



11 LEADERSHIP SKILLS & QUALITIES

OBJECTIVE:

To examine the skills and qualities of an effective leader.

(i) - A good leader should...

PREPARATION:

You will need:

- a) a set of index cards for each group. On each card you should write a skill or quality which leaders could demonstrate. Examples of some statements are included, in the Leadership Skills Handout
- b) Some sheets of newsprint.

You will also need to copy or write out the 'A Good Leader Should ...' briefing sheet.

TIMING:

The exercise will take about 1 hour.

WHAT TO DO:

Divide the group into sub-groups of 6-8 people.

Go through the briefing sheet for the exercise.

Give each group four sheets of newsprint, listed Essential, Important, Doesn't Really Matter & Should Not, a set of cards and some blank cards.

Tell people they have 1 hour to do the exercise.

After 1 hour bring the whole group back together and give everyone the chance to look where other people have placed the cards.

Have a discussion around the following points:

- were there any differences in where the cards were placed?
- what additions did people make?
- what are the most important skills/qualities a leader should have?

Finally, ask people to spend 5 minutes in a pair discussing skills they have now and skills they would like to develop.

A GOOD LEADER SHOULD ...

- 1 Each group has a set of cards and four sheets titled:
 - Essential
 - Important
 - Doesn't Really Matter
 - Should Not
- 2 In turn, pick up a card, read it out and place it where you think it should go on the four sheets. Give a short reason why. (No discussions at this stage.)
- 3 After all the cards have been placed, have a good look at them. If you disagree about the place of any card then turn it over.
- 4 Once everyone has had a chance to turn over any of the cards, start discussing the ones which have been turned over and try to agree, as a group, where they should go.

NB You will have some blank cards. If you think anything is missing, write it down.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

**Tell people
exactly what
is expected of
them**

**Always
involve other
staff in all the
decisions**

**Be able to
motivate
people**

**Lead by
example**

**Be firm and
strong**

**Be willing to
take risks and
try new ideas**

**Never forget
they are in
charge**

**Step in and
offer advice if
others aren't
doing the task
well**

**Always give
reasons for
their
decisions**

**Change their
style to suit
the task in
hand**

**Not put up
with any
criticism**

**Be able and
willing to
listen to
people**

**Go with the
majority**

**Let other
people know
exactly where
they stand**

**Be committed
to their job**

**Have high
expectations
of those they
work with**

**Be honest
about their
own
strengths and
weaknesses**

**Give feedback
to other
people on
their
development**

**Consult as
many people
as possible
when making
a decision**

(ii) Leaders we do and don't admire

PREPARATION:

You will need newsprint (or a satisfactory substitute) and pens.

TIMING:

The exercise will take about one hour.

WHAT TO DO:

Ask people to take two sheets of paper. Label one sheet 'Leaders I admire' and the other 'Leaders I do not admire'. They will then be asked to compile a list of actual people under each of those headings. To assist them to do so you may wish to provide some prompts, eg:

- People involved in national politics, international politics, music, fashion, the media, and business.
- People who are traditional leaders of their communities, heads of pressure groups, trade unions or emerging as influential youth cult figures.
- People who are still alive or people who are dead;
- Prominent women and young people;
- Great writers, actors, artists, fighters, humanitarians, scientists, prisoners of conscience in oppressive states;
- Local politicians, sportsmen and women and business people, mothers and fathers;

When people have completed their lists (there is no optimum number but people must be choosy - they should genuinely admire the leaders they list), ask them to identify any common characteristics they may have. There may be a number of differing groupings of people with different characteristics and approaches. Do this for both the admired and not admired.

Now concentrate on one person from each list. What are the personal characteristics that make them so admired or not admired?

In a group discussion share:

(a) the leaders people have identified

(b) the characteristics they have distilled.

Finally, suggest that participants meet in pairs and reflect on how they perceive their own leadership strengths and weaknesses. What areas would they personally target to improve upon?