

## LEADERSHIP – ACTION CENTRED LEADERSHIP

The Cognisi newsletter seeks to help business owners, directors and managers by providing guidance, insights and support and this month I want to provide some thoughts on leadership as provided in John Adair's simple Action-Centred Leadership (ACL) model

The ACL model provides a great blueprint for leadership and the management of any team, group or organization.

The three parts of Adair's Action-Centred Leadership model are commonly represented by three overlapping circles

John Adair's Action-Centred Leadership model is represented by Adair's 'three circles' diagram, which illustrates Adair's three core management responsibilities:

- **achieving the task**
- **managing the team or group**
- **managing individuals**



When using it in your own environment think about the aspects of performance necessary for success in your own situation, and incorporate local relevant factors into the model to create your own interpretation. This will give you a very useful management framework:

To read about your responsibilities as a leader in these 3 areas, click [here](#) or alternatively contact me for a FREE introductory coaching session during which we can address your leadership strengths and areas for improvement in a constructive environment where

## **Your responsibilities as a manager for achieving the**

### **TASK are:**

- identify aims and vision for the group, purpose, and direction - define the activity (the task)
- identify resources, people, processes, systems and tools (inc. financials, communications, IT)
- create the plan to achieve the task - deliverables, measures, timescales, strategy and tactics
- establish responsibilities, objectives, accountabilities and measures, by agreement and delegation
- set standards, quality, time and reporting parameters
- control and maintain activities against parameters
- monitor and maintain overall performance against plan
- report on progress towards the group's aim
- review, re-assess, adjust plan, methods and targets as necessary

## Your responsibilities as a manager for the **TEAM** are:

- establish, agree and communicate standards of performance and behaviour
- establish style, culture, approach of the group - soft skill elements
- monitor and maintain discipline, ethics, integrity and focus on objectives
- anticipate and resolve group conflict, struggles or disagreements
- assess and change as necessary the balance and composition of the group
- develop team-working, cooperation, morale and team-spirit
- develop the collective maturity and capability of the group - progressively increase group freedom and authority
- encourage the team towards objectives and aims - motivate the group and provide a collective sense of purpose
- identify, develop and agree team- and project-leadership roles within group
- enable, facilitate and ensure effective internal and external group communications
- identify and meet group training needs
- give feedback to the group on overall progress; consult with, and seek feedback and input from the group

## Your responsibilities as a manager for each

### **INDIVIDUAL** are:

- understand the team members as individuals - personality, skills, strengths, needs, aims and fears
- assist and support individuals - plans, problems, challenges, highs and lows
- identify and agree appropriate individual responsibilities and objectives
- give recognition and praise to individuals - acknowledge effort and good work
- where appropriate reward individuals with extra responsibility, advancement and status

- identify, develop and utilise each individual's capabilities and strengths
- train and develop individual team members
- develop individual freedom and authority

## Action Centred Leadership and John Adair

Leadership is different to management. All leaders are not necessarily great managers, but the best leaders will possess good management skills. One skill-set does not automatically imply the other will be present.

Leadership is an ancient ability about deciding direction, from an Anglo-Saxon word meaning the road or path ahead; knowing the next step and then taking others with you to it. Managing is a later concept, from Latin 'manus', meaning hand, and more associated with handling a system or machine of some kind. The original concept of managing began in the 19th century when engineers and accountants started to become entrepreneurs.

There are valuable elements of management not necessarily found in leadership, eg administration and managing resources. Leadership on the other hand contains elements not necessarily found in management, eg, inspiring others through the leader's own enthusiasm and commitment.

Importantly as well, Adair set out these core functions of leadership and says they are vital to the Action Centred Leadership model:

1. Planning - seeking information, defining tasks, setting aims
2. Initiating - briefing, task allocation, setting standards
3. Controlling - maintaining standards, ensuring progress, ongoing decision-making
4. Supporting - individuals' contributions, encouraging, team spirit, reconciling, morale
5. Informing - clarifying tasks and plans, updating, receiving feedback and interpreting

6. Evaluating - feasibility of ideas, performance, enabling self assessment

The Action Centred Leadership model therefore does not stand alone, it must be part of an integrated approach to managing and leading, and also which should include a strong emphasis on applying these principles through training.

Adair also promotes a '50:50 rule' which he applies to various situations involving two possible influencers, eg the view that 50% of motivation lies with the individual and 50% comes from external factors, among them leadership from another. This contradicts most of the motivation gurus who assert that most motivation is from within the individual. He also suggests that 50% of team building success comes from the team and 50% from the leader.