



**LEADERSHIP
EDGE INC.**

Lifestyle Leadership Model

Introduction

In our culture, leadership has become a buzzword. Look at any company's values statement, any university's ideal student, or any organization's development program, and you will find leadership as a core tenet. But what does it really mean? The concept of leadership can be somewhat elusive, and at times it feels like nothing more than an idea that organizations must pay lip service to rather than an actual practice that can be taught, learned, or developed.

We hope that this paper will dispel much of the ambiguity about leadership. Furthermore, we hope that beyond understanding leadership in a purely conceptual manner, the reader will walk away understanding LEI's overarching philosophy of leadership, what we call the *Lifestyle Leadership Model*.

Put simply, our belief is that leadership is based on influence and that influence is derived from a lifestyle of leadership, something cultivated 24/7 rather than something with which one is born.

We believe that God-honoring leadership is forged into us, as God uses His sovereignty and grace to shape us into persons who live and lead for His glory and honor.ⁱ We encourage readers *not to* take up the Lifestyle Leadership Model and determine to infuse it into their lives and leadership. We instead encourage readers to prayerfully consider and apply this model, seeking God's grace, strength and endurance to do so.

The remainder of this module will focus on understanding why leadership is a result of influence and how one can grow in influence through character, competence, and commitment.

Preliminary Remarks

Desiring to grow in leadership is a worthwhile pursuit and one with a noble conclusion as you seek to serve others in your respective spheres of influence. However, nothing in these materials will prove to be a substitute for the disciplined cultivation of a life of character, competency, and commitment. Said another way, this paper is no silver bullet for leading well – instead, it serves as a framework by which one can prayerfully grow into a seasoned and respected leader.



These materials are likewise not meant to be the be-all and end-all of understanding leadership. Leadership is required in various contexts, and no two situations will demand the same leading. The ultimate test for any act of leadership, in any context, is that it was done in faith and for the glory and honor of God. This test requires that our influence aligns with our core convictions (God's word) and values (God's character) as we achieve the organization's purposes. It is in the experience of leadership that you will learn some of your most profound lessons concerning your core convictions and personal values. As you grow to understand leadership as a lifestyle, you will grow in both your confidence in leadership and your desire to serve.

Objectives for this Paper

Now that we have understood this paper's uses, we can get into what we hope to accomplish. We hope you will come away with a framework and common language for a leadership lifestyle, which you can apply in your current contexts and beyond.

Differences between Managing and Leading

Leadership is not the same as, nor a synonym for, management. Although the two concepts are often considered side by side, as both are critical to an organization's success, management and leadership are far from synonymous. Frequently, because we expect those high in an organizational hierarchy to be leaders, management is mistakenly called leadership. So, what are the differences?

Please note: Sometimes, when we make this distinction, it can seem that management is a second-tier skill behind leadership. That is not the intention of this distinction. We make these distinctions so that as we focus on leadership, we can ensure that we have a foundation for understanding what it is and what it is not. Organizations and our lives need both. We cannot merely consider the future without living prudently today. We must live in the tension of seeking to be good managers and good leaders.

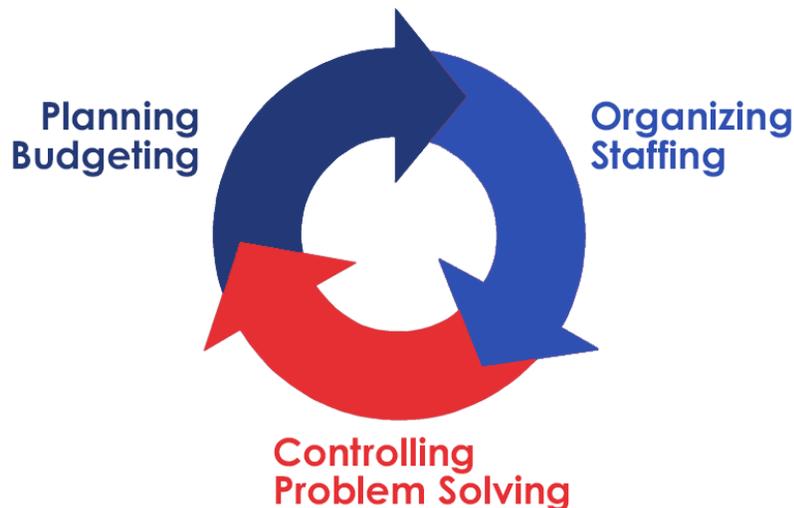
Management

Broadly speaking, "management is a set of well-known processes, like planning, budgeting, structuring jobs, staffing jobs, measuring performance and problem-solving, which help an organization to predictably do what it knows how to do well."ⁱⁱ Let's take a closer look at some of these categories:



1. **Planning and Budgeting** - Forecasting for and budgeting for anticipated future events. Ensuring that plans are made to adequately address anticipated future needs and provide a timely and cost-effective project completion.
2. **Organizing and Staffing** - Getting the right people in the right roles to accomplish those plans as laid out in Planning and Budgeting. This involves understanding what needs to be accomplished (i.e., which role is best suited for this task) and who should accomplish it (i.e., can this individual perform these tasks well).
3. **Controlling and Problem Solving** - As a project is completed, managers consistently re-evaluate what is going well and what needs to change. Undoubtedly, problems will arise, and managers work to fix these problems to keep things as close to the original plan and budget as possible, ensuring timely and cost-effective work.

Managers Focus on:



What we see in these descriptions of the role of management are undoubtedly crucial functions to the success of any organization. Without effective management, organizations simply cannot hope to function effectively for long. However, the question at hand is not whether these management practices are needed, but instead, how they relate to leadership, if at all. Put simply, management is not equivalent to leadership, but something to understand alongside it. While we will see this more



clearly below when we define leadership, let us now turn our attention to another way that we often misunderstand leadership.

Leadership and Charisma

Whereas holding a management position is often mistaken as being identical with being a leader, we can also misunderstand leadership as it relates to charisma or personality. While it is true that leaders may be charismatic, their charisma, or lack thereof, will never be a substitute for their trustworthiness. Regardless of their charisma or personality traits, all leaders and managers must prove their trustworthiness, which establishes their influence.

With the above understanding of management as a focus on efficient processes, leadership, conversely, “is about vision, about people buying in, about empowerment and, most of all, about producing useful change.”ⁱⁱⁱ

1. **Vision** - An understanding of the positive impact that the organization wants to bring about in the future.
2. **Buy-in** - A shared conviction for realizing the stated vision or purpose.
3. **Empowerment** - Ensuring that each team member feels the ability to contribute to the vision.
4. **Producing God-honoring Change** - Leading towards a desired future state necessitates change; to manage is to maintain efficiency and status quo. To lead is to seek change towards achieving the vision.

Leaders Focus on:

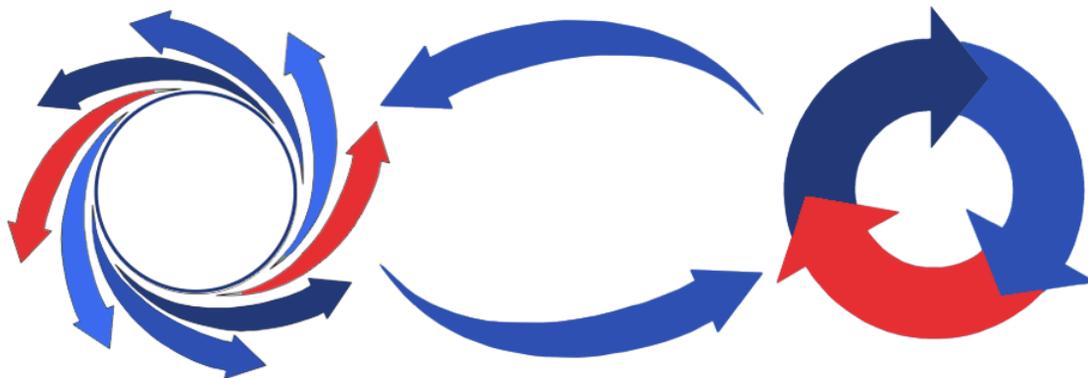




So, while managers aim for consistency and order, leaders aim for movement and change. While being conscious of the future in their planning and budgeting, managers are more concerned with the here and now. On the other hand, leaders look forward, imagine the possibilities, and think about how to accomplish them. With this understanding, we can confront the second way that we often misunderstand leadership – that it is a natural ability based on charisma. While charisma may be a factor in capturing people’s attention, it does not necessarily lend itself to the ability to cast a vision, inspire others towards that shared goal, empower them to achieve their desired end, and produce the necessary change. Instead, these are skills that a leader employs that can be grown through practice. This will be discussed in detail below.

Living in the Tension: Managing and Leading

**Loosening Control in Order
to Broaden Influence**



**Sustaining Change by
Implementing Systems**

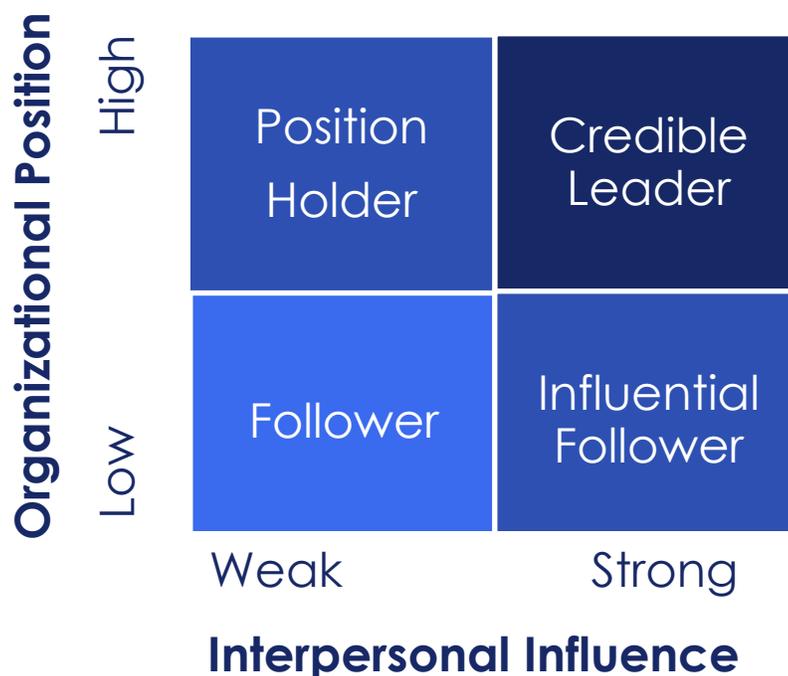
Leadership and Influence

Suppose a leader's goal is to determine a trajectory for the future and achieve that desired trajectory. In that case, we find that influence is the vehicle by which the leader achieves this vision. It is critical to understand that leadership is not necessarily about one’s organizational position but one’s influence. When thinking of leadership as influence, organizational position is important as to the resources one has to use, but



holding a specific position within an organization does not inherently generate leadership. As Peter Northouse says, “Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.”^{iv} One may be the highest-ranking officer in an organization, but if he or she cannot influence the other members of the organization, leadership will not occur. Likewise, though someone may hold a significant degree of influence, their position may inhibit the effective practice of leading. Understanding leadership’s binding link to influence helps us to understand LEI’s perspective that effective leadership is a function of growth in two areas: **organizational position** and **interpersonal influence**.

Organizational Influence Model



Based on the chart above, we see that organizational position and interpersonal influence come together as two axes against which we can measure our organizational influence or ability to lead. Let us briefly consider each quadrant.

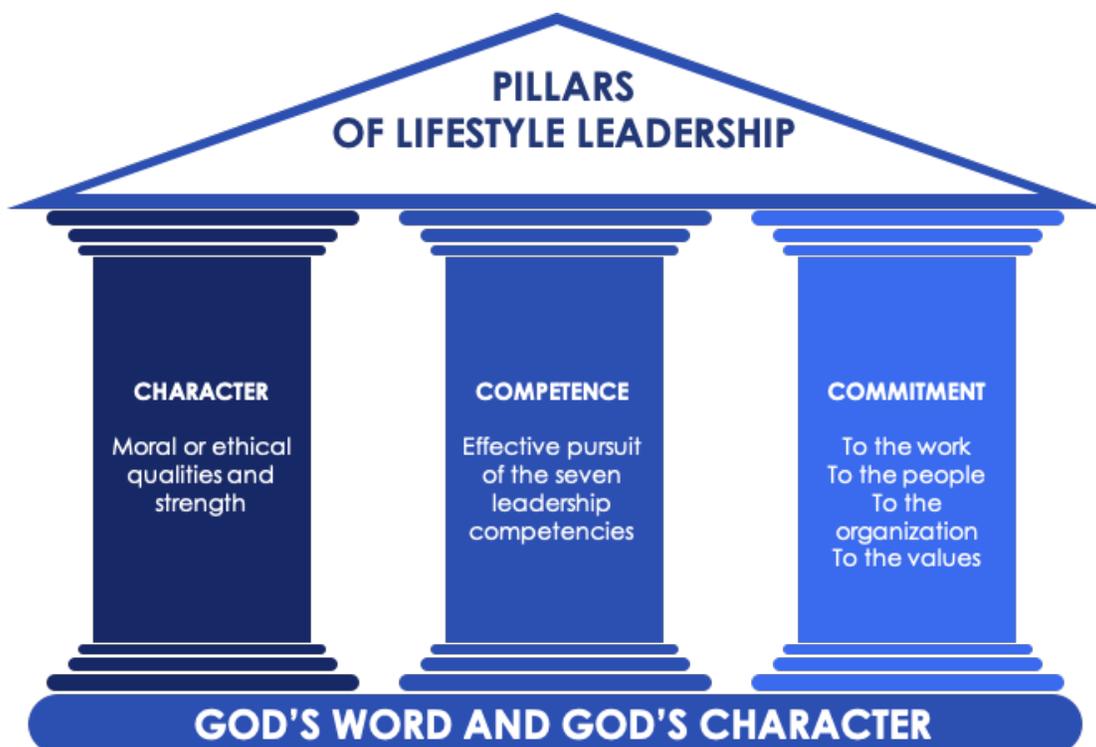
1. **Follower** - Someone who has limited responsibility in the operations of an organization and has little influence or control over others



2. **Position Holder** - Someone who has a position in the organization which allows them control over others or tasks but does not have or exercise influence
3. **Influential Follower** - Someone who does not have explicit organizational responsibility but can effect change through stewarding influence
4. **Credible Leader** - Someone who can influence change both through organizational position and influence over others

Three Areas of Trust: Character, Competence, and Commitment

If it is true that leadership is primarily linked to influence, we must ask how we gain and steward influence. To gain influence, your constituents must believe that you are trustworthy in three areas: character, competence, and commitment. Without character, your constituents will, over the long term, lose their confidence in your trustworthiness. Without competence, those who follow you will eventually lose confidence that you know what you're doing. Without commitment, it will be unclear to those you lead as to the importance of achieving the goal. If you're not committed to getting it done, why should they be committed? These three dimensions make up the core of long-term, life-driven leadership.





Understanding this is key. Leadership is not a series of boxes to check, and it is not something with which you are born. Instead, leadership is the cultivation of a credible life in these three areas, which, as they grow, will result in more significant influence with others to achieve a shared desired vision. Let us define each of these areas:

1. **Character** - Moral or ethical qualities and strength
2. **Competence** - Skill and excellence in leading towards the vision
3. **Commitment** - To the work; to the people; to the organization; to its values

A goal for any *Lifestyle Leader* is to grow in integrity. By integrity, we mean that their core beliefs and virtues^v are integrated into their character, competence and commitment. For a Christian, this means that God's Word (core beliefs) and God's Character (virtues) shape and give meaning to the character, competence, and commitment they put forward in their spheres of influence. To the degree that this is true, then they live and lead an integrated life. To the degree that this is not true, they may continue to lead, but they have lost their integrity. As Christian leaders, what we know to be true in God's Word and Character must continually be the integrated basis for all aspects of our leadership.

Source of Lifestyle Leadership



Character, competence, and commitment aligned with God's Word and Character are the basis for God-honoring leadership. The *weight* or *gravitas* that comes from this type of leadership is, over time, much more effective than control, power, or manipulation.



Character: The Weight of Moral Authority

Character is the combination of moral qualities by which a person is judged apart from intellect or talent. We can also understand it as moral or ethical strength that results from a congruity between public and private life. For a Christian, one's character results from aligning one's words and actions with God's Word and Character. The Bible puts forward many character traits^{vi}, all of which are important for Christian leadership, with love being the greatest.^{vii} Over Leadership Edge's decades of history, we've seen God consistently build the following five character traits into the God-honoring leaders we've mentored.

- The glory and honor of God in all things
- Humility
- Wisdom
- Intentionality
- Resilience^{viii}

We most easily see the manifestation of character in action and lifestyle. It guides our mindset as to how we assess our context and our role in our context. It also guides our volition as we choose to act in ways that are true to our character. Character, in theory, has to work out as character in action for it to have meaning and value to those we lead.

The following chart demonstrates the difference between how one teaches for character awareness and how one teaches for character lived out. Suppose leadership is exercising influence in all areas of life. In that case, character cannot only be taught conceptually in a classroom setting but must be embodied by the leader in their daily life.



	Character in Theory	Character in Action
Focus	Intellectual	Actional
Context	Classroom	In all situations; By experience; Flow of life
Approach of teaching	Tell them	Coaching them in life situations
Demands of the teacher	Possess information to be taught and able to teach it	Consistently exemplify character traits in all of life
Evaluation	Testing for comprehension	Observation over range of life situations

Competence: The Weight of Developed Ability

Competence is demonstrated skill. Competence is crucial for leaders; to exercise influence, one must show that they can lead the team to skillful completion of the tasks to achieve their vision. While there are many ways to discuss leadership skills, we will focus on seven competencies of leadership. When leaders practice these competencies, they will find that they lead with greater effectiveness. The seven competencies of effective leadership are:^{ix}

1. **Challenging the Process** - A focus on examining how things have traditionally been done and demonstrating a willingness to examine their efficacy and pursue new ways of doing things. Challenging the process involves two commitments:
 - Search for challenging opportunities to change, grow, innovate and improve
 - Experiment, take risks and learn from the accompanying mistakes
2. **Inspiring a Shared Vision** - A vision is an ideal and unique image for the organization's or group's future identity. Inspiring a shared vision involves two commitments:
 - Envision an uplifting and ennobling future
 - Enlist others in a shared vision by appealing to their values, interests, hopes and dreams.



3. **Enabling Others to Act** - To enable others is to ensure that they can meaningfully contribute to the fulfillment of the organizational vision. Enabling others to act involves two commitments:
 - Foster collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and building trust
 - Strengthen people by giving power away, providing choice, developing competence, assigning critical tasks, and offering visible support
4. **Modeling the Way** - Modeling for others both visibly and vulnerably how they are to work towards the vision. Modeling the way involves two commitments:
 - Set the example by acting in ways that are consistent with God's Word and Character
 - Achieve small wins that promote consistent progress and build commitment
5. **Encouraging the Heart** - To embolden your constituents towards completing the desired vision, they must receive regular, constructive feedback, which affirms their successes. Encouraging the heart involves two commitments:
 - Recognize individual contributions to the success of every project
 - Celebrate team accomplishment regularly
6. **Maintaining Accountability** - Accountability is an outwardly focused commitment to your organization, stakeholders, and constituents. Maintaining accountability involves two commitments:
 - Work with your team to specify your stakeholders
 - Determine times, means, and content of accountable communication to stakeholders
7. **Maintaining Personal Perspective and Balance** - Personal perspective and balance is an inwardly focused commitment to yourself and your core values. Maintaining personal perspective and balance involves two commitments:
 - Faithfully manage your schedule, responsibilities, and commitments
 - Regularly plug into sources for perspective and balance

In developing these seven leadership competencies, leaders establish the skills needed to with their team produce the change to move from where they are today to where they need to get to in accomplishing their mission and vision as guided by their values. As you demonstrate competency in these areas and grow in these practices, your credibility will rise as you seek to influence others.



Commitment: The Weight of Focused Attention

Finally, the last piece of cultivating influence in your lifestyle of leadership is through commitment. Commitment, or the weight of prolonged, focused attention, is necessary for effective and credible leadership in any sphere of influence. Commitment is necessary for leadership because followers tend to trust and follow those leaders who have demonstrated a visible commitment to the vision at hand. Specifically, commitment can be understood in this context as being committed to the following things:

- To the work
- To the people
- To your team/organization
- To your values
- The role you will play
- The boundaries you will live by
- How you will balance the tensions between what is good for the team, what is good for individuals on the team, and what is good for you

Once determined, the leader must communicate their commitments to the people she or he leads. This establishes accurate expectations and accountability for the leader. It is best to communicate commitments at the beginning of your leadership initiatives clearly and concisely. Communicate commitments carefully, recognizing that you are putting your credibility on the line through your commitment – for as you communicate your expected involvement, those that you lead will naturally seek to hold you accountable to this standard. Leaders should consider communicating commitments verbally and in writing to ensure that there is real clarity in your commitment and that it is rightly understood and received by those you lead.

Growing as a Leader

There are three ways in which one grows as a leader:

1. **Experience** - Through the intentional practice of our leadership abilities, they will grow in skillful influence over others to achieve our desired ends.



2. **Examples** - As he or she observes and serves alongside other leaders, the leader will be shaped and molded by how they cultivate and exercise their own influence.
3. **Education** - By understanding that leaders are learners and by seeking to cultivate an attitude of always learning, leaders will grow their abilities through formal education. As Denis Waitley says in his book *Empires of the Mind*, “Leaders who continue learning throughout their lives never forget that they always have more to learn. The most compelling reason not to think like an expert is that your assumptions may damage your ability to generate and work with new ideas.”

All of these paths of growth are in direct opposition to one surefire way to **not** grow as a leader: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

Conclusion

Our hope in this reading is that you have come to see the differences between leadership and management, and have learned that leadership involves cultivating specific traits and abilities that establish the credibility of your influence. In particular, we have seen that through the cultivation of **character, competence, and commitment**, one can grow in their ability to influence others and achieve the desired change in a group or organization. For leaders to lead with integrity, their core beliefs and virtues must penetrate their character, competence and commitment. For a Christian leader, this means that God’s Word and Character must be reflected in every aspect of the leader’s influence. Growth in these areas is not meant to manipulate the actions of others in a hurtful way. Instead, when one lives a lifestyle worthy of emulation, with skill and honor, one creates a reason for others to follow as you pursue right goals and ambitions. We hope that you will continue to grow in this understanding of leadership and that it serves you and your organizations well as you do so.



ⁱTo learn more about how God forges us into God-honoring leader, read *Leadership Craftsmanship* at <https://www.lead-edge.com/4hisglory>.

ⁱⁱ John Kotter: <https://hbr.org/2013/01/management-is-still-not-leadership/>

ⁱⁱⁱ See previous Kotter article

^{iv} Peter Northouse, *Leadership Theory and Practice*, Sage Publishing, page 3.)

^v Noted historian Gertrude Himmelfarb, in her book *The Demoralization of Society*, puts forward the argument that there is a categorical difference between the concepts of values and virtues. She argues that “values” are based upon the “assumptions that all moral ideas are subjective and relative, that they are mere customs and conventions, that they have a purely instrumental, utilitarian purpose, and that they are peculiar to specific individuals and societies.” (*The De-moralization of Society*, Gertrude Himmelfarb, Vintage Books, page 11.)

Dr. Himmelfarb contends that the concept of “virtues” of the late 18th and early 19th century meant “fixed and certain standards against which behavior could and should be measured ... And when conduct fell short of those standards, it was judged in moral terms, as bad, wrong or evil – not , as is more often the case today, as misguided, undesirable or ‘inappropriate’.” (Himmelfarb, pages 12-13.)

^{vi} See for example Matthew 5:3-12, Galatians 5:22-24

^{vii} I Corinthians 13:13 and Matthew 22:34-40

^{viii} You can learn more about these five character traits and their importance for Christian leaders in the paper, *God-Forged Mindsets for God-Honoring Leaders*. You can request a copy of this document at lei@lead-edge.com

^{ix} The first five competencies are taken from *The Leadership Challenge* by James Kouzes and Barry Posner