

Becoming a Complete Change Leader by Using Your Head, Heart, and Hands

Motivating Employees to Embrace Change and a Culture of Quality Improvement by Varying Your Leadership Style

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“Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality”
—Warren Bennis (Quotes on Leadership)

What is Leadership?

Leadership has been described as “a process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task” (Chemers). The leadership process for making change in an organization involves developing a future vision, motivating employees to embrace the vision, deploying the vision by showing the pathway forward, modeling the new behavior, “checking” to make sure the vision is being implemented fully, and aiding those parts of the organization that are slow to embrace the new direction.

Leadership follows a process just like anything else we do in our daily job. The leadership process for making change is a series of tasks involving the leader’s Head, Heart, and Hands. Henry Kissinger once stated that “The task of the leader is to get his people from where they are to where they have not been” (Brainy Quote).

It is important to distinguish leadership from management. Leadership inspires, while management plans. Leadership asks questions, while managers give directions. These are subtle differences, but ones that are often overlooked. Too often we think good managers are great leaders. The critical role that management plays in directing does not inspire workers or ignite passion for the job—it just tells them what to do and when.

It is insufficient to simply have a vision for change in an organization. Lots of people see things that should be done, things that should be improved, changed, or fixed, and actions that could be taken. There are many great visions that have never been acted upon because no one had the leadership skills to make them a reality. What makes leaders different is that they act—taking the necessary steps to achieve their vision.

Table 1: Typical Leadership Styles

Typical Leadership Styles	Characteristic	Strength	Weakness
Visionary/Champion	Investigative/ Promoter	Sets the direction	Does not show the way
Coaching/Facilitative	Encourager	Neutral, empathetic and points out improvements	Just points out and comments—no hands on
Democratic	Involver	Involves all in decisions	Does not work in a crisis when action is required
Commanding	Directive	Demanding—do it because I say so	Does not inspire and often hurts morale
Driver/Pacesetter	Challenger	Sets the direction and standard of achievement	Shows how but with no passion and can burn the staff out over the long haul
Adopter	Flexible	Flexible	Flexible and may use the wrong style at the wrong time

To facilitate the leadership process, there are a number of typical leadership styles that can be employed, as shown in Table 1, along with their characteristics. Each of the leadership styles has strengths and weaknesses associated with it. Each needs to be used in the right situation to get the maximum impact and benefit.

Great leaders will be adaptable ones, who understand the need for flexibility and are able to use all the styles (depending on the situation) to inspire and motivate their employees to adopt change and embrace a culture of quality.

How Do Leaders Get Buy-In For Their Vision?

To move a change vision from a concept to a reality, a leader has to ignite passion for the vision within the workforce. Leaders require passion to move their vision forward despite all the obstacles blocking the pathway, despite all the naysayers proclaiming it to be too costly,

recycled (“We tried that before!”), or a dozen other excuses. Great leaders develop the vision, build passion for the vision, and show how to implement the vision. To do this successfully, the leader must employ the Head, Heart, Hand leadership process as shown in Table 2. This table also shows the shortcomings of the various leadership styles in Table 1, since they use only one or two of the elements of the leadership process of Head, Heart, and Hand.

Leadership Style	Head (Vision)	Heart (Motivation)	Hand (Execution)
Visionary/Champion	√		
Coaching/Facilitative		√	
Democratic		√	√
Commanding			√
Driver/Pacesetter	√		√
Adopter	√ (If Needed)	√ (If Needed)	√ (If Needed)

The Leadership Process and Leadership Styles

1. Head—Storehouse of Our Skills and Knowledge

“Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity.”

—General George Patton (Brainy Quote)

Every leader wants to institute change and create a culture of quality that will help the organization become a high-performing and efficient entity. Leaders set the vision and the direction and communicate it to the employees. Leaders want their employees to commit and contribute to this culture by head, heart, and hands to make things better every day in their programs or bureaus. Developing a culture of quality means that every process step we make, every interaction we have with internal and external customers, every decision we make, and every dollar we spend is done efficiently and effectively. A quality culture should motivate and excite employees to continually strive to be better, and they should be able to see the results of those efforts by the improved value the organization delivers to its customers.

2. Heart—Where Our Motivation and Passion Reside

“Leaders are people who believe so passionately that they can seduce other people into sharing their dream.”

—Warren G. Bennis (Goodreads)

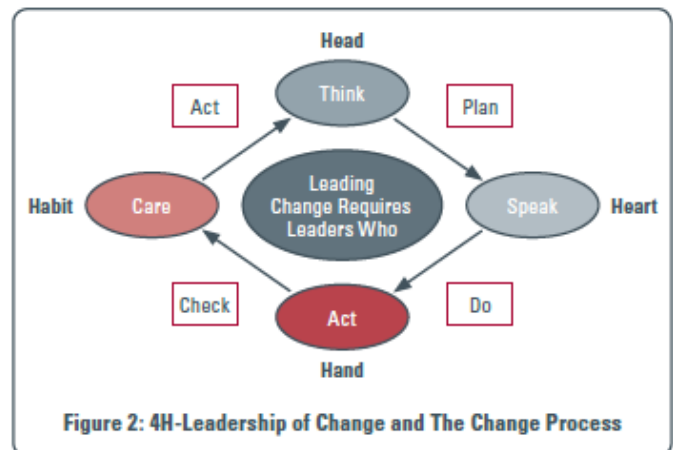
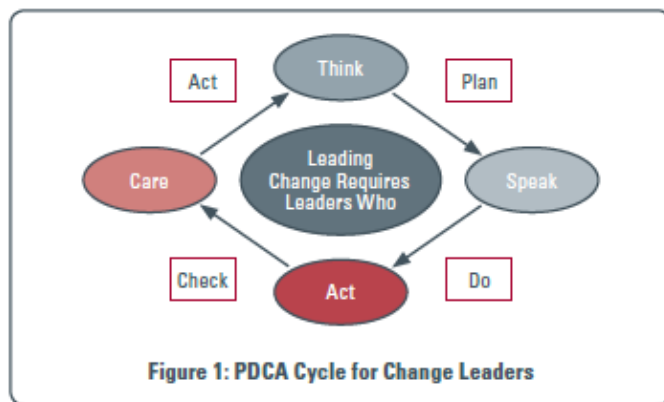
Leaders know that once they have used their head to develop a vision to change an organization to a culture of quality, they must develop the passion to sell it to employees. The heart helps us to ignite the same passion in others we have for our vision. We must truly believe in the change we are pushing through our organization, and we have to use our heart to develop the marketing process. The passion process helps us inspire others and manage and channel their energy to make the needed change.

3. Hands—How We Show Others the Way. Taking Action

“What you do has far greater impact than what you say.”

—Stephen M. R. Covey (Inspirational)

John Maxwell stated that “a leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way” (Kruse, 2012). True leaders who have developed the change vision with their head and sold it with their heart to the employees needs to take the next step and use their hands to model the behavior they want to see in others. A wise vision and heartfelt passion just moves you so far down the change pathway. You earn the respect and the commitment of those around you by “walking the talk.”



Conclusion

Leaders also need to ensure that their vision is being implemented correctly. To do this, they must employ a fourth step in the Head, Heart, and Hand leadership process that is often overlooked: They must make it a Habit to “check” on how things are being implemented.

In a previous article the authors described the PDCA Cycle for change leaders as shown in Figure 1 (Moran & Beitsch, 2012).

The PDCA Cycle for change leaders is updated in Figure 2 to show how the Head, Heart, Hands, and Habit concept can be overlaid to enhance the cycle to show why.

Change leaders must help those who are making the change to stay on task, and those who are having difficulty to understand their constraints and simultaneously challenge them and guide them to overcome those obstacles and move forward with the desired change.

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