

Being a Leader in Your Organization, Even When You're Not the Boss

John Durel [johndurel@qm2.org](mailto: johndurel@qm2.org)

Strategies for Quiet Leadership

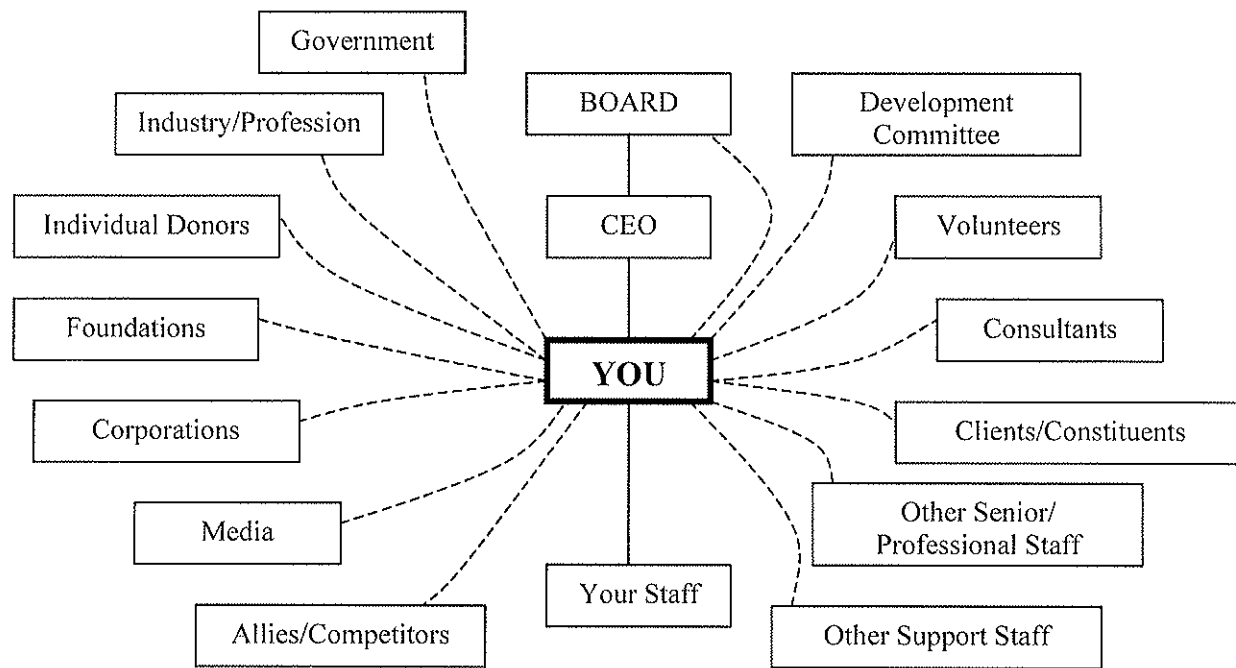
1. **Know yourself.** Be aware of your own leadership style, your strong tendencies and your weak tendencies, and how other perceive you. Work to develop your leadership abilities.
2. **Know the systems in which you operate.** There are multiple systems of power within any organization, some formal and some informal. Know who has power in each system, and work to strengthen your own role within each.
3. **Strengthen your key relationships.** Identify the individuals in your organization who are key to your success, and nurture your relationships with them. Get to know them well. Interact frequently and honestly, informally and formally. Work to build mutual respect and trust, so that you can influence them to follow your lead.
4. **Cultivate Level 5 leadership qualities:**
 - **Take responsibility for the whole organization.** Rise above the defense of turf. Although your function is important, it is one of many functions that need to succeed if the whole organization is to thrive. Recognize the valid differences among departments, and strive for win-win solutions that benefit the whole.
 - **Be humble.** When something goes wrong, accept responsibility. When something goes well, deflect praise. Paradoxically, by admitting your own mistakes, and freely giving others credit for successes, you gain stature in the organization.
 - **Hold yourself to high expectations and standards.** Be fair and at the same time make tough choices for the good of the whole organization. Be reliable, so that people know they can count on you. They will follow your lead if they have confidence in your abilities and feel they can trust you.
5. **Be realistic.**
 - **Pick your battles carefully.** Simple looking situations usually are complicated and complex. Things often turn out differently from what you expect. Realize that you do not know everything about the situation, and expect to be surprised. You may risk your reputation and your relationships by taking a controversial stand. Balance that consideration against being true to your convictions.
 - **Bend the rules.** Things are not always black and white. Strict adherence to rules may do more harm than good. When situations are complicated, look for room to move within the boundaries set by the rules.
 - **Enhance your leadership role gradually.** You do not have to become a leader overnight. Choose instances where you have a good chance of success, build your reputation, learn from your mistakes, and over time take greater risks.

This list is based in part on Joseph L. Badaracco, Jr., *Leading Quietly* (2002), and Jim Collins, *Good To Great* (2001)

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What Are Your Key Relationships?



You operate within a web of formal and informal relationships. Which relationships are most important to your success?

Identify five or six individuals who play a major role in your work. Select people whose support is crucial to your success, or those who can act to prevent you from achieving what needs to be done.

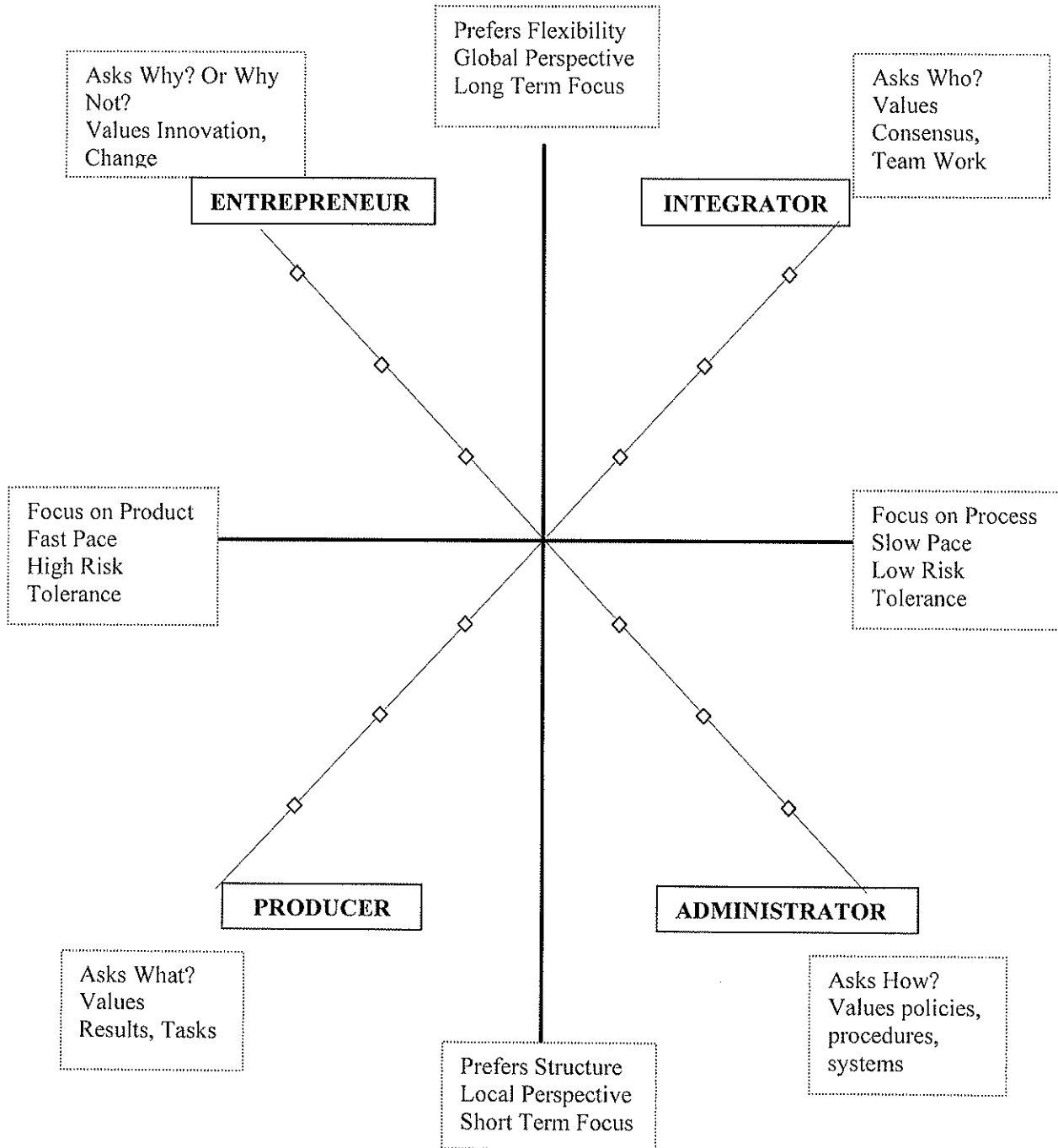
For each key relationship, consider:

1. How well do you know this person? What are his or her interests, passions, beliefs, ambitions?
2. How does the person view you? How well does he or she know you?
3. How do you differ in terms of personal style, interests, etc.?
4. What does he or she need from you?
5. What motivates the person to either support or hinder you?
6. What can you do to improve the relationship?

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What Is Your Leadership Style?



Based on concepts of Ichak Adizes presented in *Corporate Lifecycles* and *How to Solve the Mismanagement Crisis*

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Systems of Power and Influence

Although you may not have the authority to make certain things happen in your organization, you can influence important decisions and actions. There is a formal structure that shows lines of authority and accountability: who directs and who reports to whom. At the same time, there are informal structures that have enormous influence on what actually happens.

Organizations, like the human body, are complex. The official organization, like the drawing of a human skeleton, shows the relationship of the head to the arms, legs, and other structural components. If you want to understand how the body actually works, however, you must consider other systems: circulatory, respiratory, nervous, muscular, etc. Imagine the depiction of a skeleton in an anatomy textbook, with transparent overlays showing the other systems. Similarly, to really understand how an organization works, you need to look beyond the organizational chart and become aware of other systems.

Karen Stephenson (*Strategy + Business*, Fourth Quarter, 2002), has identified six such systems, which she calls knowledge networks:

1. **The Work Network:** The routine and frequent interactions that comprise day-to-day operations. To understand this network you need to know who exchanges information with whom as part of the daily work.
2. **The Social Network:** Those individuals with whom other employees “check in” to see how things are going, both within and outside the organization.
3. **The Innovation Network:** How do new ideas get aired? Who participates in informal conversations about new things to do, or new ways to do what is already being done? Such conversations can take place in many corners and levels of the organization.
4. **The Expert Knowledge Network:** Those individuals who hold crucial knowledge and expertise about the organization and its products and services. How is this knowledge shared (or not) within the organization?
5. **The Strategic Network:** Those individuals whom others rely on for guidance about the future, in terms of both personal and organizational direction.
6. **The Learning Network:** Individuals who work informally to improve existing processes and methods.

Each of the networks operates through a series of interpersonal interactions, by which individuals come to trust one another.

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What role do you play within each of these networks? In some you may be a hub, at the very center of the interactions that make up the network. This, of course, is a position of power, enabling you to influence the decisions and actions people take. On the other hand, you may be completely left out of other networks, so you must work to get in.

Sometimes networks are at odds. For example, the Innovation Network and the Expert Knowledge Network may function independently of one another, with different groups of individuals participating in each, and each group viewing the other as a threat. The same could happen between the Work Network and the Learning Network. An important, informal leadership role is to serve as a bridge between networks.

Becoming aware of and actively participating in these networks can give you a base from which to influence what actually happens in your organization. To become a leader in each network, you must have frequent interactions and develop trust. You must show sincere interest in the work and well-being of others. Also you must hold yourself to high standards and expectations, so that others come to see you as someone they can trust. As people come to trust you, they will be inclined to follow your lead. Over time they will learn to accept your judgment, and even when they have reservations support your position.

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Leadership Hierarchy

Level 5 Executive	Builds enduring greatness through a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will.
Level 4 Effective Leader	Catalyzes commitment to and vigorous pursuit of a clear and compelling vision, stimulating higher performance standards.
Level 3 Competent Manager	Organizes people and resources toward the effective and efficient pursuit of predetermined objectives.
Level 4 Contributing Team Member	Contributes individual capabilities to the achievement of group objectives and works effectively with others in a group setting.
Level 5 Highly Capable Individual	Makes productive contributions through talent, knowledge, skills and good work habits.

Excerpted from Jim Collins, *Good To Great*, page 20