



# The Leadership Letter

## Team Leadership: The Answer for Today?

We're entering a new era of organizational management, whether in a business or non-profit organization.

The "traditional" volunteer is changing and we're facing a new leadership group that may have very different perspectives and ideas about what employment or volunteering means.

If we're reaching out to the new generation (and it's critical for the survival of our organizations), the tried and true leadership roles won't necessarily work. The younger group wants:

- ◆ A well-defined mission and set of expectations.
- ◆ A volunteer opportunity that fits within their personal lifestyle.
- ◆ A leadership opportunity that is available more quickly and doesn't require "putting in your time" to reach that position.
- ◆ A leadership team that thinks outside of the box and accepts change readily and easily.

The world is moving too quickly these days for us to remain "stuck" in a system because we've always done it that way. For many of us, we've moved up through the ranks over a defined period of time. Younger members with the required skills want to have those opportunities presented more quickly and to feel that they have contributed to

the mission of the organization.

**Team Leadership** is one of a variety of leadership theories that is being implemented on a much broader scale than in the past. This issue of *The Leadership Letter* will explore that leadership theory and how to make it work for your organization. This type of leadership means organizational groups that:

- ⇒ Are independent.
- ⇒ Share common goals.
- ⇒ Coordinate activities to reach their goals.

Most of our associations rely on the standard board structure. We have the elected officers, representatives from different groups and probably some type of committee structure. If we move toward team leadership, that traditional structure will no longer be viable, changes will occur in how the organization conducts business and the organization must ask itself these questions.

- 1) Does our leadership have the capacity to create those teams and allow them the autonomy to complete assigned tasks?
- 2) Is our leadership skilled in team dynamics and "letting go" of control in some areas?
- 3) Can our leaders support and nurture those teams to blend the old and new to accomplish a goal?

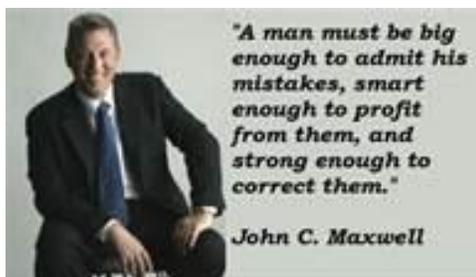
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# The Law of the Lid



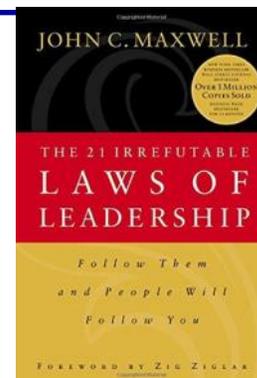
John C. Maxwell is a well-known expert in the dynamics of leadership. For more than 30 years, he has served as pastor of churches in Indiana, Ohio, California and Florida, currently serving as guest pastor at the world famous Crystal Cathedral in Orange County, California. Maxwell is the author of more than 50 books, including [The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership](#) and [The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader](#).

One of his newest concepts is the **Law of the Lid**, a method of describing a leader's effectiveness and the value of leadership skills. In a [blog post](#) on July 19, 2013, the Law of the Lid is explained in this manner. "Leadership ability is the lid that determines a person's

level of effectiveness. The lower a person's ability to lead, the lower the lid on his potential. The higher the individual's ability to lead, the higher the lid on his potential. To give you an example, if your leadership rates an 8, then your effectiveness can never be greater than a 7. If your leadership is only a 4, then your effectiveness will be no higher than a 3. Your leadership ability—for better or for worse—always determines your effectiveness and the potential impact of your organization....I believe that success is within the reach of just about everyone. But I also believe that personal success without leadership ability brings only limited effectiveness. Without leadership ability, a person's impact is only a fraction of what it could be with good leadership. Whatever you will accomplish is restricted by your ability to lead others." *Source: [www.johnmaxwell.com/blog](http://www.johnmaxwell.com/blog)*

If we're talking about team leadership, your "lid" or leadership skills

will impact how successfully you can work within this type of system. How can you become that exceptional leader? According to Maxwell, there are [Seven Steps to Success](#):



- 1) Make a commitment to grow daily.
- 2) Value the process more than events.
- 3) Don't wait for inspiration.
- 4) Be willing to sacrifice pleasure for opportunity.
- 5) Dream big.
- 6) Plan your priorities.
- 7) Give up to go up. *Source: [http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/68.John\\_C\\_Maxwell](http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/68.John_C_Maxwell)*

**What's YOUR lid?** "[Leaders must be close enough to relate to others, but far enough ahead to motivate them.](#)" John C. Maxwell

## Two Dimensions of Team Leadership

One model of Team Leadership looks at [two dimensions](#):

- ◆ "Monitoring versus taking actions.
- ◆ Focusing on internal group issues versus external group issues."

With this type of leadership model, the leader is not solely responsible for executing initiatives but relies on his experienced leaders within

the team to bear that responsibility as well. To effectively manage, a leader reviews and analyzes both the external and internal environment.

- 1) Are team members working collaboratively and are they achieving the desired results?
- 2) Are there external issues that are impacting the work of the team? Are there solutions identified to remove these obstacles

from the team?

- 3) Are there individuals within the team who are showing leadership capacity? Are there members who need additional support?
- 4) Do you, as the leader, provide the appropriate feedback and mediation, when necessary, to effectively move the team forward?

# Characteristics of Effective Teams

As we discuss **Team Leadership**, it's very important to look at the characteristics that make those teams effective. They aren't so different from those that make traditional boards effective...They are just different in method and measurements.

**Characteristic #1: Teams are judged on outcomes and achievements, not process.**

Too often, we measure process (how things get done) rather than the outcome. Does it matter how we get there, as long as whatever system we employ gets us to the final destination? Obviously the dynamics of teams rather than traditional groups can change the landscape of how a mission is achieved.

**Characteristic #2: The team**

**sets clear goals and objectives and operates within a results driven structure.**

Without clearly defined goals and objectives, teams often flounder in trying to figure out what's expected of them. Strategic planning (setting those goals and objectives) is a critical part of the success of teams. Once a goal is defined, the team can begin to plan initiatives, programs and activities that will meet that goal. The leader of the team expects results and will take actions to ensure that those results are achieved. (This may mean some difficult decisions in moving people into different positions that more clearly reflect their skills.)

**Characteristic #3: The team is made up of competent people who have the background**

**and skills to achieve the goals and objectives assigned to the team.**

This team can operate in a collaborative manner, has a unified commitment to the team's goal and has an integral role to play in developing the project/goal. Team members trust each other based on honesty, openness and respect. Members are willing to take risks and know that they will not be penalized for taking those risks.

**Characteristic #4: The team has a leader that keeps them on task.**

This involves maintaining a collaborative climate, setting priorities, managing performance, and, perhaps, subjugating an ego!

Source: *Leadership & Innovation: Team Leadership*, <http://leadershiptheories.blogspot.com>, 2010

## The Strengths and Challenges of Team Leadership

As with any approach, the team leadership approach has both strengths and weaknesses. Because this approach is largely dependent upon the expertise and strength of the leader (usually the president of our associations), groups must decide if the approach will work for them before implementation.

### Strengths

- ◆ The approach is focused on real-life organizational work teams and the leadership needed to ensure the effectiveness of the team.
- ◆ The approach provides a prac-

tical model that can be utilized to gauge organizational effectiveness.

- ◆ The changing roles of leadership within the organization are taken into account.
- ◆ Leaders are identified and matched to areas which highlight their strengths and knowledge.

### Challenges

- ◆ Leading a team is much harder and more difficult than just telling people what to do. It requires a collaborative nature that allows other opinions and approaches to surface.

- ◆ It's not clear cut and provides many avenues to resolve a problem. There are no specific answers to a specific question.
- ◆ It provides a framework, not a roadmap. Leaders who have difficulty with change and a variety of options will struggle with teams.

For more information about the characteristics of good leaders (someone who could manage the team approach), access past issues of [The Leadership Letter](#) on the SECA website. You'll find a wealth of information about becoming that exemplary leader.

## *From the Archives*



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Past issues of *The Leadership Letter* are archived on the SECA website. These issues may be of special interest as you consider the topic of Team Leadership.

[\*The Leadership Letter, September 2014: Leader or Manager? What's the Difference\*](#)

[\*The Leadership Letter, July 2014: From Buddy to Boss: Making the Transition\*](#)

[\*The Leadership Letter, May 2014: The Top 10 Communication Skills\*](#)

[\*The Leadership Letter, January 2014: The 10 Qualities of Great Leaders\*](#)

[\*The Leadership Letter, November 2013: Where are We Going and Who Can Get Us There?\*](#)

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## Leadership and Change: Are You Ready?

With this discussion about team leadership, we've already broached the subject of change. It's often a word that no one wants to hear but all vital organizations and leaders are poised to meet the challenges and opportunities inherent in change.

Throughout the last 30 years, we've experienced major changes. Technology has become a major factor in our lives and the way of life that we knew growing up has seen significant change...some good, some bad.

We're now putting together special programs to ensure that children play outdoors, something that would have been unheard of 30 years ago. Small children are racing ahead of their parents and grandparents with technology

skills and reliance on devices. World news is available 24/7 and we're seeing and hearing things that would have been unthinkable 30 years ago. Our world is shrinking in geography but expanding in access through the Internet, making communication with colleagues and others around the world a simple event.

**"Change is the only constant."** We've all heard that quote and it's certainly more true today than ever before.

If our cherished traditions and history are to stay vital and secure, we must be ready as leaders to evaluate the changing climate, make the changes necessary to move forward and embrace change as an opportunity, not a challenge.

Changing how we operate and how we meet the needs of our constituents doesn't invalidate all that has come before. It simply strengthens and highlights the great progress that we've made over the years and provides a platform to maintain and enhance that service.

**Management is stewardship.** Good stewardship means bringing predictability, reliability and certainty to organizational change. When all the parties understand the expectations and process, change becomes an opportunity.

**Leadership is about creating something new.** Are you the leader to bring your association through a change process, strengthening the core and moving to the future?