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LEADERSHIP AND MULTIDIMENSIONALITY

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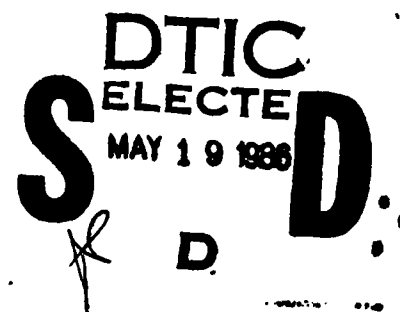BASIC RESEARCH
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In this chapter, the author explores the rationale for the following suggestions: that leaders must be able to empathize (i.e., perceive and understand employees and relevant others appropriately), that the executive leader should be able to communicate effectively, and that appropriate and effective leadership action generally has to be based on differentiative and integrative thinking, perceiving, and planning. Questions about how differentiation and integration are useful, when and where multidimensionality is needed, and what must be differentiated to achieve leadership excellence

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PREFACE

This report is the second in a series which considers
the predictions of complexity theory for interpersonal leader-
ship in managerial settings. This report is best read after
a general understanding of our leadership views has been
gained. More general information is presented in the report
"Leadership: Where and what is leadership excellence." Greater
detail about complexity theory and its prediction for management
especially managerial decision making, is included in an earlier
report entitled "Complexity, Managers and Organizations" which
will also be available in book form in April or May of this
year (Academic Press).

This report and the "Leadership: Where and what is leadership
excellence" report will be included as chapters in a forth-
coming book with the title "The Multidimensional Executive"
(Scribner's, publication date late 1986). The chapters were
not written for scientists. Rather, they use language that
will, we hope, communicate to those who work as mangers in
military and private sector organizations. In other words,
the discussions in this and the previous report on leadership
theory will be less detailed and will provide fewer references
than a reader of "Complexity, Managers and Organizations"
encounters.

Leadership, as conceived here and in the previous report,
represents the interpersonal component of managerial activity.
For those readers who wish to include decision making and
other executive tasks as part of the leadership concept, only
a reading of "Complexity, Managers and Organizations" will
provide a complete impression of our theoretical approach.

MANAGING PEOPLE

In the last chapter we have explored leadership excellence. I have suggested that leaders must be able to empathize, i.e., perceive and understand employees and relevant others appropriately. I have suggested that this executive leader should be able to communicate effectively. I have tried to show that appropriate and effective leadership action generally has to be based on differentiative and integrative thinking, perceiving and planning. In this chapter, I will explore the rationale for these suggestions in somewhat greater detail. I will answer questions about <u>how</u> differentiation and integration is useful. I will discuss when and where multidimensionality is needed. I will consider <u>what</u> must be differentiated and what must be integrated to achieve leadership excellence.

To be an excellent leader, one who contributes to the satisfaction and performance of employees and, of course, to the success of the organization, an executive must be able to do at least three things very well. All three depend on sufficient multidimensionality, i.e., on a style which permits the flexible application of differentiation and integration when and where needed:

(1) the executive must be able to understand and handle

the multiple and varied demands of the organization
and of the organization's task environment,

(2) the executive must be able to understand, accept as
legitimate, and respond (where appropriate) to the
characteristics, views, contributions and needs of the
people who make up the organization, and

(3) the executive must be able to interface the culture,
needs and demands of the organization (and its task
environment) with not only the characteristics, views,
contributions and needs of people. When I speak of
people, I am including those who make up the members
of the organization, the customers, and the suppliers.
I am even including competitors and yet others who can
play a significant part in the successful functioning
of the organization.

INTEGRATIVE EMPATHY: LEADING INDIVIDUALS

The first two demands for leeadership excellence take us
back to our earlier concerns with the process of perception.
They require an understanding of dimensions that exist within an
organizational setting. They also require that the leader
understands those dimensions that represent the thinking of
people with whom a leader must deal. The last of the three
demands, demands even more from the leader. It requires not
only that the leader should understand or empathize; it also
requires that understanding be appropriately supplemented by
action.

Empathy, "placing oneself in the other person's shoes" has long been identified with the integrative process (see Chapter 2). Empathy means not only comprehending what another person thinks. It also requires understanding how that person thinks, why he or she thinks along these lines and how he or she reaches apparent conclusions. It requires setting aside, for the moment, one's own views of a relevant situation. It means differentiating if that person differentiates. It means integrating if that person integrates. And it means differentiating and integrating, for the moment, in that person's way.

For example, let us say you are in charge of R&D for your corporation and find out that the V.P. in charge of financial affairs wants to cut your budget in half. Just calling him up or yelling at him is not going to do the job. Arguing that you and the company need the R&D at full funding probably won't work either. He has other priorities. Suggesting that the company will need the output from R&D for new product development may not help: the financial man will likely point to potentially increased funding next year. After all, he may suggest how certain are you anyway that you can bring a new product to fruition with a "reasonable" time frame.

It may be more useful to determine how the financial V.P. thinks and why he has suggested to cut R&D. What are his priorities, his motives? Say he is under the (more or less typical) pressure to generate a very favorable profit margin this year. And, he thinks that the current corporate President might

be promoted to CEO and Chairman of the Board. He thinks he has a chance at the Presidency if he looks good this year. Finally, he has always thought that too much money for R&D is a waste. So that is where he wants to cut (among other places). In other words, you find out that the financial V.P. is considering three aspects of the situation which might even represent three separate dimensions. And, he is apparently engaged in some low level integration: he is considering how to interface his actions to increase his chances for promotion.

Understanding the thought processes of your opponent means half the battle is won. You merely need to find an apparently better way for him to achieve his goals (or let him believe there is a better way) which does not involve cutting your funds. Maybe you know a few of the people who will decide on the next company president. Maybe you are aware that the current president and future CEO is not so enamoured about cutting the research budget. You can use that information to persuade the financial V.P. that an alliance with you (maybe even with an increased budget?) would be more helpful to him than making an enemy out of you. If you had not engaged in empathy, i.e. in understanding the thoughts and motives of the financial V.P., you could not have employed that or some other successful strategy.

Empathy is a fascinating approach to people. Many people are quite easy to understand. Their underlying assumptions and their resulting thought processes are easy to follow. Often, their thoughts are very different from our own. Yet, it is

surprising how legitimate even some of the "strangest" views expressed by others can become, if one is able to empathize. As long as those views are not schizophrenic, their origin and their development <u>can</u> be understood. It does not take a psychiatrist: anyone who can empathize can understand. I am not saying that an executive should spend all of his or her time understanding strange people. However, there are times and people where empathy is very cost effective.

I am not suggesting that the empathizing executive should always support the views of other people. Not at all. If an employee's thought processes are helpful to the organization or its other employees, they should be accepted, maybe even utilized. Where views are irrelevant, they might be acknowledged but gently discarded. It is more problematic, if an employee's views turn out to be counterproductive. In that case, the executive leader may use his or her empathic understanding, gained through careful listening, to guide the other person away from actions that might be unworkable or undesirable. This is where Harry Truman's statement is highly appropriate: the leader should be able to make people <u>like doing or thinking something</u> <u>that they initially did not want to do or think</u>.

Persuasion

To guide others toward a new and different conceptualization of their organizational world, a leader is well advised to gain some understanding of how the particular person arrived at a current point of view. To do this, the leader may, while

attentively listening, covertly or even overtly, pose a number of questions. What are this person's underlying assumptions? What dimensions of thought are playing a part? How are the person's dimensions selected? How do they apply to the current situation? What needs and motives do they represent? Which integrated thought sequences, if any, lead to the evident conclusions?

Again, let us consider an example. Our executive may have to deal with a worker who has filed some grievance against management. The worker may feel that a transfer to another job (his old job was eliminated when that product line ended) has cost him an expected promotion. Now he believes that he is underpaid and has been discriminated against for one reason or another. The motive for better pay is easy to understand. But if we would raise this worker's salary, just because a grievance was filed, the company would have lots of grievances on its hands. Something else must be done.

On talking with the worker, our executive may encounter a person who feels quite antagonistic toward management. He has the proverbial competitive "us against them" attitude. He knows that management personnel recently got a raise and believes that management is highly overpaid. Why should managers get so much more money than workers? He feels exploited because he believes that management is always out to exploit labor.

Upon understanding that the worker's unhappiness derived from a generally negative and hostile attitude toward management,

the executive may embark on a number of possible communications that might be effective. First of all, the worker has not been laid off: he was transferred to save his job. If the executive can demonstrate that this action was not taken for some other reason (e.g., he may be able to show that an already trained outsider would have been available for the new job), the view of management as "exploitative" becomes a little more difficult to maintain. Secondly, the raise and salary levels of management can be explained: The competitor pays more, and they have hired away a number of our best managers. That cannot continue if the company and the jobs of workers are to survive. Again, the communication may make sense to the worker. In other words, communications that are meaningful, understood, and most of all relevant to the concerns of the worker are more likely effective (if anything can be). But, to be able to communicate on the appropriate dimensions, empathy was initially needed. The knowledge about the workers beliefs and thoughts about management that was gained by posing incisive question and that was followed up by astute observations and carefully tuned listening provided insights into the other person's thinking. Those insights can then be used to restructure (note the word structure) the thoughts and actions of errant followers (where that is deemed useful).

Let us consider the thought processes and behaviors of an executive who functions as an excellent leader in a bit more detail. Persuading a person (in President Truman's sense) to

think and act quite differently might, for example, require the following efforts. Initially, the leader would have to listen very carefully to the other person and question him or her gently to understand both the content (what the person believes) and the structure (how all the thoughts are put together) of that person's thoughts. The leader would have to pay special attention to the assumptions that underlie the other's thinking process. Is he or she thinking in a unidimensional fashion? Does this person merely define some people, some events and some situations as "good" and others as "bad?" Are more dimensions involved? For example, if the same things or the same people are viewed as "bad" under one condition or in one setting, but as not bad in another multidimensionality may be present. How are these dimensions organized? How does the organization, the executive leaders of the organization, or how do coworkers fare in the views of this person? Is there some evidence that views are diverse, based on different experiences and different dimensional bases of judgment? Or, are things lumped together (as, for example, in the assumption that "all managers are always out to exploit all workers"). Identifying and understanding the specific underlying assumption can be the key to any subsequent persuasion attempt.

As I suggested early in this book (Chapter 2), it is quite striking to realize how many people are not even aware that their own thinking is founded on assumptions of one kind or another. People typically feel that their own views of the

world are correct. They believe that their thoughts are based on "fact," not on assumptions. Generally, people are equally unaware that other legitimate assumptions are possible. People who base their views on different principles are too often rejected as "wrong" or "misled." I have already discussed the problems that can be generated by a failure to recognize that assumptions may differ and that diverse assumptions would generate divergent attitudes and a different philosophy. I need not repeat those arguments here.

If one understands what another person's assumptions are, one can build upon them. Remember the example of a worker who would not trust management. By using his dimensionality in the communication from manager to worker, it was possible to change his views. Nonetheless, the change was probably superficial. The worker probably began to see the current situation as an "exception" to the rule.

Sometimes, one can go further. Sometimes we can have a much greater persuasive impact. Whatever another's assumptions may be, where they are not necessarily grounded in some strong religious or moral belief system, the assumption themselves might be gently questioned. They may even be replaced by an astute leader's strategic communications. The most effective means of modifying existing assumptions is to show that person that his or her philosophy or basic beliefs dictate attitudes or even actions that are inconsistent with some other moral or general beliefs he or she is holding. People, especially if they are not multi-

dimensional, tend to abhor apparent "inconsistencies" within their own thoughts. If such inconsistencies are pointed out, people are often only too willing to listen to suggestions on how to remove them. This openness provides the ideal opportunity for the leader to work his or her magic.

I am not suggesting that all persons who work for a single organization should hold the same beliefs. I am not saying that all of them should base their views on common assumptions. Fortunately, we don't all have the same opinions. We differ in what we believe, in our attitudes, i.e., in the "content" of our thinking. Even more fortunately, we differ in the dimensionality of our concepts. Not all differentiators approach a situation with the identical sets of dimensions. Not all integrators combine and interrelate dimensions in quite the same way. Without these differences in structural processes, new insights and creativity would be little more than an accident. Major breakthroughs in thinking would not occur.

Fortunately, there are enough people among us who can integrate. Fortunately, there will be people among them who can and do base their thinking on a variety of assumptions that, in turn, result in diverse integrative processes. It is these differences, that generate the basis for new understanding, new ways of handling organizational problems, even the development of new philosophies. Diverse assumptions and the diverse integrations of experienced events and thoughts that are colored by these assumptions may generate quite different attitudes and

quite different behavior. Some of those attitudes and some of
that behavior may be counterproductive. It is that behavior
which a leader may wish to change. At other times, however,
these attitudes, that behavior will provide the basis for
organizational progress that may be badly needed. It is the
leader's task to recognize when attitudes and/or behaviors are
detrimental and when they are potentially helpful, even though
they may not yet fit with "the way things are currently done" in
an organization. That recognition by the leader requires
empathy, but it also requires integrating anticipated outcomes
with the needs and characteristics of the organization.

All of us are, of course, aware of the considerable differ-
ences in assumptions about human nature that are made by economic
philosophies that are based on Marxist versus "Capitalist"
ideologies. Some of us are even aware of the differences
generated by lesser discrepancies between the underlying assump-
tions of Democratic versus Republican party platforms during any
one election year. These discrepancies may be reflected in a
wide range of attitudes and a wide range of actions that would be
(at least) expected from those who subscribe to those views.
Similar discrepancies would also emerge in the leadership styles
of executives who hold diverse points of view about management.
It would take too many pages to show the precise impact of each
of the potential differences in considerable detail. However, an
example of how leadership can affect employee behavior may be
useful. Let us consider points of view held by employees of an

organization - and the potential modification of these views by
an executive who functions as an astute leader. Note, however,
that these examples were intentionally chosen to be simple
and straightforward. Further, for better communication, they
were selected to be somewhat extreme in nature. The reader
should remember that actual events may be much more complex and
likely more subtle.

Let us initially focus on a worker who has done well in the
past. He has been rapidly promoted and rewarded in previous
years. He looks favorable upon the company and believes that his
superiors appreciate him. Let us say that this worker would
predict that another promotion, some time soon, would be quite
likely, earned by doing the present job very well indeed. His
basic assumption is an expectation of favorable treatment, and
the belief that this treatment is well deserved. If this
particular worker were now assigned a particularly difficult
task, he may well conclude that the assignment communicates
"trust" in his competence by superiors. The result may be a high
level motivation, if not enthusiasm. That enthusiasm, in turn,
may generate an even greater appreciation of, and loyalty for,
the company.

The favorable attitude taken by this employee is, without
question, founded upon his positive views of the organization
and upon his assumptions that the organizational leadership
views him favorably. What, if those assumptions were different?
Let us consider another employee. He was hired about a year ago

after being fired unjustly by a boss elsewhere, a boss with whom
he did not get along. That boss acted vindictively, destroying
that worker's trust in management in general. Even when hired
in the present company, the worker was unable to overcome his
near-paranoid views. He thinks that history will repeat itself
at his new job. He believes that his new boss would rather fire
him than keep him on the staff. Consider what might happen, if
the difficult task is assigned to this particular employee. He
is likely to conclude that the task was chosen to demonstrate
his supposed incompetence and to provide an excuse for dismissal.
The worker might further reason, that there is no good or
acceptable way to do this task. Any way he would approach it
would certainly be interpreted as faulty by the boss. That
interpretation would then precipitate the intended outcome: He
would be fired. Concluding that there is no way to keep the job,
the employee might decide that this is the last chance to get
back at the company. He may actually do some damage, he may be
disinterested and do a poor job on the task and he may _indeed_ get
fired, but not for the reason that he had derived from is
underlying assumptions.

The supervisor could, if this employee and his task is
important, have intervened. That supervisor would have had to
assume the leadership function I have described. He or she would
have to engage in integrative "empathy." Becoming aware of the
employee's discomfort with the task assignment, the leader may
have gently questioned the employee. After discovering the

underlying fears, the executive could have placed doubts on the
assumptions that precipitated the fears. Let us assume, for the
moment, that the supervisor wishes to keep the employee in the
organization because of his valuable talents. He or she might
have said: "Look, I assigned this job to you because I think
that the task is important for all of us. I need someone with
imagination who can get us out of the trouble we are in.
Whatever solution you come up with, let me tell you that I am
guaranteeing your job with us for long beyond this task. I know
the task I have given you is difficult. I know there is no
'right' answer. But I want someone who is competent to think
about it, someone who may have a chance of coming up with the
best possible answer. So I thought of you. Actually, if you
come up with something that does work, it will probably mean a
promotion or some reward."

"If you prefer, I could give the job to someone else. But
somehow I have the confidence that you would come up with a
better solution, if there even is a solution. So think about
it. Let me just say that I believe you are the best choice for
the job." Providing the option to say "no" to the task, guaran-
teeing (where that is appropriate) a valuable worker's job for
the immediate future and singling that person out because of his
competence (aside from admitting that there is no perfect
solution) must argue against that faulty basic assumption
of the employee. An assumption of hostility and negative intent
by the supervising manager just does not fit the pattern of

this leader's statements and actions. The employee's earlier
assumptions must, consequently be changed: They are no longer
viable. Likely, the supervisor's approach has probably saved the
services of a valuable employee. That could not have happened,
if the employee's boss had been unable to empathize. i.e., had
been unable to identify the assumptions which determined the
employee's initial rejection of the assigned task.

As I have already suggested, this example is rather sim-
plistic. Let met repeat: it had to be. There simply is no
space in a book of this kind for detail about the many complex
and subtle processes which extend from assumptions to attitudes
and actions. There simply is not enough space to present many
complete examples of the complex integrative perceptual processes
which an effective leader might use to communicate and to
persuade. More extensive and complicated examples must be left
to executive training sessions where more time can be devoted to
issues and concerns of this kind.

Unfortunately, restructuring the assumptions, attitudes and
actions of employees is not always easy. I have already discuss-
ed the need for empathy toward understanding the basis of
employee assumptions. However, something else is needed as
well. Employees differ in their own level of multidimension-
ality. Their levels of multidimensionality allow them to "tune
in" to specific kinds of communications but do not permit them
to tune into others. A successful leader must match his or her
communications to the differentiative and integrative multidi-

mensionality of which an employee is capable. People don't
understand communications that are beyond their own level of
multidimensionality. At best, they distort those communications.
On the other hand, communications that remain considerably below
the level of an employees dimensional capacity are typically
rejected as simple minded and inappropriate.

Let, for example, us think of an employee who has experi-
enced conflict with some others in the organization because they
would not accept his suggestions. Say, this employee is strictly
unidimensional. He or she views those others as "bad" persons
whose motivation is necessarily sinister. If a leader would try
to explain their behavior on the basis of a differentiated
second dimension ("look, they are not rejecting you, they just
don't think that your capacities are needed for this particular
task..."), the message would hardly get through. The employee
may only reject the leader as well. He or she would consider
the leader's statements as irrelevant, wishy washy and so forth.
At best, the employee might conclude that the leader is trying
to make excuses for the others.

In contrast, an employee who is capable of integration
would likely reject a leader's unidimensional communication as
simplistic and inappropriate. The employee might conclude that
the leader simply does not comprehend the forces at play or does
not care to consider all of the different issues involved. In
other words, to avoid miscommunication, a leader must apply
integrative empathy not only (1) to determine the assumptions

and resulting thoughts of employees, but also (2) to determine
the number and nature of the dimensions which specific employees
are bringing to a situation at hand. The leader should ask
himself (1) What is the content of the dimensions? (2) How are
they integrated? (3) How do they relate to the task or issue at
hand? (4) How should the applicable communication be structured?

If the leader finds that an employee thinks in a unidimen-
sional fashion, he or she may have either an easy or, on the
other hand a very difficult task to modify that employee's views.
On first thought, one might conclude that the views and assump-
tions of a unidimensional person would be unmodifiable. Where an
astute leader can, however, show that person that his or her
assumptions conflict with other accepted facts and conclusions,
change may be imminent and can often be easily guided. With
changes in underlying assumptions and thought patterns, attitudes
will easily shift as well. Only where the person's belief system
is based on a fixed and closed system, e.g., moral beliefs,
fundamental religious views, and so forth, will change be
unlikely. Persons with closed and fixed views of the world
either do not comprehend inconsistencies in their own thinking or
will distort and reject contradictory information to maintain
their established views. Only an extremely painful impact would
serve to modify their thought patterns. When such rare events
occur, however, the resulting changes tend to be extreme, often
resulting in a complete flip-flop of both assumptions, beliefs
and views.

It is a bit more difficult - and may take a bit more time -
to change and stabilize the attitudes and views of an employee
who differentiates and integrates. A change in one assumption
for such a person often affects other related assumptions.
Changing one attitude can have impact on a variety of other
attitudes, on action tendencies, and so forth. In fact, many
changes may require redifferentiation and reintegration of much
of the person's thoughts and concepts, a process that is likely
to take time before stabilization is achieved. After all, just
about everything is such a person's thought patterns depends on
other (relevant) thought patterns. Considerable cognitive work
is required to sort things out. Certainly more time is required.
It may also require repeated communications between leader and
employee as the employee checks and rechecks the implications of
modified thought patterns: "But doesn't that mean that...and how
can that be?" Nonetheless, in the thinking of multidimensional
employees, changes can be achieved by an astute executive leader
if that leader is at least equal in multidimensionality to the
employee in question. Whether such an effort would be worthwhile
must, of course, depend on the judgment of the executive
involved.

Even where underlying assumptions cannot or should not be
modified, some changes in the content of thoughts and actions of
followers can often be accomplished. The leader might, for
example, point out the likely outcome of an employee's views or
actions. Depending, again, on the degree of dimensionality

available to the employee, guidance would have to be appropriately tailored. The best method guides the person through (apparently self generated) thought sequences toward the potential consequences of thoughts and actions that the leader may view as undesirable. If the leader can guide an employee toward a conclusion that the outcomes of present behavior will have personally undesirable consequences*, change will most often be imminent. chance will most often be imminent. The leader may then guide the employee as he or she explores other thought sequences that have more desirable consequences for all concerned.

Of course, the process of guiding an employee's views, attitudes and actions may not be easy one. It may require considerable effort which, in some cases, can be cost effective; in other cases it may not. Guiding an employee's views effectively is, of course, a process that must be considered in terms of multiple demands. It does not only concern itself with the employee per se. The demands and the culture of the organization as well as the executive leader's own level of structural dimensionality must have an impact. The effective leader must be able to carefully manage these interrelationships to achieve the optimal result.

Maintaining Diversity

I should emphasize that it is not an executive supervisor's

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*Remember, the person must reach these conclusions on the basis of his or her own thinking, only guided by the leader.

task to create carbon copies of his or her own belief systems,
assumptions and attitudes in those whom he or she supervises.
Especially the executive's belief content should not simply be
transferred to his or her team of employees. Uniformity
eliminates the potential for creativity and alternate thinking.
An employee or a coworker does not have to believe in the same
things you do, or does not have to have the same attitude that
you have. There are a number of diverse assumptions, a number of
diverse attitudes and beliefs that can make positive contribu-
tions to the functioning of the organization. Only assumptions
and attitudes that are clearly detrimental need be changed.
Other kinds of variety are possible sources of useful contribu-
tions.

If a leader would make it his or her task to select or train
carbon copies of the leader's own approach to problems, he or she
would be wasting valuable time that could be spent more effec-
tively in dealing with external tasks. For that matter, an
executive leader may be more effective by generating a level of
"freedom" for the employees of the team. If employees are
motivated, if they work hard, then their very differences can
sometimes generate more effective alternate avenues toward
problem solutions. Good leaders may provide that team of
employees with the framework of a problem. They may specify a
goal at some appropriate level of detail or generality. However,
decisions on what approaches might be used toward that goal may
well be left to the team of employees. From time to time, the

executive leader may wish to refocus the goal, either because the team has drifted away from the original goal or because the goal itself has shifted. It is up to the leader to assure that a task oriented group maintains a reasonable direction. Where the team's actions, however, continue to be productive fed, in part, by a useful diversity among team members, the leader may best function only as a "guide."

I have talked as though an executive must or should always communicate with supervisors in the appropriate (i.e., matching) dimensional fashion. Generally, that is fine; but there are exceptions. In cases where facts or even straightforward orders must be communicated, a multidimensional leadership approach may not be necessary. If the executive requests of an employee to "call George and tell him that we can pay 897 dollars per unit," there is little need to worry about the dimensions involved in this communication. Most of the time, such statement can and should well be unidimensional. If, however, the employee is given a task which contains uncertainty, where he must operate independently over considerable time with only minimal super-vision, the executive leader should be aware of how the relevant employee's dimensionality might affect resulting actions. It is here where a multidimensionally based intervention by the leader might well be useful.

Control Through Empathy

So far, I have considered the relationship between supervis-ing executives who function as leaders and their teams of

employees whom they instruct and guide. Of course, "leader-
ship," as I already suggested in the last chapter, is not
limited to the relationship between superior and subordinate.
One can, as well, lead one's peers, in some cases even one's
superiors. One can also lead one's partners and even one's
adversaries. The principles involved are very much the same.
They all involve competent communication. They all involve
integrative multidimensionality. Understanding another's
(including an opponent's) point of view makes one aware of their
intent and their strategy. Where one can empathize with their
underlying assumptions, one may, after some experience, even
predict what they might do or say next. Such an ability disrupts
an opponent's capacity to manipulate the situation: their
strategy is discovered before it can even be applied.

For those persons who cannot be classified as opponents but
rather act to fulfill their own needs, the empathizing executive
can yet engage in another kind of "disarming leadership." The
leader can communicate that the other person is understood, that
the other's needs make sense, that he or she is accepted for
what he or she is. Such a communication can be quite disarming.
It may even generate a certain kind of loyalty: after all, most
of us want to be "understood" and we tend to feel very close to
others who do seem to understand us. They seem, to most of us,
to see us as the "legitimate" persons that we want to see in
ourselves.

Matching Leadership to Supervisee Strength

I have talked of empathy. Empathy also implies understand-
ing what those who are supervised can do or cannot do. Depending
on their present level of competence in their respective jobs,
supervision should differ. Hershey and Blanchard[*] have described
a current (and changing) competence level in a job as
"Task-Relevant Maturity" or "TRM." That maturity may grow, as
familiarity with a job increases over time.

Where task relevant maturity has not yet been achieved,
precise and detailed instructions, where feasible, are useful.
With increased maturity, the supervisor should be able to give
the employee greater freedom. More "exploration" may be permitt-
ed. However, at this stage support and aid is often required.
Negative feedback and rejection should be avoided where possible.
As the employee reaches a level of full maturity in the task,
the managing supervisor will be less and less needed. He or she
should, however, be there to communicate and to monitor the work
of the employee to assure that a joint understanding of the task
and the methods of achieving the task is maintained. That,
also, is effective leadership. Grove[**] considers that level of
supervision essential: the supervisor should "delegate", not
"abdicate" responsibility.

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[*]Hershey, P. & Blanchard, K.H. (1972). Management of
organizational behavior, (Second edition). New York: Prentice
Hall.

[**]Grove, A.S. (1983). High output management. New York:
Random House.

Where an employee is new, we can hardly expect him or her to have a complete understanding of task requirements. Even though many managers apparently fail to realize it, the same holds for a recently promoted employee. Promotion implies new tasks in which the employee has limited or no experience. Promotion involves a lack of knowledge about task components and task demands. That lack of understanding, in turn, may generate overload experience. And as all of us know quite well by now, overload hinders multidimensional functioning.

If a recently promoted employee, e.g., a junior executive, has the necessary intelligence and motivation, and if that employee has the underlying capacity to differentiate and integrate, then task relevant maturity is apt to grow. We may assume that this employee will reach an adequate or fare above adequate level of performance in the new position. However, we cannot expect him or her to display that capacity immediately. New task components have to be learned. They have to be integrated into existing and into new knowledge. New strategic insights have to be attained. New interrelationships with people have to be developed. All that takes time. The performance of a unit which the promoted employee is now supervising may even, temporarily, drop. But that drop will not likely be permanent. Let us not despair: with the new supervisor's intelligence, motivation and needed integrative capacity, unit performance will likely return to its previous level or beyond.

Of course, we all know that promoting someone who is not

intelligent enough to perform a higher level job must be a
disaster. We also know that promoting a person who lacks
motivation will result in failure. Higher level positions often
need the investment of considerably more time and involvement.
A low degree of motivation that might have been enough at a less
complex job but may be far from adequate at higher levels.

Many of us have not realized the discrepancy between
requirement for multidimensional thought and action at diverse
job levels. Working at more senior positions in organizations
often implies greater complexity of tasks. There is more flux
and uncertainty in the task environment, less clarity about what
needs to be done. Goals may be less defined, strategies are
likely multiple and less obvious. In other words, with a higher
executive job level, greater differentiative and integrative
capacity might be required. Typically, organizations have not
prepared their employees for this change in responsibility. For
that matter, most organizations are not even aware that such
requirements exist. At least, they have not verbalized that
need or implemented appropriate training programs. A manager who
is promoted to a position which requires multidimensionality in
excess of his or her capacity has indeed been promoted to their
own "level of incompetence." The astute and, of course, multidi-
mensional senior executive who is involved in promotion decisions
should consider whether an individual candidate for promotion
possesses all three needed ingredients for success at the higher
level: intellectual capacity, motivation and multidimension-

ality.   Only when all three are present can task-relevant

maturity be achieved.

INTEGRATING PEOPLE

The leadership role and the communication expertise required

of a leader do, of course, become more difficult when an execu-

tive must simultaneously deal with several persons. That is

especially the case if these people hold potentially diverse

points of view. The problems encountered become even more

demanding when the views are, at least on the surface, directly

contradictory. In a competitive environment, seemingly incompat-

ible points of view tend to produce hostility. People tend to

think that there must be a winner and a loser. As a consequence,

individuals often unthinkingly defend their own views without

even considering the usefulness of opposing views or counter-

arguments.

Task groups are frequently bound by the same fallacy that

we know from individuals. Many task oriented groups or

committees attempt to select one (often intact) view from

among those available. The group will often sanctify that one

view as "correct." They will then, most likely, propose or

initiate implementation of that view - even though several

alternate views may also have contained appropriate components.

The loss of valuable ideas which were part of rejected arguments

can be quite harmful to the success of an organization. In

addition, team members whose points of view were rejected despite

their potential usefulness may become resentful, an emotion that

can make future cooperation among task group members even more difficult.

The executive leader should be sensitive to these short-comings of many a task group. A leader who differentiates with ease is often able to identify valuable components in each group member's approach. Such a leader can often encourage a group process or obtain a group decision that reflects <u>integration</u>. An integrative group process draws upon and combines, wherever possible, valuable components from the team member's varying conceptualizations. Even suggestions based on diverse underlying assumptions can <u>sometimes</u> be utilized in an integrative group process. Resulting decisions outcomes may turn out to be more appropriate to the task and the environment at hand. In addition, an integrative group process allows many group members to feel that they did contribute something to the final outcome. The group's conclusion, decision, or whatever, is - at least in part - <u>their</u> <u>own</u>. As a consequence, group members may obtain a feeling of "<u>ownership</u>" that can generate a greater allegiance to the group and to the organization.

An example may again be useful. Unfortunately, in the interest of space, our example must again be simple. Consider an American company that has, until recently, marketed a lucrative product without competition. Very recently, a foreign competitor has entered the market. The competing product is less expensive, and of somewhat variable quality. Apparently their quality control is not optimal. The competing product is offered

to the same stores that are now selling the original product. A
task group is assembled by the original producer to develop a
strategy designed to fight the new competition. The executive is
charge meets with three other members of the group and listens to
the following opinions:

Person A feels that the lack of quality control inherent in
the foreign product is going to ruin them in the long-run. "It
will only make us look better," he states. Let us not do
anything. They will dig their own grave.

Person B has a quite different opinion. She feels that we
cannot afford to wait. "It may take years before the public
will catch on to the fact that their product breaks down more
frequently." This group member argues that the company should
increase its advertising, with emphasis on quality. Then, once
the public does find out that the new product is shoddy, they
will become the American company's loyal customers forever.

Person C has yet a different opinion. He is concerned
about the profit margin: "we have to decrease our prices, as it
is, to compete with their product. If we advertised as well,
especially on a large scale, we would end up losing money on the
product." Consequently, he suggests that their company should do
some marketing research and find out what kind of consumers buy
the foreign product anyway. "There probably are not very many
people who used to buy our product that would actually be
willing to switch to theirs. Our previous marketing research has
shown that our customers are more quality conscious and less

concerned with price. They want a product that lasts, that has little down-time and requires a minimum of service."

The executive leader in charge of this task group can now initiate a group process that emphasizes the usefulness of suggestions by all members. The outcome of that process may lead to thoughts that might look something like this: Indeed, lacking quality control will ruin them in the long-run, at least with the kind of customers that the American company has had for years. Maybe it is not necessary to drop the product price: some advertising - with diminished cost by targeting people who have always brought the original American product - may be useful. Ads should emphasize quality, reliability and longevity differences. Maybe some old customers of the American product can be persuaded to show up in the ad campaign, emphasizing their as yet only short term, but nonetheless bad experiences with the new imported product. They can then reminisce about the reliability and quality of the original product they have always used in the past. Careful marketing research would be able to guide media selections and focus of the limited ad campaign.

The executive group leader could develop these conclusions through an integrative process, guiding the thoughts of team members toward such an integrated or a similarly integrated outcome. He or she may finally thank all concerned for their contributions; obviously, all of them were needed to reach the final conclusion. Likely the three participants will feel good about the result - and likely they will feel good about each

other.

Let me emphasize again that my examples, including the last one, are often rather "simplistic." They are kept simple to save space and to avoid confusion that might be generated by the introduction of greater complexity. In reality, the views of task group members are likely to contain many more components and multiple reasons for these components. The process of integrating some of these components into a novel and meaningful combination of some of these components is, of course, likely much more complex. But no matter what the complexity might be, this process proceeds along similar pathways: by integrating various thoughts generated by several team members toward a meaningful approach.

We have just considered the need to integrate the diverse ideas and approaches that are contributed by various people. Where several people, with widely diverse attitudes, abilities and needs must jointly complete a task, such an integration can be quite difficult. It potentially requires an even higher level of integrative capacity from the executive who functions as a group's or team's leader. To mold a well functioning team from quite diverse individuals, a team that is ready to deal with its tasks in an optimal fashion, the leader must, among other things, consider questions such as the following: What do the different views of these people have in common? How do their underlying assumptions compare? How do the consequences of each proposed view (or of each proposed action) differ? Could one achieve

desirable task outcomes on the basis of several views that are present among team members? Can parts of these views be combined to achieve optimal outcomes? What are some of the common denominators among the various different views or approaches? What are the common and diverse interests of group members? What are the common and diverse motives that may underlie in the various views and suggestions? Are there "hidden agendas" that would potentially generate immediate or subsequent conflict?

Can one find some thoughts and actions upon which group members would wholeheartedly agree, i.e., thoughts and actions that may be used to begin the construction of a "joint" point of view? Can it be shown that one conclusion, one outcome that would benefit the organization would also satisfy at least some of the goals of the various parties to the conflict? How can individual needs and group conflicts be harnessed and interfaced with task requirements and with desirable benefits for the organization? Answers to those questions, developed by the leader through careful listening and probing, can form the basis of the integrative approach. Where differences among individuals in a task group are considerable, that approach may involve some "restructuring" of a few group members' dimensionality. I have already dealt with the process of restructuring earlier in this book.

Naturally, there are going to be some task group members who may remain absolutely fixed in their views. They will defend their own point of view to the end - without actually "listening"

to others and without attention to a leader's integrative
efforts. They will only listen to themselves, as they - over and
over again - preach their own view and their own solutions.
Possibly they had bad experiences in the past, e.g., situations
where giving in, even partially, turned out to be to their
distinct disadvantage. Maybe they are dogmatic, rigid or too
insecure to admit that someone else may have a better idea. Some
of these people may yet be persuaded by an attentive, patient,
supportive and integrating leader. To achieve that feat,
however, a leader would have to have much time on his or her
hands or would have to consider the dogmatic employee to be
especially valuable. In most situations, such an extensive
effort at persuasion would probably not be justified. The loss
of employees who remain adamantly rigid and dogmatic, especially
if they are working at higher executive levels, may well be a
gain for many a company that must operate in complex, changing
and uncertain environments.

The reader may have concluded that I would consider a
competent leader to be a "super-person." Not so. For example, I
am not suggesting that a leader must always be "correct" or
"right." I have merely suggested that an excellent leader must
have the capacity to be an excellent integrator, a capacity that
is applied (only) when and where it is useful. Indeed, integra-
ting executive leaders can have a major impact on employees who
are their followers. But that impact need not be one-sided. The
positions of leader and follower in task oriented groups are

rarely clear-cut. Groups can have more than one leader. Leadership positions may shift from one person to another. The most senior executive in a group need neither be the official nor the unofficial leader, at least not at all times. Relevant competence and corresponding influence may well be divided among several members of a task group. No matter, in complex tasks with uncertain outcomes, any or all of the group's leaders must be able to employ the needed integrative style.

Getting people to understand each other, to communicate effectively, getting them to cooperatively share and integrate their ideas with each other and with their organization as a whole is, however, only part of the leader's task. Another part is more procedural: it requires an effort to maintain optimal information flow.

INTERFACING TASKS AND PEOPLE

Managing Information Flow and Group Deliberations

So far, we have considered a leader who is able to perceive the dimensional basis of others' thoughts. We have viewed that leader as a person whose communications and actions guide people via multidimensional, especially integrative, processes. This leader creates productive interactions with followers, inter-actions that are beneficial to the organization.

We should be concerned about yet another aspect of leader-ship. This one is less directly interpersonal, yet it is just as much founded on the perceptual and task oriented dimensionality that we have discussed. We should be concerned

with a leader's information management. The leader often can
have an influence on information he or she may wish to employ
information management as a means to influence the deliberations
of a task oriented group. Task groups, unfortunately, are not
always effective. We are all familiar with the bad reputation of
the "committee." One might even argue that "committees can be
detrimental to the health of organizations." While such a view
is, unfortunately, often correct, it need not be. First of all,
committee problems typically originate from interpersonal
conflict. Where different team members have different views that
they cannot integrate, hostility and haphazard performance
may well be the outcome. Leaders can prevent or, at least,
ameliorate that effect. We have already considered how a
leader is potentially able to deal with conflict among task
group members. However, the leader has yet other means to
facilitate the creative integration of views into meaningful
group processes toward results that are based on the best of all
views available to a committee: the leader manage information
flow to optimize the kind of group process and group decision
making that would be most desirable.

Multidimensionality in Individuals and in Task Oriented Groups

In an earlier chapter I have dealt with the effects of
information, for example load, on the dimensionality of percep-
tion and performance. I have considered how specific load
levels do or do not permit us to function in a differentiative
and/or an integrative fashion. If too little information is

available (if load is too low), our understanding of a situation at hand will likely be based on inadequate or even irrelevant information. Decisions that are to deal with complex phenomena will be inappropriate. If too much information is received per unit time (if load is too high), decisions will likely be respondent, i.e., each decision will likely be based on few specific items of information, especially information that seems salient or important. An integrative view of the task environment may not be possible. However, if information flow is intermediate without demand for immediate action, multidimensional processes will likely emerge, at least in those persons who have learned to function in a differentiative and/or integrative fashion.

In previous chapters, we have primarily emphasized differentiation and integration by individual executives. I have explored the perceptual processes that are involved in the selection of simultaneously applied dimensions, both with regard to decision making and with regard to interpersonal leadership. I have discussed how the capacity to make integrated decisions is affected by the information load to which an individual executive is exposed. Let us now extend these processes to task oriented groups.

Of course, individuals and groups are not the same. Once, they were thought to be very different: during the late 19th

century, the sociologist Durkheim[*] argued that groups had a mind of their own. By postulating a "group mind", he was able to explain why a group of otherwise decent people might turn into a vicious lynch mob. Even today, we recognize that there are unique characteristics of the group. However, we tend to explain them as an effect of the sum of the individuals that are present. For example, groups in many task settings come up with more ideas and with more varied ideas than individuals do. Groups are often better at brain-storming and at gathering information. Those group attributes are not surprising: more varies approaches, more different ideas are the by product of differences among multiple individuals.

But, there are also ways in which groups are quite similar to individuals. In our research, we have posed the same problems to individuals and to task oriented groups (of various sizes) and have found that the number and the quality of integrated decisions do not differ, no matter how many people are present. Wherever a group operates as a single unit, i.e., where it does not assign task components to sub-committees that work independently of each other, the capacity to differentiate and especially the capacity to integrate does not increase with the number of individuals who participate. An obvious increase in the variety of ideas that are available in the group does not translate into an increase of integrative activity.

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[*]Durkheim, E. (1898). Representations individuelles et representations collectives. Revue de Metaphysique, 6, 274-302.

The degree to which a group or a team applies differentiative or integrative processes to a task depends at least on two things: (1) the dimensional style of thinking by group members, especially of the majority or of the leaders who are in control, and (2) the particular task demands and load characteristics with which the group or the team must deal. The impact of the dimensional style of group members, especially their differentiative and integrative capacity, and the impact of task demands on executive performance tends to be the same for both individual managers or for a team of managers. Teams which function as homogeneous entities respond to underload just as individuals do: by basing decisions on incomplete and irrelevant information. They, too, respond to overload by excessive sensitivity to single salient cues. They attain the same levels of differentiative and integrative activity as individuals with equivalent levels of multidimensional capacity. In other words, a team's optimal differentiative and integrative performance level typically does not exceed the level of individuals who are members of that team.

Controlling Information Flow

In many situations, an executive who functions as a group's leader can have considerable influence on the quantity of information with which the group or committee must deal. In other situations, the executive may be able to affect the rate of information flow to the group. As a result, the leader can, in part, determine the level of multidimensional processes or, for example, the level of respondent processes that will be evident

in group functioning*. By generating appropriate load levels,
the leader may be able to assure that optimal group functioning
is achieved. What might be considered optimal would, of course,
depend on situational and task demands. If the task would most
benefit from the consideration of alternatives (e.g., differen-
tiation); if the task requires considering the multiple interre-
lationships among task components and their implications for
decision making (perceptual integration) or if multiple decision
sequences must be carried forward in uncertain complex settings
toward as yet remote goals, (decision integration), the leader
who can have an impact on information load would want to assure
that something close to optimal intermediate information flow is
provided.

On the other hand, where tasks require immediate action,
where any decision is better than a delayed decision, where
responses should focus on the one most important task aspect or
on the most salient information, the leader may not want to
encourage multidimensional processes. In that case, informa-
tion control may best lean toward overload: the leader would
want to assure that all the important and salient information is
being received by the team. The executive leader may want to
make certain that integrative processes cannot wash out the
maximal impact of salient cues. For that purpose, the leader
might encourage a rapid and overloading flow of information.

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*The level of functioning that is achieved by control of
information flow, of course, cannot exceed the multidimensional
capacity that is present in task group members.

Except in very rare circumstances, underload, i.e., very little information, should be avoided. Of course, if it is known which single item of information should provide the only basis for an impression or the only basis for a decision, then that limited information may be sufficient. However, it must be perfectly clear to all group members that no other information is to be considered. Without such a strong admonishment, group members may find it too tempting to add other, even very irrelevant, information into the processes of forming impressions and making decisions. And, decisions that are in some part based on irrelevant information may be flawed.

The amount of relevant or useful information varies, of course, from situation to situation and from task to task. Where sufficient time is available, all relevant information could possibly be channeled to arrive at appropriate information flow rates. The executive who functions as leader might be able to assure that information flow at appropriate rates is maintained (where feasible) until all relevant information has been processed. In other, more demanding situations, monitoring even some semblance of control over information flow may be impossible.

Information management where differentiative and integrative multidimensional efforts are required should, nonetheless, assure that overload is avoided whenever possible. Most executive leaders fail exactly at this point. Somehow they have been taught that ample information is essential for adequate decision

making. They have also learned that time is not to be wasted
(later in this book we will consider such "Type A" character-
istics and their effects). As a result, they tend to push for
rapid conclusions or decisions. They will often do so at a pace
that is much too fast, that requires processing of much more
information per unit time than their task group can effectively
handle. These leaders may request volumes of additional informa-
tion or they may actively support those group members that engage
in additional information search. Of course, neither the
group's leader nor the group members are able to handle the
resulting onslaught of information. The resulting group thinking
and decision making will be respondent in nature. Differen-
tiation and integration become unlikely. Decisions will typical-
ly be based on a very few selected information items. All other
information will be ignored or forgotten. The result are actions
that fail to consider many important cues or task components.
Interestingly enough, overload may result in actions that can be
based on less actual information than would have been the case
with optimal load. Even where actions that are the outcome of
overload generate some initial success in the short-run (and
occasionally they might), they are likely to produce failure in
the long-run, simply because the long-run consequences of any
present action would probably not have been considered.

Are there techniques which a leader might use to maintain
optimal information flow, techniques that would generate more
differentiated and integrated task group functioning? Where too

much information must, by necessity, be processed and considered, the leader may want to establish subgroups that can be asked to generate partial insights or conclusions that could later be combined into decisions by the group as a whole (note the warning about potential integration errors that I have discussed in an earlier chapter).

If possible, the leader might wish to spread large quantities of information across large periods of time. However, where information flow to a task group continues over time (whether or not that group consists of several subgroups), the leader has yet an additional task: he or she must be very sensitive to how the group uses information. It is only natural for groups (as it is for individuals) to lock in on certain information items or on partial or preliminary conclusions. I am talking about the tendency of individuals and groups to place more weight on thoughts that seemed to make sense in early deliberations, i.e., a "primacy effect" of sorts. Subsequent (later) information will often be considered only as it affects or interrelates with earlier conclusions. If it does not fit, no matter how important that information may actually be, it may be disregarded. If it fits partially, it may be seen as providing more support for earlier views than is actually evident. As a result, alternate thoughts and new insights may no longer be generated.

Once pre-conclusions of this kind have been accepted as "true", groups members often reinforce each other in maintaining

those salient and "<u>locked in</u>" views. The result can be restric-
tive thinking which fails to consider or fails to integrate
important aspects of the problem at hand. In the long-run,
decisions resulting from this process are frequently flawed or
unrealistic. The leader, whether officially appointed or
emerging from within the group, can do much to prevent this
"lock-in" on salient thoughts or premature conclusions. To
maintain openness and flexibility by the task group, the leader
may generate or actively maintain a level of uncertainty which
will aid openness to or search for new ideas. That openness may,
in many cases, permit alternate integrations of both early and
later information. It is up to the leader to show where new
information may cast doubt on previous conclusions. It is up to
the leader to insist that the group should consider that doubt.
And, last but not least, it is up to the leader to encourage the
group to reconsider thoughts, ideas, notions and information that
may have been prematurely rejected as "inconsequential" or
"inappropriate". After all, what may have seemed inconsequential
in the light of early or limited information may turn out to have
considerable importance in the light of later information or in
the light of subsequent events. At times, a leader's insistence
that the group should reconsider ideas that had already been
discarded may also serve to encourage and support those group
members who did advance previously discarded ideas in the first
place.

The competent executive leader must be able to recognize

when continued openness to information and/or reconsideration of
previously rejected ideas <u>are</u> and when they <u>are not</u> of value.
There certainly are task situations where continued openness to
new information can be counterproductive. At the wrong time and
in the wrong place, openness, even if it is paired with multi-
dimensionality, can delay action until it may be too late. I
know some very knowledgeable and otherwise competent differen-
tiators and integrators who find it very difficult to make any
kind of decision. They consider and reconsider. They integrate
and reintegrate. They are aware of uncertainties and search for
more and more optimal solutions to their tasks. They plan and
plan some more and reconsider all the possible consequences and
plan again. Unfortunately, they are rarely ready to make
decisions. Such people must be pushed to stop integrating[*].
These people can be quite <u>in</u>effective in settings where time is
of the essence. That is especially true in tasks and situations
where immediate action (or at least relatively rapid action) is
more appropriate than extended thinking or strategy development,
especially if strategy development implies unacceptable time
delays. An action taken within a given time limit may, in
retrospect, turn out to have been inappropriate, but at least it
had a chance. No action, when delay must produce failure, means
certain loss of opportunity.

In some settings where time is available but information is

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[*]Fortunately people of this kind are not in the majority
among differenting and integrating executives. Nonetheless,
enough of them exist to be concerned.

minimal, some limited immediate actions which would not create a
final outcome may be useful to provide interim information.
Responsive feedback from the environment can sometimes provide
the best kind of information and may aid in subsequent integra-
tive efforts . It is the leader's task to decide which kind of
information processing and what speed of action is presently
appropriate. To be precise: the leader must be contingent in
the application of multidimensional differentiation and/or
integration toward the management of information flow and group
deliberations.

Loss of Freedom

The unquestioned boss that we associate with stories of
early industrialization was in control. That control held, for
better or worse. The leader who follows the integrative approach
that I have described is not blessed with such control. His or
her influence is much more subtle. He or she must guide fol-
lowers through a process that welds leaders and followers
together into a purposeful whole.

The authoritarian leader of (hopefully) yesteryear was
"free." Demands, wishes, desires, needs of the staff were
irrelevant unless they contributed directly to the intents, needs
and desires of the leader. It was possible to take or leave
anything, e.g., use or ignore information or the people involved.
Whatever outcome emerged, whether positive or negative, was
entirely the leader's responsibility. Today's excellent leader
does not gain such freedom. Rather, he or she gains interdepend-

ence with others, sometimes even with people who are more competent, more intelligent, in other words, better at some job at hand than the leader could ever be.

Actually, to be the excellent leader, one need not necessarily be the technically most competent person in the crowd. Rather, one should be able to select the best people, to surround oneself with specific excellence. One should be able to integrate these people into a motivated, task oriented and cooperative team – a team which will perform the job optimally and together. The excellent leader excels by making things happen, even those things which that leader would not, personally, be able to do. The key word again is integration. Groups that are not integrated often do not perform optimally. The integrative capacity of a leader must be put to its ideal use: to managing the interactions and orientations of excellent and creative people. Without the application of an integrative leadership style, our executive does not have a much better chance to achieve organizational or personal goals than the authoritarian leader – whose failings, when they do occur, become the failings of the organization itself.

Leadership, Complexity and Task Demands

There is no question that tasks differ. We all know that tasks differ in their content requirements: some tasks are interpersonal, e.g., hiring, firing, rewarding or encouraging an employee. Others involve decision making, e.g., deciding on how much money should go to R&D this year. Yet others are planning

oriented, e.g., setting targets for corporate growth. Those differences among tasks are obvious. They are obvious because they reflect task content.

Yet, there are other distinctions among tasks. Many managers are, unfortunately, unaware of these distinctions. Tasks vary in the degree of multidimensionality that should ideally be employed by a responsible executive. Distinctions among the dimensionality requirements hold as well for executive leadership tasks. In some settings, as I have already pointed out leaders should employ considerable multidimensionality (differentiation and integration) to understand and to communicate with their followers or to optimally manage relevant information flow. In other settings or at other times, only part of that available multidimensionality should be applied. In yet other settings, a strictly unidimensional focus might be best.

With the many situational and task differences that should affect an executive's leadership style, can we know when and where each level of the multidimensional process would be required? Are we not making so many distinctions that it would be impossible to know when to do what? Is it possible to train those unfamiliar with our view toward a more optimal leadership style? In effect, does the "contingency approach" which is implied in what I have said contribute more to confusion than to clarity? Can we train executives to become more effective leaders?

On first thought, one might harbor some doubt. There is, after all, much diversity in leadership requirements. For example, research which has simply tried to predict leadership excellence on the basis of executives' scores on paper and pencil tests of multidimensional capacity has typically failed.... I must say that I am not surprised. But neither am I discouraged about the power of a multidimensional approach toward leadership excellence. Research and theory which makes overly simple predictions should not work: if it did, it would make a mockery of the complex tasks which executives face.T

here are some executive leaders that do extremely well at tasks, no matter whether task settings and requirements change. What is their secret? How do _they_ manage to deal satisfactorily with all the turmoil to which they are exposed? Their success is not just luck: It is the capacity to deal effectively and to adapt effectively to different persons, different tasks, to changed leadership demands and more; it is the capacity to function in a multidimensional fashion when and where needed. And it is to know when that style is needed.

It is not difficult to guide the reader in the selection of _which_ dimensional leadership style should be used and when it should be used. Let us start with some simple generalizations (maybe even over generalizations). Where the leadership task is complex, where uncertainty prevails, where time is available, where diverse points of view are present but no "right" approach can be singled out in advance, differentiative and integrative

leadership processes tend to be very useful. However, these multidimensional processes should not be employed inflexibly. Some leaders, who have excelled only at the application of multidimensional styles have, unfortunately, failed. Their failures occurred as tasks, situations, or followers changed, as stress increased, as information overload occurred or as time available to reach a final conclusion and to make rapid decisions was exceeded. As an example, think of Suedfeld's[*] successful revolutionaries.

The leader must adapt his or her style as situations change or as people change. A "leader" who calls for integrative thinking at a time of crisis will not have much of an audience. Even as stress and may crisis first begin to ebb, most followers are not yet eager to listen to lists of alternative actions or statements about complications and uncertainties. The leader should keep these complications and uncertainties in mind; he or she may well employ integrative processes to deal with these uncertainties and complications. However, integrated statements made to others at this stage of the game will likely be perceived as "wishy-washy" by most followers. Followers, whether political constituents or employees of an organization who have recently experienced serious stress want to hear precisely what the leader is going to do, what the leader views as "right." They often want to be told what they themselves should do and what they

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[*]Suedfeld, P. & Rank, A.D. (1976). Revolutionary leaders: Long-term success as a function of changes in conceptual complexity. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 34, 169-178.

should not do as long as the crisis is still fresh in their
minds. Stress and crisis breeds authoritarianism, both on the
political right and the left, both among leaders and followers.
The competent leader must be sensitive to this fact. The leader
must provides something that looks like decisive leadership where
it is demanded. However, that leader must already begin to
reinstitute the right of dissent and the process of creativity
as the memory of the crisis experience begins to fade among the
followers.

Some tasks and situations require only unidimensional
leadership and would possibly suffer if multidimensionality were
applied. I have already mentioned the burning factory. Here the
"right," often preplanned, procedure would be employed, based on
extensive and unquestioned instructions. But, there are also
other less threatening situations in organizational experience
that may be best handled via a unidimensional leadership style.
Consider, for example, the following situation. A senior
executive has concluded that a manager in the engineering
department is engaged in espionage for a competitor. At this
point, only one dimension will be of importance: the level of
damage created by the espionage activity. Clearly the damage
must be limited by any means possible. Two actions might be
taken (1) preventing any further leak of information, and (2)
assessing what information has found its way to the competitor.
Preventing further leaks of information may require some form of
action that immediately restricts the access of the manager to

organizational data, possibly (if that can be legally
accomplished) even those in files at his personal desk.

Likely, the spy will be fired or, if he or she is cooper-
ative in providing information about the leaked materials, at
least transferred to an insensitive job. Most likely, he or she
will have immediately accepted a position at the competing
company anyway. So far, the defensive action has indeed been
unidimensional. Subsequent actions, however, may have to take
on a more multidimensional character. Depending on what was
leaked, on the likelihood that the competitor has gained advan-
tages, depending on the morale effect on company personnel and
much more, some strategic effort to regain the prior status vis a
vis the competitor may have to be initiated. That effort may
have to be based upon multiple aspects of the situation and upon
various implications of the problem at hand. It must consider
all implications for the company, and more. At this point,
following the initial unidimensional action, more strategic
integrative efforts appear useful.

If the initial efforts of the executive who discovered the
espionage had been multidimensional, some interesting insights
might have emerged. However, the problem might not have been
resolved without further damage. For example, the executive
might have considered why this particular employee would engage
in espionage, why the company is vulnerable to such devious
efforts, whether present corporate culture or procedures results
in disloyalty, how the manager's immediate superior could have

failed to discover the problem at an earlier date, and more. Answers to these and similar questions would not be immediately available. To obtain satisfactory insights the executive may have had to start a probe without letting the spy know that he had been discovered. However, in the process, more damage might have been done. In other words: there was no time to engage in extensive multidimensional efforts. To avoid further damage, action had to be taken here and now. The resulting efforts needed to be based on a single dimension: further damage to the organization had to be prevented.

Of course, there are other situations and tasks where the appropriate level of dimensionality would best be intermediate, maybe limited to differentiation. Again, let us consider an example. Let us say that an executive supervises an employee who has been a troublemaker for some time. The employee is not particularly liked by others who would be just as happy to see him go. The social climate and the satisfaction among other employees in the same section have already suffered. Should the executive fire the employee? There are no obstacles in the way of dismissal: the company is not unionized and sufficient grounds for firing the employee are given.

There is, however, another side of this problem. This particular employee is the only person in the company who can perform a particularly essential job. Others with the same knowledge might be found after some search efforts, but there is no absolute certainty that the search will be successful.

However, other employees in the same section have demanded immediate action from our executive.   If an immediate action were indeed required, there are at least two dimensions that would have to be considered: the effect of the employee in question upon his peers (and their satisfaction/performance) within the same department and, secondly, the degree to which the company must maintain the employment of a person with relevant skills. The two dimensions do not interrelate: they remain independent. Integration is probably not needed. A differentiated choice can be made: which of the two dimensions is more important?

Of course, if - by some subterfuge or other argument - the decision can be put off, more dimensions may subsequently be brought into play, possibly even allowing some level of integration to occur. A search for a replacement might be launched without immediate firing of the troublemaker. Some attempt may be made to separate the troublemaker from the rest of the team. Some means of accommodation between the various people involved may be tried. Negotiations with the troublemaker's peers might allow some combination of actions (integration?!) which would satisfy most or even everyone to some extent - and may maintain the employment of the worker in question. However, all of these more complex and integrated actions are only possible if sufficient time is available. Where that is not the case, a differentiated choice between dimensions has to be made.

In our two examples, the leader was able to chose the level

of dimensionality that he or she would employ. To make that
choice, that leader must have had the capacity to differentiate
and to integrate. He or she had to select and focus communi-
cations directed to others on the basis of a differentiated
and/or integrated understanding of the problem at hand. However,
those communications should not necessarily reflect the differen-
tiated and/or integrated views on which they are based. Where
followers are unidimensional, the executive leader might better
keep cognitively complex differentiated and especially integrated
conceptualization to him or herself. As I have already
suggested, the level of a follower's understanding of a communi-
cation is necessarily limited by his or her own multidimensional
capacity.

For example, the general electorate is not known for
multidimensional thinking. As a consequence (and due to sheer
experience) many political leaders make themselves appear more
fixed and more unidimensional in their approach to issues than
they actually are. In my opinion, the Reagan administration has
provided an excellent example of such an apparent unidimension-
ality. Statements by the White House tend to be much more
unidimensional than political actions that have emerged, partic-
ularly where they had been guided by Mr. Baker. And, President
Reagan rarely says anything in public that is even differen-
tiated. However, his policies often are differentiated, at times
even integrated. His apparent impact upon the departure of both
Duvalier from Haiti and Marcus from the Philippines are witness

to strategic actions that are anything but unidimensional.

The fact that followers are often unable to understand differentiated or integrated communications does not provide grounds or excuses for a leader's own unidimensional actions. Where tasks or organizational environments demand multidimensional action, these actions should be taken, even if they cannot be explained at their full integrative level to others who tend to be more unidimensional in orientation. Politicians, to be elected, may promise actions that are clearly short-sighted, even detrimental if actually implemented. Many a politician may argue and even vote for short-sighted measures, merely to satisfy the majority of unidimensional constituents, as long as there is no chance that such a law will actually pass. At other times, where a promised but detrimental unidimensional action may actually obtain a majority, the politician may have to reverse direction and may have to vote against promises made during an election campaign. Such an integrative decision would probably reflect statesmanship but little personal ambition.

Making unidimensional pronouncements that are followed by differentiated or integrated actions that contradict those earlier promises will disappoint many constituents who may conclude that the politician was lying. In one way, that impression is correct. Our electoral process forces candidates to be less than completely truthful. However, if a politician has enough charisma, persuasive ability, power or support, then a few negative perceptions by some constituents may make little

difference. That is especially true, where a campaign for reelection is not in the offing.

A politician who will not run for reelection can comfortably apply an integrative approach to the problems of the country. After all, a unidimensional approach typically does not work in policy development, in leadership or in decision making. It can never be sufficiently pragmatic. It will rarely produce an adequate outcome, especially not in the long term. Neither would it work in private industry. My focus on the politician was only an example: Exactly the same arguments apply to corporate executives. But, the executive may have an advantage over the politician. Hopefully the organizational constituency of a senior executive will be able to think in a somewhat more multidimensional fashion than the constituency of the majority of our political leaders.

The leader, of course, must decide <u>when</u> and where to apply a decisive and quick approach to any task at hand and when to engage in differentiation and integration. How can we make sure that leaders understand when and where differentiation and integration are needed? How can we make sure that leaders understand the necessary multidimensional techniques? How can we assure that they apply differentiation and integration to their leadership tasks?

TRAINING FOR LEADERSHIP

When we are looking for an excellent leader, we have two choices. We can either find someone who already has the needed

skills, or we can try to improve someone's leadership ability.
The first approach requires methods of assessment and selection.
Unfortunately, most attempts to define and identify the always
perfect leader have not done well. The "Great Person" theory has
failed. Consequently we have had to rummage around in contin-
gencies that were supposed to help us determine what kind of
leader would be best for any one specific kind of situation.

We might find some comfort in the fact that a few research
projects have at least provided a hint about the "kind" of
people who may turn out to be reasonably good leaders across
at least a few tasks and situations. It seems that the best
indicator of later leadership excellence (and it is not a very
good one) are peer ratings obtained very early in a future
executive's career. Unfortunately, we don't have early peer
ratings for most leadership candidates. Another research
finding suggests that people who are generally excellent
performers are also (sometimes) excellent leaders. The problem
is with the word "sometimes." We don't even know whether they
are merely viewed as excellent performers because they can lead.
We don't know what causes what. What about people who have not
yet had the opportunity to lead? Can they do it? Do we have to
risk placing them into a leadership situation, probably only to
watch them fail?

Let us try a second alternative: training. Of course,
it should be possible for excellent leaders to transmit their
style, their knowledge and their insights to others. Indeed,

that is theoretically possible, but quite difficult to put into practice. The reason for this difficulty is already familiar to the reader: People, as I said earlier, typically understand <u>what</u> they think but rarely understand <u>how</u> they think. Most leaders would communicate the <u>what</u> of leadership to others in training to be potential future leaders. Most likely our excellent leaders will omit communicating the most important aspect of leadership. Likely they will not consciously recognize the multidimensional differentiative and integrative processes that they themselves are naturally applying to leadership task. Yet this <u>how</u> of leadership, their capacity to employ differentiation and integration <u>and</u> their capacity to use these dimensional processes flexibly and appropriately are the difference between leadership excellence and failure. To train leaders, or to train leaders to train other leaders, we must first learn to recognize and learn to communicate the structural <u>style</u> that successful leaders are employing; future leaders must learn to recognize <u>how</u> they are thinking. Both the multidimensional style as well as the content of leadership excellence must be transmitted to those who are to become our future leaders. In the next chapter of this book, I will describe how we can achieve an understanding of our own structural style, how we can learn to apply differen-tiative and integrative processes and how we can pass that knowledge on to others.