
Review Article

The real power of leadership: Adding value to people

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Abstract

Leadership can be either a blessing or a curse. It is a blessing because leaders can make people's lives better, but it is a curse because they can also make people become victims. Drawing on secondary sources, this review article aims to discuss issues concerning leaders and people. It begins by discussing people's values. It then lays out five essential leadership skills for leaders to add value to people, focusing on valuing people, empathizing with people, serving people, developing people, and adding people. Finally, the article concludes that leaders must put people ahead of their personal glory if they want to become good leaders whom people want to follow.

Keywords: Leadership; people's values; leadership skills; adding value

Introduction

Leadership is an inexhaustible subject (Maxwell, 2011). Experts, researchers, scholars, and top leaders in organizations have explained the definitions of leadership based on their learning, experience, and findings. To date, one of the best elaborations of leadership is from author Vance Packard, who said, "Leadership is the art of getting others to want to do something that you believe should be done." (Heagney, 2022, p. 6). Many people can learn about leadership and recognize its power and effectiveness. By becoming good leaders, people can improve their conditions, change others' lives, and make the world a better place (Maxwell, 2018a). Leadership helps people add productivity, subtract problems, multiply success, and divide accountabilities.

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Leadership, however, can be a blessing or a curse to people (Maxwell, 2024). It is a blessing because people can improve their lives, but it is a curse because people can suffer terribly from it. Consider these leaders in human history: Abraham Lincoln, Mother Teresa, Dave Thomas, Adolf Hitler, Pol Pot, and Kenneth Lay. While the first three leaders positively influenced countless people and made the world a better place, the last three leaders negatively impacted people, and millions of innocents died at their hands. Skills and values are the primary causes that mark good and bad leadership (Maxwell, 2024).

When a person is recruited into a team, he or she often does the job by himself or herself. However, when this person is promoted to a leadership position, his or her success is measured by the performance of his or her team members (Harvard Business Review, 2017). Understanding this fact distinguishes a successful leader from an unsuccessful one because the former realizes that he or she needs to employ skills, such as motivation, persuasion, communication, confidence, influence, emotional intelligence, and so forth, to get people to want to do their jobs. In contrast, an unsuccessful leader still has a fixed belief that what he or she used to do to achieve his or her job as an individual contributor still works well when he or she becomes a leader.

Value, by the way, plays a significant role in directing leaders' decisions and behaviors (Maxwell & Hoskins, 2021). Leaders who have no values are like boats without rudders adrift on the ocean. When waves crash them down, they do not know where to go (Maxwell, 2004a). Conversely, leaders with strong values are like anchors holding their boats firmly. They never waver and are undaunted. They know what they are doing and where they are going. They respond to external storms with decisions in line with their values. They are determined to live by those values until sinking deeply into their hearts.

Simply put, leadership rises when leaders operate from a combination of good skills and values, and it falls when leaders' skills and values are poor. According to data from Gallup, an American multinational analytics and advisory company, half of the population in the USA rated the overall state of moral value as poor, and over 75 percent of the same population believed that morals are getting worse and worse (Maxwell, 2024).

Against this background, this review article aims to discuss people's values and leadership skills. It begins by explaining why the life of every person matters. Then, it discusses some significant leadership skills that leaders can adopt to add value to their people. The article concludes that the number one priority for leaders must be people; therefore, they must value and treat people fairly.

People's values

At the heart of good leadership is a willingness to value all people (Maxwell, 2024). Few things in life are better than valuing people, but many people feel devalued by others (Maxwell & Hoskins, 2021). When it comes to the business world, organizations often classify their employees into three distinct groups: the top, the middle, and the bottom employees (Ben-Shahar, 2021). People with this hierarchy are more likely to value the top employees than the bottom ones (Maxwell, 2010). They possess a manner that follows a Dutch phrase: kissing up and kicking down (Grant, 2013).

In his classic book, *Good to Great*, author Jim Collins asserted that not every person in good-to-great companies is an asset, but the *right* people are (Collins, 2001). He wrote, "In a good-to-great transformation, people are not your most important asset. The *right* people are." (Collins, 2001, p. 51). If leaders consider only the right people the assets of their companies, then they will value only a handful of people and ignore the rest. Why is it like that? The results of the following four studies are the response to this claim. The first study by the Gallup organization showed that only 50% of the employees surveyed engaged themselves with the work, while 20% intentionally disengaged themselves from their tasks (Kim & Mauborgne, 2017a). The 20% group alone affected the US economy by approximately half a trillion dollars each year. The second study, also from Gallup on 1.7 million employees, found that only 20 percent of the employees believed that they worked in their strength zone (Maxwell, 2008). The third study mentioned by Tracy and Chee (2013) reported that a person, on average, works at less than 50 percent of their capability and sometimes less than 40 or 30 percent. The final study showed that only 50 percent of workers in the United States said that they were pleased with their work (Ben-Shahar, 2007). Based on these pieces of empirical evidence, it implies that there are not many right people in work settings.

Author Marilyn Gist asserted that “Every human being has and needs a sense of self-worth – or dignity” (Maxwell, 2024, p. 35). Regardless of their background, education, skills, race, social status, position, and other external factors, people, as human beings, have their values and dignity. Everyone desires to be valued. Everyone has his or her dreams to achieve, his or her family to take care of, and his or her problems to solve. Everyone wants freedom, fairness, job security, safety, and honor. Just because a person works as a janitor, a security guard, a street vendor, a garbage collector, a server, a valet, or a groundskeeper does not imply that he or she should be underestimated or devalued. In stark contrast, everyone from every walk of life deserves respect and must be treated equally. As Mengly J. Quach, the founder of Mengly J Quach Education, rightly put it, “Everyone is important: The higher, the lower; the lower, the more important; the more educated, the more meaningful” (MJQ Quotes, 2020, n.p.).

For good leaders, people’s lives are invaluable, and nothing can trade off humans’ lives. The true measure of leadership is found when leaders prioritize people over profit and see their worth as human beings. Furthermore, the ultimate goal in leadership is not how high leaders climb the corporate ladder but how far they advance others (Maxwell, 2017). Instead of sacrificing people to save profit, they sacrifice profit to save people (Sinek, 2014).

Strategies for adding value to people

Leaders can be adders or subtractors to their people. Once a person is appointed to lead a group of people, he or she needs to observe the results of people under his or her stewardship. Do people’s lives become better or worse? Do they grow or stagnate in their careers? Do they enjoy or hate doing their jobs? Do they see their teammates as friends or enemies? If a leader’s answers are positive to these questions, then he or she is a plus in people’s lives. Leaders who genuinely add value to people embrace the acronym VESDA, which stands for Value people, Empathize with people, Serve people, Develop people, and Add people.

Value people

Some entrepreneurs say that business is about profit-making. If we have this mindset, we will be headed for trouble in our leadership journey. Profit will outweigh people and become a core value of the organization. Evidence showed that visionary companies like 3M, Ford, and Walmart value people first, products second, and profit last (Collins & Porras, 2005). One of the core

ideologies of Marriott Corporation, a hospitality company, is “People are number 1. Treat them well, expect a lot, and the rest will follow.” (Collins & Porras, 2005, p. 69). Among the nine values of the John Maxwell Team, an organization co-founded by John C. Maxwell, valuing people has been on the top list (Maxwell, 2022a).

David Packard, a co-founder of Hewlett-Packard, asserted that “I think many people assume, wrongly, that a company exists simply to make money. Profits are not the proper end and aim of management – it is what makes all of the proper ends and aims possible.” (Collins & Porras, 2005, p. 56). Good leaders build a company that goes beyond profits and benefits people and society. To value people, leaders should implement the following four concepts meticulously.

Love people: The moment leaders stop loving people is when they should stop leading them. Leaders find it impossible to lead people well if they are contemptuous of them. As leadership expert John C. Maxwell said, “You can like people without leading them, but you can’t lead people without liking them.” (Maxwell, 2020a, pp. 96–97). Good leaders love people unconditionally in the same way as they love their family members. When leaders love people, they are passionate about improving people’s lives and professions. In *Operacy*, Christopher Lee explained that every good thing in this world is the outcome of love. The world, in the absence of love, will be ruled by evil and darkness. Love is the precise force that makes lives possible, and great families and communities are the results of love (Lee, 2012). In this regard, the affection of leaders can nurture people, bring prosperity to people’s lives, and bring people together.

Care for people: Manipulation may give short-term achievements to some leaders; however, leaders who genuinely value people care for them and want to help them from the bottom of their hearts. Maxwell (2014) profoundly observed that followers always ask these three questions when they work for a leader.

- Can the leader help me?
- Does the leader care for me?
- Can I trust the leader?

Leaders who care for people always find ways to add value to them. They build safe working conditions for people. They find ways to improve people's performance. They sharpen and challenge people. They catch people doing things right and praise them publicly, but they give feedback to people privately when they make mistakes. They understand that impacting people's emotions with care is more important than impressing them with their knowledge and pearls of wisdom. As American President Theodore Roosevelt once remarked, "Nobody cares how much you know, until they know how much you care" ([Price & Lisk, 2019](#), p. 146).

Respect people: Physicist Albert Einstein once advised that "Gentlemen, try not to become men of success. Rather, become men of value" ([Maxwell, 2023](#), p. 282). Becoming a man of value is also a venerable man. Leaders play a pivotal role in setting the tone for the entire organization ([Maxwell, 2018b](#)). A person's attitude, good or bad, will be contagious, like a disease, to others in the workplace ([Maxwell, 2003](#)). If a leader at the top often switches his or her emotions, displays incivility, and expresses no etiquette, then it will set a copycat for the people at the bottom. As a proverb states, "Trees die from the top." ([Drucker & Maciariello, 2004](#), p. 3). By contrast, when a leader is gracious and consistently shows respect, it will spread to people throughout the organization. People, in return, will treat their colleagues and customers with politeness, respect, and dignity. Undoubtedly, respect is a primary secret of successful leaders in building great companies ([Collins & Lazier, 2020](#)).

Treat people with kindness: Russian writer and philosopher Leo Tolstoy remarked that "Nothing can make our life, or the lives of other people, more beautiful than perpetual kindness." ([Sharma, 2024](#), p. 362). For me, I have been convinced that I must commit strongly to self-improvement and generosity if I manage to rotate myself from here to there. On the one hand, I learn and grow myself diligently. On the other hand, enlarging myself through intentional learning also opens a window of opportunity for me to enrich others. Thus, personal growth and generosity have become core values that guide my life. Leaders who truly value people treat them with kindness ([Maxwell, 2024](#)).

Empathize with people

The term empathy is formed by two parts: *em*, meaning “in,” and *pathos*, meaning “feeling” (Price & Lisk, 2019). Empathy is also originally from the Greek *empathia*, which means “feeling into” (Goleman, 2020). Based on these two meanings, we can tell that empathy refers to a person’s ability to be in other people’s feelings. Leaders who empathize with employees often put themselves into their shoes. Instead of lashing out at employees when deviations occur, they swallow their temper, calm themselves down, listen to seek the root of the issue, and express their empathy.

According to Daniel Goleman, empathy becomes the key component in leadership for three reasons (Harvard Business Review, 2011). First, more and more teams are rising every day. Leading a team is one of the biggest challenges in leadership because the team members have diverse backgrounds, values, agendas, and viewpoints. Recognizing the differences of members allows leaders to open up to them. They listen to their people attentively. They inspire people to express their frustrations, share their opinions, and offer constructive feedback. In other words, empathy helps leaders bring people together to achieve common goals. Second, as globalization is increasing rapidly, cross-cultural communication can easily lead to misinterpretations. Leaders who have empathy are skillful at reading people beyond their words, including actions, gestures, tones, voices, emotions, and hearts. Third, we need empathy to retain talent. Recruiting the best people for the company is one thing. Keeping them is another. Leaders with a critical mass of empathy can retain their best people by developing and coaching them. They nurture robust relationships with people because it is key in mentorship. They know when to push people for outstanding performance and realize how to give effective advice. To grow empathy for better leadership, the following ideas should be taken into account.

Listen to people attentively: The first step to empathizing with people is being a good listener. In fact, good leaders are good listeners (Carnegie, 2020; Finzel, 2017). Attentive listening communicates to people that they matter to leaders. A series of experiments showed that when people listen with empathy, non-judgment, and attention, it makes others feel less anxious and defensive (Grant, 2021). As leaders continuously listen to people long enough, it builds trust, the glue holding team members together. As a result, the team consists of

empathetic people who listen to their members and understand the needs of one another ([Price & Lisk, 2019](#)).

Put ourselves in their places: Good leaders do not lead people with assumptions because assumptions can lead to false judgments. Chinese tycoon Cho Tak Wong wisely said that “Anything which would hurt customer’s interest. Anything hurting other people I will not do” ([Badziag, 2019](#), p. 320). This is good advice, but how can we guarantee that we do not step on other people’s toes? The answer lies in putting ourselves in people’s shoes. We need to learn how to see things from others’ perspectives. For instance, we should try to understand their temperaments, listen to their stories and concerns, study their culture or occupations, discover their dreams and life missions, read in terms of their areas of interest, or visit their whereabouts, offices, and homelands ([Maxwell, 2004b](#)). These pieces of information can help us understand people better and know their perspectives, keeping us from hurting them.

Take a high road response: Life is unfair for people ([Collins, 2001; Maxwell, 2024](#)). Sometimes, we give and help others many times, but they never express gratitude and eventually turn their backs on us. Sometimes, we are honest, love, and tell others our stories, but they turn out to have two faces and stab us behind them. It is not difficult to love our family members who love us, help others when they help us, and treat others with kindness when they are kind to us. However, what is our response when others treat us poorly? There are three options for us:

- The low road response: We treat them worse than they treat us.
- The middle road response: We treat them the same as they treat us.
- The high road response: We treat them better than they treat us ([Maxwell, 2004b, 2024](#)).

Some people often take the low road response. Many follow the middle road response. However, the high road response is the path few people travel ([Maxwell, 2004b](#)) because only people with strong character can treat others better than they treat them ([Maxwell, 2005](#)). The Cambridge Dictionary defines the meaning of “take the high road” as “to behave in a moral way when other people are not behaving morally” ([Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.](#)). Leaders who value and empathize with people will adhere to the high road response because

they understand that people sometimes hurt others unintentionally and do not even know the impacts on others. They give more than they receive. They help others devoid of keeping score. They build ladders and uplift others to a higher place. They want others to be successful in their lives and professions.

Serve people

Dictators wield their power to drive others to do things in alignment with their desired direction. However, managers recognized that this command-and-control approach has become relatively less and less effective in recent years (Autry, 2001; Harvard Business Review, 2020). Leaders, on the other hand, get people to want to do things that should be done (Heagney, 2022). This vast difference becomes strikingly apparent and sets leaders apart from dictators because people *want to* work with the former and *have to* work with the latter. No doubt, servant leadership plays an increasingly important role in getting people to do their jobs willingly. The following pieces of advice should be considered to bring out the best in the servant leadership model.

Invert the “power pyramid”: The traditional structure of an organization looks like Egypt’s pyramid and is known as a top-down model (Maxwell, 2018a). In this model, a top leader takes control of everything and everybody in an organization. This model generates a pursuit of ladder climbing for everyone. People believe they need to make an effort and work their way up to the highest place so that everyone will follow their orders and respond to their commands (Finzel, 1994).

The servant leadership approach, in stark contrast, is to invert the traditional structure, putting people at the top and leaders at the bottom (Maxwell, 2018a). In fact, with the opportunity comes responsibility. The higher leaders go up the organizational ladder, the more accountabilities they have, not the greater power they obtain (Finzel, 1994). Moreover, this model reminds leaders that they are servants rather than bosses. Instead of just sitting and shouting their manifestos from the mountaintops, they are supporters, helpers, and facilitators to people on the shop floor. Some companies, such as Nordstrom and Scandinavian Airlines, have shaped their organizational structures to be compatible with this model (Collins & Porras, 2005; Heagney, 2022) because their leaders value their people and believe that their people are the most appreciable assets.

Find means to serve people: It is easy to find reasons not to serve people because human nature desires contradiction. I have met people with no spirit to serve others, even in service positions, and I have known people who want to serve others even though there is no such task in their job description. Good leaders measure their success by the number of people they serve, not the number of people who serve them (Maxwell, 2018a). They go through their days and ask themselves, “What can we do for others?” not “What can others do for us?” For instance, it is reported that the founding father of the United States, Benjamin Franklin, regularly asked himself, “What good shall I do today?” in the morning, and he asked, “What good have I done today?” in the evening (Maxwell, 2022b, p. 244). Benjamin Franklin often found reasons to serve people. He saw the world in terms of how much he could give and how many people he could serve.

Serve people with the right actions: Leaders who execute the servant leadership model should keep vigilance with their actions toward people. Servant leadership is not about pleasing people. It is not about looking nice or being loved (Auntry, 2001). A misconception of servant leadership can cause leaders to suffer burnout and eventually become victims to some people, producing a win-lose consequence. Finzel (2017), for example, claimed that servant leadership does not mean that leaders serve everyone, leaders do all the dirty tasks, leaders carry all the workload on their shoulders, or leaders allow others to step on their feet. In contrast to the conventional wisdom that people have to do something for leaders, servant leadership is about what leaders can do for their people. It is about being humble, listening to people, and serving them.

Develop people

Many leaders do not have the guts to develop their people. Perhaps their busy schedule is rigid. They may not know the return on investment from people development. They are probably intimidated that the new leader outshines them and achieves greater success, or they used to pour themselves into someone, which ultimately turned out awry. More seriously, when leaders decide to develop a new leader, that one eventually leaves the company to work for another competitor. However, if leaders want to raise their leadership bar, they need to make an effort to invest in people. Developing people allows leaders to reach the upper levels of leadership, which remarkably influences

their people and organizations. It is a win-win-win approach. Any leaders who shift the paradigm from producers to developers will expand their sphere of influence.

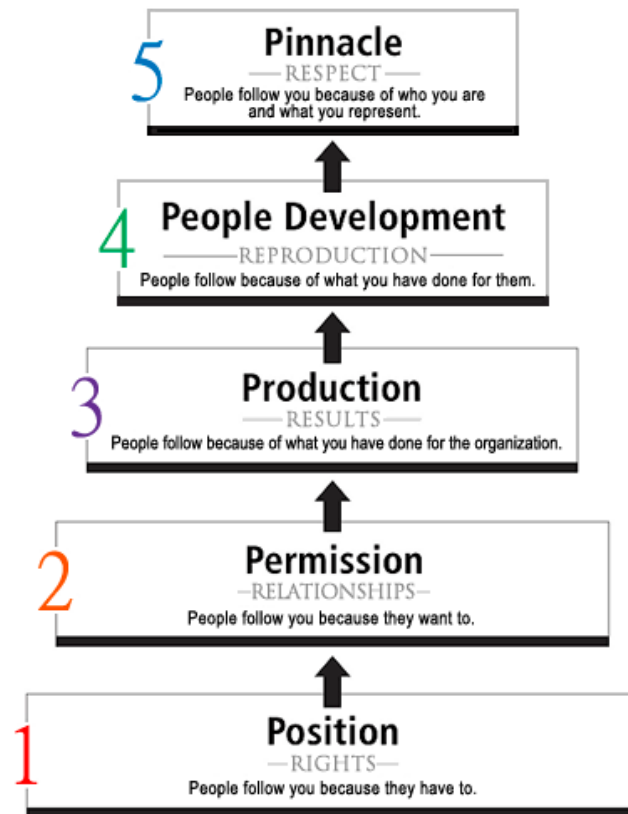


Figure 1. The five levels of leadership (Maxwell, 2011, p. 6)

Figure 1 shows a step-by-step process of leadership developed by leadership expert John C. Maxwell. According to Maxwell (2011), almost every leader can lead others at a positional level. Many leaders can win over permission levels. Few leaders can be productive and bring success to their organizations. However, very few leaders are willing to continue to Level 4, people development. Like a double-edged sword, developing people has its upsides and downsides. It is fortunate, then, that investing in people produces more benefits than disadvantages because enriching people equates to enlarging organizations (Maxwell, 2011). It takes time, resources, energy, and, most of all, commitment from the mentor and mentee. Nevertheless, the fruitful results that come from people development for employees, leaders, and the entire organization make it worth the effort. To develop people and anticipate great returns, consider the following step-by-step strategies.

Recognize and select the right people: It is impossible for leaders to develop people in every corner of the organization. Due to this rationale, leaders need to apply the Pareto Principle, which states that employees impact the organization unequally (Maxwell, 2018a). The top 20 percent of people carry the heaviest workload, subsequently make tough decisions, and produce results after results for the organization. Consequently, leaders have to select 20 percent of the people and then invest 80 percent of their time in this group, who will guarantee the greatest return for the organization (Maxwell, 2018a, 2020b). In my opinion, the right people should possess most of the following qualifications:

- They fit with the organization's culture.
- They buy into the organization's core values.
- They have good relationships with their colleagues.
- They are good team players.
- They have contributed to the success of the organization.
- They have had good records of professional performance.
- They possess a good attitude.
- They have a strong will to build up the organization.
- They take accountability for their actions.
- They share credit with and pass it to others.
- They have a critical mass of emotional intelligence.
- They cast no blame on others despite failures and try to improve themselves.

Coach people to do their jobs: The term coach refers to someone who goes before others and shows others the way (Maxwell, 2022b). The father of modern management, Peter Drucker, stated that "The largest single source of failed promotion is the failure to think through and help others to think through what a new job requires." (Maxwell, 2011, p. 210). To develop people efficiently and effectively, proper learning for people and exceptional coaching from leaders are needed to evade squandering. Research showed that people remember 10 percent of what they hear, 50 percent of what they see, 70 percent of what they say, and 90 percent of what they hear, see, say, and do (Maxwell, 2012). Competent mentors recognize these processes and tap into them when developing people.

Release people to soar and shine: This is a significant phase because the objective of development is empowering people to reach their full potential. The inability to allow people to show their talent is like finding a racehorse, buying it, training it, but never letting it race on the track. Like racehorses that like racing, people desire to show their talent. First, leaders must put people in the right places. This means that people work in their strength zone and enjoy doing their jobs. Second, leaders delegate tasks to people and give them autonomy to do the job themselves. In the words of President Theodore Roosevelt, “The best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done and self-restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it.” (Maxwell, 2022a, p. 152). Third, leaders should provide people with tangible and intangible resources such as finance, materials, authority, time, motivation, etc. Fourth, leaders should act as facilitators who help people deal with unaddressed problems and mitigate the obstacles. Their job is to pave a path for people to do their tasks smoothly. Finally, leaders should meet people quarterly or semesterly to evaluate their performance and give feedback for improvement.

Believe in people: Many people rise to the level of their leader’s expectations for them (Maxwell, 2024). As a leader, he or she needs to believe in his or her people’s potential. Leaders must deeply believe in people because leaders’ beliefs create a self-fulfilling prophecy, meaning an anticipation that impacts a person’s behaviors and eventually causes the belief to come true. When leaders set high expectations for people, it motivates them to try their best to reach the expectations of leaders in return. The bottom line is that good leaders are not only just ladder climbers, but they are also ladder builders. They are skillful in finding the diamonds in the rough, investing in them wholeheartedly, bringing out the best in them, and believing that they can accomplish greatness for the organization.

Add people

Adding people to the team sounds simple but is difficult to do. When two people just know one another, what brings them together and makes the relationship flourish? Sameness or similarity between people is one of many factors (Berger, 2016; Grant, 2013; Maxwell, 2015). When people have identical names, values, interests, behaviors, backgrounds, or life missions, they are likely to gravitate toward one another. People will work together to make a

difference when they have the same minds and purposes ([Maxwell, 2015](#)). In a meta-analysis, Brett Pelham, a psychologist at the University at Buffalo, uncovered that people seem to be attracted to things that remind them of themselves. They love and enjoy working with those who possess the same names as them ([Grant, 2013](#)). In another experiment, researchers discovered that mimicry of other people can lead to professional success ([Berger, 2016](#)). When interviewees emulate the interviewers' behavior, for example, they feel more relaxed and perform better. Good leaders recognize that diverse teams give many benefits to the organization as follows.

A diverse team can fill in the knowledge gap: Many achievements in human history have been made by teams. As author and speaker John C. Maxwell said, "One is too small a number to achieve greatness." ([Maxwell, 2001](#), p. 1). Teams can appear in all sizes and shapes, but a good team is formed between 6 and 12 members and is diverse enough to fill the knowledge gap of other members ([Hunsaker & Hunsaker, 2022](#)). As a result, a diverse team makes members accessible to knowledge, expertise, and influence ([Grant, 2013](#)).

A diverse team can fill in the skill gap: Harvard Business Review defines a team as "a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable." ([Maxwell, 2019](#), p. 173). It is impossible for a person to be skillful in everything. However, a person can master one or a few skills. When people with different skill sets rally together for a common goal, it makes the dreams work. As Mother Teresa said, "I can do what you cannot, and you can do what I cannot; together we can do great things." ([Maxwell & Hoskins, 2021](#), p. 57).

A diverse team can fill in the experience gap: Many people wrongly believe that experience is their great teacher. If experience gives them the best lessons, people's lives will be better when they are aged. However, many people have been in the same conditions no matter how old they are ([Maxwell, 2023](#)). Experience is not a good teacher, but evaluating experience is ([Maxwell, 2019](#)). In a diverse team, there are probably two or three generations, such as Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z, working together. The good news is that they all have distinct experiences, which are the assets for the team.

When they all get on the same page, their experiences help them do their jobs faster, easier, and better.

A diverse team can fill in the creativity gap: According to [Tracy and Chee \(2013\)](#), creativity means improvement. Any new idea that can improve people's lives is an act of creativity. Furthermore, creativity is the key contribution to increasing the odds of success in companies. In the technology era, the sameness of products is the death of business ([Maxwell, 2018b](#)).

A diverse team can achieve greater success: In the fast-paced, changing world with cutting-edge technology, many businesses have been run globally ([Hunsaker & Hunsaker, 2022](#)). The number of women in workplaces is increasing yearly. People emigrate from their own countries to work in other countries around the world. This can make the business more challenging and offer more opportunities simultaneously. A research study conducted by McKinsey & Company in 2020 demonstrated that companies integrating higher levels of gender, ethnic, and cultural diversity seemed to earn greater profits than those with lower diversity. The same source also argued that companies promoting more than 30 percent of women as executives could win over less gender-diverse companies ([Hunsaker & Hunsaker, 2022](#)).

Conclusion

Leadership is not about climbing a higher position, earning much money, or fulfilling personal glory. Great organizations may not be measured by their sizes, big or small. If a huge organization is led by leaders who devalue people and sacrifice people for profit, then it is not a great organization. Conversely, if leaders in a small organization can improve people's lives, impact society, and make the world a better place, then it can become a great organization.

Leadership is about making a difference in people's lives. Leaders who truly value people embrace VESDA. They add value to people with love, care, respect, and generosity. They empathize with people by listening attentively to people, putting themselves in their people's shoes, and taking high-road responses. They serve people from the bottom of their hearts and never rank themselves above their employees. They spend time, resources, energy, experience, and knowledge to develop their people because growing people, empowering them, and creating new leaders equate to enlarging the

organization. They add people to their team regardless of ethnicity, religion, gender, race, nationality, or political views.

In spite of the fact that some people were born with innate abilities to lead people well, great leaders are made, not born ([Maxwell & Hoskins, 2021](#)). Leaders such as Abraham Lincoln, Steve Jobs, and Martin Luther King Jr. started from scratch as ordinary ones. However, they learned and improved themselves ceaselessly and ultimately turned out to be extraordinary leaders in human history. Thus, to become good leaders, we should do these two things. First, we need to lead ourselves properly. Skills such as critical thinking, communication, self-improvement, self-discipline, self-monitoring, self-corrective thinking, consistency, and patience can help us to lead ourselves effectively. Second, when we win over and take control of ourselves well, then we expand our circles to leading other people, and VESDA is about leading other people diversely, both in small and large organizations.

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