



# FACILITIES MANAGER: A COMPLETE OVERVIEW OF YOUR LEADERSHIP ROLE

- KEITH LANGLOTZ, DOF, WILLIAMSVILLE CSD (K1)
- KEITH WATKINS, CDF, CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT OF  
NEW ROCHELLE (K2)



**WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?**

# the office



# DEFINITIONS OF LEADERSHIP

- *The ability to inspire and guide others toward a shared goal while empowering them to grow along the way. It's not just about getting people from point A to point B. It's how you get them there.*
- *The process of influencing and guiding a group of people to achieve a common goal by providing direction, motivating members, fostering collaboration, and making decisions.*
- *A combination of position, responsibilities, attitude, skills, and behaviors that allows someone to bring out the best in others and the best in their organization in a sustainable manner.*
- *A social influence process where an individual guides and motivates others toward a shared goal, vision, or objective.*

**THE BEST LEADERS  
KNOW THIS**



# COMMONALITIES OF LEADERSHIP

- **Strong communication skills**: Facilities management leaders must be able to clearly and effectively communicate their vision, goals, and expectations to their team. They must also be able to listen to and understand the concerns and needs of their team members and address those needs effectively. It is also helpful if they can drive strong communications and collaboration.
- *A facilities management leader with strong communication skills can articulate their vision and goals for the team clearly and can communicate changes or updates to team members effectively. This helps to ensure that everyone is on the same page and working towards the same objectives.*

# COMMONALITIES OF LEADERSHIP

- **Attention to detail**: Successful facilities management requires a high level of attention to detail. Leaders in this field must be able to identify and address problems quickly and efficiently and be able to develop and implement effective solutions.
- *A detail-oriented leader can identify and address problems quickly and efficiently, which can help to prevent minor issues from becoming bigger problems. For example, if a leader notices that a piece of equipment is not functioning correctly, they may take steps to repair or replace it before it breaks down completely, disrupting operations.*

# COMMONALITIES OF LEADERSHIP

- **Problem-solving skills**: Effective facilities management leaders must be able to identify and solve problems in a timely and effective manner. They must be able to analyze complex situations and devise creative and innovative solutions.
- *Strong problem-solving leaders can analyze complex situations and produce creative solutions. For example, if a facility is experiencing a high number of water leaks, a leader with problem-solving skills might develop a plan to identify and rectify the source of the leaks, rather than simply patching them as they occur.*

# COMMONALITIES OF LEADERSHIP

- **Ability to build and maintain relationships**: Facilities management leaders must be able to develop and maintain strong relationships with team members, as well as with other departments and stakeholders. They must be able to collaborate with others to achieve common goals effectively.
- *A leader who can build and maintain strong relationships can effectively collaborate with other departments and stakeholders to achieve common goals. For example, a leader who has a good relationship with the maintenance team might be able to work with them to develop a proactive maintenance plan, which could help to reduce the number of unexpected breakdowns and repairs.*

# COMMONALITIES OF LEADERSHIP

- **Adaptability**: The facilities management field is constantly changing, and leaders must be able to adapt to new challenges and technologies. They must be able to think on their feet and adjust their plans and strategies as needed. Building a learning culture in an organization can help businesses, schools, and staff to adapt to the opportunities and challenges that arise.
- *An adaptable leader can adjust their plans and strategies as needed in response to changing circumstances. For example, if a facility experiences an unexpected increase in demand for a particular service, an adaptable leader might quickly devise a plan to meet that demand, such as by hiring additional staff or repurposing existing resources.*

LEARN HOW TO  
~~MANAGE~~ PEOPLE

**LEAD**



# TRIAL-AND-ERROR OF LEADERSHIP

- Process where leaders experiment with different approaches, learn from failures and successes, and adapt their strategies over time rather than clinging to a single plan.
- This adaptable approach fosters flexibility and innovation, allowing leaders to navigate uncertainty and complex situations by continually trying, observing, learning, and adjusting.
- A key aspect is creating a culture where mistakes are seen as learning opportunities and where openness and accountability are valued, enabling continuous growth for both the leader and the team.
- What have you learned from your failures or successes?

# KEY ASPECTS OF TRIAL-AND-ERROR LEADERSHIP

- Experimental Approach: Instead of fixating on one solution, leaders take a calculated risk by trying new things and seeing what works.
- Learning from Mistakes: Failures are not viewed negatively but as valuable opportunities for reflection and growth.
- Adaptability and Flexibility: Leaders and teams can adjust their plans based on new evidence and feedback, staying agile in dynamic environments.
- Fostering a Culture of Openness: Leaders who admit their own mistakes create a safe space for others to experiment and share ideas without fear of repercussions.
- Continuous Improvement: The cycle of trying, observing, learning, and adjusting promotes ongoing development and better leadership outcomes.

# BENEFITS OF TRIAL-AND-ERROR LEADERSHIP

- Boosts Innovation: Encourages creative problem-solving by exploring various solutions.
- Develops Resilience: Equips leaders to handle uncertainty and bounce back from setbacks.
- Increases Adaptability: Helps leaders and organizations stay responsive to changing circumstances.
- Builds Trust: Leaders who show humility and a willingness to learn from mistakes build stronger relationships with their teams.

# POSITIVE RESULTS OF TRIAL-AND-ERROR LEADERSHIP

- Learning and Adaptation: When leaders and their team experiment, they learn from setbacks, which reveal new ways to overcome challenges and adapt to changing circumstances.
- Innovation: Trial and error, when viewed as experimentation, is crucial for innovation, as it allows for the exploration of new ideas and strategies.
- Resilience: Leaders and teams who learn from mistakes develop resilience, a critical trait for successfully navigating future difficulties and complex situations.
- Improved Culture: Leaders who admit their own mistakes and encourage others to learn from theirs create a culture of openness and transparency, which builds trust and empowers team members.
- Flexibility: This approach moves away from rigid, one-size-fits-all strategies towards a flexible and adaptable mindset that is more effective in dynamic environments.

# NEGATIVE RESULTS OF TRIAL-AND-ERROR LEADERSHIP

- Assumption: 80% of leaders have never been taught the critical skills they need to lead effectively, leaving them to figure it out on their own. This impacts their success, their team's performance, and the organization's success, and adds to everyone's stress.
- Stagnation: Leaders who avoid mistakes out of fear or lack the skills to handle them can halt innovation and prevent growth.
- Disengagement: A culture of fear and punishment for mistakes leads to low employee engagement, high stress, and decreased productivity.
- Turnover: Poor leadership that results from unguided trial and error can drive away valuable employees, leading to high turnover and increased recruitment costs.
- Financial Loss: Ultimately, a lack of effective leadership—often characterized by ineffective trial and error—can result in significant financial losses for an organization.

# OUTCOMES OF A TRIAL-AND-ERROR LEADERSHIP

- A culture of innovation: By normalizing failure and encouraging experimentation, leaders create a psychologically safe environment where teams are motivated to innovate and think creatively. In contrast, cultures that punish failure often become risk-averse, stifling initiative and growth.
- Enhanced organizational adaptability: An experimental mindset builds the organization's capacity to handle new challenges and unexpected events. In an unpredictable world, this enables the company to thrive rather than survive.
- Increased employee engagement and resilience: When leaders admit mistakes and show humility, they build trust with their teams. This makes employees more willing to take ownership, learn from their own setbacks, and stay motivated.
- Data-driven decision-making: Repeated experimentation helps replace intuition and personal bias with objective evidence. This leads to more reliable and informed decisions, ensuring the company's path is grounded in real-world feedback.
- Development of future leaders: Leadership is no longer confined to top-down authority but becomes a collective process. By empowering team members to diagnose problems and run their own experiments, organizations build their leadership bench strength.

# RESULTS OF A TRIAL-AND-ERROR LEADERSHIP

- Through repeated experimentation, or trial and error, leadership studies have shown that the most effective leaders embrace adaptability, encourage risk-taking, and normalize failure as a path to innovation. Rather than being a sign of weakness, acknowledging errors is essential for building a culture of learning, resilience, and growth.
- The "final results" of this process reveal that relying solely on intuition or avoiding failure ultimately leads to stagnation and high organizational costs. In contrast, effective leaders use a continuous cycle of experimentation to navigate uncertainty, challenge assumptions, and foster innovation.

# RESULTS OF A TRIAL-AND-ERROR LEADERSHIP

- Through repeated experimentation, or trial and error, leadership studies have shown that the most effective leaders embrace adaptability, encourage risk-taking, and normalize failure as a path to innovation. Rather than being a sign of weakness, acknowledging errors is essential for building a culture of learning, resilience, and growth.
- The "final results" of this process reveal that relying solely on intuition or avoiding failure ultimately leads to stagnation and high organizational costs. In contrast, effective leaders use a continuous cycle of experimentation to navigate uncertainty, challenge assumptions, and foster innovation.
- Failure has to be an option in your leadership landscape. It's not that you want to fail or intentionally choose to fail, but painting a leadership picture without taking risks is the equivalent of building your organization on outdated ideas of the past.



the  
office

The background is a dark teal color with decorative white circuit-like lines in the corners. These lines consist of straight segments and small circles, resembling a printed circuit board or a network diagram. The lines are positioned in the top-left, top-right, bottom-left, and bottom-right corners, framing the central text.

Questions / Comments

Thank You!