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STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:  
AN OPERATION DOMAIN APPLICATION

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## **Disclaimer**

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## *Contents*

	<i>Page</i>
DISCLAIMER .....	ii
LIST OF TABLES .....	v
PREFACE.....	vi
ABSTRACT.....	vii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
LEADERSHIP DOMAINS: ATTRIBUTES AND SKILLS.....	4
Introduction .....	4
Direct Domain.....	5
Stratum I: Direct Judgment.....	6
Stratum II: Diagnostic Accumulation .....	6
Operation Domain.....	7
Stratum Level III: Alternative Pathways .....	7
Stratum IV: Parallel Processing .....	8
Strategic Domain .....	9
Stratum V: Unified Whole System .....	9
Stratum VI: World Wide Diagnostic Accumulation.....	10
Stratum VII: Put Business Units Into Society .....	10
Summary.....	11
TOOLS FOR ASSESSMENT .....	13
Introduction .....	13
Strategic Leadership Development Inventory.....	14
Conceptual Skills And Abilities .....	15
Professional Competence.....	15
Conceptual Flexibility .....	16
Future Vision.....	16
Conceptual Competence .....	16
Political Sensitivity .....	17
Positive Attributes.....	17
Interpersonal Competence .....	17
Empowering Subordinates.....	17

Team Performance Facilitation.....	18
Objectivity.....	18
Initiative/Commitment.....	18
Negative Attributes.....	18
Technical Incompetence.....	18
Self-serving/Unethical.....	19
Micro-manager.....	19
Arrogant.....	19
Explosive/Abusive.....	19
Inaccessible.....	20
Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.....	20
Strong Extroversion.....	21
Strong Introversiion.....	21
Strong Sensing.....	21
Strong Intuition.....	21
Strong Thinkers.....	21
Strong Feeler.....	22
Strong Judgment.....	22
Strong Perceiving.....	22
Summary.....	22
 PUTTING IT TOGETHER.....	 24
 CONCLUSIONS.....	 29
 BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	 32

## *Tables*

	<i>Page</i>
Table 1. Organization Levels And Strata.....	5
Table 2. Strategic Leadership Development Inventory Skills And Attributes.....	15

## *Preface*

The idea for application of the Strategic Leadership Development Inventory (SLDI) to the Operation Domain originated from the Organizational Cultures Research Elective. This paper is an effort to apply the model and tools used within the SLDI for senior leaders (Colonel and Flag Officers) to the level of majors and lieutenant colonels. Application of the SLDI provides a rare opportunity for personal growth in leadership skills, attributes, and effectiveness for all leaders..

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of my Faculty Research Advisor Major Scott Morgan. Major Morgan not only shared his knowledge about the research process, but also provided insight into leadership and its impact on organizational culture. Additionally, I appreciate Colonel Gail I. Arnott's readiness and willingness to answer my questions about the SLDI and to provide me direction in my effort to learn more about leadership development. Finally, I am grateful to Kenneth M. Holmes, Ph.D. for research and technical assistance. Doctor Holmes' willingness to give of his time to listen to and discuss new ideas and provide honest, constructive feedback are only small examples of his dedication as an educator and mentor.

*Abstract*

The leaders of tomorrow's military will be faced not only with more complex technologically but will function in an environment of joint operations. In this environment members from sister services will be brought together toward the goals of planning and achieving the nation's security, and fighting and winning the nation's wars. The success or failure of these goals rests upon the leadership effectiveness.

Understanding the identification and development of effective leadership skills and attributes maximizes individual leadership effectiveness. The Stratified Systems Theory Model is used to identify skills and attributes for the three leadership domains of Direct, Operation, and Strategic. However, this paper focuses specifically on those affecting the Operation Domain. The Strategic Leadership Development Inventory (SLDI) and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) are used to facilitate an objective self assessment to identify personal skills and attributes that will contribute to or detract from leadership effectiveness within this domain. Finally, Individuation is discussed as a method for improving skills and attribute weaknesses identified from the SLDI and MBTI assessment.

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

*I tend to think of the difference between leaders and managers as the difference between those who master the context and those who surrender to it.*

—Warren Bennis  
*On Becoming a Leader*

Leadership is the subject of much interest and the aspiration of many as reflected in the multitude of papers, speeches, books, and seminars. Effective leadership can be difficult as it involves not only dealing with the concrete aspects of achieving an organization's objectives, but also with motivating and equipping others with the tools they need to help the organization achieve its goals.

In discussing leadership, it is important to distinguish between management and leadership. Peter Drucker and Warren Bennis, two noted authors on leadership, offered the following differentiation:

“Management is doing things right. Leadership is doing the right things. Management is the efficiency in climbing the ladder of success; leadership determines if the ladder is leaning against the right wall.”<sup>1</sup>

This distinction places the focus of leadership on being concerned with achieving goals and objectives as well as making the right decisions and providing the right direction. It also serves to differentiate merely being a leader from being an effective leader. Further, their suggestion of “doing the right thing and leaning against the right

wall” serves as a basis for learning more about what leadership is and how to become an effective leader.

Definitions and opinions regarding leadership roles vary among different sources. In discussing the role of leadership, Jacobs and Jaques describe it as, “Giving purpose (meaningful direction) to a collective effort and causing effort to be expended to achieve that purpose.”<sup>2</sup> Multiple descriptions of leadership roles were found by Willis M. Watt to include, “Being tough, being purposeful, being meticulous, being innovative, and being willing to occasionally use power.”<sup>3</sup> A more descriptive example of leadership was given by President Dwight David Eisenhower as he would place a piece of string on a table and say, “Pull it and it’ll follow you; push it and it will do nothing.”<sup>4</sup> The essence of these examples is that leadership is the ability, personal and professional, to provide direction to an individual, or a group, towards a goal and to coordinate, integrate, and motivate others to follow this direction.

Authors who focus on the personal and professional ability to lead generally discuss the personal qualities or attributes that comprise the roots of effective leadership. These attributes frequently include resilience, strong moral character, and charisma. Air Force Chief of Staff General Ronald R. Fogleman stresses that the individual in a leadership position determines a unit’s effectiveness. He further states that integrity and leadership are “inextricably linked” and that integrity is the “cornerstone of mission accomplishment.”<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John M. Shalikashvili, identifies the three pillars of leadership as, “Character, love and care for soldiers, and professional competence.”<sup>6</sup> A common thread binding both opinions is that the crux of effective leadership revolves around having high moral fiber, assuming

individual responsibility for service to country, being concerned for others first, and striving to be the best.

Striving to be the best as a leader involves building professional competence and developing an understanding of effective leadership. Many programs have been established to improve a leader's ability by providing exposure to and developing an understanding of attributes associated with effective leadership. The Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) has developed a curriculum that helps senior leaders to develop these skills through identification of effective leadership characteristics. It is possible to apply the ICAF curriculum to other leadership levels and is done herein for the leader of the O-4 to O-6 grade. This application will involve a discussion of the theoretical basis of effective leadership, discussion and application of two personality tools that measure potential leadership effectiveness, and a discussion for personal application to improve individual leadership effectiveness.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Stephen R. Covey *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Restoring the Character Ethic* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 101.

<sup>2</sup> Jacobs, T. Owens and Elliot Jaques, "Military Executive Leadership," in *Measurement of Leadership*, ed. K. E. Clark et al. (West Orange, NJ: Leadership Library of America, Inc., 1990), 281.

<sup>3</sup>Watt, M. Willis, "Teaching Essential Behaviors of Leadership: A Rationale and Syllabus," *The Journal of Leadership Studies* 2, no. 1, 149.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>5</sup> Fogleman, General Ronald R., "The Leadership-Integrity Link," in *Concepts for Air Force Leadership*, ed. R.I. Lester and A.G. Morton. (Maxwell AFB, AL. College of Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education, 1996), 32.

<sup>6</sup>General John M. Shalikashvili, chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, "The Three Pillars of Leadership," address, George C. Marshall ROTC Award Seminar, Virginia Military Institute, VA, 12 April 1995.

## Chapter 2

### Leadership Domains: Attributes and Skills

*The importance of the attribute to effective leadership varies with the situation.*

—John W. Gardner  
*On Leadership*

#### Introduction

Understanding leadership begins with understanding the theoretical foundations of effective leadership. The ICAF utilizes Jacques' Stratified Systems Theory to divide the functional levels of an organization into the three domains of **Direct, Operation, and Strategic**.<sup>1</sup> These domains correlate with what is more commonly known as the supervisory, middle level, and executive managers' areas of responsibility. They are further broken down into seven strata (Figure 1) each with identifiable skills that are dependent upon task complexity (i.e., the complexity and amount of information which is dealt with at each domain) and time span (i.e., the length of time in which a task must be completed or is projected for completion). Examination of each domain and stratum provides an understanding of skills and attributes that are essential for optimizing leadership effectiveness.

**Table 1. Organization Levels And Strata**

<b>Strata</b>	<b>Task Complexity</b>	<b>Time Span</b>	<b>Equivalent Military Rank</b>	<b>Organizational Domain</b>
Stratum VII	Put business Units Into Society	20-50 years	O10	Strategic
Stratum VI	World-Wide Diagnostic Accumulation	10-20 years	O9 Appointees	Strategic
Stratum V	Unified Whole System	2-5 years	O8	Strategic
Stratum IV	Parallel Processing	2-5 years	O6-O7 GS 14-GS 15	Operation
Stratum III	Alternative Pathways	1-2 years	O4-O5 GS 11-GS 13	Operation
Stratum II	Diagnostic Accumulation	3 months-1 year	O1-O3 GS 7-GS 10	Direct
Stratum I	Direct Judgment	1 day-3 months	E-1-E-7 GS 1-GS 6	Direct

**Source:** Col Gail Arnott, Air War College, Maxwell AFB, Al, interviewed by author 12 February 1997.

### **Direct Domain**

The **Direct** (or supervisory) domain encompasses the two lowest strata within an organization’s structure. Individuals in this domain are responsible for the accomplishment of the day-to-day tasks and actual work or output of an organization. Responsibility primarily involves direct hands-on functioning, but does extend up to the first levels of staff supervision as the individual becomes responsible for a larger portion of the organization’s mission. Individuals generally focus on the performance of tasks and their scope of knowledge is “**specialized.**” Therefore, task complexity is at its lowest. Decisions made within the direct domain have a direct impact on the accomplishment of objectives and on those directly responsible for achieving those objectives.

### **Stratum I: Direct Judgment**

Stratum I primarily involves manual work performance that is characterized by concrete functioning and is guided by step-by-step instructions for task accomplishment. Minimal problem solving skills are required to deal with occurrences outside the norm and individuals usually apply a limited degree of direct judgment based upon previous experience. Except for the assistant manager role, there are no true management or leadership skills required. Time span generally ranges from 1 day to 3 months.<sup>2</sup>

### **Stratum II: Diagnostic Accumulation**

Stratum II begins the first level of managerial work as individuals become responsible for a larger part of an organization's mission. While still primarily concerned with product output, a broader scope of knowledge is required to solve problems based upon collected, sorted, and analyzed information. Good interpersonal skills, the ability to clearly and effectively communicate, and good judgment become increasingly important. Time span ranges from focusing on and delivering a product within 1 day to longer projects of 3 months to 1 year.<sup>3</sup>

Direct domain leadership is generally conducted by enlisted personnel (E1 to E7) and company grade officers (O-1 to O-3) who are primarily focused on the completion of tasks assigned by their immediate supervisors. Role ambiguity arises as these individuals become simultaneously responsible for the actual "hands-on" task accomplishment and the supervision of others doing the same. They frequently are concerned with accomplishing their supervisor's goals and objectives, while being looked upon by subordinates to represent their concerns. Ambiguity also arises as direct domain leaders frequently strive for, but lack a strong sense of identity with their superiors and yet maintain the Stratum I

understanding of an organization's objectives, missions, or functioning.<sup>4</sup> The tasks of minimal problem solving, implementation of instructions or objectives, and face-face interaction within Stratum I and Stratum II require good interpersonal skills, job knowledge, and technical skills. However, analytical skills, extensive integrative thought, or reasoning are not essential for success.<sup>5</sup>

### **Operation Domain**

The **Operation** domain of an organization starts with the beginning leadership levels of field grade officers. Two leadership roles emerge within this domain. First is the leader with the authority and responsibility for performing the necessary functions of the organization (the "line" manager). Second is the staff officer who provides advice and assistance to the "line" manager but is unable to force acceptance of ideas.<sup>6</sup> With the transition from direct to the operation domain, concern shifts from the day-to-day organizational tasks to broader decisions, actions, and the formulation of operational policy and practice. Direct domain decisions and actions have a direct and immediate impact on the functioning of the organization. However, at the Operation domain it must be remembered that the impact of decisions frequently affects the second or third order of subordinate strata.

### **Stratum Level III: Alternative Pathways**

Stratum III builds on the analysis and decision making skills of Stratum II as the leader is required to develop goals and plans to achieve goals. This involves the identification of specific steps for achievement, identification of landmarks marking progression towards the goals and if necessary making decisions regarding alternative

plans. Therefore, Stratum III requires understanding the whole process within a plan. As individuals become responsible for more of an organization's functioning they lead larger numbers and teams of individuals and will call upon strong communication and team leading skills. Time span generally extends from 1-2 years.<sup>7</sup>

#### **Stratum IV: Parallel Processing**

While Stratum III involves one goal or objective, Stratum IV requires creating, balancing, directing, and leading multiple projects. This involves simultaneously managing subordinates responsible for multiple delegated projects. Balancing the demands of resource allocation, problem solving, and keeping each project progressing requires a multi-faceted understanding and calls upon interpersonal and team leading skills. Time span increases from 2 to 5 years.<sup>8</sup>

Progression from Direct to the Operation domain requires a shift of focus from the one-on-one short term functioning and concrete task accomplishment to that of creating and monitoring progression towards goals or objectives. As the organizational environment becomes more complex leaders must determine the long term impact of environmental changes and be able to adapt goals and plan accordingly. Also, a broader grasp of an organization's functioning is required as the time span changes from the immediate period of 1 day to 3 months to that of 1-5 years.

Just as Direct domain leaders face finding a balance between the Direct domain workers and senior leaders' needs, the Operation domain leaders face the demands from the supervisors subordinate and senior to them. They must find a balance between "following" or "developing" policy for their seniors and forming policy and/or decisions that are realistic to the lower organizational domains.

A vital skill at this domain is the ability to effectively lead others either individually or in teams. Effectiveness requires not only depth but breadth of knowledge combined with strong interpersonal skills to facilitate subordinate trust and confidence. As will be seen later, team building and leading skills combined with being comfortable with delegating and empowering individuals are key in motivating and facilitating subordinates in doing their best.

### **Strategic Domain**

Individuals at the **Strategic** domain face an increasingly broader, longer range view of the organization's environment and future. Functioning is much more complex because it demands an integration between the internal environment of the organization and the knowledge and ability to consider and deal with the external environment: specifically, Congress and the media. Leaders deal with change over a long period of time, projecting progression from the present state to that of 5-50 years in the future

### **Stratum V: Unified Whole System**

Jaques identifies this area as the most interesting and most important of the complexity orders. It is in this area that leaders become responsible for the whole picture or all the subsystems of their area or system. Their focus is on the overall needs of the system as they bring larger teams together. Success requires the ability to think abstractly, to perform a high level of analysis, and to exhibit a masterful understanding of the operating environment.<sup>9</sup>

## **Stratum VI: World Wide Diagnostic Accumulation**

The step from Stratum V to Stratum VI is the greatest step in terms of complexity. At this stratum the focus shifts from that of the internal organizational functioning to that of assimilating, analyzing, and incorporating information from the external environment. The leader must network to facilitate gathering political, economical, social, and technical information, and must be able to analyze its current or future impact and plan accordingly. Time span ranges from 10 to 20 years.<sup>10</sup>

## **Stratum VII: Put Business Units Into Society**

Jaques describes Stratum VII as “moving into executive leadership.”<sup>11</sup> As the time span increases from 20 up to 50 years, the leader forecasts the needs of society, the nation, and the world to project a global view of what services will be needed. This requires the ability to understand the impact of changes on the organization and to begin planning to adapt the organization to this projected view. This plan for new directions, new products, new objectives, or new ventures is referred to as “Strategic Planning.”

As Strategic leaders work to coordinate organizational units, they require long term vision, team building, and networking skills. The focus within the Strategic domain changes from carrying out and organizing units so that the organization’s mission is efficiently achieved to seeing the organization as a whole and projecting it into the future. This involves considering and understanding the impact of decisions not only on the immediate time but also on the evolution of the organization as a whole and **10-50 years** in the future.<sup>12</sup>

## Summary

The progression of task complexity and increasing time span from the Direct to the Strategic domain of an organization is seen through the Stratified Systems Theory. Progression requires increasingly complex skills and a broader view of the organization's functioning and future. At the Direct domain the individual is primarily responsible for the hands on daily accomplishment of the organization's mission. The Strategic domain is concerned with an organization's overall functioning and with moving it in a direction that will insure its preparation to meet the societal and environmental demands of **20 to 50 years** in the future.

The transition from Direct to Operation domain leadership changes focus from the daily hands-on involvement to being responsible for multiple simultaneously progressing projects. Operation domain leaders develop long-term policy in accordance with senior leadership directives and are concerned with the organization's progression for up to 5 years in the future. Operation domain leadership involves subordinate supervision and requires a comfort level with delegation and empowerment. Additionally, networking with contemporaries, functioning on teams, and maintaining good rapport with senior leaders requires strong interpersonal and team building skills.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Jaques, Elliot, *Requisite Organization: The CEO's Guide to Creative Structure and Leadership* (Cason Hall and Co., 1989), 20.

<sup>2</sup> Jaques, 24.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>4</sup> Petit, Thomas, *Fundamentals of Management Coordination: Supervisors, Middle Managers, and Executives* (New York, John Riley and Sons, 1975), 68.

<sup>5</sup> Jacobs, T. Owens, *A Guide to the Strategic Leader Development Inventory* (National Defense University, Industrial College of the Air Force, 1996), 83.

## Notes

<sup>6</sup>Petit, 72.

<sup>7</sup>Jaques, 26.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 27.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 28.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 29.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 30.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

## Chapter 3

### Tools for Assessment

*From the beginning of their careers to the end, each of them (Generals Marshall, Patton, and McArthur) was continually applying new brushstrokes to their knowledge and to their skills.*

—General John M Shalikashvili  
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff  
The Three Pillars of Leadership

#### Introduction

In discussing his thoughts on leadership development, General Shalikashvili referred to the careers of General Marshall, General Patton, and General McArthur to make his point that strong leadership results from training and development. They were “learning leaders” whose education occurred not only in the academic setting but also training and experience gained from actual on-the-job experience. At each stage of these generals’ experiences, they confronted increasingly difficult assignments by applying themselves to do the best and learn the most they could. Each stage of their careers built upon the previous and provided a foundation for subsequent assignments. These leaders’ developments resulted from careers that gave them opportunities to hone leadership skills through experience, institutional training and education (Professional Military Education), and self development.<sup>1</sup>

While not everyone achieves the accomplishments of General McArthur, General Patton, or General Marshall, it is possible to pursue development and maximization of each individual's leadership potential. This maximization of potential begins with an honest assessment of individual leadership skills and attributes to identify strengths and weaknesses and provide a foundation for growth. Two very useful tools in this assessment are the **Strategic Leadership Development Inventory (SLDI)** and the **Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)**.

### **Strategic Leadership Development Inventory**

The SLDI was developed by T. Owens Jacobs at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) and the United States Army War College (USAWC) and results from the fusion of data from three sources. Original questions were developed by surveying general officers and senior defense civilians to identify key job requirements and skills they believed to be critical to success at senior leadership domains. Additional questions were developed through surveying USAWC students asking them to identify strengths and weaknesses they felt were critical to the effectiveness of senior leaders they had observed. Further refinement occurred over a six year period as additional surveys were conducted on 1200 USAWC students, their supervisors, peers, and subordinates. The information from these sources was developed into the current tool that assesses characteristics found to be most important in leadership effectiveness. For convenience the characteristics are grouped into the three broad skills and attribute areas of *conceptual skills and attributes*, *positive attributes*, and *negative attributes* (Table 2).<sup>2</sup> The SLDI provides a comparative view of an individual's strengths and weaknesses by combining a self assessment with an

independent assessment from peers and supervisors. Such an assessment provides the advantage of identifying areas for future growth that may not have otherwise been apparent. The three SLDI categories, attributes within each, and developmental survey results are discussed below.

**Table 2. Strategic Leadership Development Inventory Skills And Attributes**

<b>Conceptual Skills and Abilities</b>	<b>Positive Attributes</b>	<b>Negative Attributes</b>
Professional competence	Interpersonal Competence	Technical Incompetence
Conceptual Flexibility	Empowering Subordinates	Self Serving/Unethical
Future Vision	Team Performance	Micromanager
Conceptual Competence	Objectivity	Explosive/Abusive
Political Sensitivity	Initiative/Commitment	Arrogant
		Inaccessible

### **Conceptual Skills And Abilities**

#### **Professional Competence**

Professional mastery is a cornerstone of effective leadership; as it is paramount in gaining the respect of subordinates. Further, it facilitates assessing information, performing problem solving, and ensuring efficient mission performance. Individuals lacking professional competence appear slow in understanding information being provided and may fail to properly utilize material and human resources to accomplish the mission. From the subordinate surveys conducted in the development of the SLDI, professional competence was the most important conceptual skill and ability.<sup>3</sup>

### **Conceptual Flexibility**

The results of subordinate SLDI questionnaire indicated job knowledge and ability as being most important. However, the results of senior leaders' questionnaires identified the ability to see a problem or situation from different perspectives and a tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity as important to being effective at higher domains.<sup>4</sup>

### **Future Vision**

Surveys of general officers identified the two most important attributes a senior leader might possess as: the ability to visualize future trends, and anticipate, plan, and intervene now for possible "future" problems. Individuals without the ability to project or anticipate future trends may find themselves behind the power curve as future events and trends unfold. This may detract from their value to an organization.<sup>5</sup>

### **Conceptual Competence**

While conceptual flexibility refers to the ability to quickly react to a situation, conceptual competence indicates the individual's ability to see globally and think through complex situations. High scores in this area indicate that the individuals know where they fit into the organization as a whole and that they have an ability to analyze problems from multiple perspectives. These individuals possess good decision making skills. In addition, their understanding of an organization or of a situation facilitates their choosing which issues are worth fighting.<sup>6</sup>

## **Political Sensitivity**

Awareness of and sensitivity to political issues both within and outside the military becomes increasingly important with progression to upper leadership domains. General officer surveys identify this area as very important.<sup>7</sup>

## **Positive Attributes**

### **Interpersonal Competence**

Interpersonal competence involves an appreciation for the personal worth of others and a concern for subordinates. Specifically, this means providing an environment of openness, trusting others' motives, and showing courtesy in interactions. Effectiveness in Interpersonal Competence is important in motivating and fully utilizing subordinates' talents, bringing diverse groups together, facilitating joint efforts, and working with persons of other offices or agencies.<sup>8</sup>

### **Empowering Subordinates**

Leading an organization towards its fullest potential is facilitated through comfort with delegation, trusting personnel to complete their jobs without micro-managing, creating an environment that encourages initiative, and promoting professional growth. Low scores in this area indicate a tendency towards excessive supervision and a low degree of trust for others' motivation. In subordinates, this fosters a feeling of not being fully respected and leads to getting less than the best.<sup>9</sup>

### **Team Performance Facilitation**

Facilitating Team Performance involves getting the right person for the job and ensuring that they have what is needed to get the job done. Conversely, just as important is recognizing individuals having difficulty completing their tasks and taking the necessary actions to correct the situation.<sup>10</sup>

### **Objectivity**

Objectivity is important at all leadership domains and involves the ability see situations impersonally and maintain composure under threatening situations. Individuals scoring low in objectivity tend to become personally involved in situations when it is not appropriate or necessary. They may also become subjective in their analysis, have difficulty seeing their weaknesses, and have difficulty making sound decisions.<sup>11</sup>

### **Initiative/Commitment**

Individuals scoring high in this area exhibit drive, commitment, are fully apart of the team, work hard to get things done, take charge in a crisis, and understand priorities. Low scores in this area indicate a lack of focus, or interest in the “job at hand” that will lead to long term credibility problems.<sup>12</sup>

## **Negative Attributes**

### **Technical Incompetence**

Lacking the ability to do the job well results in a loss of subordinate respect. It also indicates an inadequate knowledge base and the analytical ability to be proactive.<sup>13</sup>

### **Self-serving/Unethical**

Self serving and unethical individuals impact the functioning of a unit as they exhibit behaviors such as self interest, abuse of others for their gain, and taking credit for work they have not done. Their behavior impacts the ethical climate of an organization and leads to divisiveness. As leaders, they alienate peers and subordinates and are a liability.<sup>14</sup>

### **Micro-manager**

Usually resulting from a lack of professional competence, micro-managers are uncomfortable with risk, tend to over-supervise subordinates, and significantly decrease motivation.<sup>15</sup>

### **Arrogant**

Arrogance impacts subordinate motivation, damages professional peer relationships and creates a negative environment. It causes individuals to do as little as necessary as opposed to striving for exceptional performance; thus, significantly affecting motivation.<sup>16</sup>

### **Explosive/Abusive**

Individuals with the tendency to be explosive or abusive may be unable to develop an in-depth understanding of complex problems and therefore may not analyze situations deeply enough before making decisions. Their behavior makes subordinates reluctant to go to them, particularly with bad news that can result in their finding out things have gone wrong when it is too late. Explosive or abusive behavior also negatively affects networking and “team” efforts.<sup>17</sup>

## **Inaccessible**

Inaccessibility may be the result of any of three reasons: The individual may not be a people's person, may be lacking in interpersonal skills, or may be self-centered. Regardless, the impact is serious as it causes subordinate's reluctance to keep the leader informed. It further affects the development of trust, mutual respect, and decreases the leader's influence on subordinate development.<sup>18</sup>

## **Myers-Briggs Type Indicator**

The MBTI ascertains an individuals' "preferences" in dealing with the world. It was developed from Carl Jung's "Psychological Type Theory" that evolves around how information is taken in (Perceiving) and how that information is organized and used to draw conclusions (Judging).<sup>19</sup> Perceiving is done either through *Sensing* or *Intuition*. Judging occurs either through *Thinking* or *Feeling*. The MBTI indicates where people focus their attention (Extroversion or Introversion), the way they prefer to gather information (Sensing or Intuition), the way they prefer to make decisions (Thinking or Feeling), and the way they orient themselves to the world (Judging or Perceiving).<sup>20</sup>

Preferences within these categories and "type" combinations are useful in identifying characteristics and behaviors that may be predictive of leadership effectiveness. Conversely, developing an awareness of and dealing with negative traits improves leadership effectiveness. Strong preference (35 points above or below the MBTI midline scale) is indicative of an area that warrants consideration as it may affect an individual's "flexibility." The following summarizes strong preferences within each category:

**Strong Extroversion**

Indicates a potential lack of focus necessary to achieve technical depth in areas that require intense individual effort.

**Strong Introversion**

Indicates an interpersonal skill deficiency that may be seen by others as a coldness. This is especially true if coupled with a strong Thinker.

**Strong Sensing**

Indicates a possible delay in developing abstract thinking skills and complex frames of reference required in higher operation and strategic leadership domains. Others may see these individuals as lacking depth of knowledge. If coupled with a strong Thinker it may indicate a tendency to micro-manage.

**Strong Intuition**

Indicates a tendency to lack the situational awareness that may be required to deal decisively with developing situations. These individuals may be perceived by others as having a lack of focus and the perception of unreliability in task completion.

**Strong Thinkers**

Indicates a tendency to over emphasize the mission at all-costs and may be seen by others as uncaring. As stated earlier, if coupled with a strong Sensing there may be a tendency to micro-manage.

### **Strong Feeler**

Indicates a tendency to over emphasize people concerns and may lead to being perceived by others as not being tough enough.

### **Strong Judgment**

Indicates a tendency to over emphasize conformity to procedures with a tendency to reach decisions quickly without a full consideration of options. If coupled with a strong Sensing it may be seen by others as not being very creative.

### **Strong Perceiving**

Indicates a tendency to vacillate in decision making. The need to consider options may cause the opportunity or the timeliness of the decision to lapse. Others may perceive the individual as not being sufficiently task focused.<sup>21</sup>

## **Summary**

The road to developing effective leadership attributes and skills begins with a self assessment to determine individual strengths and areas for growth. The SLDI and MBTI are two tools proven to be effective in measuring these areas. The SLDI specifically assesses attributes under the three broad categories of *Conceptual Skills and Abilities*, *Positive Personal Attributes*, and *Negative Personal Attributes*. These broad categories include sixteen individual areas identified through 1200 surveys as being important in effective leadership. Reviewing the results of self, peer, and supervisor surveys provides a comprehensive view of individual strengths and areas to build on within these categories.

The MBTI indicates an individuals “preferences” in collecting, assimilating, and acting on information. The tool identifies tendencies that may indicate a particular role suitability and identifies tendencies within each preference that may hamper individual effectiveness.

### Notes

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Jacobs, T. Owens, *A Guide to the Strategic Leader Development Inventory* (National Defense University, Industrial College of the Air Force, 1996), 86.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Briggs-Myers, Isabel, *Introduction to Type* (Palo Alto: Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc. 1993), 2.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter 4

### Putting it Together

*We must not cease from exploration and the end of all exploring will be to arrive where we began and to know the place for the first time.*

—T.S. Eliot

Previous chapters have identified personal skills and attributes that have been shown to contribute to effective leadership. At the operation domain it is seen that an integration of three skills is required. These are the adeptness to interpret and implement the goals and objectives of senior leaders while balancing the needs of subordinates; the ability to develop, implement and monitor the progression towards objectives and goals of individual areas of responsibility; and the skill to inspire, motivate, and facilitate subordinates in achieving goals and objectives. Crucial to succeeding in these areas is the ability to create an environment conducive to encouraging teamwork and the growth, creativity, and innovation of individual team members. Creating such an environment begins with the leader who is cognizant of the impact of the skills and attributes discussed in the SLDI and the MBTI on the working environment. Additionally, it involves taking a personal look at the results from the two tools and working to maximize strengths and improving weaknesses.

The skills and attributes identified from the discussion of Operation Domain of an organization provide direction for applying the results of SLDI surveys. This domain of leadership calls upon depth and breadth of knowledge as a foundation to keep an organization functioning in the present and to plan for the 1 to 5 year future. These skills are assessed within the *Conceptual Skills and Abilities* category and relate specifically to Professional Competence, Conceptual Flexibility, and Conceptual Competence. As the leader progresses upward within an organization the ability to impact the direct outcome of the organization's mission decreases. The most effective leader is comfortable with empowering subordinates and is able to optimize their ability to complete their roles. As the task complexity increases and the leader's responsibilities involve more persons, building and leading teams and strong interpersonal skills become paramount. These attributes are assessed in the *Positive Attributes* category by looking at Interpersonal Competence, Empowering Subordinates, Objectivity, Team Performance and Interpersonal Competence.

Application of the information regarding skills and attributes to individual SLDI surveys involves an analysis of strengths and weaknesses. Strengths are identified as being in the top 25% for positive attributes and the bottom 25% for negative attributes. Conversely, weaknesses are identified through scores in the bottom 25% of positive areas and top 25% for negative. Reviewing and comparing the results of peer and subordinate surveys against self assessments further identifies areas of strengths and weaknesses. Personal scores that are a lot lower (more than 0.5) than peers and subordinates are indicative of being self critical, being reluctant to take risks, and of being less open with

others about their needs. Personal scores that are a lot higher than those of peers and subordinates also indicate areas for improvement.<sup>1</sup>

As with all “personal improvement” tools, the goal of SLDI application is to work on minimizing negative attributes while building and maximizing strengths and weaknesses. Improvement within the *Conceptual Skills and Abilities* involves education, training, continuing education, and reading to develop professional competence and maintain an edge through awareness of changes and trends. General suggestions for improvement within this category are to work towards developing improved reading, writing, and speaking skills. Reading in areas that are applicable to individual specialties or focus on potential future trends will provide a large benefit in visualizing where the organization will be in the future years. Attributes within the Positive and Negative Attribute areas are predominantly interpersonal skills. Improvement involves developing an awareness of interaction skills and comfort with Empowering Subordinates and Facilitating Team Performance. Suggestions for improving these areas are covered in the discussion of application of the MBTI.

The MBTI identified individual preferences for dealing with the external world and possible negative implications of each preference. A suggested method for minimizing these negative implications is to work towards developing a balance between preferences and non-preferences. This balance is called *Individuation*. A strategy for developing individuation begins with a personal realization that this balance can be beneficial (**Attention**) and then identifying personal patterns of preferences and non-preferences from the MBTI (**Recognition**). This recognition is followed by developing an

understanding of these preferences and non-preferences (**Awareness**) and deciding to focus on the least preferred side (**Decision**). After determining the strengths and weaknesses of individual preferences and non-preferences and visualizing the potential for development (**Vision**) a commitment to make growth and development a priority (**Commitment**) is made and is followed by a decision to pursue developing a balance (**Decision**).<sup>2</sup>

Specific information for balancing preferences is found in Myers-Briggs Introduction to Type. Some brief suggestions are included here for a starting point. Extroverts should try working alone in quiet; being patient with long jobs; thinking before acting; and practicing communication by writing. Introverts can work on tolerating interruptions, making decisions quickly; and communicating more through talking. Since Sensors prefer factual concrete information, a balance is achieved through increasing awareness of the “big picture” and pulling back on the tendency to micro-manage. Conversely, Intuitors can work on organizational skills by focusing on details of what works now and not jumping to conclusions too quickly. The Thinker’s preference for cause and effect reasoning combined with impersonal, objective truth may be perceived as cold and uncaring. It is balanced by developing an understanding and an awareness of the impact of decisions on others. Feelers should work on responding to other’s ideas by learning to have less concern for pleasing people, becoming firmer and tougher minded, and becoming more comfortable with giving people unpleasant information. Judgers can balance the need for a systematic structured environment through being less structurally rigid, more open to last minute changes, and by avoiding making snap decisions. The Perceiver’s preferences for spontaneity and “leaving options open,” is balanced by becoming more

organized or having more structure in plan development. Also, working on and sticking to one project at a time, and not postponing unpleasant jobs is helpful.<sup>3</sup>

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Jacobs, T. Owens, "A Guide to the Strategic Leader Development Inventory," in *Leadership and Ethics*, ed Colonel Gail I. Arnott et. al. (Maxwell AFB, Ala: Air University Press, August 1996), 86.

<sup>2</sup> Knowleton, Bill and Mike McGee, "Strategic Leadership and Personality: Making the MBTI Relevant," in *Leadership and Ethics*, ed Colonel Gail I. Arnott et. al. (Maxwell AFB, Ala: Air University Press, August 1996), 34.

<sup>3</sup> Briggs-Myers, Isabel, *Introduction to Type* (Palo Alto, Ca, Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc., 1993), 5.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusions

*Leadership is a very different quality (than management)--it involves creating direction through vision, direction through inspiration, direction through example, as opposed to direction through control.*

—Tom Peters

*Liberation Management: Necessary Disorganization for the Nanosecond Nineties*

Leadership effectiveness is one of the most important factors in an organization's success or failure. It is the leader who is responsible for knowing or envisioning where the group is to go and how to get there. The leader must plan how the group will move forward and be prepared to make adjustments according to internal or external environmental changes. Also, the leader must be able to bring a group of individuals together, motivate them, and meld and direct their diverse talents towards the envisioned end state.

The responsibilities of leadership require many qualities and attributes. Not the least of which is a character that causes subordinate's to trust and follow. However, just as important as trust and character is the possession of professional knowledge to understand the organization's goals, cope with unknown circumstances and envision future possibilities. The effective leader must have the skills to motivate subordinates and ensure they have the necessary tools to complete their individual tasks. Finally, effective

leadership requires the ability to facilitate these individuals into one team, to network with peers and to work well with others.

The task complexity requirements, and therefore the particular skills that are important at each leadership domain, vary within the different strata of an organization. Jacob's Stratified Systems Theory analyzes, and identifies the skills and attributes necessary for effective leadership at seven different organization strata. At the operation domain, the leader relies heavily on a strong conceptual knowledge, strong conceptual flexibility, interpersonal skills, comfort with empowering subordinates and team building skills. Maximizing these areas is complemented by minimizing the negative factors of Technical Incompetence, Arrogance, Explosive/Abusive or Unethical Behavior, Micro-managing, and/or being Inaccessible.

The areas included in Conceptual Skills and Abilities and Positive Attributes are a function of and developed through assignments, experience and training. Minimizing negative attributes begins with a self assessment followed by purposeful targeting towards correction. By using the SLDI and the MBTI, the leader achieves a multidimensional view that includes the assessment by peers, supervisors and subordinates regarding Conceptual Skills and Abilities, Positive Attributes, and Negative Attributes.

After reviewing the information from the SLDI and MBTI, the individual initiates planning to capitalize on strengths and minimize weaknesses. This *individuation* process specifically involves developing an awareness of strengths, weaknesses, and preferences. Individuation is achieved by paying attention to and recognizing individual preferences in professional and social situations and developing balance between preferences and non-preferences.

Development of effective leadership attributes is a growth process in which individual “raw material” is recognized, shaped and reshaped into a final product. Warren Bennis said, “Only when we know what we are made of and what we want to make of it can we begin our lives.”<sup>1</sup> The road to effective leadership begins with understanding what skills are needed to effectively lead at the operation domains, reflecting upon individual strengths and weaknesses, and stepping towards individuation to minimize weaknesses and maximize strengths..

### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Bennis, Warren, *On Becoming a Leader* (Reading: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1994), 40.

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