, people will not trust the leader and without trust leaders cannot influence others to follow them on a journey of change.

- “Leadership is a combination of strategy and character. If you must be without one, be without the strategy.” – General H. Norman Schwarzkopf
- “Leadership: The capacity and will to rally people to a common purpose together with the character that inspires confidence and trust” – Field Marshal Montgomery
- “Leadership is not a person or a position. It is a complex moral relationship between people, based on trust, obligation, commitment, emotion, and a shared vision of the good.” – Joanne Ciulla

Leadership as Development

There are a number of definitions of leadership that focus on the responsibility of the leader to grow and develop others into leaders. They highlight the importance of knowing and expressing who you are as a leader. These definitions recognise the need for the personal development of the leader and their constituents so they are able to effectively deal with the challenges of change brought about by a challenging vision.

- “The function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers.” – Ralph Nadar
- “Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others.” – Jack Welch
- “If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.” — John Quincy Adams, American 6th US President (1825-29)
- “Leadership is a function of knowing yourself, having a vision that is well communicated, building trust among colleagues, and taking effective

action to realize your own leadership potential.” – Warren Bennis

The above definitions provide an overview of some of the most widely reference definitions of leadership.

What's Your Personal Definition of Leadership?

As you would have noticed from the collection of leadership definitions above that there is no one single definition of leadership. There are as many definitions of leadership as there are leaders. This is a good thing. It recognises that leadership is deeply personal and a topic to be wrestled with by each of us as we prepare to lead. Leaders are unique and each leader needs a personal definition of leadership that guides and inspires them. Unless we understand what we mean by leadership it becomes difficult to select, develop and grow leaders.

As leadership is personal and unique to the individual, having your own personal definition provides an anchor for your role as leader. Your definition of leadership affects how you think about your role, how you act, your relationship with others and ultimately your results.

If you don't as yet have a personal definition of leadership take some time over the next week to develop one that's your own. I would suggest the following process to create your own personal definition of leadership:

1. Review the definitions listed previously as a source of inspiration. Highlight those that resonate with you personally.
2. Start a conversation with your peers and others on how they define leadership. Use these conversations to stimulate and challenge your own thinking.

3. Work on and revise your personal definition as you go.
4. Your personal definition should create awareness for you concerning to your role as leader and help you answer the question, "How do I know when I'm leading?"

Lastly, please leave a comment below, sharing your definition of leadership.

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Daniel Sild, Kirk Kramer

14 mins

The Effective Organization: Five Questions to Translate Leadership into Strong Management

leadership | management

Summary

Effective organizations create results, and to be fully effective, nonprofits must exhibit strengths in five core organizational areas—leadership, decision making and structure, people, work processes and systems, and culture.

"Too many people are involved in every decision."

"Staff complain about unclear and changing priorities."

"No bench strength exists in the leadership ranks to take on new tasks."

"Staff are duplicating work and reinventing existing processes."

Organizational inefficiencies like these are all too familiar to nonprofit leaders. And they come with a high cost: lower potential for making progress toward the important societal challenges and opportunities nonprofits seek to address.

Simply put, effective organizations deliver results. This connection has been well-documented in the for-profit sector, with highly effective organizations demonstrating superior market performance to their less effective peers. We have observed the same connection between effectiveness and performance time and time again in our work with over 200 nonprofit organizations. Given the link, it is critically important for nonprofit leaders to assess their organizations' effectiveness and become more purposeful about improving it.

How can nonprofit organizations become more effective? In our experience, and in line with organizational research from Bain & Company, Inc., to be fully effective an organization must demonstrate strength in each of the following

areas: leadership, decision making and structure, people, work processes and systems, and culture. As Exhibit 1 suggests, these elements are interconnected; strength in one area offset by weakness in another does not appear to result in sustainable improvement. All five elements must be strong to create a highly effective organization.

Our diagnostic surveys of 42 nonprofits suggest that there is significant room for nonprofits to improve their organizational effectiveness across all five categories.[2] While many nonprofits owe their initial success to visionary leadership, only systematic development of each of these five areas will lead to the managerial strength required to sustain growth and outcomes. Organizations need to establish and communicate clear priorities, make roles and responsibilities explicit, create clear connections across organizational silos, and develop the talented people they attract, or they will fall short of their full potential for impact.

Exhibit 1: Effective organizations demonstrate strength in five key areas



Source: Framework developed by Bain & Company and adapted by Bridgespan

In this article, we present our survey results in more detail and offer concrete managerial advice for strengthening the five core organizational elements in pursuit of becoming a more effective organization.

The Link between Organizational Effectiveness and Results

The lack of a common measurement of performance in the nonprofit sector makes it difficult to prove the link between organizational effectiveness and results quantitatively. In the for-profit world, however, barometers such as profitability and shareholder value make this assessment possible. Consider the research of Bain & Company, the for-profit strategy consulting firm.

In 2003, Bain surveyed more than 500 companies about their organizational effectiveness and also measured the market performance of those companies. Eighty percent of the respondents from the "strongest financial performers" rated their companies "highly effective," while only 14 percent of the total pool of respondents did so. [3] Bain also developed an in-depth diagnostic survey to assess the companies' performance in five areas: leadership, decision making and structure, people, work processes and systems, and culture. The bulk of respondents from the smaller, high-performing group gave their companies much better marks across the board than did their more average-performing peers.

The lessons emerging from Bain's research are clear: effective organizations deliver results, and strength across all five elements is required. Our experience working with nonprofit organizations has borne this out repeatedly.

Room for Improvement

The link between organizational effectiveness and results puts a premium on understanding how nonprofits function organizationally. To inform this perspective, we adapted Bain's organizational diagnostic survey, asking similar questions designed to assess nonprofit organizations' strength in each of the five categories that distinguish high-performing companies. As of this writing, we have administered our diagnostic to more than 40 nonprofits with annual budgets ranging in size from less than \$5 million to about \$200 million.

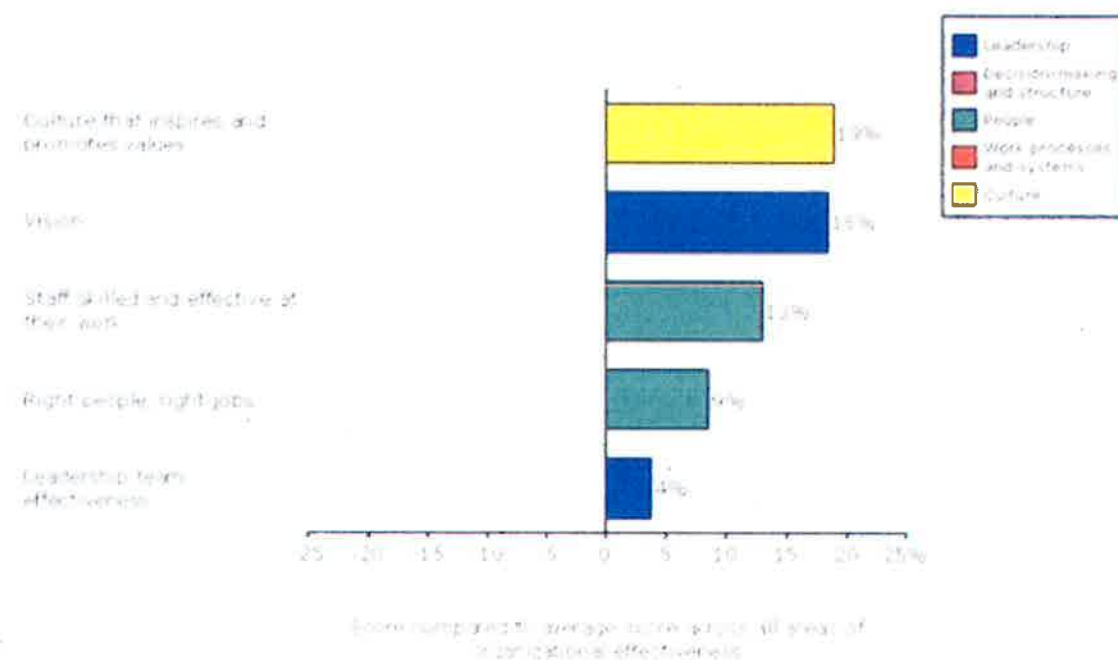
Our analysis indicates that while nonprofits have some tremendous organizational assets, weaknesses in other areas hold them back from achieving their full potential for impact. (See Exhibit 2, which shows how survey respondents' scores on various dimensions compare to the overall average across all dimensions.) In short, significant room exists for improvement. Responses to the diagnostic survey painted the following picture:

- **Leadership:** Nonprofit leaders tend to establish strong visions and build strong teams. These same leaders, however, seem to be less effective at translating a compelling vision into a set of explicit goals and corresponding priorities. They're even less effective at communicating priorities throughout their organizations.
- **Decision making and structure:** The ability of people to coordinate and work well together across organizational boundaries is an area where nonprofits tend to run into difficulties. Decision-making roles and processes also appear to be a significant weakness.
- **People:** Nonprofits appear to attract good talent and do well placing the right people in the right jobs. However, these employees do not feel that their work is well aligned to the priorities of the organization. What's more, organizations on average have some difficulty evaluating, developing, and rewarding staff consistent with the organizations' priorities. This finding is not surprising, given leadership scores on setting and communicating priorities. Further, nonprofits in general do not appear to prepare adequately for leadership transitions and succession; this area emerged as the biggest weakness overall.
- **Work processes and systems:** Nonprofit employees, on both the program and administrative sides, appear to be skilled and motivated. Working conditions, however, hamper their effectiveness. In particular, work processes are not well defined and resources are scarce. While this last point did not emerge strongly in the survey data, in our work with nonprofit organizations working conditions crop up repeatedly as a major impediment.

- **Culture:** Culture is a clear strength. Interestingly, however, ability to execute change is a weakness. This finding may also correlate to the relatively low leadership score in setting priorities. Nonprofit leaders cannot effectively change the direction of their organizations if they do not know what their priorities are and what they want the change to accomplish.

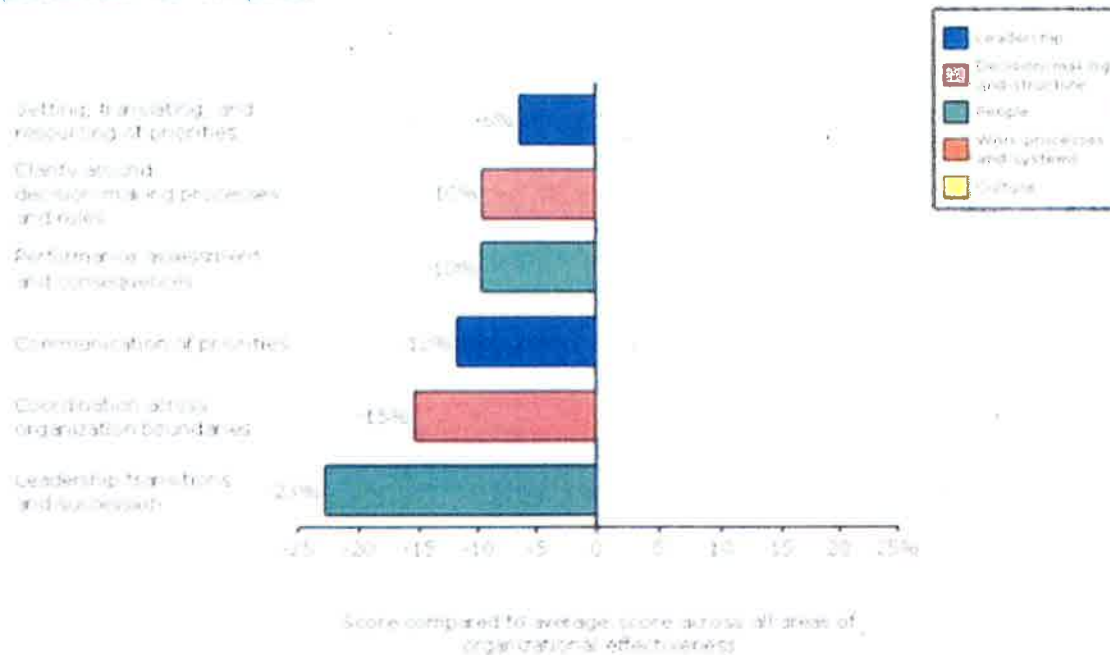
These findings are consistent with our experience working with and observing many nonprofits: namely, for the most part, they are strongly led but under-managed. Many nonprofits have inspirational and visionary leaders who attract hard-working people with great passion for the cause at hand. However, these same leaders often find it difficult to implement and codify the kinds of mechanisms that would help these highly motivated people be as productive as possible. Good managers know how to bring discipline, structure, and process to bear, and this is where nonprofits seem to be most lacking.

Exhibit 2: While nonprofits start out with some tremendous assets...



Source: Bridgespan Organizational Assets Database, N=100

...weaknesses in other areas hold them back from achieving their full potential for impact



Source: Bridgespan organizational diagnostic database, N=40.

Becoming More Effective

The key to becoming more effective, then, is to invest in management capabilities—in short, to move to a place where the nonprofit is not only strongly led, but also strongly managed. As noted, our research suggests that nonprofits need to take a holistic approach towards improving effectiveness, shoring up management capabilities across the board. A good place to start is with the areas our research has shown to be most prone to weakness. The following five sets of questions can help an organization's leadership team assess those areas and set a purposeful course towards improvement. Given that many of the issues illuminated by our survey data link to unclear or poorly communicated strategic priorities, we recommend beginning with that challenge.

1. Are we clear on the strategic priorities that will enable our organization to achieve our desired impact over the next several years? Have we communicated our strategy clearly enough that everyone within the organization understands where we are going, why, and how we will get there?

Clear priorities are the "north star" against which an organization can align its people, structure, and processes, and build its culture. When an organization's leader has established clear priorities, he or she has essentially defined what "success" will look like. Against that goal, it becomes easier to determine which programs or initiatives are essential, and which are not, and to allocate resources accordingly.

Take, for example, an organization that serves students who are at-risk for dropping out of high school. Where does that organization draw the line in terms of serving these young people? What if an opportunity arises to help recent

dropouts get back into school? Or to help younger students move out of the "at-risk" category before they enter high school? Or to strengthen the home lives of these students? Unless the leadership team has established and communicated what matters most it can be difficult to chart a course in the face of such options.

One way to determine if your organization has clear priorities is to ask each member of the senior management team to make a list of its top five priorities for the next one to three years. Once you've compared the lists, you'll be able to see whether the team members are on the same page. If they are, you'll next want to determine whether the priorities are well communicated throughout the organization. To begin to find out, ask a representative sample of managers at the next level down to engage in the same exercise. These simple exercises will help you determine if your challenge is clarifying priorities or if you need to work to on communicating the priorities to enable alignment to them.

2. Given the organization's priorities, what decisions are truly critical? Is it clear who is responsible (and who has the authority) to make those decisions?

With clearly communicated priorities come more consistent decisions, given that decision makers throughout the organization are guiding their choices with the same compass. That said, ample room often remains for refinement of the decision-making process itself. A well-defined decision-making process leads to more efficient, responsive, and transparent decisions, with less role confusion and therefore less conflict.

Establishing and implementing a strong decision-making process is a complex endeavor—one that is hard to do well. So it may be valuable to use a management tool specifically designed to help an organization's leaders unravel the decision-making process, clarify roles and responsibilities, and set clear expectations for decision making going forward. The process of using such a tool can help leaders get past preconceived notions of structure and more fully engage in a holistic approach to their organization.

The national leadership team at Omaha, Nebraska-based Boys Town, for example, used a tool called RAPID® to clarify decision making between the national headquarters and site-based program leaders. [4] Historically, decision making had been highly centralized, with a small group of people at the national headquarters making many decisions about local operations—from hiring, to merit-pay increases, to purchasing furniture. As Boys Town continued to expand its services, though, that approach no longer worked well.

With input from managers throughout the organization, an internal project team worked with national office management to draft a matrix that classified the types of decisions Boys Town site-based leaders faced, and set boundaries of authority and responsibility for decision making going forward. This process helped the organization push decision making down to the right level and clarify when and how the national office should be involved.

3. Who in our organization must work closely together to achieve these priorities, and does our structure enable them to do so?

Identifying the work that's critical to achieving the organization's priorities, who does that work, and how it delivers the desired outcomes helps reveal which people need to work together and, ultimately, whether the current structure facilitates their work.

Organizational design experts in the for-profit and nonprofit sectors alike talk about the "grouping and linking" of work. They find that most leadership teams pay a lot of attention to how work is grouped: around geographies, for example, or product lines or functional areas such as finance or human resources. Most, however, pay less attention to how people need to work together across these groups, and thus fail to put in place the kinds of structural mechanisms that can make such coordination easier. Without these mechanisms, people end up working in their own silos. The fallout ranges from wasted time (as people try to find information that isn't readily available to them), to poor quality work (when the right input isn't incorporated), to poor execution (because stakeholders critical to implementation fail to buy in).

To help people work together more effectively across departments or groups, start by identifying critical areas where such work takes place. Then narrow that list to the areas that link back to the organization's top priorities. Armed with this information, creating explicit linking mechanisms becomes a more manageable endeavor. Some organizations use cross-functional working teams. Others tap staff members to serve as liaisons between departments—for example, asking a finance manager to work with a specific program.

4. Do we have the right people and capabilities to achieve our priorities, and do our people feel that their goals and measures align with these priorities?

One way to assess and improve the effectiveness of your people is to determine how they are aligned against the organization's priorities. For each priority, identify who is working on it and compare it to items that are of lower priority. Ask yourself, do I have enough people against things that matter? Are my best people allocated against the things that matter the most? Have I taken lower priority work away from these people so that I am sure they will succeed? Doing this can be especially critical in times of change, be it regrouping after layoffs or embarking on a growth trajectory. These are the times when management team members tend to take on new responsibilities, sometimes overextending themselves and under-resourcing critically important areas.

It's also important to maintain the connection to the organization's high-level priorities when setting individual performance goals and assessing staff performance. Too often, performance reviews are "check-the-box" activities. It's easier for participants to take reviews seriously—and feel that the process is valuable—when individual goals are clearly linked to the organization's overall goals. Performance reviews also should lead to action, influencing skill development plans, future job assignments, promotions, and rewards. Consider an example from another nonprofit that offers mentoring services. Leaders had told staff members that the organization's priorities included increasing the number of mentoring matches each staff member set up, maintaining the quality of the matches, and balancing matches across easy- and hard-to-serve communities. During performance reviews, however, staff were assessed and rewarded only on the number of matches—the easily quantifiable metric. As one middle manager put it, "Staff members are routinely put in a position where they have to make a choice between actually doing their jobs well and appearing to do their jobs well." When this feedback was shared with senior leaders, they redesigned the process to include data and qualitative

feedback on these other dimensions. They also began to reward employees who had performed well against all of the organization's priorities. This change has contributed to improved employee morale, and it is expected to drive more balanced performance across the organization's priorities.

5. Have we defined the work processes and tools to enable our people to be effective as they address our top priorities?

Time spent clarifying and honing work processes, and making them explicit and accessible to employees can reduce rework and reinvention. The effort can also contribute to consistency and improving levels of quality. This is gold to any nonprofit, but it's particularly valuable when an organization is struggling to increase impact on a tight budget or embarking on an expansion plan.

Consider the experience of KIPP, a charter management organization currently operating schools in 19 states and the District of Columbia. In 2000, when KIPP had only two schools (both high performing), the organization received a large grant to replicate its efforts across the country. KIPP's small leadership team recognized that in order to grow successfully, they would need to articulate the work processes—both programmatic and administrative—that had made the model so effective in the first place. These processes included, for example, how to build a strong local board, budget for a new school, and hire the right teachers. To codify these processes, the organization's leaders documented the steps they had taken to set up their first two schools. By doing this, they ensured that the principals in each new KIPP school did not have to spend time reinventing the fundamentals of the model and could, therefore, spend more time focusing on educating the students.

In addition to getting the processes right, deploying tools and technology can also increase organizational effectiveness. With limited funds available, many nonprofits are hesitant to make these kinds of investments, but they can have a huge payoff. Consider one large youth-serving organization whose leaders discovered that completing essential documentation after each case interaction was a major source of stress for staff members. The process was labor intensive and time sensitive. As a first step towards addressing the problem, the organization tested voice-recognition software that allowed staff to dictate their notes, which were then automatically transcribed. Not only did the software cut documentation time in half, but staff members also began to find the task much less onerous. In fact, the organization's leaders believe that adopting this technology has been a major contributor to improved staff retention, increasing quality while reducing hiring and training costs.

Progress towards becoming a more effective organization means progress towards increasing your impact. Whatever your organization's strengths and weaknesses, a purposeful and holistic effort to improve effectiveness will be worthwhile—not only for your employees and volunteers but, above all, for those your organization seeks to serve.

(Kirk Kramer is a partner at the Bridgespan Group and leads the firm's work on organizational effectiveness. Bridgespan partner Daniel Stid has written on the topic of leadership and management in nonprofit organizations.)

Sources Used for This Article

[1] Bain & Company, Inc. research originally documented these five areas as being the keys to organizational effectiveness. Bain's latest thinking on this topic is captured in the upcoming book by Paul Rogers, Marcia Blenko, and Michael Mankins, due to be published in September 2010 by Harvard Business Press.

[2] Bridgespan's organizational diagnostic survey is an adaptation of the survey Bain developed to assess the organizational effectiveness of for-profit companies.

[3] Bain classified companies by their effectiveness level based on self-reported answers to the question: "All things considered, we have a highly effective organization." "Highly effective" companies were those with a score of 3.25 or greater on a 1-4 scale. Bain categorized the companies by their financial success based on total shareholder return relative to a peer index.

[4] RAPID® is a registered trademark of Bain & Company, Inc. The article titled "[RAPID Decision-making: What it is, why we like it, and how to get the most out of it](#)," provides more detail about this tool.



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Leadership Is an Action, Not a Position

by [Allison Wolf](#)

As we move deeper into 2009 one thing I know for sure is that many lawyers, law firm staff members and clients are facing deep uncertainty. So many of us feel we have lost control; that larger forces are at work. At this time more then ever it is important to come to grips with what we can influence and impact.

We all have a leadership role to play in our organizations. When we catch ourselves complaining about the system, about how decisions are made and how things are done it is a good time to come to grips with our own responsibility for making a positive contribution.

Some people might say: "I'm not the boss; I have no power to change anything". Certainly at times we all feel that way but this is rarely the whole truth. I had the opportunity to interview leadership effectiveness trainer [Robert Gilfoyle](#) to ask him for his thoughts on leadership. He opened with the statement: "Leadership is an action not a position. " Leadership is not about the role we hold in an organization; rather it is about the action we choose to take. He followed by saying that if you ask people to cite examples of extraordinary leadership at least one third of the time they will comment on the leadership actions taken by a colleague who is not in a leadership position.

Jane took the initiative. We were struggling and wondered if it was even possible. She just dove in and started things off. She got us into the difficult conversations about barriers and challenges and helped us get through. She made things happen.

Gilfoyle pointed to three key characteristics of leadership-in-action:

1. The action is other focused: "How can I help people succeed?"
2. It is future oriented: "I know we are focused on this phase of the project but how does it connect with the end result we are after?"
3. It is client focused. "How is that going to look from our client's perspective? How will it help them with their business goals?"

..

At the heart of leadership is the urge to get things moving and to take the initiative to help.

When someone in a peer role takes a leadership approach it is just as effective or even more effective then leadership exercised by a figure of authority. Taking a leadership approach, regardless of your position in the firm or organization, will engender respect. You will be perceived as having leadership qualities. You will provide a huge value to the people around you.

Gilfoyle told me that he has given this approach to leadership the "acid test" with law firm partners. He asked them how they would respond to associates demonstrating leadership in this way and the response was overwhelmingly positive. Gilfoyle also told me that in his experience even when just a small percentage of the staff of an organization take on this leadership approach the quality of the work and productivity are both greatly enhanced.

In our turbulent times this approach to leadership is as more important then ever. Gilfoyle shared with me his thoughts on the vital role of leadership in the current economic environment climate:

We could all sit back and take a victim mentality, and with the state of the world right now who could blame us, but it is important to realise that we are not doomed. Rather it is that the environment in which we live and work has changed. Our job is to figure out how to make the most from this changed environment and discover how we can create value for our clients, our organizations and ourselves. You don't have to be the President of the United States to become engaged in the process and to demonstrate leadership.

We all have the capacity to contribute. You don't need to read about it, or sign up for an advanced leadership training program.

Gifolye reflected:

We can all get far too cerebral, intellectual and mystical even about leadership. It really is just about what we do. It's behavioural. It's a choice we make each day. "I think I can help here. I am going to take a chance and see what I can do to move things along."

Leadership is quite simply about choice and behaviour. The best start is to test it out. Give it a try and see what happens.

(Authors note: For more examples of putting leadership into action check out Christina Bielaszka-DuVernay's post to the [Harvard Management Update](#): "How to Lead When You are Not the Boss". She provides a summary of the five key leadership actions outlined in the book [Lateral Leadership: Getting Things Done When You're Not the Boss](#) (2nd ed., Profile Books, 2004), by Harvard negotiation specialist Roger Fisher and coauthor Alan Sharp.)

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