

CHANGING THE WAY WE ASSESS LEADERSHIP

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Defense leaders face unprecedented challenges of accelerating change in a world without a Cold War. The technology explosion is forcing reduced cycle times as acquisition leaders lead the way to “better, faster, and cheaper.” Specific initiatives and reforms such as single process initiative, electrical combat/electronic data interchange (EC/EDI), cost as an independent variable, and increased emphasis on commercial specifications helped accomplish this. The challenges, however, will not go away. The acquisition community cannot meet these demands simply by implementing the reform efforts of the Colleen Preston (former Deputy Under Secretary of Defense [Acquisition Reform]) era. To ensure that cost, schedule, and performance are continually improved, change must be inextricably linked to both the “thinking” and the “doing” of the T.S. Eliot quote below. Change is required at the organizational level, the team level, and the personal level, so the acquisition community can operate effectively and efficiently within a constrained budget and with fewer people. To effect this transformation, leaders must lead differently. Einstein’s insight reflects this imperative: “No problem can be solved from the same consciousness that created it; we must learn to see the world anew.” Continuing to do what we have always done will only get us what we already have. Better, faster, and cheaper weapons systems, flexible management systems, and empowered integrated product teams are required to produce new results.

...between the thinking and the doing lies the shadow.

—T. S. Eliot

To operate productively in an environment of constant change, leaders must think and act differently. Change efforts, such as the acquisition reform initiatives, must be considered part of a transformation process, not an “event” to be managed. Leaders who are effective

in the change wave must be visionary, apply a systems approach to their problem solving, encourage out-of-the-box thinking, appreciate the dynamics of teams, know the reality of change management, and operate effectively in a chaotic world. The capacity to lead in this

scenario requires the skills to establish direction; align people, systems, and resources; and motivate and inspire followers (Kotter, 1996a). Leaders must continually learn and enhance their management techniques to encourage excellent performance in a complex environment. To do this leaders must lead the change process. They must adapt to change while remaining focused on the strategic direction. Peter Vaill, in *Learning as a Way of Being* (1996a), calls this approach to continual, real-time change “leaderly learning.”

The purpose of this article is twofold. The first is to present a theory of leadership for the circumstances described above. The second is to provide managers with a method for assessing their present capability and building personal mastery associated with the theory. So first I will present a theory focusing on leadership in a world of accelerating change. It provides definitions for leadership in terms of the dimensions that research indicates are necessary for leading in a volatile, uncertain, ambiguous world where the only constant is faster change. Then I will provide a practical, hands-on tutorial for self-directed, intentional learning to increase capacity for the type of leadership detailed in the theoretical model. The framework includes techniques for assessing present leadership capacity, a tool for describing and demonstrating this capacity, and a model for intentional learning to increase capacity. The framework helps

eliminate the “shadow” in Eliot’s quote by presenting tools for “doing.”

LEADERSHIP AS LEARNING

My research for assessing personal leadership capacity began several years ago in my role as organizational change catalyst. During 1994, I researched and benchmarked best practices. I formalized findings and concepts into a paper that was subsequently presented at the American Association of Higher Education Conference in June 1996, and at the University of Maryland Symposium, Leaders and Change, in September 1996 (Hall, 1996). The two meetings led me to rethink the leadership content presented in the original paper. Based on further research, especially the influence of Peter Vaill and John Kotter (who has written extensively on leading change), I revised the leadership content.

As expressed by Kotter (1990, 1996a) there is a critical distinction between leadership and management. He states that “Management is a set of processes [planning, budgeting, organizing, staffing, problem-solving, etc.] that keep a system...running” (1996, p. 25). Leadership, on the other hand, is defining the future, aligning the people (and all of the systems and resources) with that particular future and then inspiring people to create that future. See Appendix A for

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Kotter's distinction between management and leadership.

While both management and leadership are necessary, the change and complexity associated with the future demands that the leadership role takes precedence over the management role. This concept of managerial leadership in an environment full of surprising, novel, messy events demanding attention is described as "permanent white water" (Vaill, 1989).

Leading in this environment implies learning new ways of operating and behaving based on the demands and reality of a changing context. As Farkas and Wetlaufer wrote in the *Harvard Business Review* (1996), "CEOs must learn on the job how to lead a company, and they must learn while every stockholder is watching." Dixon (1996, p. 4) references Robert Kegan's work, *In Over Our Head*, and states: "People find themselves in over their heads much of the time. The organizations in which people work are also in over their heads. They are actively searching for new ways of acting and interacting."

Change is not only a phenomenon associated with organizations desiring to be more customer-driven, more team oriented, and more inclined to make decisions based on data. Change is pervasive in all facets of our present and future world, from demographics, to technology, to global issues. Living in the present and future world successfully requires extraordinary changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors. Gaining this new capacity requires a focused, conscious awareness of the learning process and a dedication to improve intentional, personal learning through planning and self-direction.

To develop self-planned, intentional learning, individuals need to understand the purpose for learning (the why of learning), have strategies, methods, and resources for learning (the how of learning), and they need to be able to comprehend the content (the what of learning). They need to have the skills to assess present capacity and establish specific objectives to enable future learning. The opportunity for human learning occurs every day. However, for learning to translate into new skills, behaviors, and competencies on the job, learning must be purposeful, directed, and intentional.

The original version of this work presents the primary skills of leaders of change as: focus (vision, strategic goals, purpose), direction (values, communication, stretch goals, a customer focus, using data to drive decisions), guidance (process improvement, use of tools, teaming continual improvements), and support (consistency in support systems, encouraging innovation, etc.). The revised version provides five dimensions for leadership; the major differences being primarily in the emphasis on personal learning and managing change.

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Here I describe the dimensions of leadership as: personal learning; establishing direction; aligning people, systems, and resources; motivating and inspiring followers; and managing change. The revised leadership context takes into account the

complexity inherent in present and future leadership, especially in the face of the “permanent white water” characteristic of acquisition reform.

PERSONAL LEARNING

The problem with real-time, self-directed learning for leaders is that it is assumed that leaders know more than others. Today the rate, volume, and variety of change is increasing at such a rate that leaders are in a constant state of learning—they do not have the luxury of prior experience and knowledge. Vaill calls this “leading a learning process” (1996b, p. 2). He goes on to postulate a learning premise (1996b, p. 8).

In dynamic, rapidly changing situations of “permanent white water,” where unprecedented challenges and crisis are occurring continually, the ability to learn effectively is the primary (in)competence. Therefore, effective managerial leadership in such situations cannot ever be sufficiently learned.

Effective managerial leadership in such situations is learning.

The premise is profound in that it recognizes that the purpose of education is not to teach the present reality, but rather, to create an environment where everyone is enabled to learn about their learning and to learn methods, strategies, and tools to improve their unique learning process. The question Vaill puts forth is: “To what extent are the individuals who are in posi-

tions of leadership...focusing (and being helped to focus) on their own learning abilities on the subject of leadership?” (1996b, p. 9). Thus, leadership is about learning. Vaill (1996b) posits that reflection is an integral aspect of this process and that a reflective learner “...learns about ourselves as learners...” (p. 84). He further adds that the reflective learning system relies on self direction, creativity, expressiveness, feeling the meaning, learning on-line, and continuous learning.

The self-directed mode of learning is the degree to which intentional learning is guided by personal choice, not dependence on others. “In reflexive activities we are trying to understand how to increase our personal sense of ownership in our learning” (Vaill, 1996a, p. 87). Creative learning implies that we are going into unexplored territory, not just doing what others have done before. Expressive learning is being engaged actively, not merely absorbing. Feeling learning is knowing the gut reaction to the learning. It is the emotional element that engages the brain to an extent not possible without emotion. On-line learning broadens our learning because we are consciously and intentionally learning new subjects, new topics, and exploring areas. This implies a willingness and openness to learn about a variety of options rather than sticking to the known. This means experiential learning, not passive listening. Continual learning implies continual intentional learning, i.e., by design and consciousness, not ad hoc and by osmosis.

Learning can be part of every work process. When it is, it continually stretches the people involved in the learning and expands the capability of the organization. Peter Senge states (1990, p. 14):

Real learning gets to the heart of what it means to be human. Through learning we re-create ourselves. Through learning we become able to do something we never were able to do. Through learning, we re-perceive the world and our relationship to it. Through learning we extend our capacity to create, to be part of the generative process of life.

ESTABLISHING DIRECTION

Establishing direction implies a clear vision for the future and strategies to get to the vision. The purpose for establishing direction is to transform the organization into something different than its present state. The purpose is not to have detailed plans that occupy shelf space and are posted on the World Wide Web. For the acquisition community, establishing direction implies a business approach with the tenets of the Government Performance and Results Act and Acquisition Reform inherent in every aspect of the operation. The primary skills needed by leaders to establish direction are creating a vision and articulating that vision to the extent that the organizational leadership is able to develop strategies to realize the vision (Kotter, 1990). This vision is a clear picture of a future state that looks at the organization as a whole, integrated system, not a group of individual parts or vertical stovepipes. Setting and communicating a clear picture of the future focuses on outcomes that are consistent with the requirements of present and future customers. Progress toward the vision is measured periodically with performance results.

Leading in this manner promotes innovation by everyone and models integrity through open communication consistent with behavior, the cornerstone of a high-performance, agile organization.

ALIGNING PEOPLE, SYSTEMS, AND RESOURCES

Aligning people with vision and strategies is easier said than done. It requires extensive communication in a variety of formats (e.g., verbal, written, electronic, personal). It also requires “buy-in” from everyone for the vision and commitment to its achievement and success. This implies two-way communication. Listening is most important in creating an environment in which all are enabled to empower themselves. Asking pertinent and thought-provoking questions about the system is as important as providing solutions. Communication is not just verbal and written, it includes modeling core values of the organization such as teaming, trust, empowerment, and excellence. Communication builds trust within and among all people by actions that match words, thus instilling integrity in the system.

“Establishing direction implies a clear vision for the future and strategies to get to the vision.”

While Kotter focuses primarily on aligning people, research also indicates that systems and resources must be aligned with the vision and the strategies as a precursor for involvement and commitment. For example, if reward and recognition

systems do not support the vision, values, and strategies, it is difficult to inspire and motivate people to continually improve and change.

MOTIVATING AND INSPIRING FOLLOWERS

Motivating and inspiring others is necessary to keep the change journey on track and progressing. Kotter states (1990, p. 61):

...direction setting identifies an appropriate path for movement, effective alignment gets people moving down that path, and a successful motivational effort assures that those people will have the energy to overcome obstacles in their way.

The change journey has barriers, obstacles, challenges, and hurdles that continually surface. Being able to stay focused on the vision and strategies when these barriers surface is like changing a tire

“Motivating and inspiring others is necessary to keep the change journey on track and progressing.”

while the car is zooming down the interstate at 60 mph. Inspiring and motivating others involves accepting people for their unique contributions, supporting innovation and risk taking, and being constantly self-motivated. It is inherent that the diversity of the workforce in terms of race, gender, learning style, personality type, functional specialty, service, grade, and rank, influences the efficacy and pro-

ductivity of integrated product teams. However, for the impact to be positive, the leader must motivate and inspire all team members, not just a few.

MANAGING CHANGE

Managers must lead to the vision through unprecedented challenges and change; therefore, the effective leader must manage the change as a never-ending process, not as a specific event or activity. While it behooves leaders to focus on the present change, it is more important that leaders understand and work with others on the process of continual change. The capacity to manage change is best summarized by Kotter (1996a) and includes: establishing a sense of urgency, creating the guiding coalition, developing a vision and strategy, communicating the change vision, empowering broad-based action, generating short-term wins, consolidating gains, and producing more change and anchoring new approaches in the culture (see Appendix B for further breakdown).

While some of the skills, competencies, and behaviors needed to lead a focused change process are the same general skills, competencies, and behaviors needed by leaders in a more stable environment (for example, establishing direction), Kotter's managing change category is purposefully presented intact because of the thoroughness and acceptability of the model. Additionally, this model is compatible with the classic three-step procedure of change model (unfreezing, movement, and re-freezing) presented by Kurt Lewin (1951). Kotter's (1996b, p. 59) research documents that not doing any one of the ac-

tions results in a change effort that is not as successful as expected: "...the change process goes through a series of phases that, in total, usually require a considerable length of time. Skipping steps creates only the illusion of speed and never produces a satisfying result."

ASSESSMENT USING A CAPACITY MATRIX

Identifying the competencies, the skills, and the behaviors to lead organizational change is the first step in the learning process. The individual's capacity in each of the five leadership dimensions areas must then be assessed to determine present capacity. Goals and a plan to reach the goals must then be developed. To get results and build capacity, the plan must be implemented and assessed. This article uses David Langford's "capacity matrix" as the tool (Appendix C) to assess personal capacity to lead change in a volatile world (1995). The competencies, behaviors, and skills from the five leadership dimensions are loaded into the tool.

According to Langford, the capacity matrix gives responsibility for both evaluation and learning to the individual. In the matrix the horizontal axis depicts the skills, competencies, and behaviors identified as the five dimensions of leadership. The vertical axis shows the learning levels broken down by a variation of Bloom's Learning Taxonomy, developed by Langford and Myron Tribus (Langford, 1995). These categories are knowledge, know-how, and wisdom.

As described by Langford (1995), *knowledge* includes obtaining information and the ability to recall it, especially at the appropriate time (for example, re-

sponding to test questions about a topic). Knowledge can be demonstrated by: naming, listing, defining, and answering: who, what, where, when, how many, and how much?

Know-how is the ability to understand or comprehend and apply knowledge and to analyze information. Comprehension can be demonstrated by: giving examples; telling what probably will happen; telling what caused an incident; comparing; contrasting; presenting an idea in your own words; and using terminology associated with the concept in a meaningful way.

Application is the ability to use ideas, concepts, methods, and principles in new situations. The process of applying a skill or competence is demonstrated by solving challenges, generalizing from one situation to another, and probing for answers.

Analysis is methodically examining ideas and concepts and separating them into parts or basic principles. Analysis requires knowledge, comprehension, and application. In the Langford/Tribus model, the *wisdom* category includes judgment (discerning), synthesis (creating), and appreciation or evaluation. Judgment includes comparing, assessing, reflecting, observing, thinking, correlating, and focusing.

Synthesis is the ability to put together parts and elements into a unified whole, which requires original and creative thinking. It includes constructing a model, creating a plan, or arranging pieces together that probably were not previously joined.

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Appreciation is the ability to acknowledge or judge the value of ideas, procedures, and methods using appropriate criteria, such as usefulness or effectiveness. It is the ability to predict, measure, and select. It also includes substantiating with facts, theories, and observations.

The capacity matrix, using these levels of learning, is a living document that is regularly updated by the learner. Shading, color-coding or other indicators are used to assess personal capacity in a particular skill, competency, or behavior.

DOCUMENTATION USING A PORTFOLIO

Self assessment of one's individual capacity to lead change using the capacity matrix is a start. But as W. Edwards Deming (1993) frequently asked, "How

"The importance of a "reality check" by soliciting data from a variety of sources cannot be overemphasized."

do you know your assessment is accurate?" Personal learning implies actually learning how to learn and continually

improving that process. Learning happens in a variety of ways. It can be through experience, modeling, and inputs such as lectures, videos, and texts (Langford, 1995, a-11). Part of the personal change process is understanding the effectiveness of the different ways one personally learns.

One's measure of personal learning is a portfolio documenting, defending, and describing present capacity. This portfolio can be a handwritten notebook with tabs for each of the skills, behaviors, and competencies, or it can be electronic with hyperlink text and multimedia portions.

Documentation includes storyboards from projects, feedback from others, reports, videos of presentations, or personal documentation of the learning process (for example, a learning journal that substantiates the assessment level on the capacity matrix). The capacity portfolio documents what you presently know with examples and answers the questions "How do I know I know, and at what level or competency?"

The portfolio also reflects documentation of what others think about your capacity level as well as what you think. One strategy for determining what others think is customer feedback. Mechanisms for receiving feedback include climate surveys of the organization such as the Campbell Organizational Survey, feedback from work processes, letters, certificates, and Multirater Assessment (360° Feedback). The importance of a "reality check" by soliciting data from a variety of sources cannot be overemphasized.

INTENTIONAL LEARNING

Having completed an assessment of your capacity as a leader of change, documented and described your skills, knowledge, and activities in a portfolio, how do you continue intentional, self-directed learning? A model developed by Wick and Leon (1993) and used extensively by industry, is called SMART learning (select, map, act, review, and target). A modification of this model includes the following steps:

Step 1 is to select a goal based on present and future importance to the organization. Identifying one goal at the time and working on that particular goal for approximately 4 months is the recom-

mended strategy. Selection of a goal is based on both the gaps in the capacity matrix and personal analysis.

Step 2 is to map out achievement of the goal with a detailed learning map. Concentrate on the purpose and the results simultaneously. Incorporate planning and management tools to quantify as much of the plan as possible. A suggested format for the map includes:

- a learning goal;
- action steps with milestone chart (be specific and detailed);
- resources needed (this could be a matrix of people, materials, and resources);
- barriers anticipated (force field analysis);
- measurement of result (from capacity matrix levels);
- future organization benefits;
- future personal benefits; and
- a planned completion date.

Step 3 is to act on the plan. Determine progress on a monthly basis. Analyze both the content and the process of the learning. Make mid-course corrections in the plan. Recommendations to help stay on track include using learning partners/mentors, visual reminders adaptable to particular calendars or daytimers and learning journals for reflection, lessons learned, idea development, and linking new information with present knowledge.

Step 4 is to review and evaluate learning and the learning process. Continually reflecting on the learning process is important to make connections with other learning and to transfer the new learning to on-the-job practice. Reflecting and questioning tacit assumptions helps define and clarify one's belief system. Using the new learning is imperative; thus finding practice opportunities is a constant need.

“Reflecting and questioning tacit assumptions helps define and clarify one’s belief system.”

Step 5 is to target the next learning goal. This implies going back to the learning purpose and the capacity matrix. This phase in the learning triggers a new learning cycle and repeating the assessment, documentation, planning, and learning sequence. This cycle for building personal capacity increases leadership skills and promotes higher levels of learning. It models leaderly learning.

SUMMARY

The bottom line in assessing personal leadership effectiveness is improving personal capacity to lead in the complex, changing world of permanent white water, regardless of the present acquisition reform initiative. This implies improving your skills, competencies, and behaviors through intentional, self-directed, personal learning, and it includes having the skills to establish direction for a work group, team, or organization. This leadership skill also assumes having the capacity to align people, systems, and resources toward a

common vision; motivate and inspire all members; and successfully manage change. The assessment, documentation, and planning for learning are simply activities if the results do not improve leadership and contribute to acquisition systems that meet the requirements of the warfighters.

Commitment to improve one's personal capacity to lead is generally based on intrinsic motivation. It is, however, the primary role of the leader of change. It is impossible for leaders to build a team or an organization into something different from themselves (Clemmer, 1995). For leaders to expect the organization to change, they must understand the change process and how people react to change. For leaders to expect the organization to improve, they must improve themselves using a disciplined approach. For leaders to expect everyone to contribute to the vision and mission, they must personally

contribute to the vision and mission. For an organization to move toward its vision, all systems must be aligned and individuals must be intrinsically motivated and inspired.

The greatest loss in any organization is the inability to tap the full measure of human potential. The leadership role in today's organizations places great emphasis on transforming the enterprise through others. Leaders need to engage 100 percent of their members in producing outcomes required by customers. In the acquisition community this means weapon systems for warfighters that meet cost, schedule, and performance requirements in a downsized, budget-constrained environment. To meet this challenge, leaders must model self-directed, intentional, real-time learning. They then will eliminate the shadow between thinking and doing in personally mastering leaderly learning.

The statements of fact or opinion appearing in this document are solely attributable to the authors and are not necessarily endorsed by the Department of Defense or the Defense Acquisition University.

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APPENDIX A

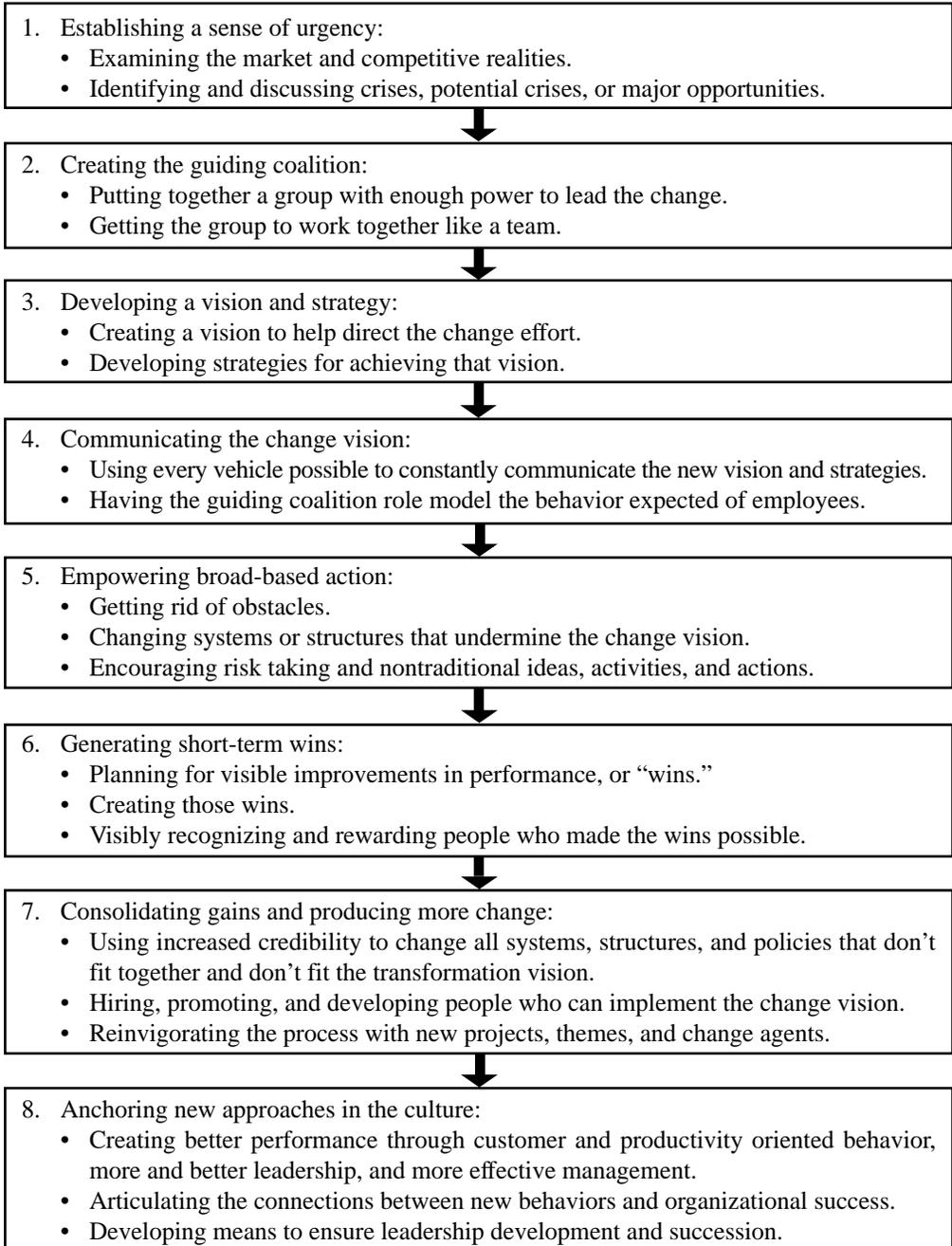
KOTTER'S COMPARISON OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

	Management	Leadership
Creating an agenda	Planning and budgeting: Establishing detailed steps and timetables for achieving needed results, and then allocating the resources necessary to make that happen.	Establishing direction: Developing a vision of the future, often the distant future, and devising strategies for producing the changes needed to achieve that vision.
Developing a human network for achieving the agenda	Organizing and staffing: Establishing some structure for accomplishing plan requirements staffing that structure with individuals, delegating responsibility and authority for carrying out the plan, providing policies and procedures to help guide people and creating methods or systems to monitor implementation.	Aligning people: Communicating the direction by words and deeds to all those whose cooperation may be needed so as to influence the creation of teams and coalitions that understand the vision and strategies, and accept their validity.
Execution	Controlling and problem solving: Monitoring results versus plan in some detail, identifying deviations, and then planning and organizing to solve these problems.	Motivating and inspiring: Energizing people to overcome major political, bureaucratic, and resource barriers to change by satisfying very basic, but often unfulfilled, human needs.
Outcomes	Produces a degree of predictability and order, and has the potential to consistently produce key results expected by various stakeholders (e.g., for customers, always being on time; for stockholders, being on budget).	Produces change, often to a dramatic degree, and has the potential to produce extremely useful change (e.g., new products that customers want, new approaches to labor relations that help make a firm more competitive).

Source: Taken from Kotter, J. P. (1990). *A Force for Change*. New York: The Free Press.

APPENDIX B

THE EIGHT-STAGE PROCESS OF CREATING MAJOR CHANGE



Source: Taken from Kotter, J. P. (1995, March–April). *Harvard Business Review*.

APPENDIX C

TABLE 1. CAPACITY MATRIX FOR INCREASING PERSONAL LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

Outcome	Competencies	Breakdown			Wisdom
		Knowledge	Know-how	Know-why	
Leadership for change	Personal learning	Learning process			
		Individual learning			
		Team learning			
		Organizational learning			
		Reflection/reflectivity			
		Self direction			
		Creativity			
		Expressiveness			
		Feeling the meaning			
		Learning on-line			
Continuous learning					

Source: Text taken from Vääll, P. (1996). *Leadership Is Not Learned; It Is Learned*, Proceeding of the 1996 NLI Conference: Leaders and Change.

APPENDIX C

TABLE 2. CAPACITY MATRIX FOR INCREASING PERSONAL LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

Outcome	Competencies	Breakdown	Knowledge	Know-how	Wisdom
Leadership for change	Establishing direction	Creating a vision			
		Thinking from a systems perspective			
		Developing strategies			
		Focusing on outcomes			
		Assessing performance			
		Defining priorities			
		Clarify roles			
		Modeling integrity			
		Understanding stakeholder requirements			
		Analyzing feasibility of strategies			
Promoting innovation					

Source: Text taken from Hall, M. (1996). *Proceedings: The 1996 NTL Conference: Leaders and Change*. "Increasing Leadership Capacity to Transform Organizations" College Park, MD: The University of Maryland.

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TABLE 3. CAPACITY MATRIX FOR INCREASING PERSONAL LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

Outcome	Competencies		Breakdown	Knowledge	Know-how	Wisdom
	Aligning people, systems, and resources					
Leadership for change			Communicating			
			Listening			
			Teaming			
			Living values			
			Creating a shared vision			
			Matching systems to vision			
			Understanding interactions of people			
			Building trust			

Source: Text taken from Hall, M. (1996). *Proceedings: The 1996 NTL Conference: Leaders and Change*. "Increasing Leadership Capacity to Transform Organizations" College Park, MD. The University of Maryland.

APPENDIX C

TABLE 4. CAPACITY MATRIX FOR INCREASING PERSONAL LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

Outcome	Competencies	Breakdown		
		Knowledge	Know-how	Wisdom
Leadership for change	Motivating and inspiring others	Enabling risk-taking		
		Removing barriers		
		Promoting strategic thinking		
		Fostering innovation		
		Enabling all to empower themselves		
		Embracing diversity		
		Managing conflict		
		Supporting efforts		
		Continuous communication which connects to values		

Source: Text taken from Hall, M. (1996). *Proceedings: The 1996 NTL Conference: Leaders and Change*. "Increasing Leadership Capacity to Transform Organizations" College Park, MD. The University of Maryland.

APPENDIX C

TABLE 5. CAPACITY MATRIX FOR INCREASING PERSONAL LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

Outcome	Competencies	Breakdown	Knowledge	Know-how	Wisdom
			Leadership for change	Managing change	Ensuring a sense of urgency Creating the guiding coalition Developing a vision and strategy Communicating the change vision Empowering broad-based action Generating short-term wins Consolidating gains and producing more change Anchoring new approaches in the culture

Source: Text taken from Kotter, J. (1996). *Leading Change*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.