



## TenStep Supplemental Paper

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### Corporate Souvenirs

*From being good enough to being impressively better...*

#### Key Learning Points

- Leadership is an integrated version of skills, personality and commitment
- Leadership enables organizations to execute strategies that counter corporate exigencies

Thinking of a gift for your company? How about a leader!

CEOs and other senior managers are constantly on the lookout for people who share their passion and vision of taking the organization ahead. Managers hungry for growth and success generally attract CEOs. However, experts assert that there is more to leadership than being ambitious and number hungry.

Leadership by definition is the art of attracting others to follow. Thus, people who inspire others and serve as role models are true leaders. So how does one inspire others to emulate them? What qualities of a leader attract others? Can these qualities be cultivated or are they inborn? These are questions that senior managers hoping to cultivate leaders have to answer. To begin with, senior managers have to conduct a corporate SWOT analysis to gauge their current potential.

Corporate SWOT is aimed at bringing out the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of a company. It's critical to determine the status of the organization on its leadership front since it gives an insight to the competitive standing of the company. If a corporation churns out effective leaders, securing its long-term standing, then CEOs just have the "maintenance" job on hand. If a SWOT reveals a lack of potential leaders and shaky future prospects, then CEOs have to take charge and ponder over strategies to cultivate leaders.

Organizations need to replenish their pool of leadership talent constantly. Leadership development at every level is critical for a company's success. The clout of effective leadership within an organization helps accurate assessment of market trends, competitor analysis and self-assessment. In addition, it also enables organizations to execute strategies that counter corporate exigencies.

Corporations that find their employees lacking in initiative to take up leadership responsibilities have a serious problem at hand. Employees who do not take to leadership responsibilities naturally have to be trained to do so. Teaching the art of leadership execution is critical to organizational success. Leaders commanding senior management positions thus need to identify potential candidates and make them effective and successful leaders. However, before setting course, senior leaders need to first understand the kind of leadership they want to foster and characteristic features of leaders that set them apart from others.

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### **Raw leadership - Sneak preview**

The sole aim of effective leaders is to shift corporate status from “good enough” to “impressively better”. How they do it differentiates an effective leader from an ineffective one. Though leadership does not entail any one best method of execution, certain principles of leadership have to be followed.

Leadership is more about followers and less about leaders. It is an integrated function of purpose, context and personality. A balance between these three components is critical for successful leadership. Followers visualize their leaders in the light of these three components and aspire for an ideal mix of them.

#### *Personality*

Physical attributes of a leader play a critical role in making an impression. A leader’s personality is depicted not by just his physical features but by his confidence, conviction, panache and power to attract. However, as we list the desirable leadership traits, it’s important to note that there is no perfect formula for an ideal leader’s personality. There is nonetheless a preferred list of attributes that leaders should embody.

#### *Context*

Leadership does not exist in isolation. It is a contextual concept. Leadership is always in context to something or someone. In an organizational set-up leadership revolves around relationships. Relationships are largely focused on the

- Leader and his followers
- Leader and his competitors
- Leader and market
- Leader and other external forces

The context of leadership is critical for determining the performance of leaders. Without a proper understanding of the context, a leader might falter and lose sight of long-term objectives.

#### *Purpose*

Leaders and followers need to share a common sense of purpose. Without a common purpose the entire exercise would go haywire. If leaders intend to drive their followers to a certain level of success, they should ensure that the followers are neck deep into it with them. A mismatch of objectives between leaders and followers can sabotage the overall leadership agenda.

At a macro level the leader’s purpose should be in sync with the overall organizational objectives. Thus aligning the entire organization on one axis is challenging but worthwhile.

In addition to the right purpose, context and personality, a leader needs to have three key skills to deliver the desired results. These include:



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### *Skill of grasping*

A leader needs to be constantly aware of things happening in and around the organization. He should be quick to read warnings and act before crisis strikes. Also he should be able to envision the complete corporate picture and frame strategies accordingly.

### *Skill of inciting*

A leader is like the conductor in an orchestra. He must aim at getting others in sync. In short, leaders need to make deliberate attempts to get the best out of others.

### *Skill of transforming*

Transformation is the ultimate goal of leadership. Leaders thus should have the foresight to visualize the deliverance of objectives, making transformation purposeful and justified.

Leadership is an integrated version of skills, personality and commitment. Senior managers aspiring to develop leaders across levels should therefore establish a process based on these guidelines.