22 TRAINING EVENTS for DEVELOPING TEAM LEADERS

Rod Storey

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PREFACE

Writing training activities for other people to use is a humbling experience. Because I am familiar with them, I run most of the activities in this manual with just a few of pieces of paper — a trainer's instructions sheet and a debrief sheet, for example. However, unless you have worked with me in the past, you are almost certainly seeing these activities for the first time and I have therefore had to go into much more detail, as I will not actually be with you to explain how to run them. That is the humbling part, trying to ensure that I explain everything fully and clearly in writing. I have tried to make the activities clear and hope that you find them easy to follow. As soon as you get used to them, or if you are already an experienced trainer, you will soon be able to dispense with much of the background information.

I have been using some of these activities in their present form for quite some time, having developed them some years ago for specific needs. Others are activities which I originally devised for particular clients to meet the needs of their leaders but which have been rewritten to make them more generic and applicable to a wider range of organizations. Feel free to re-adapt them to meet your own requirements and to reflect your organizational culture and ways of doing things. I have enjoyed putting these activities together. I hope you and your leaders enjoy using them!

I would like to give my thanks to Chuck Ash of Anchorage, Alaska, for giving me the initial idea for the **Alaska!** activity, and my old friend Pete Gifford for ensuring that I did not make a total fool of myself when writing about the chemical industry in **Who Was at Fault?**

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Rod Storey
Shrivenham, Oxfordshire
England, UK

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership

Leadership in a company or organization takes place at different levels. I am not aware of any definitive definitions of leadership at various levels, but a rough guide is as follows:

Strategic Leader

- Decides on the overall policy of the organization

- Advises on policy

- Uses a maximum of planning and control.

Senior Leader

- Translates policy into workable instructions and day-to-day activities for the team or department

- Plans the work and how to implement the overall policies

- Uses a high degree of planning and control.

Team or Project Leader

- Implements the plans

- Organizes the team.

Common to all of these levels of leadership are the key functions of a leader — initiating, decision-making, controlling, communicating, evaluating, delegating, and motivating — although the emphasis on each of these varies from one level to another.

Some of the activities in this manual are useful for all levels of leadership, some are best used for particular levels, and others are adaptable to different levels.

Using the Activities

I have written each of the activities as stand-alone exercises and have designed them so that you may fit each one into the training program that you are designing in a way that suits you and your participants. In a few cases, in order to avoid duplication, I have advised you to take notes from another activity. In other cases, I have advised you that a particular activity may effectively follow another, or that one activity is a good preparation for another. Please regard this as advice only and do not feel obliged to follow it.

You will find that I have added extra notes as an appendix to each activity. They vary from one activity to another but generally cover *Background*, *Use of the Activity*, and *Further Guidance on Method*. These are all based on my own experiences of running the activities and are to help the less experienced trainer run them more effectively. Occasionally, in the section called *Pitfalls*, I have included advice on what can go wrong and how to avoid it — again based on my own experiences!

Debrief

Where a debrief or review of the learning points is applicable, I have included a separate debrief sheet for that activity. The emphasis varies from one activity to another so it is not appropriate to use the same debrief sheet for each one.

Groups vary a good deal in the amount of time they need to complete a debrief sheet. Don't allow them to complete it quickly by writing only "good" or "poor;" ask for detail and encourage them to quote examples whenever possible. This will increase the value of the feedback to the leader and also help the leader see how the learning messages can be applied in the real world of work.

On the other hand, if you find that a group tends to take a long time to complete a debrief sheet, you can suggest a time limit, such as ten minutes. This is not foolproof but it does allow you a little control. Take care not to cut off the flow of good ideas and feedback by setting too short a time.

After the group has given feedback, ask each group leader what learning points he or she has gained from the activity. The leader may reiterate the points which have just been covered, thus emphasizing them, or may reveal other new, key points. Feel free to question the leader further in order to draw out any additional important points. Useful questions might be:

- "What do you think you did well? Why?"
- "What do you think you could have done better?"
- "What learning points have you gained from this exercise in addition to those given to you by the rest of the team?"

Effective debriefing is absolutely crucial in many activities in order to highlight or concentrate on what has been learned or can be learned from them. In this way, the learning may then be transferred back into the workplace, which is exactly where the leaders need to apply it in order to be more effective.

ACTIVITY INDEX

The activities are indexed in two ways — first, by Leadership Skills (initiating, controlling), and then by Activity Type (personal skills, active exercise).

Activity Number and Title	Leadership Skills							Activity Type				
	Initiating	Decision-Making	Controlling	Communicating	Evaluating	Delegating	Motivating	Skill Diagnosis	Discussion/Case Study	Active Exercise	Planning	Personal Skills
1 How Good a Leader Are You?	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
2 Leadership Stick-Up	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■		
3 The New Team Leader	■	■	■	■		■	■		■			
4 Leadership Style	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
5 Leadership in Your Own Organization	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
6 Front Page		■	■	■	■		■	■		■		
7 Moving Day		■	■	■	■				■			
8 Lights, Camera, Action!	■		■	■	■					■		
9 Alaska!		■	■	■					■			
10 The Rice Race	■	■	■	■	■		■			■		
11 Business Consultants, Ltd..		■	■	■					■			
12 Who Was at Fault?		■	■	■					■			
13 The Do-It-Yourself Builder		■	■	■	■	■			■		■	
14 Feedback											■	
15 Decisions, Decisions, Decisions!	■							■			■	
16 Motivation in Practice						■		■			■	
17 Influence Style			■	■							■	
18 Problems With People		■		■			■		■		■	
19 The Delegator						■					■	
20 Delegate That Task			■			■					■	
21 Crisis Plan		■	■	■		■	■			■		
22 Reorganization		■		■					■			

ACTIVITY SUMMARIES

1 How Good a Leader Are You?   Questionnaire and Discussion

Individuals rate their own leadership skills using a short question-
naire, share their conclusions with the group, and invite feedback
to focus on their own development needs.

30-40 minutes

2 Leadership Stick-Up   Discussion

Using flipcharts and Post-It® notes, individuals identify the key
skills that define a good leader (or team leader), distribute them
among a series of seven main headings and then assess their own
personal skills against the criteria.

35-45 minutes

3 The New Team Leader   Case Study

Working in small groups, participants agree on the strengths and
weaknesses of a manager as a leader in a case study example,
present their conclusions to the whole group, and then use the case
study to assess their own performance as leaders.

50-60 minutes

4 Leadership Style   Questionnaire and Discussion

Individuals recognize their own leadership styles using a question-
naire covering all of the skills of a leader, interpret the results, and
consider ways to develop their skills.

60-65 minutes

5 Leadership in Your Own Organization   Checklist

Working together or as individuals, participants use the checklist
to explore their perceptions of the attitude to leadership within
their own organization and its effects on the way in which they
lead.

40-80 minutes

6 Front Page   Team Exercise

Working in small teams according to instructions given in a verbal
brief by the team leader, participants create the front page of an
evening newspaper. The debrief explores the team leadership skills
needed to manage a time-sensitive task. The exercise may be used
either for diagnosing the need for these skills or for practicing and
consolidating the skills.

70 minutes, plus briefing of leader

7 Moving Day   Consensus Exercise

Working in small groups, participants try to reach consensus on what possessions to keep and what to throw away when moving from a large house to a small one. The debrief explores the team leader's skills in managing the decision-making process.

85-90 minutes

8 Lights, Camera, Action!   Team Exercise

Working in small groups, participants have 60 minutes to plan, design, and shoot a ten-minute video about their organization, working on several tasks at the same time. The debrief explores the effectiveness of both the teams and their leaders.

90-100 minutes

9 Alaska!   Consensus Exercise

Stranded in the wilds of Alaska, small teams of participants try to reach consensus on the items most and least essential to their survival. The debrief explores the consensus process and the effectiveness of both teams and leaders.

90-95 minutes

10 The Rice Race   Team Exercise

A competitive, small team exercise in which the participants compare their strategy and budget for devising a means of transporting rice as quickly as possible. The debrief focuses on the skills of the team leader.

80 minutes

11 Business Consultants, Ltd.   Simulation

Working as a small group, participants assume the role of department heads to negotiate and agree on the future of their consultancy business. The debrief explores the leader's approach and consideration of individual needs.

85-95 minutes

12 Who Was at Fault?   Case Study

A small group exercise in which participants work individually and then together to identify the causes of a serious industrial accident. The focus of the debrief is on decision-making and communication skills as well as on team leadership skills.

85 minutes

13 The Do-It-Yourself Builder   Team Exercise

Working in groups of five, participants plan and schedule building work on an old house. The debrief explores the project leadership skill of managing team members with diverse technical expertise.

75 minutes

14 Feedback   Observed Task

Team leaders are observed briefing and debriefing a task and are offered structured feedback on their performance. It also provides the group members with the experience of giving effective feedback.

45-70 minutes

15 Decisions, Decisions, Decisions!   Rating Exercise

Working individually, participants rate a series of decisions according to the Tannenbaum and Schmidt Decision-Making Continuum as a means of understanding how and when to involve team members in making decisions.

20-30 minutes

16 Motivation in Practice   Discussion and Exercise

Working individually or in groups, participants discuss what motivates their own staff, and then discuss how to motivate certain people in practice.

30 minutes

17 Influence Style   Discussion and Exercise

Participants work as individuals in small groups to discuss and then apply the four main influencing styles: "Sound Reasoning," "Carrot and Stick," "Trust and Involvement," and "Shared Enthusiasm."

70+ minutes

18 Problems With People   Case Studies or Practice Sessions

Working in small groups or in pairs, participants tackle a series of "people problems" as case studies for discussion or as practice sessions. Skills include motivation and handling people.

75-85 minutes (as case studies)
95 minutes or longer (as practice sessions)

19 The Delegator   Practice Sessions

Working in small groups, participants use a series of practice sessions to understand the principles of delegation and explore the skill of adopting a delegation style that is best suited to the task and to the person to whom it is being delegated.

100-120 minutes

20 Delegate That Task   Group Exercise

Working as a group, participants discuss and agree on how (and to whom) they would delegate a series of tasks. Debriefing focuses on the criteria the group used, how they reached agreement, and the process by which they got there.

65 minutes

21 Crisis Plan   Problem-Solving Task

Working on their own, participants decide how to use the people in their teams to resolve a series of crises within a fictitious organization.

60 minutes

22 Reorganization   Case Study

A small group exercise in which participants are asked to empathize with employees caught up in a company reorganization and agree on an action plan for each. The debrief concentrates on how to use the process of "Role Agreement" to resolve problems in working relationships.

60 minutes

TIME CHECKLIST

This checklist gives guidance on the time needed to run each activity. Some activities are flexible or have variations which take different lengths of time. Times will be affected by whether or not you set limits on time for discussion.

45 Minutes or Less

1 How Good a Leader Are You?

2 Leadership Stick-Up

5 Leadership in Your Own Organization (a variation can take much longer)

15 Decisions, Decisions, Decisions!

16 Motivation in Practice

About 1 Hour

3 The New Team Leader

4 Leadership Style

14 Feedback

20 Delegate That Task

21 Crisis Plan

22 Reorganization

Between 1 and 1½ Hours

6 Front Page

7 Moving Day

8 Lights, Camera, Action!

9 Alaska!

10 The Rice Race

11 Business Consultants, Ltd.

12 Who Was at Fault?

3 The New Team Leader

DESCRIPTION

A newly appointed leader may do some things well and others not so well.

This case study identifies good and poor performance of a newly appointed leader. It reinforces, in a practical way, the key skills of a leader and provides a foundation for further discussion so that each participant may compare him- or herself to the key character in the case study.

PURPOSE

- To build a clear picture of a leader's good (effective) and poor (ineffective) behaviors.

- To start to develop an understanding of some of the key skills of a leader, especially Initiating, Decision-Making, Controlling, Communicating, Delegating, and Motivating.

This case study, which uses a fictitious character, encourages the participants to think about their own performance and to begin to consider how they might improve.

GROUP MEMBERSHIP

The activity works best with a group of 4-6 participants and is suitable for a group of up to eight. A large group of over eight people should be split into smaller subgroups. It is suitable for any level of participants, but is especially useful for team or project leaders.

TIMING

Briefing by trainer	5 minutes
Case study	30 minutes
Presentation of findings	5 minutes per subgroup
Discussion	10 minutes
Total	**50 minutes or a little more**

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- One copy of Handout 3.1, *Case Study*, for each participant.
- A flipchart and markers for each subgroup.
- A room large enough for each participant to be able to write, or separate rooms if the group is split into subgroups (see Method below).

PREPARATION

Familiarize yourself with the case study and Trainer's Guide 3.2, *Trainer's Reference*.

METHOD

1. Introduce the case study as a way of identifying the key skills of a leader, emphasizing that the leader, Mark Hayworth, is new to the job.

2. If the group is large, divide it into subgroups of 4-6 participants.

3. Suggest that each group quickly select a leader/chair and a scribe (flipchart writer) for the exercise.

4. If separate subgroups are used, send the groups to separate rooms.

5. Ask them to work through the case study and to present their ideas on a flipchart at the end of 30 minutes.

6. Bring everyone together and ask each group to present its findings. This should take a total of about ten minutes.

7. Finally, spend up to ten minutes discussing their ideas and relating these to their normal work.

APPENDIX

Background

Any new leader who is keen to make progress is likely to make the same kinds of mistake as Mark does in the case study. The case study will help new (and not so new) leaders to think about their own leadership skills and areas in which they can improve.

Use of the Activity

Use in any leadership training program or any course in which the skills or functions of the leader are discussed — for example, a team-work course.

This case study is suitable at an early stage of a training program, even as the first activity after the introductions, as it highlights key leadership skills in a safe and non-threatening way. It is particularly useful immediately following **Activity 2: Leadership Stick-Up** as a reinforcement and practical application of those ideas.

Further Guidance on Method

There is no ideal group size for this case study, but if the group is too small — say, three participants — it may have difficulty in finding all the key points. If the group is too large — that is, over eight participants — some people may not have the opportunity to "have their say."

Advise members of the group(s) to work together, rather than working individually and then comparing notes, as this will save time. If participants work as a group, after individually reading the case study, then one individual's idea or comment will stimulate another idea from someone else. This gives a fuller and more complete set of ideas. Alternatively, ask everyone to read the case study quickly in the main training room before groups go to separate rooms. This encourages the participants to read and grasp the material quickly and also gives them the opportunity to ask any questions for clarification. If you use this method, you should still allow groups 30 minutes to work on the case study.

If you ask the groups to present their ideas on a flipchart, advise them to do this as they go along, as opposed to writing their ideas on a piece of paper and transferring them onto the flipchart. This is quicker and involves every member of the group.

Some groups like to be left alone while they are working on the case study. Others are happy to have you, the trainer, move from one group to another, sitting quietly and listening. Do not interrupt unless a group is making serious errors, as they may feel that you are trying to take control. Before the groups start the case study, ask which approach they would like you to take.

Pitfalls

There are relatively few pitfalls in this case study. However, some participants may concentrate on the negative aspects of Mark's performance and ignore the positive ones.