Shared Leadership in Teams: Expanding Traditional Approaches to Leadership to Make Teams and Organizations More Effective

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“Leadership…the ability of an *individual* to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organization”

- House et al., 1999
Why and how is leadership evolving to increasingly be more shared, distributed and networked, what might be the advantages for teams and organizations and what are potential approaches to build systems of shared leadership?
Complex and ambiguous tasks
Dynamic environments
Differentiated, distributed expertise
Flatter systems

Changing nature of work and organizations = greater reliance on teams that...
Evolving Nature of Leadership
No one has a boss/manager

Colleagues negotiate responsibilities with peers

Each individual and team is responsible for acquiring own tools to do their work

No titles or promotions

Compensation decisions are peer-based
Shared Leadership

- Distribution of leadership influence across multiple team members
- Influence “claiming” and “granting” exchanges
- Mutual influence embedded in team member interactions related to providing direction, motivation and support
  - Greater utilization of knowledge and expertise
  - Team identification and mutual accountability
  - Commitment/engagement
Shared Leadership

- Greater utilization of knowledge and expertise
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- Commitment/engagement

= Superior Relational Coordination, Employee Engagement, Customer Focus

Performance

- Customer Satisfaction
- Customer Loyalty

Sources:
• What are potential boundary conditions of shared leadership and its relationship with team performance?
Team Performance

High Team Competence

Low Team Competence

Shared Leadership

• What are the enabling conditions that seem to promote the development of shared leadership?
Shared Leadership Enablers

- **Shared purpose**
  - Common understanding of team’s goals and purpose

- **Social support**
  - Team members’ efforts to provide emotional and psychological strength to each other

- **Team trust**
  - Team members’ willingness to assume vulnerability with others on the team

- **Voice**
  - Team members’ input into how the team carries out its purpose

• What is the role and forms of external team leadership that promote the development of shared leadership?
Evolving Nature of Leadership
• Empowering Leadership
  – Emphasize significance of work
  – Encourage participative decision making
  – Build efficacy of the team
  – Reduce bureaucracy

• Leader Humility
  – Demonstrate self-awareness
  – Acknowledge strengths and contributions of others
  – Open to new ideas and feedback

• Shared purpose
• Social support
• Team trust
• Voice
Shared Leadership

Leader Humility

Highly Proactive Team
Non Proactive Team

• **Empowering Leadership**
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• **Leader Humility**
  – Demonstrate self-awareness
  – Acknowledge strengths and contributions of others
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• **Active Coaching**
  – Help identify unique challenges
  – Assist with developing problem solutions
  – Facilitate team learning and adaptation

- Shared purpose
- Social support
- Team trust
- Voice
Adaptive Performance

High Active Coaching

Low

High

Little Active Coaching

1. Shared leadership is well suited for the evolving nature of work and can best utilize expertise
2. Teams need to have a clear sense of purpose and a high level of social support, trust and voice to engage in sharing leadership.
3. Formal team leaders can enable shared leadership in their teams by engaging in empowerment, demonstrating humility, and using active coaching.
1. Shared leadership is well suited for the evolving nature of work and can best utilize expertise

2. Teams need to have a clear sense of purpose and a high level of social support, trust and voice to engage in sharing leadership

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Current shared leadership projects:

• Buffalo Public Schools
• Interdisciplinary health care teams
• Sustainable urban transformation
Additional Resources

• Recommended academic research

• You tube clip on shared leadership concept
  – [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=haqy9ff2BS8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=haqy9ff2BS8)

• Great example of shared leadership (and followership) in sports – leadership philosophy of coach Phil Jackson
  – [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVWqTQn-jU4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVWqTQn-jU4)
  – See also, Jackson’s book, “11 Rings”

• Ted Talk by General Stanley McCrystal where shared leadership is covered

• Wall Street Journal editorial column
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