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Key roles of the leadership landscape

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Abstract *A framework is developed, and validated, that provides an insight into the role of leadership in transforming a loose group into an effective team. In this context a loose group is defined as a number of individuals brought together to achieve a task, but with no further development undertaken. An effective team, by contrast, is one in which development of a supportive social structure has occurred, with each individual adapting his behaviour to optimise his personal contribution to the team. Four distinct leadership “key roles” are identified: legitimate, social, task, and macro, which lead to the identification of critical leadership issues that limit the speed with which loose groups transform into effective teams. This in turn enables specific recommendations to be made to assist individuals within a team to identify the key role they occupy, the importance of that key role relative to the others and the behaviours most appropriate to it. In the current research program the organisation studied was a multinational engineering company, engaged in the design, development and manufacture of rotating turbomachinery.*

Introduction

The effectiveness of leadership within modern organisations was considered by Kotter (1999), who concluded that a core issue is that they lack the leadership they need. The increasingly fast-moving and competitive environment all organisations face demands more leadership to make their organisations prosper. Without leadership, organisations stagnate and lose their way. The central issue was not considered by Kotter to be one of style, but more about core behaviours on the job.

The issue of leadership styles was considered by Blake and Mouton (1983) and the application of these styles presented by Cockman *et al.* (1999), who described four “intervention” styles. The appropriate application of the four styles helped essentially capable leaders improve their effectiveness in different situations.

The need for this flexibility can be better understood by considering the organisational culture model of Goffee and Jones (1996), who consider culture in terms of sociability and solidarity. Sociability is a measure of sincere friendliness amongst members of a community. Solidarity is a measure of a community’s ability to pursue shared objectives quickly and effectively, regardless of personal ties. There are often hierarchical differences within a single company. Senior managers may display an entirely different culture from middle managers. The culture of blue-collar workers may be different again. The sociability and solidarity of an organisation, therefore, are a function of one’s place within it.



To be effective, those in leadership positions must display essentially unchanging core beliefs and behaviours, whilst simultaneously adapting their style to fit into the “micro culture” of the organisation around them. It is this solid core (Kotter, 1999), plus flexible adaptivity of style (Cockman *et al.*, 1999), that will enable those in leadership positions to be truly effective.

Transforming groups into teams

Sheard and Kakabadse (2002) considered key factors that impact on the speed with which loose groups transform into effective teams. Nine key factors were identified in all, with three models being found to be useful during the process of doing so. The first was the four-stage model of the team development process described by Kakabadse *et al.* (1988) and originally developed by Tuckman (1965), outlining Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing as the four stages through which all teams pass during transformation from a loose group into an effective team. The second was the transition model of Kübler Ross (1969), defining the changes in competence/effectiveness of individuals with time after a major change, applied to executive development by Parker and Lewis (1980) and Kakabadse (2000). The third was the model of Adair (1986), defining areas of team “need” that must be satisfied if the team is to perform. Leadership, in a general sense, was identified by Sheard and Kakabadse (2000) as the most important key factor influencing the speed of transformation.

The leadership landscape

The work of Sheard and Kakabadse (2002) characterised leadership in terms of the four stages of the team development process. This was helpful within the context of the nine key factors, where the level of granularity chosen associated all leadership issues with a single key factor “leadership”. In this context granularity is defined as the level of detail into which a subject is sub-divided. A lower level of granularity, however, is required, if those in leadership positions within an organisation are to be provided with a deeper level of insight into the impact of their behaviour on the speed of transformation of those teams with which they are associated. This lower level of granularity is provided by developing the concept of the “leadership landscape”, which characterises leadership in terms of key roles and critical points through the team development process.

The concept of key roles is a development of the concept put forward by James (1999) of the existence of a legitimate and dual task for any team. The core task is the “legitimate” task, that which the group was set up to perform, with publicly stated goals, structures and roles. There is also a dual task of developing and maintaining relationships, which is not easy to perform, given the deep emotions that working in groups evokes. This insight leads on to the concept of two leadership roles within a team, first, the role of “legitimate” leader and, second, the role of “social” leader. In this context the legitimate leader is defined as the publicly appointed leader of the team who is accountable for delivery of the team’s objectives. The social leader is defined as

the individual who undertakes to build and maintain a network of relationships with other team members.

Sheard and Kakabadse (2002) observed that a team attempting to deliver a technically complex objective required a series of individuals to lead specific tasks that required undertaking and completing during the delivery of the team's overall goal. These "task" leaders may be regarded as deriving their legitimacy to lead other team members from the formal allocation of responsibility for delivering a specific task by the team's legitimate leader. A fourth leadership role identified by Sheard and Kakabadse was that of senior management, who as individuals represented the views of the "macro" organisation. Whilst the time that the company's senior staff spent directly engaged with individual teams was relatively small, the impact that this had on the team's speed of transformation was found to be great.

An additional observation was made by Sheard and Kakabadse, who reported that teams spent very little time in transition from one stage of the team development process to another. Typically teams would progress between stages in less than a day, or not at all. Clearly, the critical leadership challenge is negotiation of boundaries between stages in the team development process. The four-stage team development process may, therefore, be regarded as having five "critical points" associated with it:

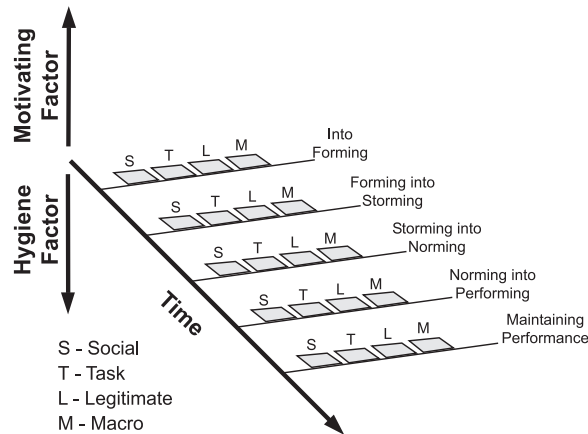
- (1) Into Forming.
- (2) Forming into Storming.
- (3) Storming into Norming.
- (4) Norming into Performing.
- (5) Maintaining Performing.

The act of moving from one stage of the team development process to the next may be considered to be bound up in the willingness of individuals within the team to move on. This willingness is considered to be primarily a function of the competence of those associated with the team in leadership positions. This leads to the conclusion that leadership in the most general sense is of primary importance at each critical point through the team development process.

The work of James (1999), Sheard and Kakabadse (2002) and Tuckman (1965) may be combined into a single concept of four leadership key roles that are primarily relevant at five critical points. These have been combined to form the leadership landscape (see Figure 1), comprising 20 "links".

Different key roles will be important at different critical points. Whilst it has been established that the key roles are significant in themselves, the relative significance of each key role at each critical point must be verified empirically. Specifically the objective is to establish the relative importance of each key role at each critical point, plus the extent to which it is a motivating or hygiene factor. This was considered appropriate, as during the theory-building and data-gathering phase of the research program it became clear that, in addition

Figure 1.
The proposed leadership
landscape



to the absolute importance of a key role at a critical point, it was perceived by team members either as a hygiene or as a motivating factor.

In this context a hygiene factor is defined as a factor that will not motivate a team if present, but will de-motivate it if absent. A motivating factor, by contrast, is defined as a factor that will not de-motivate a team if absent, but will motivate it if present.

Ethnographic methodology

Analytical research strategies may be characterised by the generation of data followed by their analysis. In contrast ethnography involves the researcher attempting to understand the individuals who are the subject of the research. The ethnographic methodology is a formulation of the rationale used in both the current research program and that reported by Sheard and Kakabadse (2002). In both research programs the rationale was used for generating the strategy of enquiry adopted by the authors. This approach was also adopted by Analoui and Kakabadse (1991), enabling them to become an integral part of the group being studied. Many of the leadership issues associated with why loose groups do, and in many cases do not, transform into effective teams were considered to hold parallels with the research of Analoui and Kakabadse. The authors' approach was, therefore, to become an integral part of the different teams within the organisation studied. In this way the authors were able to gain access to data that simply would not have been available via any other route. The ethnographic methodology was characterised by Kakabadse *et al.* (1997), who wrote:

- Interaction with the participants under scrutiny has to be sustained over time. Hence, issues of gaining entry, negotiating trust and maintaining credibility arise. How these issues are addressed may differ from one site to the next. However, the relationship-building and maintaining skills of the researcher are of crucial consideration.
- The conditions of each locality of site are likely strongly to influence the mode of data gathering. A mix of approaches is likely to emerge including

interview, shadowing, attending meetings, running workshops and even casual meetings and conversations. Data are not invalidated because different modes of approach are applied from one site to the other. What counts is the quality of data; less so how they were gathered.

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- Data gathering and theory development are unlikely to be distinguished in terms of different stages of the project. Data gathering and the emergence of broader generalisations, which may not survive as concepts and theory, are likely to considerably overlap and may be experienced as haphazard, and the drawing-together of sound principles may only be done in retrospect. On this basis, validation is of prime concern and even then may be experienced as “the best one can do at the time”.

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The ethnographic methodology has at its core the concept of “theory from data”, which is the process by which theory emerges from data as free as possible from preconceived values and models imposed by the researcher. The theme of “theory from data” was strongly promoted by Eden and Huxham (1993), who argue that access to data and maintaining credibility with those participating in the research program are crucial issues.

Theory building and data collection

The authors had observed that some individuals in leadership positions within the organisation were able to transform loose groups into effective teams quickly, whilst some seemed unable to initiate the transformation process at all. Managers within the organisation had their own explanations as to why this was the case. Typically, examples of senior managers “leading from the front” would be offered as the “reason” why some teams transformed quickly, with little evidence to support the assertion. The authors formed the view that first and foremost it was necessary to take into account the explanations of the individuals involved in the teams, whilst also remaining objective enough to take into account the context within which the transformation was taking place. To this end it was necessary to get close to and actually work with the team leaders and team members during the life cycle of the teams involved.

The authors worked with team members, team leaders and the senior management to whom the team leaders reported over a 12-month period between September 1999 and September 2000. During this period teams were formed, delivered their goals, were disbanded, and members re-formed into new teams. Over this period the authors were involved in discussions on a daily basis with those involved. Approximately 100 of these discussions were considered significant enough to record. Data collected in this way fell into two categories, those which were observed by the researchers and those in which they were directly involved. The process of collecting data was often performed under circumstances where those involved were under great pressure:

The engineering director sat down in the board room, looking at a collection of about 50 staff from different departments. After outlining the project specification, he asked each technical specialist to summarise issues they considered significant, with the chief designer

commenting after each had spoken. An hour later he then split the assembled group into eight teams, assigning a team leader and one element of the project to each.

"Design review all day a week on Tuesday. I want eight linked project plans and a list of issues for then. Gentlemen, good luck."

Everyone got up, clustered around their new team leader and left quickly in eight separate groups. The engineering director looked up at the only other person left in the room, the chief designer. The two friends smiled at each other, got up and left the board room together. They both knew without speaking that the week ahead was going to be very busy.

Slowly, a picture emerged of the real issues that were driving the behaviour of those individuals within the organisation occupying leadership roles. After about four months of data collection, the data were ordered into a tree structure. The data themselves were regarded as "evidence" that was collected together into logical sub-groups of data that related to a similar theme. A single "fact" in summary of this theme was then generated, which the collected data could be considered to "support". In this context a fact is defined as "a truth verifiable from experience or observation". An example of this would be the above situation, which was characterised as:

Team leaders, who involve the team members fully, tend to help in the development of a team social structure, which in turn helps the team to perform.

This was one of 11 separate batches of data collected as evidence of a similar theme, that were collectively characterised as being "in support" of the following fact:

Team leaders who are perceived to consult team members get buy-in to their proposed solutions.

In total, 80 separate facts were generated in this way, underpinned by approximately 1,000 separate batches of data. The decision was made to repeat the process, but one level higher, this time collecting the facts together into logical sub-groups of facts that related to a similar theme. A single "assumption" was then generated, which the collected facts could be considered to "support". In total, 18 assumptions were generated in this way. The process was repeated one last time, this time collecting the assumptions together into logical sub-groups. Four of these sub-groups emerged, with the following hypotheses being created from a consideration of the assumptions in each:

- (1) Loose groups of individuals do not transform into an effective team instantaneously, or randomly; there is a process at work that takes time to play out.
- (2) The transformation of a loose group into an effective team will only happen routinely in an organisation with the necessary business process infrastructure.
- (3) The transformation of a loose group into an effective team is dependent on the leadership philosophy of the team leader.

- (4) Team leaders who come with a poor history of relationships are not trusted to apply social levers.

Key roles of the leadership landscape

The nature of the ethnographic methodology is such that the process of gathering data and theory development occurs simultaneously, and this comprised the first iteration of the theory-building process. Subsequent iterations led on to the development by Sheard and Kakabadse (2002) of the nine key factors and in the research program reported here the four leadership key roles, the five critical points and, finally, the leadership landscape.

The iterative theory development process was interwoven with an iterative data gathering exercise. The observed and involved data were used to generate the initial facts, assumptions and hypotheses. As a separate exercise ten interviews were then conducted with team leaders and key team members, and the data from these interviews recorded in a similar format to the observed and involved data. The objective of this exercise was to generate additional data from the same individuals, but via a different route. A “data triangulation” exercise was then conducted, during which the interview data were used as evidence in support of the already existing facts. This process subsequently resulted in the extension and revision of the initial facts and assumptions, followed by the re-checking and classification of all data. During this process, two researchers independently coded data and then the classification was jointly reviewed. The data gathering process was then extended, to seek out additional observed and involved data within the organisation in support of the new facts and assumptions that the interview data and their classification had helped to generate.

Leadership landscape characterisation

Following the data-gathering and theory-building process, it was necessary to characterise the 20 links in the leadership landscape to establish their relative significance. This was achieved via a consideration of the 224 separate pieces of data gathered during the interviews. Two independent researchers considered to which critical point a piece of data referred and then which of the key roles was most relevant to the batches. The data classification was then compared and agreed.

In total, 56 separate pieces of data were associated with the first critical point “Into Forming” (Table I), with Macro and Legitimate emerging as the most

Leadership role	Cases
Macro	29
Legitimate	26
Task	0
Social	1
Total	56

Table I.
Data assigned to leadership roles during Into Forming

significant key roles. Typical data associated with the Macro key role at this critical point were:

- The reaction of the team members to the team goal was extremely positive. The high level priority from the engineering director motivated the team.
- As people understood how the goals linked in together there was buy-in to deliver at an early stage in the project.
- The management used its judgement to estimate the size and skill mix of the team.

The Legitimate key role also had significant data associated with it at this critical point. Typical data were:

- After the top-level plan was produced we spent two or three days planning in detail what sub-goals were needed to deliver the top-level goals. Every sub-goal was given to one individual, who then became responsible for delivering it.
- The team leader did most of the work to identify sub-goals and tasks to achieve team goals.

The above points to the importance of the relationship between an individual in the Macro key role and those individuals occupying Legitimate key roles within the teams working on a project. The individual occupying the Macro key role had to clearly define the top level goal, communicate how it was to be broken down into sub-goals, and who would occupy the Legitimate key roles in the teams set up to deliver each sub-goal.

In addition to the importance of the Macro key role, the above also points to the significance of those in Legitimate key roles behaving in a complementary manner to the individual in the Macro key role. Each Legitimate key role holder must present that team’s sub-goal to his own team in such a manner that it can be further broken down into elements of which each individual team member can take ownership.

In total, 19 batches of data were associated with the second critical point “Forming into Storming” (Table II). The Legitimate and Social key roles emerged as the most significant motivational key roles at this critical point. Typical data associated with the Legitimate key role were:

- Goal planning was very effective; activity planning was not even attempted.
- Splitting the team into two teams helped the mobilisation; each one planned the whole task, then presented it to the other. Lively debate followed, and eventually everyone agreed on a “composite” plan.

Table II.
Data assigned to
leadership roles during
Forming into Storming

Leadership role	Cases
Macro	3
Legitimate	10
Task	1
Social	5
Total	19

Typical data associated with the Social key role were:

After about two weeks I became aware that different team members doing similar work were doing it in different ways.

One member wanted to run the team, and upset others by trying to do this.

The above points to the importance of the Legitimate key role holders finding a way of presenting the team’s goal in a way that does not prevent individual team members from developing lateral, creative and innovative tactical solutions to the problems that achieving the goal presents. The authors were surprised to find that data relating to those in Macro key roles were mostly negative at this critical point. Typical data associated with the Macro key role were:

The engineering director effectively formed the team and imposed the technical solution, of whose merits some team members needed persuading.

In total, 51 batches of data were associated with the third critical point “Storming into Norming” (Table III). The relative importance of the key roles seen at the second critical point remains the same as at the third, but is more pronounced. Typical data associated with the Legitimate key role were:

The new team leader gave a generally relaxed and capable impression; he just seemed to pull it all together without undue stress or drama.

Following information gathering and brainstorming, a team view of the answer started to emerge.

The act of getting people to agree on a task set involved putting it all together without being overly prescriptive. People were only 90 percent bought into the goal plan, but that was enough.

The above data indicate that individuals occupying Legitimate key roles must find a workable common ground that all team members can accept. The observation was made by Sheard and Kakabadse (2002) that, at the transition from the Storming to Norming stages of the team development process, the team leaders performed better with the close support of the team member performing the social role of James (1999). In the current research program typical data associated with the Social key role were:

The pessimists and sceptics did not realise how their behaviour was stopping the team performing before they were “turned around”.

After the first couple of weeks I got to know the other individuals within the team, and the perceived overlap of roles felt less and the level of conflict generally reduced.

Leadership role	Cases
Macro	11
Legitimate	28
Task	1
Social	11
Total	51

Table III.
Data assigned to leadership roles during Storming into Norming

In total, 51 separate pieces of data were associated with the fourth critical point “Norming into Performing” (Table IV). Whilst the Legitimate and Social key roles are still significant at this critical point, the importance of the Task key role has emerged for the first time. Typical data associated with the Task key role at this critical point were:

After four to six weeks good quality tangible deliverables from the team started to be delivered. The mutual admiration for work done helped the team spirit.

In the last four weeks we have focused on a solution we want to test. The positive thing to come out of the earlier problems with the technology is that we now have a much better understanding of the technology, and confidence that the engine will perform as predicted.

The above points to the ability of the team to now function, having developed the supportive social system required to do this. The move into the Performing stage of the team development process is linked to the public success of the team in delivering tangible results that can be seen as successful by all team members. This success was dependent on being clearly visible to team members working on other elements of the team goal, who were therefore not directly connected with the results delivered.

In total, 47 separate batches of data were associated with the fifth critical point “Maintaining Performing” (Table V). The key role with the most positive data associated with it at this critical point was Task, with data associated with the Social key role indicating that at this critical point individuals occupying this key role are “in support” of those occupying Task key roles. The authors were again surprised to find a large quantity of data associated with the Macro key role that were almost exclusively negative. Typical data associated with the Task key role at this critical point were:

The large number of part time team members gave the team a real issue over priorities, but we performed by being flexible about who did what when.

Table IV.
Data assigned to
leadership roles during
Norming into
Performing

Leadership role	Cases
Macro	13
Legitimate	17
Task	9
Social	12
Total	51

Table V.
Data assigned to
leadership roles during
Maintaining
Performing

Leadership role	Cases
Macro	28
Legitimate	4
Task	10
Social	5
Total	47

We compared the technical content of the work we were doing, and some team members modified what they were doing to make it consistent with the rest of the team.

Now the team is working well, “loose ends” are being sorted out by team members.

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Typical data associated with the Social key role at this critical point were:

Once the team was performing new members were collectively “informed” about what the team needed from them. This was a social process effectively assigning new members a place in the social system that was the team. This allowed new team members to be absorbed with minimal disruption to the team.

In the last two weeks it was all understood, and the team networked together to formalise the end result.

Typical data associated with the Macro key role at this critical point were:

Senior management was in the habit of switching resources, as the priority technical solution was perceived to change.

Teams that were performing could assimilate junior team members effectively; however, senior management could undermine the social system and destroy the team spirit.

Different levels of management have different roles; we should be clear about what they are and that we are all part of the larger team effort. It is not just a hierarchy.

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Discussion of results

The decision was made to classify the number of interviews in which data had been assigned to a link. This overcame the problem associated with those being interviewed making up to six points that related to the same link, and in so doing potentially over-emphasising its significance by simply considering the total number of times data had been assigned to a link. The classification utilised four categories:

- (1) *Category One*: No data assigned to the link in any interview.
- (2) *Category Two*: Data assigned to the link in between three and six interviews.
- (3) *Category Three*: Data assigned to the link in between seven and nine interviews.
- (4) *Category Four*: Data assigned to the link in all ten interviews.

The classification of data was then taken one stage further. The data assigned to each link were characterised as being either “hygiene” or “motivating”; following which the relative proportion of hygiene and motivating data associated with each link could be calculated.

The data have been represented graphically on the leadership landscape (Figure 2). The “height” of each link is directly proportional to the links significance, with, for example, a Category Four link being taller than a Category One, Two or Three link. The concept is simple, in any landscape you are more likely to stumble over taller objects. The relative significance of the links in Figure 2 may be assessed by considering the leadership landscape as a composite landscape combining both hygiene and motivating elements into a

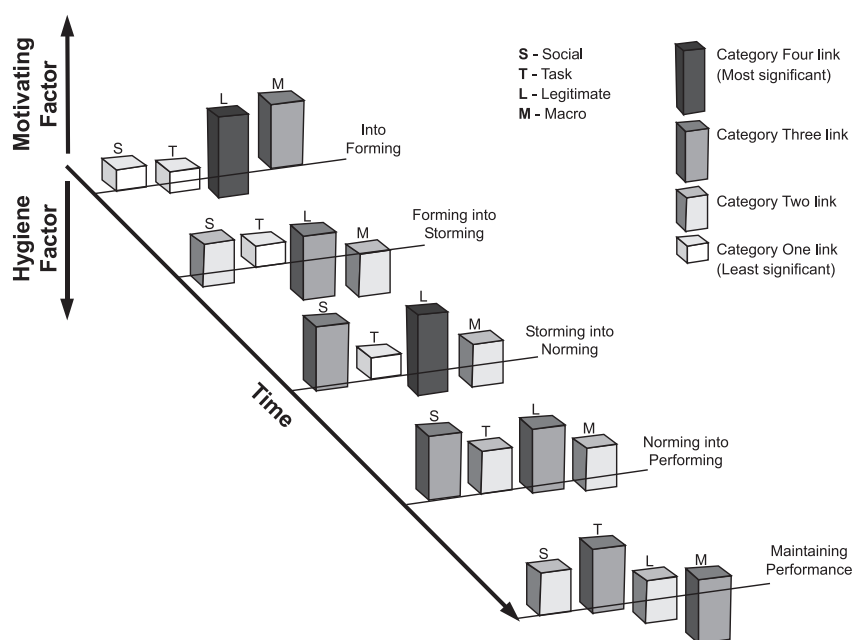


Figure 2.
The validated leadership
landscape

single landscape. In this way the relative significance of the links in Figure 2. In terms of both hygiene and motivational significance, is made clear.

The most striking feature of the leadership landscape is that “major” features are associated with each critical point, and with each key role. The key roles have all been demonstrated to be “significant” in that they all had interview data assigned to them in at least one critical point. The level of granularity associated with the key roles is also considered to have been shown to be appropriate. Of the four key roles defined, none was found to be significant at every critical point through the team development process, and all were significant at at least one critical point.

Considering the relevance of the key roles at each critical point, negotiation of the first critical point, Into Forming, was found to be primarily associated with the quality of leadership associated with individuals occupying Legitimate key roles (Figure 2). The positive support of individuals occupying Macro key roles at this early stage in the team life was also found to be highly motivational. The combined efforts of individuals occupying Legitimate and Macro key roles as a leadership dyad, clearly communicating and defining the team’s goals, were found to be particularly effective at moving the team through the first critical point.

The move from Forming into Storming is relatively easy for any team to make, and it is considered significant that there is little those in Legitimate or Macro key roles can do to motivate the team at this second critical point. Quite to the contrary, it would seem that any effort on their part to impose leadership is actually very demotivating.

At this second critical point the individual in a team occupying the Social key role can have the most motivational effect on the team. This fits with the findings of Sheard and Kakabadse (2002), who concluded that the primary key factor during the Storming stage was “group dynamics”, which is associated with the establishment of a team social system. The individual within a team occupying the Social key role would naturally lead this process. In practice it was observed that the team would pass through this critical point more quickly if individuals occupying the Legitimate and Social key roles formed an effective dyad. This provided individuals occupying the Legitimate key role with critical feedback, enabling them to address those issues perceived to be important by team members.

The third critical point, Storming into Norming, was found to be negotiated most effectively by those occupying the Legitimate and Social key roles continuing to operate as a dyad. In this context the Legitimate key role holder within a team was required to act as a “sink” for organisational uncertainty, communicating team objectives clearly to individual members. The individual occupying the Social key role would be involved in addressing issues with individual team members that for whatever reason they did not feel able to raise with a formal authority figure. The more effective the relationship between individuals occupying Legitimate and Social key roles, the quicker the transition through this critical point was found to be.

The fourth critical point, Norming into Performing, may be regarded as a continuation of the leadership dyad that formed between individuals occupying Legitimate and Social key roles at the third critical point. The significant change, however, is the reduction in impact of the Legitimate key role, and the increase in the importance of the Task key role. This may be regarded as the emergence of a further set of leadership dyads between individuals occupying the Social and various Task key roles within the team. This is not unexpected, as it is at the Performing stage of the team development process that the individuals occupying the Task key roles within a team need to be in control of their respective tasks, with the full support of the social system that the team has now become.

The trend described above is continued into the fifth critical point, Maintaining Performing, with the Task key role becoming the most motivating key role for the first time. This critical point represents a shift in the relative importance of the key roles, as it is now individuals occupying the Task and Social key roles that form the primary motivational dyads for the team. The impact of Legitimate and Macro key roles is reduced at this critical point, and in practice almost any intervention is perceived as interference by a team that is clearly focused on its objective, and would like to be left alone to achieve it.

Implications for managers

The leadership landscape provides practitioners with an insight into some fundamental leadership issues:

- The leadership behaviours that work well at one point during the life cycle of a team will not necessarily be appropriate throughout the life cycle.

- Leadership is about more than “one great man” with truly effective teams involving all team members.
- The behaviour of those in formal team leader and senior management roles can have a profoundly negative effect on a team’s ability to become truly effective.

The subject of leadership was examined by Kakabadse (2000), who stresses the inter-linked nature of the impact of leadership on the organisation. Key points drawn out by Kakabadse were:

- Effective leaders need to have developed a high level of people skills.
- Leadership requires the development of key aspects of character, of balancing ambition with conscience, so that the individual can harness drive with the desire to be fully responsible for their words and deeds.
- Effective leaders need to be astute, not seeking power for its own sake, but knowing how to work through the ambiguities which they recognise are not easy to address.

The leadership landscape helps those within a team to act on the above insights and observations. First, it is relatively easy in practice to associate different individuals within a team with one of the four leadership key roles. Second, it is relatively easy to follow a team’s progress through the five critical points, and therefore remain aware of the next critical point a team faces.

Once individuals are characterised as holding a specific key role, and the critical point faced by the team is known, the leadership landscape then provides an insight into which individuals within a team are likely to influence most positively the speed with which the next critical point is negotiated. The tactical application of the leadership landscape will vary from organisation to organisation, the objectives in applying it, however, are considered to be generic. First, the most important key roles at a specific critical point are made explicit. Second, the extent to which the key role at a specific critical point can have a motivational effect on the team is defined. Third, the key role holders who must form a “motivational dyad” as the two most motivational key roles at the critical point are made clear.

The second critical points (see Figure 2), can be used to illustrate how the leadership landscape can be interpreted in practice. When faced with this critical point appropriate action for any individuals associated with the team would be to focus on Social, Legitimate and Macro key role holders, as these are the most motivational key roles at this critical point. First, those occupying Social key roles need encouraging to network amongst team members, as this is one of the two most motivational key roles at this critical point. Second, the Legitimate key role holder should be tactfully reminded about the sensitivity of team members to help avoid perceived criticism where none is intended and the need to listen and provide support at this stage of the team’s life. This is because the Legitimate key role can have a motivational effect at this critical point; however, if team members perceive behaviour to be inappropriate, it can

be very demotivating. The leadership dyad at this critical point is between the Social and Legitimate key role holders, with the Social key role holder providing feedback to the Legitimate key role holder on the actual impact of their behaviour on the team. Finally those occupying Macro key roles should be encouraged to avoid unnecessary contact with the team at this point, focusing what time they do have available on teams facing the first or fourth critical point. At this critical point the leadership landscape characterises almost any intervention by those in Macro key roles as being unlikely to motivate the team. It is better that those in Macro key roles are “seen” at a distance to be making an appropriate contribution to other teams within the organisation, and therefore whilst not available to the team now, to be clearly available, should the need arise.

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leadership
landscape

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Conclusions

The concept of four leadership key roles within a team does not focus specifically on the one individual in a formal team leadership role. Within the context of key roles and the leadership landscape, it is entirely possible for every individual within a team to occupy one of the key roles. The existence of leadership dyads at each critical point helps to explain why the ability to manage ourselves and our relationships with others is so important. The speed of transition from a loose group to an effective team is influenced strongly by the robustness of relationships between individuals forming these dyads. Again this insight helps to explain why some individuals are particularly effective at leading teams.

The need for further research into the nature of the four leadership key roles is clear. The concepts advanced here, and the implications discussed, provide an insight into the nature of leadership as a network of relationships. The practical steps that individual team members can take to develop their ability to adopt the different key roles, and modify their behaviour as each critical point is approached, need to be defined. More generally, to test its robustness, the leadership landscape requires validating in organisations with significantly different cultures from that in which it was developed. It is hoped that the observations and emerging theoretical frameworks offered in this article will stimulate debate and an enthusiasm for more research.

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