

Event Leadership

Theory and methods for event management and tourism

Instructor's Manual

5: Leadership as a collective process

This is the instructor's manual produced to accompany the book *Event Leadership – theory and practice for event management and tourism*, by Emma Abson (with contributions by Miriam Firth and Jane Tattersall), 2021, published by Goodfellow Publishers Ltd.

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How to use the book for teaching & learning

The content of the book can easily be adapted to facilitate learning from the content. Instructors using the book will have access to the following:

- ◆ *Learning objectives* - each of these suggests one or more study or discussion questions, as the reader should be able to demonstrate the applicable knowledge drawn from the chapter.
- ◆ *Short explanations of leadership theory* – these can be used to stimulate discussions or debates, as the basis of case study evaluations or to ask students to reflect on their own experiences of leadership.
- ◆ *Scenarios* – these can be used to prompt conversations, for analysis and for problem solving.
- ◆ *Further questions* that could be integrated into study are at the end of each chapter.
- ◆ *Further reading suggestions* are typically 3-5 additional texts which the authors believe will help to develop understanding of key topics further.
- ◆ *'Voice from the event industry'* – these industry insights enable the reader to gain useful insights into how leadership works in the event industry.

It is recommended that instructors use a blend of class discussions, debates, case study evaluation, real life scenario setting and student-led presentations in order to fully utilise the content of the book.

How to introduce the subject of event leadership to your students

A lack of research into human resource development, managerial skillsets and leadership practices of event managers has meant that there is very little understanding of the contribution that leadership makes to the management of experiences. The purpose of this book is to shine a light on leadership theory and explore how it relates to the unique context of planned events and event tourism.

An understanding of leadership is essential for the development of successful event managers and for the delivery of successful event experiences - whilst some sectors of the leisure industry are run by large corporations, with well-established leadership structures in place, the event industry tends to be more transient, and often has temporary management structures which exist only for the duration of the event. In addition, the difference in leadership required for a small-scale local community event and that of a large-scale international event such as Glastonbury Festival is vast. This then is the tension at the heart of leadership within events – event projects are intangible and temporary in nature and they provide only one opportunity to get it right. However, in order to be successful leaders, they also need to work in teams, motivating, empowering and developing team members. This then is the challenge in planned events and makes them a unique context within which to study leadership.

This book explores the key questions of how those who work in events resolve the tension between the intangibility of event experiences, the planned nature of the events, and how event managers become successful leaders and lead successful event experiences. The purpose of this book is therefore to provide a concise introduction to leadership theory and methods for use in event management and event tourism.

Lecture 5

Chapter aims

- Introduce and critically discuss concepts of collectivistic leadership
- Explore the differences and similarities in terminology and the problems that creates
- Critically discuss the use of shared leadership in planned events and event tourism
- Introduce and critically examine the concept of team leadership
- Examine the role of social identity theory in leadership
- Focus on leadership as an enabling action: industry insight from Eamonn Hunt

5.1: Introducing leadership as a collectivistic process

Use the following extracts to introduce the idea that leadership is not always something performed by one leader, but can sometimes also be performed by a group of people who are not in formal leadership positions.

Previous lectures / chapters in the book have discussed one of the criticisms of a large section of leadership studies – namely that they still mostly focus on the role of those in formal leadership positions. The majority of leadership scholars still tend to study leadership from the perspective of the formal leaders, and with the preconception that leadership stems from a single source. This perspective is referred to as an entity-led perspective – viewing leadership through the lens of the behaviour of one person. By taking this entity-led perspective, leadership studies are still very narrow in focus. However, some scholars have begun to recognise the limitations of ‘heroic’ or entity-led leadership studies and have instead turned their focus from leadership as something a leader does, towards conceptualising leadership as an influence process.

Some scholars working in this area have developed an understanding that leadership does not necessarily just reside in the nominated ‘leader’ but in fact may be enacted by multiple individuals, who work in both informal and formal leadership positions. They therefore offer a broad view of leadership, which sees leadership as a process. This means that leadership can be shared, distributed or collectively completed. This new perspective has resulted in yet another significant paradigm shift for leadership studies, which has seen the growth in studies that view leadership as a collectivistic process.

At the core of these new collective leadership perspectives is the view that leadership is a social influence process and as such, organisational teams and individuals are seen as a potential source of leadership, despite having no formal leadership responsibilities. The connection between leadership and teams stems from the changes to the workplace and the increased complexity in the environment in which work is carried out.

5.2: Shared leadership

Concept of shared leadership stemmed from an acceptance that leadership does not solely reside in one single person, and that with an increase in teamwork in organisations, it is more likely that multiple team members will engage with leadership functions. Theories around shared leadership therefore focus on whether and to what end team members share leadership of the team.

Whilst there are some variants in the definitions of shared leadership in the scholarly literature, what is notable is that they articulate consistent themes, viewing leadership as an emergent process of influencing organisational peers, clearly distinct from the traditional forms of hierarchical leadership. In an analysis of shared leadership research, Zhu et al. (2018, p. 837) noted that across the different conceptualisations, there are three key common characteristics – a brief summation of this key discussion is given below.

1. Shared leadership is about horizontal, lateral influence among peers. In work teams, there are two sources of leadership – vertical, hierarchical leadership from the formal leader and leadership that stems from team members. Shared leadership focuses on the later, but it should be noted that scholars do not suggest that the two sources of leadership are mutually exclusive. In fact, shared leadership scholars agree (and have empirically demonstrated) that both sources of leadership are important.
2. Shared leadership is a team phenomenon. In contrast to traditional views of leadership as a phenomenon that derives from a single individual, shared leadership highlights leadership as an emergent property of a collective. Leadership influence is shared among members at group level.
3. Leadership roles and influence are dispersed across team members. Whereas entity led views of leadership view leadership as centralised around one leader, shared leadership suggests leadership is broadly distributed across team members.

Concepts of shared leadership therefore focus on the broad sharing of power and influence among multiple team members, who can apply influence over each other in order to engage in leadership that will enhance performance of teams and organisations. There is a growing body of evidence that indicates that there is a positive relationship between team effectiveness and performance and shared leadership. When team members commit to sharing their leadership with their team members in order to achieve the organisation's or team's missions and goals, they commit to using more of their personal resources, sharing more information and engaging with the complex tasks at a higher level. These commitments from team members allow the team effectiveness and performance to improve.

Discussion prompt – can the students think how this sharing of leadership among a team of people would be useful in the event industry?

5.3: Team leadership

Team leadership is a broader construct than other forms of collectivistic leadership. It is fundamentally orientated around enhancing team performance and the satisfaction of the team needs. As Morgeson, Derue, and Karam (2010a) suggest, “team leadership can thus be viewed as oriented around team need satisfaction (with the ultimate aim of fostering team effectiveness). Whoever (inside or outside the team) assumes responsibility for satisfying a team's needs can be viewed as taking on a team leadership role.” (pg.7). Many view other conceptualisations, such as shared or collective leadership, as forms of team leadership.

Many teams still have individuals who are primarily responsible for achieving team goals and these formal leadership positions and their effect on team performance is the area that much of the extant research on leadership in teams focuses on, with research indicating that leaders are one of the critical factors in team performance. Some scholars

go further - suggesting that leaders are the key factor for success in teams and others suggest that team leaders are the reason for failures in organisational teams. The traditional research into team leadership theories then concentrated on how leaders create and manage effective teams – leadership is viewed as an input to team processes and performance. Team leadership theories therefore take a functional approach, in which they consider that the leaders effectiveness is based on their ability to ensure that all functions that are critical to the task and team are completed. Under this approach, leadership is not necessarily undertaken by one person (i.e. it can be distributed among a team), but the leader is responsible for ensuring that the functions are accomplished. In other words, formal team leaders are still important here - when a leadership activity requires different capabilities, the best team leaders will ask other team members to assist, ensuring that team leadership is a team activity.

Some scholars have used the term team leadership to suggest that anyone who is able to identify and fulfil a critical function at the right moment is exhibiting team leadership – this, we can see, is the same as some conceptualisations of shared leadership.

Morgeson, DeRue, and Karam (2010b) suggest there are three reasons why the body of work that focuses on team leadership may not add value to an understanding of leadership. Firstly, they state, team leadership research has focused on a narrow set of leadership activities, which has resulted in a limited understanding of the range of ways leaders can help teams to succeed. Secondly, there is a gap in our understanding of the interchange between leadership processes and teams. Lastly, they suggest that research to date has focused on formal team leadership structures and has failed to recognise the “long-recognised” fact that leadership is distributed within a team. They stress the importance of the need to understand the role of leadership in the context of the team and the difference leadership sources that exist – without this, scholars risk providing an incomplete account of the ways in which leadership can help teams to success. They suggest there are four sources of leadership, which they categorise as being located internally (to the team) and externally (of the team) and which can be either formal or informal

	Formal	Informal
Internal	Team leader Project manager	Shared Emergent
External	Sponsor Coach Team advisor	Mentor Champion Executive coordinator

Table 5.1: Sources of leadership in teams from Morgeson et al. (2010)

If there is time, you could also introduce social identities of leadership – this is covered on pages 89-91 of the book.

- ◆ Social identity theories in leadership suggests that, in order for teams to function, they must share an identity, which is created through the exchanges that take place within the group.

5.4: Summary

Use the following summary of the chapter to confirm the key points of the lecture to the students.

This lecture has sought to clarify the workplace conditions that have resulted in organisations moving towards different types of leadership. It has drawn the reader's attention to the development of collective theories of leadership which have emerged as potential solutions to the current challenges in the workplace. This departure from viewing leadership as something an individual does is seen by some as radical in terms of leadership studies – certainly it requires a change in mindset from the leadership described in previous chapters. In these collective forms of leadership, where leadership is thought of as emerging from group relationships, it is more important to understand the nature of both the network and the relationships within it, than to look at how those in formal leadership positions lead, and what effects they might have. The types of leadership described in this lecture can be summarised as:

- ◆ Shared leadership is described by Pearce (2004, p. 48) as a '...simultaneous, on-going, mutual influence process within a team that is characterized by serial emergence of official and unofficial leaders.' The term shared leadership was developed from 'team-based' leadership literature and is widely used in the management/ organisational studies research fields.
- ◆ Team leadership is a broader construct than other forms of collectivistic leadership. It is fundamentally orientated around enhancing team performance and the satisfaction of the team needs.
- ◆ Social identity in leadership suggest that, in order for teams to function, they must share an identity, which is created through the exchanges that take place within the group.

Further activities for seminars / independent learning and / or assignments

- ◆ Discuss the difference between team and shared leadership
- ◆ Debate when shared leadership would be a useful tool for running events
- ◆ What would be the problems of a team of event managers engaging with shared leadership?
- ◆ Discuss how shared leadership might impact on decision making

Chapter study questions

Each of the learning objectives suggests one or more study or discussion questions, as the reader should be able to demonstrate the applicable knowledge drawn from this and subsequent chapters. Further questions that could be integrated into study might be:

1. Do you think these ideas of collectivistic leadership are unrealistic? Discuss if leadership as a collective activity could really work in an event organisation.
2. Planned events need one 'heroic' leader, in a formal leadership position who takes responsibility for all decisions, and is in control of the event plan. Critically examine this statement.

3. How do the various notions of collectivistic leadership compare and contrast with each other?
4. Where have you experienced shared leadership? What were the positive and negative aspects of it, and why?
5. Clarke (2012) suggests that shared leadership would be very useful for project management. Describe the stages in the event project cycle when you think shared leadership might work better than traditional hierarchical leadership.
6. Discuss how the concept of team leadership might enhance the planning of an event.
7. Think about a team you are part of. Do you think you share any kind of identity? List the things you have in common.
8. Reflecting on the leadership in action section, Eamonn found himself moving towards a more collectivistic approach to leadership. Describe the reasons for this, and the benefits of this approach in that situation.

Assignment suggestions

In addition to the study questions listed above, instructors could use the questions listed as essay questions, or as presentation assignments.

- ◆ Evaluate the concept of shared leadership when applied to the event industry. What are the benefits and drawbacks of such an approach to leadership?
- ◆ Using your understanding of team leadership, reflect on your own work experience in a team – present your thoughts to the rest of the group.
- ◆ Are the collective approaches to leadership really workable in industry?
- ◆ Describe and discuss the key differences between relational approaches to leadership and entity approaches to leadership

Further reading

Use the following texts as guidance for further, independent, study.

Badaracco, J. (2001). We don't need another hero. *Harvard Business Review*, 79(8), 120-126.

Carson, J., Tesluk, P. E., & Marrone, J. A. (2007). Shared leadership in teams: An investigation of antecedent conditions and performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(5), 1217-1234.

Clarke, N. (2012). Leadership in projects: what we know from the literature and new insights. *Team Performance Management*, 18(3-4), 128-148. doi:10.1108/13527591211241042

Pearce, C. L., & Conger, J. (2003). *Shared leadership: reframing the hows and whys of leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

van Knippenberg, D. (2012). Leadership and Identity. In D. V. Day & J. Antonakis (Eds.), *The Nature of Leadership* (2nd ed., pp. 477-507). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.