LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION: TWO SIDES OF A COIN?
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When thinking of a leader and the communication processes, one usually thinks of a communication source (leader), a medium, a message, and a receiver (follower). More important, though, is the outcome of the communication processes--will the follower act on the message? As will become apparent, great leadership requires great communication, which is why I see leadership and communication as two sides of a coin: inseparable.

In this chapter, I will focus on one unique perspective of communication: the communication strategies of leaders, and in particular leaders who are visionary (or charismatic). Apart from the fact that almost all of my research and consulting revolves around leadership, which gives me a good excuse--and some credibility--to write about leadership and communication, the reason why I will focus on leadership is simple: *leadership matters!*

In the sections below, I define leadership and identify the type of leadership that is related to superior performance. Then, I show what communication strategies effective leaders use. I focus particularly on charismatic-visionary leaders, showing how they make their speeches memorable and catalysts for change. Then, I discuss whether we can select individuals who will be likely to be charismatic or visionary. Finally, I discuss how charisma and vision can be developed and characteristics of good training programs. This point is an important one because I see a lot of money wasted on leadership development programs of dubious quality--programs that have never been tested but that are propagated by unscrupulous or naive consultants who might not know better. It is unethical and uneconomical to waste the money of investors on things that do not work. Thus, I hope that the suggestions I provide will give readers guidelines about how to invest their Francs wisely.

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP? DOES IT MATTER?

Leadership has to do with influence. To observe this influencing process we need a leader, followers, and a context. The means by which leaders can influence followers depends on whether the leader has power, which includes (a) reward, (b) coercive, (c) expert (competence), and (d) symbolic (charismatic) power. When I train leaders, I usually find that they very good at using "carrots" and "sticks" but not so good in influencing using symbolic means. Yet when they think of ideal leaders they envision them in terms of being competent and charismatic. It is the latter type of leadership I will focus on, because this type of leadership has been shown to have the most potent effects on followers. This type of leadership is usually interchangeably referred to as charismatic, visionary, or transformational leadership (by transformational, we imply that these types of leader are capable of transforming followers and organizations). For short, I will refer to these leaders as TCV leaders. These leaders are highly proactive, can arouse followers, are passionate about what they do, and are mission driven. I define their specific characteristics and communication styles later.

Many people are however, sceptical that TCV leader types really matter. Others are sceptical of the entire notion of leadership, because they see it as being a nebulous construct beyond scientific study. I have news for you: we can study leadership just like we study medicine. Analogous to medicine, we can identify variables that matter for some consequence (e.g., dosage of medicine or "dosage" of charisma). Next, we can measure the variables (e.g.,

dosage is measured in milligrams; charisma is measured using psychometric questionnaires or expert ratings). Granted, my measures will be less precise than a metric weight; however, they are not that imprecise that they cannot be used for purposes of prediction[1]. Next, we can correlate change in dosage with change in the consequence (e.g., patient health or organizational "economic" health). If, controlling for chance, we can find a statistically reliable relation between the dosage and health, then we can say, with some certainty, whether changing the dosage matters.

There are numerous studies and several meta-analyses (i.e., studies that integrate many independent studies together) that show that measures of TCV leadership are strongly related worker satisfaction and the economic health of organizations (and these findings are universal--data that I have from Swiss companies, using Swiss French or German managers show the same thing). How strong is this relationship? We can translate research findings into an intuitive measure called the Binomial Effect Size Display (BESD), which translates correlations into probabilities of success. In general, leaders who are TCV will have organizations that will exhibit above average economic performance in 70% of cases, whereas only 30% of cases of leaders who are not TCV will show above average performance[2] (note, performance was measured using objective criteria like organisational profit). Furthermore, leaders who are TCV will have followers who are higher than average in satisfaction in 90% if cases (note that satisfaction predicts performance). Who would like to leave such probabilities to chance? Nobody I would hope, which is why it is important to know:

1. what these TCV leaders do (in terms of their communication styles)
2. whether we can predict who will be a TCV leader (which useful for hiring)
3. whether we can make individuals into TCV leaders (which is useful for development)

Before discussing leadership and communication, it is useful to reflect on why leadership matter so much. From a strategic point of view, leadership is important because organizational systems can never be perfectly aligned to their dynamic environments. Whatever plans and processes are made today will reflect the problems and challenges of yesterday. Thus, leadership is vital for the real-time synthesis and integration of discrete organisational functions towards the mission. Anticipating and reacting to environmental forces cannot occur haphazardly; leaders, through their vision and actions on subordinate leaders, followers, and on organizational systems allow for organizational adaptation to occur. The key is vision.

TCV LEADERS AND COMMMUNICATION

TCV leaders are individuals that are idealized and admired--not idolized and feared. We must distinguish authentic TCV leaders from pseudo TCV leaders. Mandela embodies the former, and Stalin embodied the latter. Indeed, both types of leaders use similar communication strategies; however, the difference between them has to do with what values (morals) they hold. Values, by the way, are the building blocks of many TCV actions. Leaders are, thus, symbols of the moral unity of their followers. They represent the moral aspirations of the followers. Leaders are idealized because of the values they hold. One might ask "how can values be injected into the world of business. Imagine I make paper clips. What's so moral about that?" Being in any type of business has moral implications and not just being the CEO of Max Havelaar or the President of UNICEF. Producing paper clips, trying to improve the

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[1] The results of an study I recently published show that we can reliably transformational leadership: Antonakis, J., Avolio, B. J., & Sivasubramaniam, N. (2003). Context and leadership: An examination of the nine-factor Full-Range Leadership Theory using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ Form 5X). *The Leadership Quarterly*, 14, 261-295.

[2] For those who might be interested to see what the scientific findings say take a look at Lowe, K. B., Kroeck, K. G., & Sivasubramaniam, N. (1996). Effectiveness correlates of transformational and transactional leadership: A meta-analytic review of the literature. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 7, 385-425.

plight of children, or promoting fair-trade organic bananas have something in common: how something is done still has moral consequences. One still has to think about the moral consequences of ones actions and policies on staff, investors, customers, the environment, suppliers (and, in turn, their moral consequences), and the society at large. Morals and values implicate every aspect of the economic chain. And it is because of morals and values that we can get followers to go beyond their self interest for the good of the group, organization, or the country. Morals are what feed charisma. Without morals charisma cannot grow.

Interestingly, the "morals" issue was central to discussions of leadership even thousands of years ago. In the classic writings, developing virtuous leaders (with exceptional communication skills) was an imperative for the state. Aristotle for instance noted that a leader can only gain the confidence of followers by using three means: the leader must have a moral perspective of life (éthos), use reasoned argument (lógos), and appeal to follower emotions (páthos). Thus, a leader must have the right values, be a good communicator, and stir emotions in followers, and all this by using an engaging visionary style.

The vision "thing"

George H. W. Bush senior, when once asked to focus more on a long term mission instead of short term objectives, responded by dismissively saying "Oh, the vision thing." A one-term president, he could have used more of the vision "thing." Ironically, his son George W. Bush was endowed with too much vision--some would say hallucinations even! And look the mess he got the whole world in!

Visions are serious business and having a vision is key to TCV leadership. A vision is an image of a future state. A vision is not simply a bunch of words strung together or a slogan on the office wall. It is a picture, something tangible that followers can imagine--a picture of where they will go. The vision acts like glue that binds the leader's and follower's ideals towards a specific objective. Vision is primordial for leader success and, in lay terms, can be thought of foresight or foretelling the future. In reality, leaders cannot predict the future. They can, however, articulate a vision and then do whatever is necessary to make the vision happen. This is what TCV leaders do and they do so because of their communication skills.

The leader's vision acts as a road map for resource mobilization; however, the vision and the leader's actions are also energizing to followers who actively contribute to the concretization of the vision. Why? If the vision implicates how followers see themselves and who they want to be then it is in the interest of followers to help make the vision happen. Thus, followers become intimately attached to the vision because if the vision occurs it will reinforce who they are or the ideal towards which they are aspiring.

How TCV leaders communicate

TCV leaders have an uncanny ability to influence followers because they are masters of communication and framing. By framing I mean that they can draw our attention to the important issues and make followers focus intensely on them. TCV leaders can do this because in their speeches and policies they demonstrate moral conviction and define what is morally correct for the collective. Values arouse important emotional states in collectives of followers. Collective--that is another distinguishing feature of these leaders. TCV leaders usually refer to the "we" instead of the "I". They talk about collective goals and collective aspirations.

More importantly, they infuse their speeches with vivid imagery of where they want to steer the organization--the vision thing. One effective way of doing this is by using metaphors and analogies. These rhetorical tools have been shown to increase retention of the message and to facilitate understanding. It is through this means that TCV leaders can communicate

complex issues in simple ways. For example, during his famous "Dream" speech, Martin Luther King had this to say:

> In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men--yes, black men as well as white men-- would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check that has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and security of justice.

There was hardly anyone who did not understand what he meant in the above. A simple message with moral consequences is so effective. TCV leaders use metaphors regularly, whether in the world of politics, the world of sports, or the world of business. Here is a nice example from the business world, which demonstrates an important point: "Remember, corporations are invented. They are human institutions, not species found in nature" (Anita Roddick). TCV leaders are masters at many other rhetorical tricks. For example the contrast and playing on words: "In today's banking, the rules of the game change every day. Our goal is to be not only 'game ready.' It is to be ready for any kind of game" (Matthew Barrett).

TCV leaders also use stories to draw attention and to make their followers identify with them. We all love stories. From the time to we were children to today we pay attention to when people tell a story. Stories have characters, a plot, and consequences. Leaders use stories to get across important messages and bring to mind certain emotional states. TCV leader are also masters at demonstrating emotions (positive or negative) to make themselves look more authentic and to link the message with their persona. They are skilled at impression and stage management. Because of these communication strategies (and others, which I will skip due to space limitations), TCV leaders become larger than life and are able to rally followers behind a just cause and get people to do more than they thought was possible to do.

What do all these suggestions mean in terms of how much TCV leadership is needed and the medium through which it should be expressed? Research shows that the amount of contact the leader should have with followers depends on prevailing circumstances. In times of rapid change, well-timed frequent contact might be needed to rethink what's been done and to reorient resources. In times of stability, communication channels are opened to ensure that the company reaches established objectives. In both cases, the mission must be made clear and organizational controls must there to ensure that the vision becomes reality. The more that has been invested in strategic control systems and human resources development, the better the organization can attain its mission. By the way, does leader contact always have to be face-to-face? Not necessarily. Leadership works from a distance and can even spread by "contagion" among followers. It works well when mediated by electronic means, even e-mail. Indeed, research shows that TCV leader appeals can have very strong effects, even in cases where the leader never comes in direct contact with followers.

SELECTING TCV LEADERS

If we are able to predict leader outcome from behaviours, the next logical step in the scientific chain is to attempt to predict behaviours from traits. By traits I mean stable individual-differences that are measurable and exhibit some consistency across specific situations. This area of research has experienced a renaissance of sorts given the sophistication of

psychometric measures (whether personality or cognitive based). This is also an area where charlatans operate liberally and with impunity. There are far too many self-anointed "experts" who sell miracle questionnaire measures that can apparently predict effective leadership.

There are also many fads: some are short-lived others linger around longer. A good example is "emotional intelligence" (EQ). EQ, for instance, has created a sensation in the last decade, but allow me to let you in on a dirty little secret: there is very little evidence that it matters for leadership. In fact, EQ does not even predict work performance very well, and certainly less so than does general intelligence (IQ)[3].

So what predicts effective leadership? Shocking as it might sound one of the most reliable predictors is good old IQ. You have to be smart to speak like a smart person! You have to be smart to be able to see patterns in systems and understand causal relationships. You have to be smart to be able to learn from experience. Intelligence is a very important component of leadership. It does not explain everything though. Personality matters too. Factors that are reliably associated with leadership are extraversion (i.e., being assertive, gregarious, outgoing, positive/optimistic, and excitement seeking) and openness (i.e., not conservative in values, aesthetic, creative, and experiencing a wide range of feelings). TCV leaders also have a high need for power (i.e., a need to influence others and social systems); however, this need should come with high responsibility disposition (i.e., using the power to serve others in a moral way). This latter point is what distinguishes narcissistic (self-focused) from authentic forms of leadership.

DEVELOPING TCV LEADERS

Many are rightly sceptical about whether leadership can be developed, because most leadership development efforts fail. Ready and Conger quoted a division president at a Fortune 50 company recently saying: "We spend $120 million a year on this stuff, and if it all went away tomorrow, it wouldn't matter one bit." This is a sad state of affairs--and we're in this sorry mess mostly because of untrained consultants (and professors who don't care to influence practice!).

Leadership development is either considered (a) an anathema for some, who believe leaders are born not made, (b) or the wild-west for others, where travelling salespeople with miracle cures prowl on unsuspecting consumers. So, are leaders born or made? Well, have you met anyone that has never been born (one of my doctoral advisors used to love saying this joke)? Seriously though, both genes and the environment matter. Which matters more though? This question is not difficult to answer, based on what we know from behavioural genetic studies, where we observe leader outcomes in adulthood of monozygotic (twins that share 100% genetic material) and dizygotic (twins who share 50% genetic material). By controlling for both types of twins who have been reared together or apart we can estimate quite well how much the environment and genes matter. Two large-scale independent studies have shed some light on this issue. About 20%-30% of the variance in leader emergence or occupying a position of leadership is due to genes; the rest is due to the environment.

These studies suggest that genes play a strong role; however, the environment plays a stronger role. Does that mean we can take someone who is pathetic as a leader and turn her into a Doris Leuthard? I don't think so. However, we do know from carefully designed field experiments that leadership can be taught and that an average leader in the experimental

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[3] I can hear the gasps from here! Those who don't believe me, take a look at the following: Van Rooy, V. D., & Viswesvaran, C. (2004). Emotional intelligence: A meta-analytic investigation of predictive validity and nomological net. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 65*, 71-95. I have also written an extensive critique, downloadable from my website http://www.hec.unil.ch/jantonakis for those who are interested: Antonakis, J. (2004). On why "emotional intelligence" will not predict leadership effectiveness beyond IQ or the "big five": An extension and rejoinder. *Organizational Analysis, 12*, 171-182.

group (i.e., who were taught how to be more effective) will outperform an average leader in a control group (i.e., who were not taught anything). Such studies have been conducted in military and business settings and the results are very encouraging. In fact, in a recent series of experiments I have undertaken with Swiss managers (with an average age of about 42 years) I found that an afternoon long training session and a one-hour personalized coaching session had a significant effect on the experimental group (I had a control group, because that is the only way we can establish whether the experimental group really improved--I discuss this below). Again, we can estimate the effect of training in terms of the probability of having above average performance when in the experimental group. Based on the results of my experiment, we can predict that in general, 60% of the participants in the experimental group will show above average performance on the leadership measures. However, only 40% of the participants in the control group will demonstrate above average performance. Thus, the probability of success increases by 1.5 times if one receives leadership training (and this only after a 5-hour long training). More extensive training programs with my MBA students have shown more dramatic effects, as have other published studies.

Two questions still need answering. First, why do we need a control group? Second, what do you do in a training program? A control group is needed because without a control group we have no way of knowing whether the treatment worked. The treatment effect is estimated in comparison to the control group (which may or may not exhibit a placebo effect). For instance, imagine I was going to test the efficacy of a weight-loss program. Being a good scientist that I am, I randomly assign my subjects to a treatment and control condition (and thus ensure that the subjects are roughly equal in characteristics). I weigh all the subjects at the beginning. I then provide the treatment (i.e., diet, exercise, etc.) to the experimental group and tell both groups to come back in two months for reweighing. Now, if you were in the control group, and being a self-conscious human that you are, what would you do from today till the reweighing day? Sit on the couch all day long and watch TV, while stuffing your face with hamburgers, and trying your level best to consciously put on weight? Of course not! Scientifically speaking, it would not be unexpected, therefore, to see the control group lose weight too (a placebo effect of sorts). What we wish to observe, though, is if the experimental group loses significantly more weight than does the control group. Also, another important thing to note is that any scientific results don't "exist" until they are scrutinized by reviewers of a scientific journal or conference. Only then, when published, can we claim that something works or doesn't work. Yet, I often see consultants selling programs that "work", only because they say so, or because they have an impressive list of clients. These guys can be very convincing. However, being convincing and having impressive client lists is not evidence.

Second, what is usually done in training programs? Training programs that have been scientifically demonstrated to work usually do a number of things, including: filming participants giving a speech and then providing feedback regarding verbal and nonverbal communication; measuring the leadership style of the leader using 360-degree ratings of followers, peers, and bosses (note: self ratings are useful for comparing them to other ratings-- however, they really do not have any other use so beware of programs that only use self-ratings); measuring the personality of the leader and providing feedback which personality factors help or inhibit one's leadership; helping the leader devise a development plan by identifying leadership gaps and how they will be reduced.
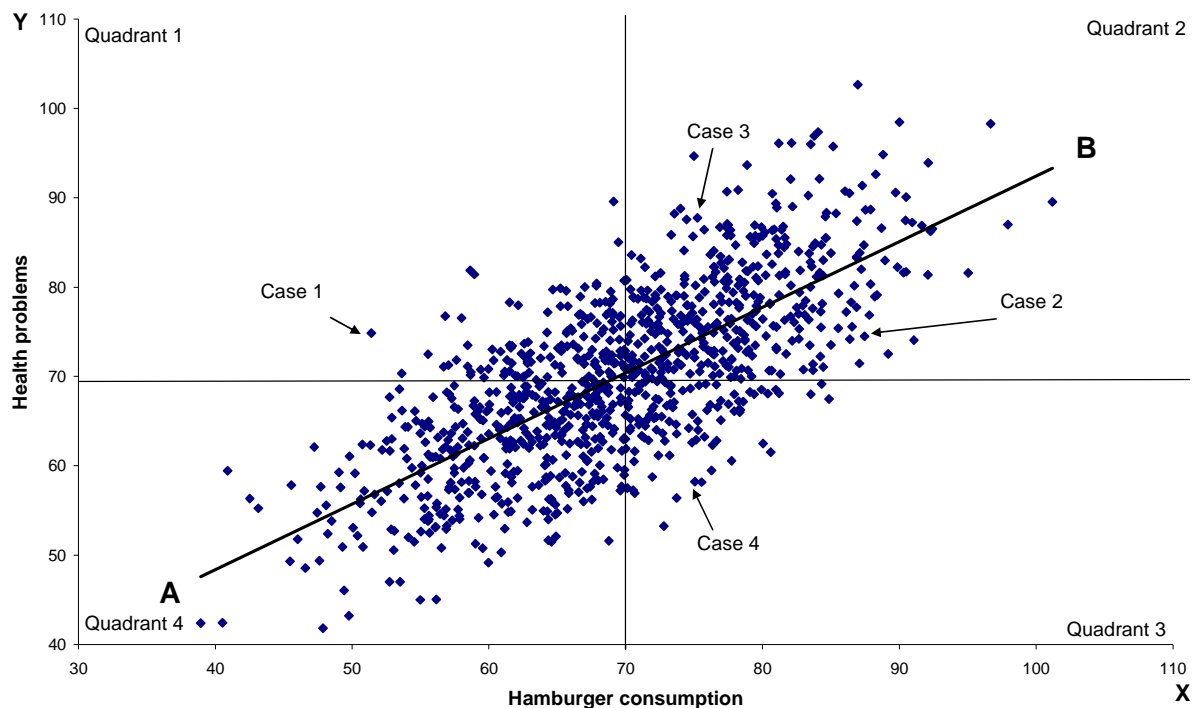
The efficacy of a training program depends on making leaders recognizing that 360 feedback is valuable; preparing leaders for negative feedback (I usually only find a couple of leaders out of 30 with an excellent leader profile); motivating leader to seek more feedback (i.e., to speak openly with others about their leadership and how they will improve it); making the leader accountable for improving (by committing publicly to improving); providing regular feedback; keeping ratings anonymous, especially of subordinates (so they are not

lenient); selecting a broad range of raters and not allowing leaders to select those who will evaluate them (otherwise they select those whom they like and who will be favourable); and finally, not allowing the leaders to distribute the questionnaires and brief raters about the nature of the intervention (which puts "pressure" on raters). Be wary of training programs that do not follow what the research says, because you'll be joining the division president above in throwing money out the window!

WAIT, WAIT, I KNOW A CASE!

There will be readers, who by now will still be sceptical about research findings, claiming that "I know a man who was high TCV and he had bad performance. I know a woman who took your program and didn't improve" and so forth. I do not deny that there will be exceptions that might contradict the evidence. However, these exceptions are just that: exceptions. For instance, simply because a person who took a certain dosage of medicine did not get better doesn't mean that the medicine doesn't work. Other factors (e.g., genetic)--if we can identify them--might explain why the medicine did not work on that person. My grandfather smoked and drank a lot and lived into his nineties. Does that constitute evidence that smoking and drinking a lot does not have a damaging consequence on one's health (and that it contributes to longevity). Of course not--it would be insane to make such a suggestion!

To better understand my point, take a look at the graph below. Imagine for the sake of argument that the Y axis represents degree of health problems and the X axis represents degree of consumption of American-style fast food (e.g., hamburgers). Note, these numbers are fictitious and computer generated (but they may as well be real!).

In this population of 1'000 individuals, the correlation between consumption and health problems is very strong (.73), as indicated by the trend line A-B. The statistics would tell us to expect that 86% of individuals that have above average hamburger consumption will have above average bad health. In fact, for those of you who have time on your hands and who are very patient, if you wish to verify these findings count the relevant dots above and you will find that 78% of those who consumed above average hamburgers (i.e., above 70 on X) had above average bad health (i.e., above 69 on Y)--these are the individuals in Quadrant 2.

Compare these results to the 25% of the individuals who consumed below average hamburgers and had above average health problems--these are the individuals in Quadrant 1.

Now, if you have your buddy Hans (Case 1) in mind when thinking about this problem, your estimation of the relationship between hamburgers and bad health is completely biased, because Hans is not representative of the population--Hans is an exception to the rule. Hans has the same health problems as does Case 2 (the other guy you have in mind), but Hans has consumed far less than Case 2 has. Does this invalidate the finding? Of course not! Perhaps Hans had other factors (e.g., genetic, he's a smoker, drinks a lot of alcohol, etc.) that contributed to his/her health problems (or maybe measurement error can explain the errant result). Cases 3 and 4 present a similar situation. Thus, we have an obligation to have faith in large-scale quantitative scientific findings, because such studies allows for systematic deductions that are not biased by anecdotes, cases, and the like. In my hypothetical example, consuming lots of hamburgers increases chances of having health problems more than fivefold! Would you take the chance of eating badly and then hoping to be an exception? I don't think so!

CONCLUSION

To conclude, I hope that I have made the case that leadership matters. Leaders are architects of organizations and the design is everything. The more the leaders invest in systems and processes to support reification of the vision, the less they have to intervene. But intervene they do. The effectiveness of their intervention depends mostly on one thing: communication. I trust that I have also convinced readers that we can select for leadership and also train for leadership. I also trust that readers will now be more sceptical consumers of leadership products. In science we have a maxim: Extraordinary claims require extraordinary data. Ask for the data.

Take-aways

- Organizational outcomes depend largely on organizational leadership.
- Vision and values are key to effective leadership.
- Effective leaders are highly effective communicators.
- Communication styles of effective leaders are numerous, and include many rhetorical strategies and impression-management techniques.
- Effective communication can work from a distance.
- Effective leaders can be selected using validated psychometric tests.
- Effective leader ability can be developed.
- Be sceptical about "miracle cures." If something is too good to be true, it probably isn't true.