

Fundamentals of Organizational Communication

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Chapter 7



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Groups in Organizations

This chapter is designed to contribute to knowledge by demonstrating the importance of leadership and management communication, distinguishing between the two, and understanding them by describing trait, style, situational, transformational, and discursive approaches. We develop sensitivity competencies by identifying individual preferences and styles for leadership and by becoming familiar with commonly used strategies and tactics. Sensitivity competencies, in turn, influence the use of strategic and tactical communication skills. We encourage value competencies by describing the importance of leadership for organizational excellence, identifying determinants of leadership effectiveness, and associating leadership with overall interpersonal communication

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The Importance of Leadership and Management Communication

- Leadership and management communication affect nearly all aspects of organizational life. Leaders help guide individuals, groups, and entire organizations in establishing goals and sustaining action to support goals. Managers fulfill specific organizationally assigned roles designed to direct and evaluate the work of others.
- Managers are expected to be leaders, although not all managers exhibit leadership behaviors. In fact, leadership communication can come from virtually anyone in the organization, with the effectiveness of leadership and management communication directly relating to organizational success and work satisfaction

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What exactly is meant by leadership and management communication?

- There are literally hundreds of definitions of what leaders do and what is considered to be leadership. Chances are our personal definition of leadership may vary from that of our friends and may even change from situation to situation.
- Leadership communication is a process of influence whereby leaders attempt to convince followers to attain specific goals or broad organizational outcomes. The ability to influence is based on the leader's position, credibility to a follower group, analysis and technical skills, and overall communication competence.

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What exactly is meant by leadership and management communication?

- People can be assigned the position of leader, but leadership occurs not from the assignment itself but through communication behaviors in interactions with others. In other words, leadership is socially constructed in the complex interplay of communication among leaders and others within ever-changing environments. Leaders may occupy a specific role or position, while leadership is the negotiation and construction of meanings that help to support or retard a variety of actions

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What exactly is meant by leadership and management communication?

- Management fulfills specifically defined roles designed to facilitate work to support organizational goals. Managers are given legitimate power to influence the behavior of employees.
- Based on formal supervisor–employee relationships, managerial communication directs work assignments, work evaluation, needed changes, and all other aspects of organizational action for goal achievement.

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Theories of Leadership and Management

- **Trait Approaches:** Early theories of effective leadership assumed leaders had innate traits that made them effective. That is, great leaders were considered to be born with the ability for leadership. This theory of the “great man” first surfaced in the writings of the early Greeks and Romans and is prevalent today among those who believe that leadership cannot be developed, that you either have leadership qualities or you don’t.

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Theories of Leadership and Management

- **Style Approaches:** The style approach theories for understanding leadership attempt to identify a range of general approaches leaders use to influence goal achievement. These approaches are theorized to be based on the leader's assumptions about what motivates people to accomplish goals.
- Autocratic Style of leader or manager who makes decisions with little influence from others.
- Democratic Style of leader or manager who involves followers in decision making.
- Laissez-faire Style of leader or manager who behaves as a nonleader. Individuals and groups are expected to make their own decisions because of a hands-off approach from the leader.

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Theories of Leadership and Management

- **Impoverished Management:** is characterized by low concern for interpersonal relationships and task accomplishment. The impoverished leader makes few attempts to influence people toward task or goal achievement. This leader frequently dislikes leadership responsibilities and lets others take responsibility that rightfully belongs to the leader.
- This leader often is uncomfortable with leadership and intellectually resists the need for it. Many impoverished leaders are excellent technically; they have been promoted to supervision or management because of strong technical skills. Technical skills, however, do not prepare them for managing people or letting others accomplish tasks the leaders themselves have been used to doing.
- Impoverished leaders may even think if people would do their jobs there would be little need for leadership. Such leaders are most often found in legitimate or formal leadership positions rather than in emergent positions as the choice of a group of peers. These leaders may be primarily responsible for the failure of a group, yet they can rarely claim much credit for a group's success. Groups with impoverished leaders often succeed despite the leader and through the emergent leadership of other group members

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Theories of Leadership and Management

- **Middle-of-the-road management Style of leader** who balances task and people concerns; commonly referred to as compromise management or leadership.
- Sometimes referred to as compromise leadership, the middle-of-the-road leader negotiates and compromises to achieve workable agreements and directions for action. This leader is more concerned with practical versus excellent solutions.
- The middle-of-the-road leader will seek the “middle” position to provide everyone with some stake in the decision.
- **Country club management Style of leader or manager** who emphasizes interpersonal relationships at the expense of goal achievement.
- The country club leader wants to be liked and to have a group of followers who feel supported by the leader. This leader provides an interpersonal relationship bond that is low on task emphasis and high in interpersonal support.
- These managers may not develop the task abilities of their employees. They may, however, lead successful groups when group members themselves have high task motivation and require only interpersonal support to maintain motivation

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Theories of Leadership and Management

- **Task management Style of leader or manager** who is concerned with goals or task achievement while exhibiting little concern for personal relationships; commonly referred to as autocratic leadership.
- This leader makes decisions and expects compliance. He or she often enforces decisions with little employee input and is willing to defend his or her position when necessary. The task leader values efficiency and will make quick and timely decisions.
- Task leadership, however, may be appropriate when a group is hopelessly deadlocked on an issue and someone needs to take responsibility for making a decision. Furthermore, surveys of top management in leading U.S. companies indicate task leadership is a prevalent style preference among highly influential managers

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Theories of Leadership and Management

- **Team leadership or management** is the theoretical ideal. Team leaders exhibit high concern for both task and interpersonal relationships by emphasizing goal accomplishment while supporting people.
- Exhibiting high concern for both task and interpersonal relationships, team leaders emphasize goal accomplishment whi
- Team leadership fosters a sense of “we” with high performance standards. This leadership shares decision making and strives for problem solving designed to solve rather than postpone problems.
- Team leaders respect different points of view and value diversity as long as all contribute to the group effort. Team leaders, however, must have capable and willing team members for successful efforts.
- Although the style is highly desirable, team leaders depend on team followers for this leadership style to work. Team members who support one another but who do not have enough ability or information to work on problems will not be able to produce a high-quality decision

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Theories of Leadership and Management

- **Situational Approach:** Both the trait and style approaches failed to describe comprehensively why particular approaches work in one set of circumstances and fail in another. In response to this difficulty, situational approaches, or contingency approaches, were developed to understand better how leaders interact with followers and the requirements of a particular environment.
- In 1967, Fred Fiedler pioneered understanding leadership styles based on the concept of contingencies.
- He suggested leader effectiveness could be evaluated only in relationship to how style choices related to contingencies in particular situations
- Task and interpersonal relationships were important, but also to be considered were the leader's power position and how rewards and punishment were handled.
- According to Fiedler, the approach or style an effective leader chose depended on a combination of task, relationship, power, and situational contingencies. Along with others, Fiedler's work began to emphasize the interactional and complex nature of leadership.

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Theories of Leadership and Management

- Building on the work of Blake and Mouton, Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard (1977) proposed a concept of leadership that suggested the appropriateness and effectiveness of leadership behaviors could not be determined by the specific behavior of the leader but by the appropriateness of the behavior in a particular situation.
- Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory postulated that effectiveness of a particular leader was related to the leader's selection of behavior appropriate to the maturity level of the follower group. Maturity was based on achievement, motivation, ability, education, experience, and the willingness to participate responsibly in goal-oriented activities. In other words, the maturity level of the follower group was the primary factor that determined an effective leadership style. Hersey and Blanchard described situational leadership as dependent on concern for relationships, concern for task, and concern for maturity of followers

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Theories of Leadership and Management

- **Transformational Approach:** The trait, style, and situational approaches discussed all focus on the leader's interactions or transactions with followers. Implied in these approaches is the leader's ability to motivate followers through situational understanding and the control of rewards and (in some cases) punishment.
- Transformational approaches to leadership suggest that inspirational leadership goes beyond the transaction between leaders and followers and literally transforms or changes situations and circumstances through personal example and the rhetorical capability for establishing vision.
- Hackman and Johnson, in summarizing research on transformational leaders, conclude five primary characteristics appear in one form or another. Transformational leaders are creative, interactive, visionary, empowering, and passionate. In the Putting It All Together section of this book, Hackman and Johnson contribute an essay expanding these five characteristics

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Theories of Leadership and Management

- **Discursive approaches** Examine leadership process through discourses that influence the accomplishment or lack of accomplishment of tasks and goals.
- Discursive leadership approaches explicitly direct our study of leadership away from specific individuals to a broad communication focus.
- Discursive leadership approaches examine discourse as influences for the accomplishment or lack of accomplishment of tasks and goals. Fairhurst characterized the term discourse as little “d” or big “D.” The little “d” discourse refers “to the study of talk and text in social practice. Viewed as a local achievement, discourse embodies cultural meanings; it is a medium for social interaction where the details of language in use and interaction process are central concerns for analysts.... However, what does it mean to study talk and text? Talk-in-interaction represents sociality, the process of messaging and conversing.

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Distinction Between Leadership & Management

- There is a profound difference between management and leadership, and both are important. “To manage” means “to bring about, to accomplish, to have charge of or responsibility for, to conduct.” “Leading” is “influencing, guiding in direction, course, action, opinion.” The distinction is crucial. Managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right thing. The difference may be summarized as activities of vision and judgment—effectiveness—versus activities of mastering routines—efficiency.
- Bennis and Nanus (1985) further contended the vision leaders provide is the clearest of all distinctions between leaders and managers. To provide vision requires marshaling the “spiritual and emotional” resources of the organization as reflected in its values, commitment, and aspirations. Management, on the other hand, is charged with directing the physical resources of the organization, its people, machines, and products.
- Competent managers can get work done efficiently, but excellence comes from leaders who inspire followers to emotional involvement with work and their organization.

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Leadership & Management Challenges

- **Confronting Ethics and Failures:** High-visibility ethical abuses and a host of failures and mistakes have put new pressures on leaders and managers to respond rapidly when problems arise. Oil spills, voter fraud, poor crisis management, and a host of other circumstances have contributed to leaders losing their jobs and even worse facing prosecution for organizational activities.
- Ellen Van Velsor and Jean Brittain Leslie (1995), in reviewing studies of why executives derail (have negative outcomes), identified four primary themes enduring over time and across countries. According to them, executives derailed because they were challenged by (1) problems with interpersonal relationships, (2) failure to meet business objectives, (3) failure to build and lead a team, and (4) inability to change or adapt during a transition

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Leadership & Management Challenges

- **Changing Organizational Forms:** Bennis (1992) contended “the organizations of the future will be networks, clusters, cross-functional teams, temporary systems, ad hoc task forces, lattices, modules, matrices—almost anything but pyramids.” We refer to these new organizational forms as spider webs, dynamic networks, virtual organizations, and post bureaucratic organizations, among others. Many describe the organizations of the twenty-first century as borderless and boundaryless.
- The “middleless” organization is the new organizational design. Fewer managers with larger spans of control characterize organizational hierarchies in almost all industries.
- Work teams are given higher degrees of autonomy and control over immediate work situations.
- The goals are to increase competitiveness and improve employee morale.
- Traditional responsibilities of managers are replaced by passing power and control to lower levels in the organization. Managers become facilitators, coaches, teachers, and experts, whereas previously they may have been controllers, directors, planners, and rewarders.

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Leadership & Management Challenges

- Leaders also are faced with the fluid nature of the formal organization. Mergers with other organizations change processes, policies, markets, and leader responsibilities.
- As Michael Hogg, Dann Van Knippenberg, and David Rast, III (2010) describe, a key leader responsibility is intergroup leadership whether within one organization or across organizational boundaries. Leaders often must work with more than one formal group to achieve desired outcomes.
- Authority structures, legitimate differences in cultures, perceptions, and overall approaches to work all are challenging. Acquisitions of companies or product lines provide similar challenges

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Leadership & Management Challenges

- **Global and Multicultural Changes:** Sims and Lorenzi (1992) provided a thoughtful discussion of several global issues affecting leadership challenges today. The authors describe economic challenges that include (1) increasing competition among firms on a global basis; (2) emphasis on speed, service, and information, a mandate for flexibility and change in organizations; (3) creative and conceptual demands of a computer-based work setting, with great opportunities for value-added labor.
- Sims and Lorenzi believed leaders must deal with the changing socioeconomic status and demographics of employees with a need for more training, flexibility, and lifelong learning.

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Leadership & Management Challenges

- **Chaos, Flux, and Speed:** Justin Menkes (2011), referring to leading under pressure and chaos, suggested great leaders become more precise under pressure.
- Menkes concluded leaders need to maintain clarity of thought important for big picture thinking under crisis conditions. Robert Safian (2012) coined the term “Generation Flux” to describe the pace of change in the economy making chaos a defining feature of modern organizations.
- **Inclusive-Participation Process:** Organizations of today and tomorrow must understand the concept of multiple stakeholders and how their participation in all aspects of organizational life contributes to a variety of organizational outcomes.
- Stanley Deetz (1993) described stakeholders (groups with organizational interests) as consumers, workers, investors, suppliers, host communities, general society, and the world ecological community. The managing process or coordination of these groups contributes to what Deetz called outcome interests: goods and services, income distribution, use of resources, environmental effects, economic stability, labor force development, lifestyles, profits, personal identities, and child-rearing practices.

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Leadership & Management Challenges

- Regardless of the precise understanding of who is a stakeholder and the variety of potential outcome interests, a clear pattern of inclusive participation emerges for marketplace competitiveness and to meet a variety of stakeholder needs and demands. Leaders and managers are directly challenged to both address and generate these high participation processes.
- **Building trust:** The global financial crisis that began in 2008 produced a history-making example of distrust, a situation my colleagues and I have described as a sweeping and almost unprecedented “trust crash.” Few would disagree distrust replaced trust for many if not the majority of people in the United States as unemployment rose, home foreclosures increased, and financial executives received large bonuses.

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Determinants of Leadership Effectiveness

- **Communication Competencies as Determinants of Leadership Effectiveness:** Research on managerial effectiveness and perceptions of effectiveness supports the importance of communication competence. Historically leadership experts such as Chris Argyris (1962), Peter Drucker (1966), and Bennis and Nanus (1985) described communication effectiveness as a central element for overall managerial effectiveness.
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Determinants of Leadership Effectiveness

- **Predispositions For Leadership Communication::** الاستعدادات للاتصال القيادي
- Whether or not we choose to attempt leadership relates to our assessment of our own competencies, the needs of the situation, the receptivity of a follower group, and our potential ability to influence (power).
- Those high in anxiety about communication, for example, are less likely to engage in leadership attempts than those lower in communication apprehension. Highly task-oriented individuals are more likely to adopt leadership styles reflecting task emphasis, whereas those preferring close interpersonal relationships are more likely to adopt styles reflecting their concern for people.
- Concerns for task and people relationships, follower maturity, personal assessments of communication competence, and assessments of influence or power positions also are reflected in our predispositions for leadership communication, predispositions that subsequently influence strategic objectives and tactical choices

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Determinants of Leadership Effectiveness

- **Strategic Communication Objectives For Leadership:** Strategic objectives for leadership communication can be described as the general game plans leaders employ for conducting communication based on personal preferences or predispositions and on assessments of the probable outcomes within particular contexts.
- Tactics are the specific behavior choices made by leaders to influence followers in specific situations and to support overall strategies. Strategic objectives are related to the big D discourses that relate to underlying assumptions about how the organization operates within a complex environment.

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Determinants of Leadership Effectiveness

- **Communication Tactics For Leadership:** Leadership tactics can be described as the communication behaviors used to support authoritarian, participative, and avoidance preferences as well as to establish vision, manage meaning, generate trust, and communicate regard and success orientations.
- Specific tactics are influenced by individual preferences and strategies, by communication competencies of leaders and followers, and by overall organizational values and expectations about how leadership works.
- Military organizations, for example, encourage authoritarian leadership, whereas organizations involved in research and development of new products usually stress more participative approach.

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Determinants of Leadership Effectiveness

- **Power Bases For Leaders:** Power is pervasive in organizations. The structure of the organization defines formal authority, control, and disciplinary processes. The ideology of a particular organization is evidenced in its structure, in its assumptions about its specific role in a broader society, and by its overall culture.
- Organizational cultures form a sometimes hidden power structure in which all leaders and organizational members interact. Core beliefs and values along with formal structures generate what comes to be recognized as legitimate or rightful power becomes the basic authority and control system of the organization.
- Organizational culture defines through myths, stories, and ways of talking about the organization what behaviors are expected, what behaviors are to be avoided, and who importantly makes evaluative judgments.



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Determinants of Leadership Effectiveness

- To understand power interactions it is helpful to think about some of the power bases available to leaders and organizational members. John French and Bertram Raven (1968) developed a now classic description of five power types: legitimate, reward, coercive, referent, and expert. They also discussed connection power. Although described as individual power bases, each of these types of power is exercised within the broader discourses of organizational power.
- **Legitimate power:** Power emerging from the positions, titles, or roles people occupy
- **Reward power:** Power based on the leader's control and distribution of tangible and intangible resources.
- **Coercive power:** Power based on the sanctions or punishments within the control of the leader.

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Determinants of Leadership Effectiveness

- **Referent power:** Power based on others identifying with the leader.
- **Expert or information power :** Power based on information the leader knows as a result of organizational interaction or areas of technical specialty.
- **Connection power :** Power resulting from whom the leader knows and the support he or she has from others in the organization.



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Determinants of Leadership Effectiveness

- **Situational Analysis for Leadership**
- Understanding the situations or circumstances requiring leadership is fundamental for effectiveness.
- The ability to assess thoughtfully the requirements of the problem and the group attempting its solutions contributes to the selection of effective strategies and tactics for leadership.

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Increasing Leadership Effectiveness

- The communication competencies needed to increase leadership capabilities can be described as an expansion of those competencies necessary for interpersonal and conflict management effectiveness.
- The knowledge, sensitivity, skills, and values identified and developed in previous chapters all are important for effective leadership, especially if we take the position that organizations need leadership from all position levels.
- As previously suggested, effective leaders understand the problems facing their group and have skill in helping diverse individuals approach common problems. Effective leaders participate in group efforts and encourage others to participate by being open-minded and exhibiting supportive behaviors. Effective leaders consult others and express sensitivity for disagreement. Effective leaders, however, will help groups make decisions when consensus is unlikely. Finally, effective leaders empower others by sharing success and credit.

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Increasing Leadership Effectiveness

- Self-awareness is a key to leadership effectiveness. Understanding personal preferences, behaviors, and problem situations is fundamental to discovering why some leadership efforts succeed while others fail. Return for a moment to your personal theory of leadership.

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Increasing Leadership Effectiveness

- **Principled, Excellent and Ethical leadership** In their extensive study of successful teams, Carl Larson and Frank LaFasto (1989) identified **principled leadership** as one of the core characteristics of why successful teams develop. According to Larson and LaFasto, principled leadership provides a consistent message, has a perspective for unleashing talent, practices ego suppression, and creates leaders.
- Larson and LaFasto (1989) found that “effective team leaders begin by establishing a vision of the future. In the most common language, this need was articulated as the clear, elevating goal.” In other words, principled leadership establishes and communicates a vision that creates change by unleashing the talent of team members

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Increasing Leadership Effectiveness

- Jim Collins (2001), in his extensive long-term study of successful organizations, described what he called Level 5 leaders as those most likely to contribute to **excellence**. According to Collins, Level 5 leaders “build enduring greatness through a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will.... Level 5 leaders channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great company..

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Increasing Leadership Effectiveness

- **Ethical communication behaviors** are fundamental to principled leadership and excellence. As we discussed in Chapter 4, ethical communication behaviors explore the complexity of issues, present information openly and fairly with concern for message distortion, share motivations or biases that may influence positions, and encourage opposing viewpoints.

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Identifying Constructive Communication Behaviors for Leadership

- Gail Fairhurst and Robert Sarr (1996) described the “art of framing” as managing the language of leadership.
- They propose framing a message is like framing a picture. When framing is successful the message gains impact and minimizes distortions. Framing is related to authenticity and ethical behaviors. Deliberate language choices require continuous evaluation for their support of the highest of ethic.
- Most effective leaders develop competencies for framing meaning for others. Next we consider constructive framing opportunities leaders have in the following general areas: task, procedural, and interpersonal responsibilities

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Identifying Constructive Communication Behaviors for Leadership

- **Task Responsibilities** :Whether leading a major corporation or leading a group in a class project, leaders have task, procedural, and interpersonal responsibilities. In the task area, leaders are responsible for facilitating problem analysis, idea generation, idea evaluation, solution generation, and decision implementation.
- **Procedural Responsibilities** : Leaders also are responsible for procedures such as goal setting, agenda making, discussion clarification, and both consensus and disagreement identification. Leaders must be able to introduce ideas, give directions, and call for action. They ask for ideas and the participation of team members.
- **Interpersonal Responsibilities**: Finally, leaders make significant contributions to the interpersonal dynamics of groups. Leaders contribute to participation, group climate, and conflict management. As previously suggested, effective leaders generate an environment in which team members can achieve excellence because they have the confidence to take risks.

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Identifying Constructive Communication Behaviors for Leadership

- Confidence to take risks comes from the supportive climate of effective interpersonal relationships. Leaders are responsible for reflecting feelings and supporting others, empathizing, and stopping personal attacks or other counterproductive individual or group behaviors.



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