

How effective is utility leadership?

SUCCESSFUL
ORGANIZATIONAL
CHANGE IS DEPENDENT
ON EFFECTIVE
LEADERSHIP—BUT WHAT
ARE THE BEHAVIORS OF
LEADERS, AND UTILITY
LEADERS IN PARTICULAR,
THAT LEAD TO SUCCESS?

Studying and writing about leadership has become a growth industry in recent years, yet our cities seem to have sunk deeper into crisis, our communities are in turmoil, political leaders of both parties are repeatedly charged with ethical violations, and the world's multiple crises demand the immediate attention they are not receiving (Bennis, 1997). But what does “leadership” mean in today's world? This question has become critical for water and wastewater utilities faced with an unprecedented array of challenges.

Having a trained and experienced workforce (including managers and supervisors) is critical for building a successful organization. Changing demographics demand the creation of a sound leadership-development and succession-planning process. At this point in the twenty-first century, these two elements are of paramount importance for the success—and even the survival—of an organization. A study on effective utility management, funded by the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and six utility-related associations (including AWWA), identified leadership as one of five keys to management success (USEPA et al, 2008). Yet how concerned are utilities about ensuring that they have effective, sustainable leadership?

Statistics abound regarding the impact that Baby Boomers will once again have on the workforce. *Business 2.0* projected a shortage of 5.3 million skilled workers by 2010 (Kaihla, 2003) and—closer to home—a 2005 study sponsored by the Water Research Foundation found that 35% of all current utility employees are eligible to retire within 10 years (Olstein, 2005). When that statistic is combined with an average attrition rate of 8% (Olstein, 2005), almost 45% of a utility's current employees may no longer work for the organization by 2015. It is difficult to foresee the impact that the current economic conditions may have on these predictions. Certainly one possibility is that a large number of those eligible to retire during this period will do so within a short period of time. To make matters worse, the research referenced by the *Business 2.0* article indicates that the shortage will be most acute among managers and highly skilled workers (Kaihla, 2003). The workforce crisis is no longer looming: It is here.

Successful organizational change is dependent on effective leadership. But what is effective leadership? John Kotter, in *Leading Change*, states that

leadership “. . . defines what the future should look like, aligns people with that vision, and inspires them to make it happen despite the obstacles” (Kotter, 1996). An important aspect of Kotter’s definition is that leadership “aligns people with that vision.” But what are the behaviors of leaders, and utility leaders in particular, that define alignment?

TAP Resource Development Group conducted research involving more than 300 water and wastewater utility managers in 10 utilities to get information about utility leadership. This article presents the findings of that research and, drawing from the research, discusses the characteristics of effective, aligned utility leadership.

EVERY ORGANIZATION HAS A SPECIFIC STRATEGIC FOCUS

TAP Resource’s research was based on the concept that in order for an organization to successfully accomplish its mission, leadership must be aligned with the way the organization provides value to its customers. In their book, *The Discipline of Market Leaders*, Treacy and Wiersema (1996) identified three ways that organizations provide value to their customers: customer intimacy, operational excellence, and product/service leadership. Schneider added a fourth—enrichment—in *Why Good Management Ideas Fail* (Schneider, 1998).

An organization that has a strategic focus on customer intimacy provides the customer with a total solution, not just a product or service. This focus is based on building a synergistic relationship with the customer to ensure that products and/or services meet unique customer needs. An operational excellence organization provides customers with consistent, reliable, and dependable products or services at a low total cost and at appropriate quality. The organization often dominates its marketplace, and is distribution-intensive. Organizations that provide products and

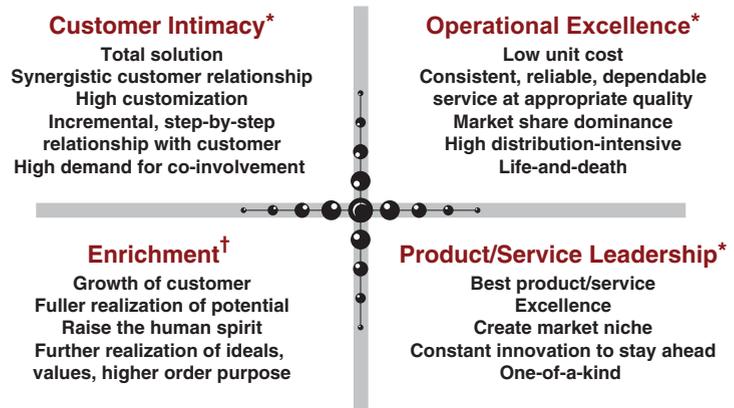
services that continually redefine the state of the art fit into the product/service leadership strategic focus category. They focus on constant innovation and/or creating a market niche in order to stay ahead. Enrichment organizations—the final organizational type—are about customer growth and the realization of higher values (Figure 1). Highly regulated organizations such as utilities most often fall into the operational excellence type of strategic focus. Indeed, all of the utilities surveyed are, at their core, operational excellence organizations. However, two important distinctions need to be made. First, it becomes important within the organization to recognize that not all departments or divisions within the organization will have the same strategic focus. For example, the human resources department may well have a customer intimacy focus or even an enrichment focus. The operations department, being a core function of the organization, should have the same strategic focus as the utility’s primary or core focus (operational excellence). In addition, organizations—and departments within an organization—have what is called a “secondary focus.” For example, a utility that fosters customer engagement would likely have a secondary focus of customer inti-

macy, one with high levels of employee input and involvement in decision-making might have a secondary focus of enrichment, and one that emphasizes the use of new technology might have a secondary focus of product/service leadership.

SUCCESS OF MANAGERS CORRELATED TO AN ORGANIZATION’S PURPOSE

A key component of this research project was a nonjudgmental, 360-degree assessment instrument (the Leadership Effectiveness Analysis™ developed by the Management Research Group) that measures the intention or energy that a manager puts toward 22 leadership and management attributes or behaviors¹ (see the sidebar beginning on page 50). These behaviors are grouped into six sets: creating a vision, developing followership, implementing a vision, following through, achieving results, and team playing. Creating a vision and developing followership are leadership-oriented behaviors; they are about figuring out where the organization is headed and getting people moving in that direction. Implementing a vision, following through, and achieving results are about implementing the vision; they are more management-oriented behaviors. Team playing is about

FIGURE 1 Types of core organizational focus



*Source: Treacy, M. & Wiersema, F., 1996

†Source: Schneider, W.E., 1998

Leadership Behaviors

The Leadership Effectiveness Analysis™ measures the intention or energy that a manager puts toward 22 leadership and management behaviors.¹ The effectiveness of a manager in any given behavior can only be determined by what the organization needs to best accomplish its purpose. These behaviors are grouped into six sets:

- creating a vision,
- developing followership,
- implementing a vision,
- following through,
- achieving results, and
- team playing.

Creating a vision and developing followership are leadership-oriented behaviors; they are about figuring out where the organization is headed and getting people moving in that direction. Implementing a vision, following through, and achieving results are about implementing the vision; they are more management-oriented behaviors. Team playing is about how the manager relates to people.

CREATING A VISION

Conservative—studying problems in light of past practices to ensure predictability, reinforce the status quo, and minimize risk.

Innovative—feeling comfortable in fast-changing environments; willing to take risks and to consider new and untested approaches.

Technical—acquiring and maintaining in-depth knowledge in your field or area of focus; using your expertise and specialized knowledge to study issues and draw conclusions.

Self—emphasizing the importance of making decisions independently; looking to yourself as the prime vehicle for decision-making.

Strategic—taking a long-range, broad approach to problem-solving and decision-making through objective analysis, thinking ahead, and planning.

DEVELOPING FOLLOWERSHIP

Persuasive—building commitment by convincing others and winning them over to your point of view.

Outgoing—acting in an extroverted, friendly, and informal manner; showing a capacity to quickly establish free and easy interpersonal relationships.

Excitement—operating with a good deal of energy, intensity, and emotional expression; having a capacity for keeping others enthusiastic and involved.

Restraint—maintaining a low-key, understated, and quiet interpersonal demeanor by working to control your emotional expression.

IMPLEMENTING THE VISION

Structuring—adopting a systematic and organized approach; preferring to work in a precise, methodical manner; developing and using guidelines and procedures.

Tactical—emphasizing the production of immediate results by focusing on short-range, hands-on, practical strategies.

Communication—stating plainly what you want and expect from others; clearly expressing your thoughts and ideas; maintaining a precise and constant flow of information.

Delegation—enlisting the talents of others to help meet objectives by giving them important activities and sufficient autonomy to exercise their own judgment.

FOLLOWING THROUGH

Control—adopting an approach in which you take nothing for granted, set deadlines for certain actions, and are persistent in monitoring the progress of activities to ensure that they are completed on schedule.

Feedback—letting others know in a straightforward manner what you think of them, how well they have performed, and whether they have met your needs and expectations.

ACHIEVING RESULTS

Management focus—seeking to exert influence by being in positions of authority, taking charge, and leading and directing the efforts of others.

Dominant—pushing vigorously to achieve results through an approach that is forceful, assertive, and competitive.

Production—adopting a strong orientation toward achievement; holding high expectations for yourself and others; pushing yourself and others to achieve at high levels.

TEAM PLAYING

Cooperation—accommodating the needs and interests of others by being willing to defer performance on your own objectives in order to assist colleagues with theirs.

Consensual—valuing the ideas and opinions of others and collecting their input as part of your decision-making process.

Authority—showing loyalty to the organization; respecting the ideas and opinions of people in authority and using them as resources for information, direction, and decisions.

Empathy—demonstrating an active concern for people and their needs by forming close and supportive relationships with others.

how the manager relates to people. The amount of attention that the manager places on each of the 22 behaviors within these six categories is reported as a percentile based on how he or she scored compared with Management Research Group's entire nationwide sample, which included close to 30,000 participants. The instrument does not determine right or wrong: A high score is not necessarily good or, conversely, a low score bad. The effectiveness of the manager in any given behavior can only be determined by what the organization needs to best accomplish its purpose (required competencies).

So how are the most appropriate behaviors determined for an organization? Behavior target ranges for an organization were identified based on findings from two sources. First, a privately funded, independent research study conducted by Schneider (1998) identified criteria for effectiveness in each of the four types of organizations described previously. Managers in organizations that met the criteria for effectiveness then completed the Leadership Effectiveness Analysis (LEA) 360® and the range of percentile scores were plotted for each behavior.

The second source—and perhaps the more important one—is the data collected from managers of the utilities included in the TAP Resource study. These data provide insight into the behaviors most needed by an organization to assist it in accomplishing its mission or purpose.

STRATEGIC PLAN DETERMINES APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR RANGES

The utility's strategic plan plays a key role in determining the appropriate behavior ranges for a particular organization. The combination of the two sets of data—in which managers in effective organizations of a comparable type tend to score similarly and what the organization needs in order to accomplish its mission is identified—provides a basis for each organization to identify the most important target range for each leadership attri-

bute, thereby creating an overall competency map for each management and supervisory job classification. A job classification's competency map is unique to each organization and is tailored individually to meet the needs of a particular utility. Alignment and improved leadership effectiveness become a matter of guiding the leaders so that they are focusing their energy and intention on the areas that are most appropriate for their position within their particular organization.

Because most, if not all, utilities—including all those in this study—have a core strategic focus of operational excellence (OE; Figure 1) and because their core functions, such as operations and maintenance, should also be OE (Treacy et al, 1996), TAP Resource's analysis only focuses on leadership characteristics of organizations or divisions within the organization that are aligned with an OE type of strategic focus.

Once the competency maps were completed, they were overlaid onto the leadership behaviors from the 360-degree assessment, and the results were analyzed in two ways: (1) by age and tenure and (2) by behavior. The first analysis involved logging each manager's individual percentile score from the 360-degree leadership assessment, comparing the scores with the expected competency map for the position and organization's department or division, and compiling and comparing the totals. The analysis then examined the average number of points outside of range. For example, if a utility had determined the expected competency range for the strategic behavior (taking a long-range, broad approach to problem-solving and decision-making) to be between the 70th and 95th percentiles for a top management position and a manager scored 50, he or she would be 20 points outside the desired range. The

FIGURE 2 Points out of range by age for all participants

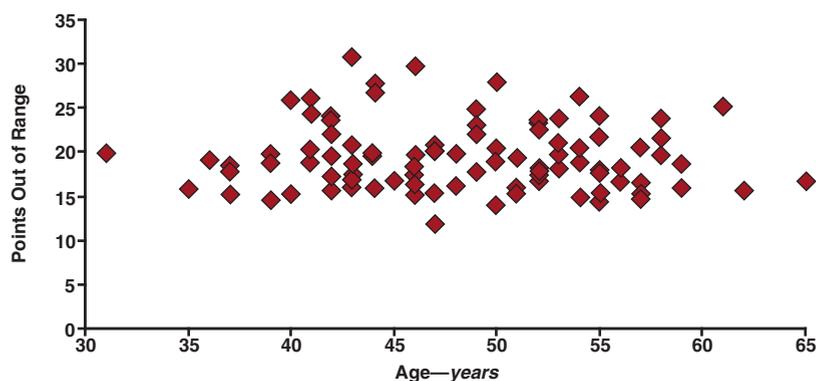
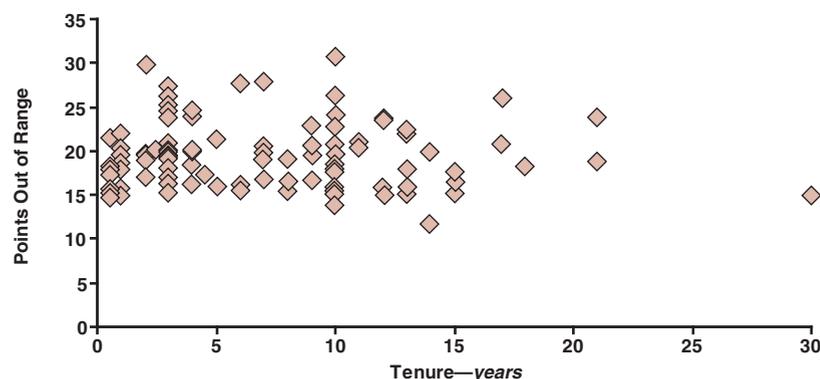


FIGURE 3 Points out of range by tenure for all participants



average points-out-of-range scores for each manager were aggregated based on the scores received from his or her boss, peers, and direct reports as well as from a self-rating tool. The results for each manager were then graphed against age, tenure, and number of years of management experience. Figure 2 plots points-out-of-range versus age for the entire sample. The result is a fairly uniform spread of points, indicating that age is not really a factor in the effectiveness of the leadership within the organizations in the sample. However, there is a clustering of scores between 15 and 20 points out of range with few out-of-range scores falling below 15. This indicates that on average over the full range of

the 22 leadership behaviors measured, there is a fairly consistent pattern of scores being at least 15 points out of the desired range identified from the competency maps.

The average age of the workers in the sample is 49 years, five years older than the average age of utility workers as a whole and eight years older than the average age of the US worker (Olstein, 2005). Although the sample size used in the current study is small, it could mean that the issues identified by Olstein (2005) may indicate a more urgent situation for management staff.

When out-of-range scores were graphed against a utility manager's tenure in his or her current position

(Figure 3), a significant cluster was found from three to 10 years, with the average time managers have been in their current position determined to be seven years. This indicates that scores (and thereby the level of alignment with the desired range in the organization's competency map) do not improve as a function of the number of years a leader has been in his or her current position. The scores appear to group between 15 and 25 points out-of-range and are spread across the years of employment.

When the total time that leaders have been in a management position is examined, the scores (Figure 4) seem to be somewhat better for leaders who have been in management positions

Implementing Leadership Development and Succession Planning at the Aurora Water Department

The Aurora (Colo.) Water Department, with a staff of more than 400 employees, recently underwent a dynamic change in organizational direction by merging its water, wastewater, and storm drain divisions into a single entity: the Utility Operations Group. The utility's new structure required a strategic approach to take full advantage of the new organization. The overall plan embodies a distinctly holistic approach and consists of four phases: (1) organizational assessment, (2) strategic direction setting, (3) development of an organizational goal alignment system, and (4) leadership development and succession planning. The last phase, the development of a comprehensive leadership development and succession planning program, is the focus of this case study.

Aurora Water decided to face the challenge of a changing organization head-on through an aggressive leadership-

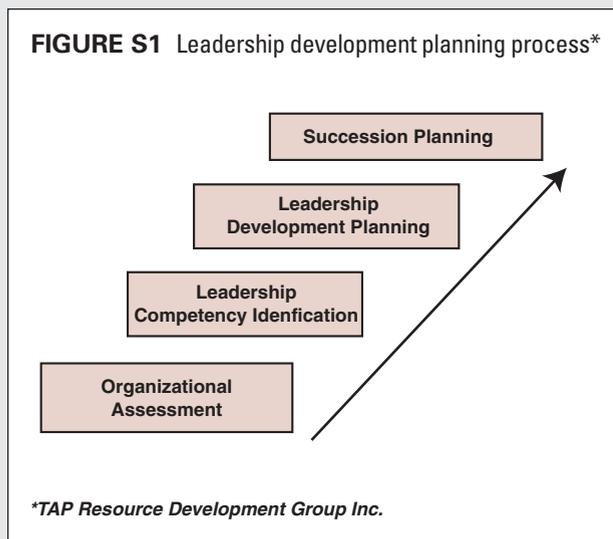
development and succession-planning program developed by TAP Resource Development Group Inc. consisting of the following four elements: organizational assessment, leadership competency identification, leadership development planning, and creating an overall succession planning process (Figure S1). Throughout the course of the process, Aurora sought to focus on the positives, not the negatives, of its changing organizational environment.

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

It's important for managers to understand the organization and context within which they lead. This first step for Aurora used the organizational assessment that was part of the overall strategic plan to provide an in-depth understanding of how the organization provides value to its customers, the organization's culture, and how leadership functions within the organization. The organizational assessment process also looked at how supportive (i.e., aligned) culture and leadership as a whole were with how the organization provides value to its customers.

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY IDENTIFICATION

Creating a comprehensive succession-planning process requires a clear understanding of the components of effective leadership for various management positions within the organization. Aurora Water chose to incorporate five levels of leadership within the operations group into the program: group manager, division manager, superintendents, supervisors, and lead workers/senior specialists. A well-constructed competency map was created to provide direction and focus for development efforts. Incorporating the various levels was important to the organization in order to provide cur-



for less than six years, where the out-of-range scores are between 14 and 20 points. After that, for managers with 10–30 years’ experience, the spread increases to an average of 20 and a high of 27 points out-of-range. This could be a reflection of a historical lack of leadership training and a more recent recognition of the importance of correcting that deficiency.

MANAGERS TEND TO RATE THEMSELVES HIGHER THAN DO THEIR DIRECT REPORTS

The second analytical approach involved an examination of the self- and direct-report rating of 22 leadership behaviors for each participant (see the sidebar on leadership behav-

iors on page 48). Tables 1–3 present the average score for the 300+ utility managers in each of the 22 leadership and management behaviors and compare that score with the appropriate organization’s competency map. The authors chose not to include boss and peer scores because of the level of complexity these additional views would add to the analysis. On average, participating managers feel that they put more energy and attention into the conservative behavior—studying problems in light of past practices to ensure predictability—than 60% of those who completed the survey instrument nationwide, indicating a fair alignment with the organiza-

tion’s purpose. Although the desired range for conservative behavior varies with each organization, it is generally in the 60th to 90th percentile range for a utility organization. On the other hand, the manager’s direct reports rate the manager’s attention to the conservative behavior at the 46th percentile, indicating a perception on their part that the manager doesn’t pay a lot of attention to what has worked well in the past for the organization.

Table 1 lists the nine leadership-related behaviors. Two important behaviors to examine in this table are “strategic” and “self.” The desired range for strategic behavior tends to vary more between levels within an

rent leadership training and the training needed for a manager to move to the next level. In essence, a competency map for leadership behavior sets allows the organization to assess and develop its leadership talent using the appropriate attributes to align with the strategic plan.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

The actual leadership development process for Aurora consisted of both individual leader assessments as well as a comprehensive leadership workshop focused on leading in a utility environment. A 360-degree assessment system (LEA 360®) was used that provides comprehensive information to individual managers and supervisors about their leadership attributes (Figure S2). This leadership evaluation tool is a nonjudgmental assessment process involving individual managers, peers, direct reports, and supervisors. By combining this information with the culture and strategy data already obtained during the previous steps, the Aurora staff was able to establish the foundation for the creation of individualized leadership development plans. During the two-day leadership train-

ing workshop that covered the basics of leadership in a water utility, Aurora Water’s leadership team gained a real understanding of the multifaceted nature of leadership. They discussed leadership fundamentals, organizational focus and why it is important, understanding organizational culture as well as the four core leadership types.

Managers then met with consultants from TAP Resource to review the information obtained from the leadership assessment process. The meeting covered the leadership attributes of the individual managers, the implications of leadership within the culture, and the strategic purpose of both the leader’s group and the larger organization.

Based on his or her assessment results and the consultation meeting, each leader participating in the process drafted an individual preliminary leadership development plan. Once the leader and the leader’s supervisor agreed on the preliminary plan, consultants helped leaders integrate the development needs of their unit and coached the manager with periodic sessions throughout the first year.

CREATING AN OVERALL LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION PLANNING PROCESS

Working with the organization’s leadership team, Aurora Water has created a process for identifying and developing a candidate pool for designated leadership/management positions. Building this critical staffing “bridge” goes a long way toward ensuring organizational continuity.

Although Aurora has not completed the process, the utility is already starting to see results. As Deputy Director Dana Ehlen notes, “When we decided to carry the training to the next [supervisor] level I had expected to hear a loud groan, but instead there was excitement from the supervisors; they saw this as an opportunity instead of a burden. It [also] helped us to have confidence that we had the right people in the right places to accomplish our goals.”

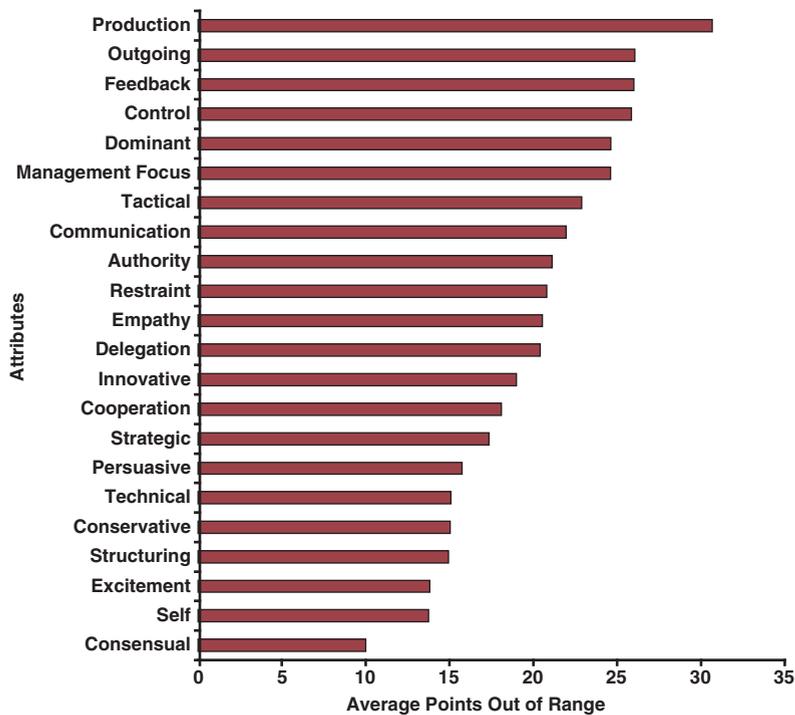
FIGURE S2 Leadership effectiveness assessment 360 process



FIGURE 4 Points out of range by experience for all participants

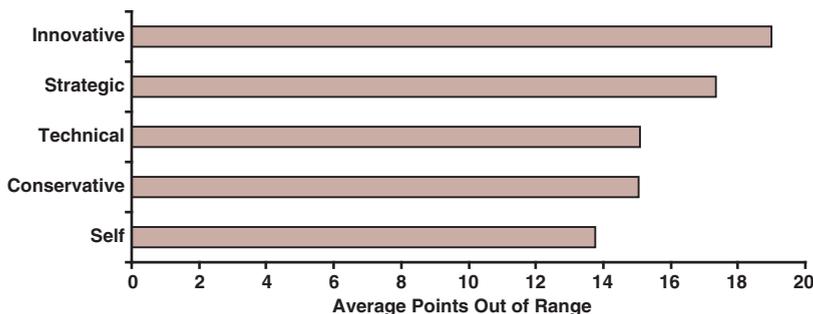


FIGURE 5 Average points out of range—all behaviors*



*Includes self, boss, peer, and direct-report scores

FIGURE 6 Average points out of range—“creating a vision” behaviors*



*Includes self, boss, peer, and direct-report scores

organization than between organizations; an average score in the 41st percentile is at the bottom end of even the general range for frontline supervisors. Also, the manager’s direct reports see their manager focusing less on strategic behavior than the manager does. The manager’s scores on strategic behavior indicate a lack of focus on longer-range, big-picture issues, whereas the difference between the manager’s and direct report’s scores could indicate a break down in communication.

“Self behavior,” a manager’s comfort in making decisions independently, is the second lowest score of all 22 behaviors. In general, the range for self behavior tends to be more in the range of 50–70%. This could indicate some discomfort on the manager’s part when a decision has to be made, particularly a difficult or authoritative one.

The management-related behaviors include implementing the vision, following through, and achieving results behavior sets (Table 2). They are about making the vision a reality. Every one of the management behaviors, with the exception of tactical behavior, is significantly below the generally desired competency range. Of particular concern are production, control, and management focus behaviors (because they relate to making things happen and achieving results) as well as communication and delegation behaviors (which relate to making the vision a reality). For almost all of the behaviors listed in Table 2, the managers’ direct reports rate the manager lower than the managers rate themselves. The tactical behavior rating is generally going to be lower (the typical range is the 20th–40th percentile) because this behavior is related to hands-on involvement in the details of the job. Generally, managers should focus more on strategic behavior (i.e., have a higher strategic score) and be less involved in day-to-day activities (i.e., a lower tactical score). Because the desired range or competency varies from organization to organization

and among management levels within an organization, in Figure 5 the average points out-of-range for each of the 22 behaviors are examined to determine whether there are areas in which the behavior of utility managers consistently fell outside the range identified by their competency maps. In this case, the self, boss, peer, and direct-report out-of-range scores were aggregated and averaged to determine an overall out-of-range score for each behavior. The average score is out of range for each of the 22 behaviors, with consensual behavior being the lowest at 10 points out and production being the highest at 31 points out. Figure 5 shows the full list of behavior scores and shows the average points out-of-range for each.

Figures 6–10 present the out-of-range data by behavior sets or groupings. The leadership-related behaviors in the creating-a-vision category (Figure 6) contain five important behaviors that contribute to effective leadership. Two of these behaviors, innovative and strategic, average 19 and 17 points out of range, respectively. In looking at the individual attribute data, managers who score themselves in the 41st percentile in strategic behavior (Table 1) are 17 points outside the desired range.

The most intriguing management-related scores, Figures 8 and 9, indicate some interesting results about the attention that managers in the study put toward making the organization's vision a reality (the implementing the vision, following through, and achieving results behavior sets), particularly from the direct report's view of the manager. For example, the manager's average self-score on the production behavior (adopting a strong orientation toward achievement) is just under the 19th percentile (Table 3), making it the highest out-of-range score (Figures 5 and 9).

As a whole, the managers in the study do not put a lot of energy into production, feedback, control, dominant, management focus, and tactical (Figures 7–9). The direct report's view is that the utility managers

TABLE 1 Comparison of scores for leadership behaviors

Leadership and Management Sets and Behaviors	Manager* %	Direct Report† %	Typical Competency Range‡
Creating a vision			
Conservative	60.00	46.27	60–90
Innovative	42.67	37.31	15–35
Technical	25.33	23.88	55–75
Self	21.33	31.34	50–70
Strategic	41.33	26.87	70–90
Developing followership			
Persuasive	52.00	38.81	20–45
Outgoing	37.33	8.96	20–45
Excitement	61.33	46.27	20–45
Restraint	38.67	46.27	60–85

*Manager's view of self

†Direct report's view of manager

‡Actual desired ranges varied depending on mission and needs of organization

TABLE 2 Average percentile scores for management behaviors

Leadership and Management Sets and Behaviors	Manager* %	Direct Report† %	Typical Competency Range‡
Implementing the vision			
Structuring	48.00	56.72	70–90
Tactical	25.33	17.91	20–40
Communication	38.67	35.82	70–90
Delegation	37.33	26.87	70–90
Following through			
Control	33.33	20.90	70–90
Feedback	37.33	20.90	70–90
Achieving results			
Management Focus	25.33	25.37	70–90
Dominant	25.33	14.93	70–90
Production	18.67	8.96	70–90

*Manager's view of self

†Direct report's view of manager

‡Actual desired ranges varied depending on mission and needs of organization

TABLE 3 Average percentile scores for people/relationship behaviors

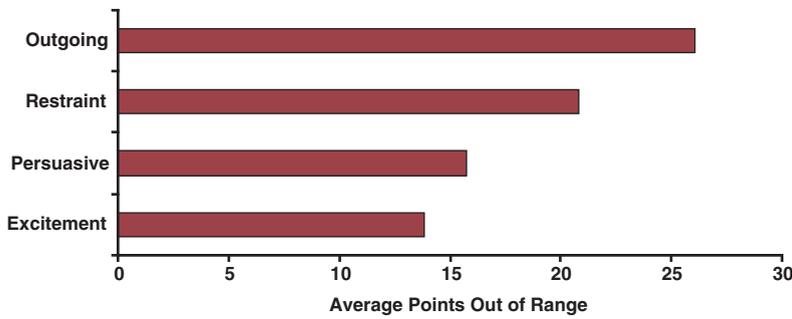
People/Relationship Set and Associated Behaviors	Manager* %	Direct Report† %	Typical Competency Range‡
Team playing			
Cooperation	49.33	53.73	65–90
Consensual	37.33	55.22	50–70
Authority	52.63	40.30	70–90
Empathy	41.89	19.40	25–45

*Manager's view of self

†Direct report's view of manager

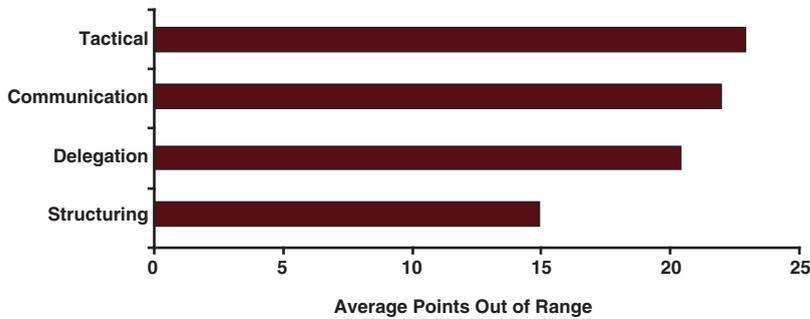
‡Actual desired ranges varied depending on mission and needs of organization

FIGURE 7 Average points out of range—"developing followership" behaviors*



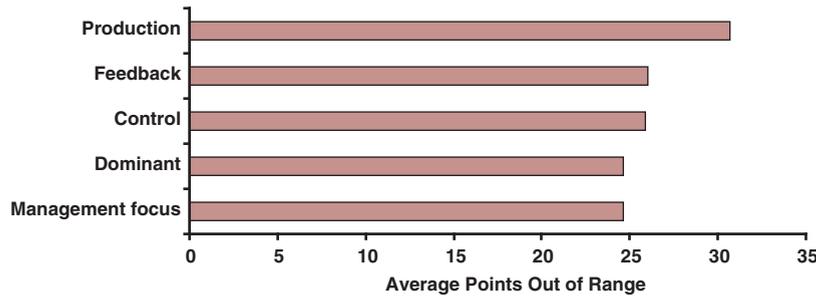
*Includes self, boss, peer, and direct-report scores

FIGURE 8 Average points out of range—"implementing the vision" behaviors*



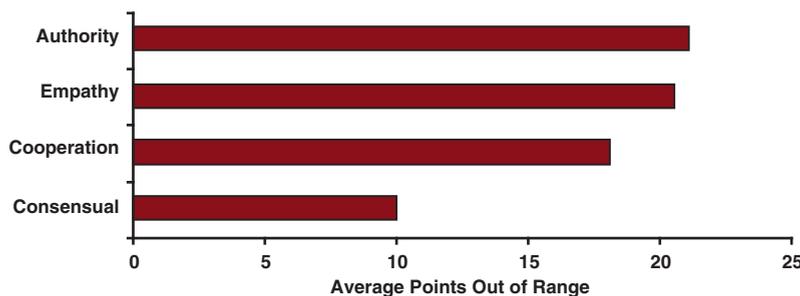
*Includes self, boss, peer, and direct-report scores

FIGURE 9 Average points out of range—"following through" behaviors*



*Includes self, boss, peer, and direct-report scores

FIGURE 10 Average points out of range—"team playing" behaviors*



*Includes self, boss, peer, and direct-report scores

studied do not invest a lot of energy and attention into making the vision a reality. In the areas of tactical, control, feedback, management focus, dominant, and production, the direct-report scores are significantly outside the expected range. Because of the low average scores and the high out-of-range points, the indication is that the utility managers in the study put little effort into adopting a strong orientation toward achievement and results.

The third set of scores, team playing (Figure 10), reflects how managers relate to people. In this area, the behaviors that stand out as possible areas of concern are authority (respect for those in authority), and cooperation (assisting others to accomplish their objectives while deferring their own goals).

CONCLUSIONS

The interaction between behaviors provides the best approach for drawing conclusions from the study data. Using material developed by a private firm¹ and relating it to an operational excellence type of organization such as a utility provide the following combinations of behaviors (a brief statement of the implication of the combined behaviors for the participant is also included):

- conservative/innovative/technical—approach to problem-solving,
- strategic/tactical—thinking versus doing,
- structuring/communication/delegation—defining expectations,
- delegation/control—demonstration of confidence,
- management focus/self/dominant/consensual—identification with leadership role and how it plays out.

Applying this approach to the results of this study presents a number of significant conclusions. The data indicate that at the time they completed the assessment instrument, the utility leaders included in the study

- were most naturally at home with the technical and process side of their work,

- were careful and tended to do what has worked well in the past,
- were often reluctant to take on the mantle of leadership and management,
- were reluctant to function in a results-oriented manner,
- were reluctant to hold their employees accountable,
- often refrained from monitoring what is happening in their organizations,
- saw themselves more aligned with the organization's competency map than did their direct reports.

Four patterns emerged from these data and should be addressed. The first two are reflective of the leadership scores; the second two are reflective of a significant majority of the overall management scores.

1. Focus on leadership behaviors does not necessarily increase with age or tenure. Therefore, the practice of promoting based on seniority may be providing a disservice to the organization from a leadership perspective.

2. Utility leaders are not taking a proactive role in the operation of their organization. They apparently cannot or believe they cannot significantly influence the direction or results of their organizations.

3. Leaders in the study tend to focus more on hands-on involvement in day-to-day activities (tactical) rather than in looking ahead and planning for the future (strategic).

4. There is a decided lack of focus on results, on following through in implementing the vision of the organization, and on making the vision a reality.

The first three patterns may be creating a significant barrier to the development of effective leadership and the fourth will definitely inhibit utilities from implementing their vision, creating a barrier to the development of the kind of organization that they want and need.

In an era of significant change (as many utility organizations are currently experiencing and will likely continue to experience for some time), these patterns are alarming. If

the present and future changes create the disruptions predicted, the patterns identified here strongly indicate that many utility leaders will be unprepared to deal with the changes and disruptions that will occur.

Based on the data in this study, the answer to the issues identified earlier is that utility organizations must understand how they provide value to their customers (i.e., their strategic focus, both core and secondary) and provide training and development programs aligned with the utility's focus and designed to enable leaders and managers to proactively influence the direction and results of their organizations. Leaders must delegate the day-to-day operations of the organization, develop their leadership team, and guide long-term organizational goal attainment. These conclusions and recommendations can also provide ideas for areas where AWWA and the Water Research Foundation could assist utilities and the water sector with the development of tomorrow's leaders. If utilities don't start now, these organizations will not be prepared to deal with the changes that are coming and, in fact, may be swept away by them.

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FOOTNOTES

¹Leadership Effectiveness Analysis 360™ (LEA 360)®, Management Research Group Inc., Portland, Maine

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