

Leadership

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Objectives:

1. Define leadership.
2. Identify key characteristics of successful leaders.
3. Learn how to develop your leadership skills.
4. Highlight common leadership roles for orthopedic surgeons.

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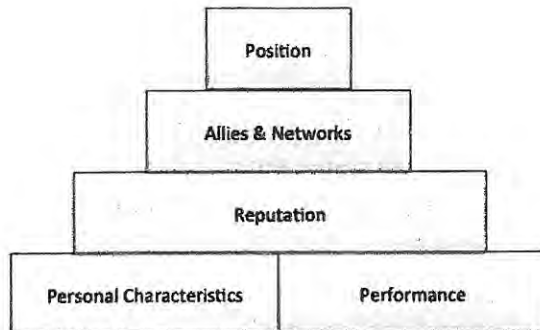
Key Takeaways:

1. A leader sets goals, then motivates and guides others to achieve those goals.
2. Leadership is built on personal character, performance track record, and reputation.
3. Humble confidence and dogged determination is essential for truly effective leadership.
4. Creating stable relationships with employees, colleagues, and allied business organizations is critical for maintaining leadership and advancing in position.
5. The power of position should be wielded with a constant eye towards reaching the organization's goals.

Introduction

Defining "leadership" can be a difficult task – is a leader an inspiring person, a powerful person, simply a goal-directed and driven person, or some combination of all of these? Who comes to mind when you think of great leaders – perhaps Nelson Mandela, Abraham Lincoln, Steve Jobs, Mother Teresa, or Vince Lombardi? Each of these people utilized vastly different skill sets in completely different circumstances, but yet all are considered great leaders.

For this short chapter, we will define leadership as "being able to set goals for an organization, then motivating, inspiring, and guiding the people within that organization to achieve those goals." A myriad of frameworks and strategies for building leadership have been created and popularized. This chapter will summarize some of these methodologies; in order to best organize the key aspects of multiple schools of thought, a "leadership power base pyramid" (formulated by Jackson and Bunderson) will be described.¹ Together, the building blocks of this pyramid form the foundation for effective leadership.



Chapter 1. Personal Characteristics and Performance

A common thread running through many leadership theories is that one's personal attributes define the type of leader he or she can become. Our own personalities, goals, strengths, and weaknesses generate how we deal with challenges and how we work with others to navigate them. The foundation of the power base pyramid is exactly this: personal characteristics and performance underlie all other aspects of leadership. This chapter will summarize how several successful leadership models integrate personality and performance.

Stephen Covey wrote one of the most commercially-successful leadership and self-improvement books ever published, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*.² In his book, the first three habits deal with personal mindset and productivity. Covey states that Habit 1, "proactivity," is much more than "merely taking initiative." Instead, it is taking responsibility for one's own life direction – you more than anyone else are in control of your destiny. A person cannot effectively lead others until first taking on the proper mindset to guide his or her own efforts and actions.

Habit 2, "beginning with the end in mind," emphasizes that creating a blueprint of the goals you want to accomplish first requires an honest evaluation of priorities and a long-term viewpoint. Covey advocates writing a personal mission statement and using this as a compass for goal-setting. Likewise, leaders within organizations first must determine the core purpose and goals for their businesses – what they want to be truly successful at doing. A clearly-defined mission then serves to guide the decisions a business makes.

Habit 3, "putting first things first," is focused on priority management – Covey views this as the outgrowth of Habits 1 and 2. Once proper objectives are chosen, the challenge then becomes how best to reach these goals. Covey's "time management matrix" has become very popular and contains four quadrants: urgent and important, non-urgent and important, urgent and non-important, and non-urgent and non-important. While it is

obvious that urgent, important tasks should be dealt with first, the difficulty often lies in properly categorizing the various tasks in our lives and our businesses.

It is important to understand the difference between Habits 2 and 3 – both are important, but goal-setting has to come before administrative planning. The great business scholar Peter Drucker succinctly summarized this crucial idea by saying, “Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things.”³ John Kotter has written an excellent article expounding on the differences between leadership and management; he states “leadership is about coping with change” while “management is about coping with complexity.”⁴

What are some other personal characteristics that leaders possess? Daniel Goleman describes “emotional intelligence (EI)” as one of the most crucial traits of successful leaders.⁵ He identifies five components of EI:

- ♣ Self-awareness: realistic appraisal of one’s own strength and weaknesses
- ♣ Self-regulation: ability to manage and control emotional responses
- ♣ Motivation: drive to achieve for sake of achievement and passion for work
- ♣ Empathy: consideration for and understanding of others’ emotions
- ♣ Social skill: skill in motivating people towards a desired goal

Goleman says that while the first three traits primarily influence self-management, empathy and social skill play a large part in how a person interacts with others in team and business settings. He also believes that EI traits can be learned and strengthened over time, although this requires focus and diligence.

In his classic book *Good to Great*, Jim Collins describes characteristics of companies that made tremendous and sustained leaps ahead of their competition.⁶ Each of these companies had what Collins terms a “Level 5” leader during their transitions. His definition of a Level 5 leader is someone who “builds enduring greatness through a paradoxical combination of personal humility plus professional will.” Level 1-4 leaders range from “highly capable individuals” to “effective leaders”; Level 4 leaders are often highly successful for short periods, but often are not able to put aside their own egos and thus their companies are not able to sustain success (Chrysler CEO Lee Iacocca is cited as an example of this). Collins emphasizes that these leaders is able to successfully place the interests of their organization ahead of their own ego – their ambition is for their companies’ success more than their own. They credit others for successes and take blame themselves for failures. This humility is combined with the will to achieve superb results by focusing all the company’s energy on what the organization does best.

Chapter 2. Reputation

The next tier in the power base pyramid is reputation. A strong reputation gives a leader credibility, and past accomplishments engender confidence that future success will ensue. Reputations takes years to build, but can crumble in an instant. There are myriad examples, in politics, business, and sports. Being a physician carries with it an innate reputation; doctors are typically considered pillars of their communities, people who have

devoted years of study and training to be able to help others. However, this professional reputation carries responsibility with it, and maintaining one's reputation is crucial to being a leader within medicine.

Professional ethics for physicians is a broad topic and encompasses many aspects of medical care. In the process of building a thriving surgical practice, orthopedic surgeons have many interactions with device and implant manufacturers. The U.S. Department of Justice has taken an increased interest in these relationships, and so caution is needed in proceeding with consulting arrangements and royalties from product development. While a surgeon should be fairly rewarded for intellectual property and time spent in product development, the potential public perception of these arrangements should be weighed. Appearance of bias for financial gain can have devastating consequences for surgeons' reputations.

Chapter 3. Building Networks and Allies

In today's world, relationships between businesses are so complex and the economic winds shift so rapidly that building networks and creating allies are essential to staying ahead of the competition. Ability to choose and cultivate the right alliances is critical for being a successful leader, and doing so can often vault a person into more-influential positions. Even the most credible leaders require advocates and personal help to achieve goals. The most effective leader will actively develop alliances to most efficiently realize objectives. The health care industry is no exception – as hospitals merge and more independent physician practices integrate with large hospital systems, alliances are crucial. The new U.S. health care legislation, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), is implementing accountable care organizations (ACOs), which will further pressure integration of health services in America.

In *Seven Habits*, Stephen Covey addresses the importance of networks and interpersonal relationships through Habits 4-6.² Habit 4 is "think win-win." Game theory is now a large part of business planning, and while its modeling is intricate the basic premise is simple: organizations need to determine who stands to benefit from a relationship. If both parties benefit, even if one party gains more than the other, the relationship is more stable than if one party receives no benefit or is harmed. An organization should make maintaining win-win alliances a major priority of their business plan, and should always be seeking new opportunities to create these relationships.

"Win-win" is also important within a business. Happy employees make good employees. When workers feel they have responsibility and freedom to perform within a company, their productivity and creativity can blossom. Southwest Airlines is a fascinating case study of this concept, as the book *Nuts!* by Kevin and Jackie Freiberg reveals.⁷ Southwest has been able to maintain profitability and grow market share in an industry that has faced a decade of instability and huge losses, largely as a result of motivated employees who take ownership of meeting the company's challenges. In turn, Southwest allows employees to own company shares and goes to great lengths to create an enjoyable, even fun, work culture.

Habit 5 is “seek first to understand, then to be understood.” Covey cites a medical analogy: diagnose first, then prescribe. In order to understand a problem, we first have to listen; only then can a well-informed decision be made. Maintaining effective relationships with employees and allies hinges on effective and open communication. Going back to Goleman’s concept of emotional intelligence, empathy and social skill come into play in these situations, where a leader needs to put aside his or her own thoughts and ideas enough to consider the wisdom in what others are saying.

Covey’s Habit 6 is “synergize.” While this word has probably become overused in the business consulting world, the idea that “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts” remains true. Integrating all members of the organization in a way that everyone will be able to contribute with their individual strengths is challenging. Leaders need to create an environment that does not stifle people, while at the same time identifying who the right people are. In *Good to Great*, Jim Collins refers to this as “getting the right people on the bus.”

Chapter 4. Position

Position sits atop the power base pyramid. Attaining and maintaining position is founded on successfully integrating the lower levels of the pyramid, and it provides a leader with the most power with which to guide and change an organization. Position grants opportunities to make far-reaching decisions, but these decisions are often unpopular with at least some of the involved parties. Whether this means cutting jobs, reducing departmental budgets, or selling off a less-profitable division, leaders face tough consequences from decisions and need to be able to accept them before making the difficult choices.

Gifted leaders know when to lean on the power of their position, and when to influence others using less-forceful methods. A domineering or dictatorial leader often does not last long. Surgeons can easily fall into this trap, as surgical training is very hierarchical and prone to malignant interpretation.

Physicians can hold many different positions of leadership power. Owning a medical practice, serving as an academic department chair, sitting on a hospital executive board, or holding office within medical professional societies all carry influence. More and more physicians are running for political office as well. Doctors bring a unique perspective and knowledge base to any table, and their input is often valued. Physicians should not shy away from holding leadership positions, but should choose their opportunities carefully so as to maximize their impact and not deviate from their personal and professional goals.

Chapter 5. Balance

Physicians are notorious workaholics. While wielding influence through leadership positions is great in principle, the reality of caring for patients while performing many other leadership tasks can wear a doctor down quickly. When this happens, all aspects of one’s personal and professional life can begin to unravel. The work put into achieving leadership status can be undone. How do we keep this from happening?

First is to recognize that burnout can happen, and what the warning signs are. Several articles have been published in the orthopedic literature dealing with burnout and loss of professional satisfaction.⁸⁻⁹ While most prevalent during residency, more than 25% of attending orthopedic surgeons report high levels of burnout. Stress and burnout contribute to medical error. Workplace stress, lack of social support, depression, and substance abuse have all been identified as risks for physician impairment.

Steven Covey's Habit 7 is "self-renewal."² He details physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects, but his primary point is that without a concerted effort to maintain balance and set limits, a leader can easily spin off into burnout and lose focus of the goals he or she has so meticulously set. Making time for family and friends, exercise, and activities that one enjoys is essential to staying an effective medical leader.

Conclusion

This chapter seeks to introduce several successful frameworks for leadership development, placing them into context for the physician. Medicine is in great need of leadership, as this is a period of dramatic change in how the American health system operates. Physician leaders need to consciously construct their leadership skills and style in order to benefit their profession and patients.

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