Karl-Johan Spiik

How Shared Leadership Is Created
and What Its Requirements Are

COMMUNITY-LED LEADERSHIP

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Leadership hacker:
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**The measurements for
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1   **FOREWORD**

During my work career, I have worked for almost two decades with shared leadership. I have operated in small and big organizations and experienced many types of leadership. I have participated more than 60 projects with teams of different sizes. I have experienced projects with teams and people from many different organizations. In all of them the same guidelines have come up. Communication and shared practices stands as a cornerstone.

I have already as a young student studied the literature on agile project methods thoroughly. Different task lists, rotating roles, and dispersed decision making have been part of my everyday life throughout my career. At first I did not see that it was about different levels of leadership. I felt that it was just a typical model for the expert industry. As a result of the development of the community-led theories I have come to understand why the fields of technological expertise have been the forerunners in shared leadership.

The present information and communication technology enables sharing leadership. People do not need to be physically in the same space. They do not even have to work at the same time. The traditional model – where one supervises the others and manages the big picture – is unnecessary. Before, it was the forerunners of technology and those using it who in particular were well-versed in the tools of shared leadership. Now information technology is necessary everywhere, and the advanced methods of leadership can take over other fields, too.

Alongside the widespread use of information technology, people's emotional intelligence has a greater role today than before. In the traditional

leadership model, the authority comes from above and anything coming from there is tolerated – sometimes even bullying and sexual harassment. Nowadays, respecting the boundaries and feelings of everyone is raised so high up as a value, that hierarchical models are no longer needed in organizations. Conflicts cannot be avoided, but if we deal with our problematic situations ourselves, we can function without leadership from above.

In shared leadership the tasks traditionally belonging to the supervisor can be shared partly or completely by the employees. Shared leadership does not automatically mean that a supervisor should be removed. In some organizations the task of the operative leader has been shared between two people. However, shared leadership mainly means that the tasks of leadership are distributed to more than just one person. Each organization can look at different models and try out which one would suit them best.

When learning shared leadership, curiosity and permitting failure are especially needed. We do not look for a culprit but rather for a solution – we want to help and succeed. When our tools for leadership are current for the 2020's, we can manage change agilely without larger problems. The only considerable problem is our own resistance to change, as with shared leadership we live in constant change. The biggest factor is our own resistance, and we can let go even of that. Another major obstacle is not reacting in time to unpleasant situations, thus making mountains out of molehills.

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INTRODUCTION

Each organization, company and team need to have functional communication and shared practices. If these are not in order, leadership cannot be shared. The responsibility for rules, guidance and communication cannot be left on the shoulders of one person, the leader.

Shared leadership means working together. Cooperation cannot work without discussion and everyone knowing how things are done.

People often form networks within organizations, and these contacts are primarily used even if the organizational chart would indicate otherwise. Work is then done in one's own circle with familiar colleagues. The purpose of this book is to create understanding about how the organization's leadership model and culture can be molded more into the desired model of operation.

Five Different Ways to Lead

Mankind's leadership has historically evolved alongside the development of technology and culture. Different types of leadership have often been illustrated by separating leadership into five different styles. These styles are presented in the picture below. The blue color in the table shows those sections of the organization managed by a supervisor, and the orange color shows those run by the whole work community.

In leader-centered leadership culture the leader is a very strong individual. Based on mental and physical strength they decide about everything. Organization-centered leadership is based on a hierarchic pattern, of which the army is a good example. This is when the rules are so strong that the personnel can at most affect the division of work itself, while everything else is assigned from above. In these two leadership patterns shouting and even physical contact as a deterrent or encouragement is a commonly accepted way to lead.

Most of the world's organizations reside in a mindset of achievement-centered leadership. On this level the supervisor has understood that they don't have to decide how their subordinates perform their tasks, they just have to set the goals and make the decisions. Dividing up the work, choosing specific tasks and coming up with methods for accomplishing them are all left up to the work community as a whole. The more diligently one works, the faster one can climb up the hierarchy or into other positions with more responsibility and power. The organization acts like a machine: each part of the machine can be swapped out or replaced – nobody is indispensable. An

The supervisor's responsibility	The community's responsibility

Leader-centered	Organization-centered	Achievement-centered	Individual-centered	Community-centered
Top-down leadership	Leadership based on a hierarchical chart	Work is guided by competition and achievements	The culture of leadership is family-like and empowering	The culture of leadership is autonomous and functions like a living organism
E.g. the mafia or street gangs	E.g. the army	E.g. innovation work	E.g. tribal culture	E.g. a self-directing organization
Impulsiveness and a strong individual	Strong rules	Goal-oriented management	Coaching management	Community-led methods
Division of work	Division of work	Division of work	Division of work	Division of work
Choosing tasks	Choosing tasks	Choosing tasks	Choosing tasks	Choosing tasks
Methods	Methods	Methods	Methods	Methods
Decisions	Decisions	Decisions	Decisions	Decisions
Values	Values	Values	Values	Values
Goals	Goals	Goals	Goals	Goals
Directing operations	Directing operations	Directing operations	Directing operations	Directing operations

Five different cultures of leadership

organization can also be led based on multiple values, in which case it is an individual-centered culture of leadership. The term "coaching management" describes this level well, where the role of the supervisor has changed into an attending and coaching one. The supervisor is not supposed to make decisions: the employees can make important decisions themselves. The supervisor's task is only to create the right circumstances, enable flexible modes of work, and help employees do their work and to develop their know-how. The values of the organization are built together with the personnel instead of being solely defined by the management.

Shared leadership is doing work together.

In traditional leadership the focus is on looking for a culprit, whereas in modern leadership the focus is on looking for a solution to solve the problem. Leadership without blaming allows the employees to try out new ways, and the threshold to make decisions is lowered. With modern information technologies solutions are shared independent of time and place. The right use of tools combined with a helpful and permissive atmosphere create the prerequisites for sharing leadership. Leadership that is focused on one person is no longer necessary.

This book combines agile leadership methods with the solution-focused nature of leadership that allows for failures. Pondering responsibility is an important part of leadership, but not from the point of view of the culprit but from that of the solution. In leadership it is important to let go of selfish needs of being right and shining. In this way it is possible to harness the synergies of all the employees for the benefit of the entire organization. Shared leadership speaks about modern leadership in a simple form.

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