

Traditional Leadership Assumptions and Related Consequences

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Category	#	Assumption	Why Assume This?	Example Leaders' Behaviors	Short-Term Results on Team
Characterizing Leadership	1	Leaders need authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams only follows leaders with authority Leaders need authority to control teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make decisions without team input Emphasize the disciplinary consequences for poor performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliant Worry about negative consequences if fail to perform well Unwilling to voice concerns
	2	Leaders are heroes who leave a legacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams are incapable of solving problems or helping themselves without a leader Leadership is about rescuing teams from problems and incidents Leaders are smarter than team members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make all team decisions Require team members to obtain approval from the leader before doing anything 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliant Discouraged from making decisions or owning problems
	3	Intimacy weakens leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams may take advantage of leaders who are intimate and vulnerable Leaders need to avoid having a manager-friendship conflict Leaders do not trust teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid sharing personal life with the team Discuss only work with the team while minimizing interactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Believe that the leader doesn't know the team well or how the leader affects their feelings Worries that the leader does not personally like the team Do not feel valued
	4	Giving away power weakens leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders who empower teams weaken their authority and appear to have less value and therefore dispensable Organizations trust and assign power to leaders but not team members Team members are not smart enough to handle power effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make all decisions for the team Become too involved in day-to-day work Limit what team members can do and say to other teams and customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliant Wait for the leader to approve work or respond to requests Frustrated with delays

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Characterizing Leadership (continued)	5	Only one person – typically a manager – functions as the leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams with more than one leader have too many conflicts and productivity problems Organizations assign leadership roles only to executive and middle-manager positions Leaders feel threaten if team members try to lead (taking away authority from the leader) Teams are incapable of leading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dominate team discussions Discipline team members who try to lead Discourage teams from being too vocal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discouraged to collaborate with the leader Believe the leader will not consider opposing views Unsure of the boundaries between following and leading
	6	The leader is the smartest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders believe that intelligence is rare and that they are intelligent Over time, leaders assume that teams cannot figure out any solutions or make sound decisions without help from leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit what team members can do to contribute to projects Criticize team members when they make mistakes Frequently remind the team of past mistakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rely on the leader to make all decisions Withhold suggestions Fear being criticized by the leader
Characterizing Team Members	7	Team members are the cause of unproductivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Because teams do the work, team members cause productivity problems Leaders do not consider (or know how to consider) root causes Leaders distrusts team members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor work too closely Disciplines teams unfairly Blame the team when deliverables are late, not to quality, or too costly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliant after being disciplined Distrust the leader when unfairly blames the team for problems
	8	Team members cannot be trusted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams are dishonest and lazy Without leaders constantly monitoring, teams fail to accomplish work on time and to quality Teams are not accountable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequently monitors teams Prevents teams from working from home Question team members' loyalty to the organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only feel obligated to work Distrust the leader
	9	Team members are less important than revenue, profits, operational expenses, and leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Without revenue and profits, organizations cannot pay teams Unproductive team members should be terminated during financial difficulties Leaders are more difficult to replace than team members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When profits are low, terminate team members Terminate unproductive team members rather than helping them improve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distrusts the leader Fear losing their jobs

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Working in Teams	10	Talking is more important than listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders know best • Leaders do not value team members' thoughts and input • Leaders do not know how to listen and may not be aware of this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interrupt team members when they are talking • Focuses on responding to team member comments without trying to understand the perspective • Argue with team members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withhold ideas and suggestions • Avoid talking with the leader
	11	Recognition is a formal process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders do not believe recognition is necessary except when the organization requires recognition • Leaders believe teams already know their value • Leaders believe that too much recognition is counter-effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complain about having to recognize the team • Display nonverbal behavior that implies a dislike for formal recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceive recognition to be artificial and a waste of time • Feel undervalued
Becoming a Leader	12	Leadership requires little or no training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because of initial accomplishments, leaders believe that they have mastered leadership • Because leadership is a simple concept, leaders require no ongoing training • Leaders perceive problems with teams and the organization to be caused by team members but not leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid any optional leadership training • Collect leadership books but do not read them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distrust the leader • Believe that the leader does not value training or want to improve
	13	Leaders know how effective their leadership is	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders Believe that their leadership is self-apparent and effective • Leaders assume that their behavior has a positive impact on team members • Leaders are afraid of feedback and prefer to think that they are effective leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never request 360-feedback or ask team for feedback • Cause team members to be uncomfortable when they try to provide feedback • Punish team members who offer constructive feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withhold feedback from the leader • Complain to each other about the leader