



Head & Heart is a collection of ideas, resources and frameworks to support your personal and professional development in leading yourself, others and organizations with head and heart.

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## From the Editor

### Dear Readers,

Each of us knows what it's like to watch a small child sum up the courage and the strength to take those wobbly movements that mark their first steps. Whilst initially challenged by falling down, over time, a small child gains competence and confidence through experience and the watchful eyes (and helping hands) of those nearby.

A first time leader's experience is very similar. One's attitude towards leading, the real time invested in truly leading and the first steps will set your leading patterns for years to come.

Consider this issue of Head & Heart your "watchful eyes" regarding this crucial passage of leadership development. We trust you'll find one or more ideas to support your process of learning as a leader.

Dan Norenberg

## Look Inside

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## Thought Leadership

### What Gives You the Right to Lead?

*"Nothing can stop the person with the right mental attitude from achieving their goal; Nothing on earth can help the person with the wrong mental attitude."*

Thomas Jefferson

How would you answer that question? It's simple, contains only seven words and gets straight to the point. It is not easy to answer and is sure to cause major discomfort in many people.

Over the past five years, I have worked with over 400 first-time leaders and have asked every single one of them this same question. It has proven to be a powerful catalyst in getting new leaders in touch with their feelings on being a leader and shows very clearly the basic attitude with which they are starting their leadership journey.

More importantly, **how the answer is used to plan their development** also has a huge impact on whether their leadership journey will continue onwards or end at this level.

I've noticed three broad patterns in the answers, each immediately suggesting an important piece of development work for that individual.

#### 1. "I don't know"

This suggests a lack of self-awareness, particularly around the individual strengths of that leader. This can be addressed, for example with a psychometric instrument and/or a good 360-feedback to give them greater self-awareness.

#### 2. "My technical skills and competence"

Most of the leaders I work with were often promoted for the results they achieved. They have proven that they can lead themselves. The danger lies in making the assumption that what got the leader promoted will keep them there. Helping them recognize and value that their new responsibility is to develop others to the same or higher level of competence they previously achieved is key.

#### 3. "My boss thinks I can do it"

This sadly is an answer that often comes from leaders who have not yet given themselves permission to lead. Their attitude towards the team is almost apologetic: "Sorry I got promoted, it could have been one of you." Helping these leaders identify their vision of what they stand for and how they want to show up as a leader is critical. The strength and clarity of that vision is a magnet, a beacon which can draw others to follow them. Some might even call this "charisma."

Each leader's answer will normally contain at least some elements of all the above patterns. The point is to use this as an aid to planning the right development mix and prioritization for that leader to bloom in their new role.

Michael Couch

## Leading Self

### Five Steps to First Time Leader Success

Congratulations! You're a newly appointed member of your company's management team. You may have become a project manager, team leader or the head of a small department of people that report either directly or indirectly to or through you.

You feel a certain sense of pride and accomplishment in this promotion, and that your hard work and results as an individual contributor have been recognized. You feel that you've finally "made it." On one hand, you are right. You developed yourself and earned the right to be promoted.

I've worked with hundreds of first time leaders over the past several years and the majority of these people shared with me that they did not feel adequately prepared for the transition from individual contributor to first time leader. While each had a slightly different opinion of why this transition was so difficult, the core issue was often difficulty recognizing the importance of getting things done through others rather than on their own. This critical shift in mindset and behaviors is essential for first time leaders to be successful.

Here are five steps to ensure that your first time leader role is a successful one.

1. Understand that while your new role comes with some authority, the real measure of a leader is their ability to influence others. Influence is more powerful than authority as it gives followers choice, rather than demanding compliance and comes more from how people experience you than from your technical expertise.

2. Make time for others, remembering that people issues take two to three times longer than technical or business issues.

3. Commit to strengthening others through coaching and resist the temptation to be the "top problem solver" in your team. You will also have to solve problems from time to time, but being conscious to coach at every opportunity will breed an atmosphere of learning and growth.



4. Being respected is more important than being liked. You will be tested constantly in your new leader role and you will serve yourself and others well by being personally consistent as often as you can. While there will always be exceptions to the rule, exceptions for one team member often have negative consequences for other team members.

5. Be yourself, and don't try to act as if you are perfect. If you're trying to be perfect, never admitting your weaknesses or mistakes, people will smell it. Nobody wants to follow a fake, they want to connect to the real you. Let the real you shine through.

*Dan Norenberg*

## Point of View

### Becoming a Leader

*"Leaders are made, not born – everyone has some leadership potential."*

*Warren Bennis*

What do you think? The quotation is a real teaser. It raises the whole nature versus nurture dichotomy. As leadership development consultants, we very often hear people described as natural leaders. I very rarely hear someone described as "great leader who has had great development." When I reflect on this, I remind myself that leadership is an art and we recognise it when we see it. We don't question how it has been learned. It is observed and judged.

But what is our thinking process when we are appointing someone to a leadership position for the first time and we need to know whether they can lead? Do we say this person appears to be a natural leader and therefore a natural for the role? Do we try to measure them psychometrically and put our faith in the predictive accuracy of the test? A study into the subjective experience of becoming a first time leader shows:

1. Becoming a leader requires a profound psychological adjustment – a transformation.
2. Becoming a leader is largely a process of learning from experience.

How do we deal with data like this? It indicates that becoming a leader is a complex transition. Perhaps only natural leaders can succeed at this. Or perhaps it is telling us that we need to develop a more realistic view of leadership development.

It all depends on your point of view.

*Ed Norman*

## Word Watch

### First Time Leader

What does it mean to be a first time leader? For some it is an issue of position and recognition – including the big rewards that accompany it. They cross the boundary between “employee” and “manager” which in hierarchical companies can be more akin to crossing a chasm. They have made it. They are now officially part of the group that directs rather than being directed.

Webster Dictionary’s defines this type of leader: “one having authority to direct; a chief; a commander” and for sure there is a place and time for this style of leadership in life. However, this leader is dependent on an external person or group which gives them the authority to lead. Once the external people withdraw their support, you are no longer a leader.

But leadership for the first time, or at any time, is never just a position. Its true meaning is found not in title, nor in the status bestowed upon you. It comes from within.

The initial trigger to lead can be subtle. The mindset switches from a critical “why don’t they do that?” to a self-challenging “why don’t I do that?” There is a sense of “I can make it happen,” even if you don’t know exactly how.

Thus, the first time leader is a pioneer. You accept the challenge to move into the unknown. You feel the desire to discover and master your own style of leadership, and use it to create newer, better products and processes.

And Webster’s Dictionary is also on hand to define this type of leader: “one who goes first.”

Steven Hunt

## Leading Others

### Meeting and Beating the Hardships

*“Leadership: the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it.”*

Dwight Eisenhower

In any situation in life there is a leader and followers. At work, stepping up from being a follower to a leader comes with mixed feelings: the joy of celebrating your promotion, the pride of achieving higher status, the uncertainty of not knowing exactly how to lead others.

The first time leader has also just gained entry into the school of hard knocks. For it is here that experience becomes one of the biggest teachers. Margaret Ann Gray, from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, claims that 34% of leaders learn from “hardships”

– in other words, experience. So what are the most common hardships that we see first time leaders struggling with?

**Failing to find time for leading.** This is more likely to be a failure to switch modes. The leader is stuck in “individual contributor” mode, which after all is a mode that has brought considerable individual success. Individual contributors focus on getting their own work completed on time. As first time leaders they fall into the trap of trying to take more work on. Leading others is about using your influence to achieve goals through others. Rather than taking more work on, the challenge is to get others to take the work on. This is where the skills of real delegation and empowerment come into play.

**Telling people once and believing it will stick.** Technical competence is closely associated with a systems approach. There is an input, a process and an output. The desired output is merely a question of getting the right mixture of inputs – a process which once established can be repeated endlessly. This systematic thinking does not lend itself to leading people.



Influencing others is more than stubbornly arguing, “Well, I told them what to do already. So maybe they need to clean their ears out and listen!” It is communicating with clarity, with patience, with empathy and with persistence to

make sure people stay on track.

**Using a one-trick-pony leadership style.** Everyone has a natural preference for leading and being led in a certain way. Inexperienced leaders start with this style. However, leadership is about influencing others to do things that they choose to do. And influencing means adaptation. It is essential to adapt your message to the situation and to the individual needs of the person you are leading.

There are many other hardships to encounter on the journey to becoming a respected and successful leader. But meeting these three hardships are the initial hurdles that all leaders have to overcome.

Steven Hunt

## Leading Organizations

### What's Mission Critical for your Future Success

*"In today's complex business environment, leadership must come alive throughout the organization, not just at executive levels."*

*Spreitzer & Cummings – The Future of Leadership*

Jack Welch made leadership development General Electric's most important business process and today it has become generally recognised that successful organizations need to build leadership capability widely and to give people the opportunity to exercise it. Companies such as these hold leadership development as mission critical and make considerable in-



vestment in the process for easing the transformation from producer to first time leader. And remember ... **they do not tolerate bad leadership.**

So what assumptions do these organizations make in appointing first time leaders? Firstly, that leadership, like any art, is easier to recognize than it is to define. Secondly, however probing assessment tests may be, they cannot show leadership talent and they cannot show trust. Without the capacity to trust and be trusted, what are the chances of generating followership in today's business environment where the exercise of leadership involves increasing networking skill and less dependence on hierarchy? It is only through the **reality of experience and**

**tough decision making** that an individual truly learns to perform and develop as a leader.

**The transformation to leadership is never to be underestimated at any career stage; Some people become leaders later in their careers.**

Linda Hill reminds us that leadership development is "a paradoxical proposition." Those responsible for it cannot tell new leaders what they need to know, even if they knew what to tell them. And the new leaders would lack the context to understand what they have to say. **Leaders have to act as leaders** before they really understand what their job is or what they are supposed to do.

This being the reality, experience of developing leaders shows clearly that people who have demonstrated, amongst other competencies, **self-insight, a desire to learn and a high proficiency to learn from experience** are the ones likely to be successful first time leaders and able to develop to be the effective leaders of the future. Linda Hill adds that if an organization could make **only one intervention** to improve the development of first time leaders, it would be in **training their senior executives on how to be better coaches.**

*Ed Norman*

## Food for Thought

**"The function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers."**

*Ralph Nader,  
American Activist and Lawyer*

## Leadership Facts and Figures

Only 32 percent of all people surveyed said that executives demonstrate strong commitment to leadership development and are willing to finance that commitment, while 81 percent are challenged to persuade managers to release high potentials for development assignments. Yet, participants cite lack of leadership as a threat to business growth. 69 percent are concerned that insufficient leadership talent will prevent their firms from capitalizing on new markets in emerging economies.

*Leadership 2012 Research Study  
Corporate University Exchange*

For more interesting **Leadership Facts and Figures** go to our Leader's Toolkit at [http://www.nvision-learning.com/leadersedge\\_toolkit.php](http://www.nvision-learning.com/leadersedge_toolkit.php)

## Challenging Situations?

What challenging situation would you like us to deal with in a future issue of Head & Heart? Get our perspective.

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We will of course ensure that your challenging situation remains anonymous.