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# Moved By The Spirit: Leadership And Spirituality In The Workplace

Jay A. Conger

**Y**ou may have seen the recent articles in *Fortune*, *Business Week*, and the *Wall Street Journal* on—strangely enough—spirituality in the workplace. You may have also noticed on the *Business Week* bestseller list a book entitled *Jesus CEO* which describes how managers can use Christian principles to lead. Even prominent business leaders such as Anita Roderick, the founder of the Body Shop, now have public talks about spirituality in their workplaces.

Like myself, you are probably wondering—why this sudden interest in workplace spirituality? Is spirituality about to become the next in a long line of management fads, or is this interest part of a more profound and fundamental search to create more meaningful organizations?

Either way you look at it, there is a remarkable amount of curiosity about the potential benefits of spirituality to workplace life despite its seemingly esoteric character. We are coming to recognize that a new state of mind and a new state of heart are what is really needed to foster human development and community spirit in our workplaces. We have watched how ideas such as teamwork and empowerment are having

only a limited impact while the disenfranchisement of the workforce continues to deepen. There is a sense that more management techniques are not a sufficient answer in themselves.

In our search to understand spirituality's potential contribution, we have come upon some role models—leaders whose strong spiritual orientations have shaped their organizations' character and performance very positively. In most cases, their organizations are not only financially successful but highly effective in terms of staff development and service to the customer.

Some of these individuals are what we would call "New Age" leaders—Tom Chappell of Tom's of Maine, Anita Rodderick of the Body Shop, and Susie Tompkins of Esprit. They speak broadly about how spirituality shapes their leadership without referring to a particular dogma or endorsing a specific faith for their organizations.

A second group leads from a strong Christian orientation, and they invoke Christ's teachings to help create a philosophy and guiding principles for their organizations. These include business leaders like Mary Kay of Mary Kay Cosmetics, Truett Cathy of Chick-fil-A, Richard DeVos of Amway, and Kenneth Wessner of ServiceMaster.



In recent years, the New Age and Christian groups have been the subject of popular books and press articles because of their unusual willingness to speak publicly about their faith and its influence on their organizations. The interest they have generated poses intriguing questions for those of us interested in leadership and in more meaningful workplaces.

First of all, why the interest in workplace spirituality at this particular time? What's going on? And why do we see so few instances of leaders who apply spirituality to the workplace? Are there natural barriers to spirituality in the workplace? Finally, do these leaders have lessons to teach us that are transferable to other organizations and leaders?

The objective of this article is to tackle each of these questions. To accomplish this, I have divided my reflections into three sections. The first section will shed light on a number of the reasons which explain the surprising interest in workplace spirituality today. The second highlights the dilemmas we face in creating more spirituality-centered workplaces and helps to explain why we see so few Tom Chappells and Anita Roddericks. The concluding section offers insights into the lessons that spiritually-directed leaders can offer all of us.

Before we begin, I want to clarify what I mean by the word *spiritual*. While rituals and dogma vary between the world's religions, the actual feelings connected with spiritual experiences are relatively universal. In other words, while each religion's pathways are different, the outcomes are largely the same. So we see a shared set of spiritual experiences across most religions that include a sense of inner peacefulness, profound and compassionate love, a transcendental connection to a larger world, respect and concern for well-being and life, appreciation for beauty, and reverence for the earth and universe. These transcend the dogma and rituals of each religion. They also explain how someone can be spiritual and yet not fully vested in a particular religion.

Traditionally, religion and spirituality have been tightly interwoven. One's religion served to promote spiritual experiences. But interestingly, we are at one

of those junctures in history where the two are uncoupling. This most often happens when the institutional guidelines and rituals of religion become disjointed from the everyday needs of its followers, in which case a schism is likely to follow. When this happens, people turn away from their religious institutions as their sole source of spiritual sustenance and seek other sources. This is exactly what is occurring with many of today's generations. Spirituality is no longer necessarily tied directly to a religion's dogma or to church and temple attendance. This trend is laying the groundwork for spirituality's appearance in new places, and it is a primary reason why we are able to talk about the possibility of spirituality in the workplace.

### **Why Today's Interest in Spirituality in the Workplace?**

To understand why spirituality and leadership in the workplace are on our minds today, we have to realize that several important forces are coming together to spark this interest. The first is a baseline force. It is the bedrock that has laid the groundwork for our interest in the first place. It is what we would call the faithfulness of our society.

Historically, America is a society that is very concerned about religion and spirituality.

For example, many of the continent's earliest immigrants and founders were refugees of religious persecution. They came to America to freely express their religious beliefs. Many of our not-for-profits are guided by spiritual principles such as the YMCA, the Salvation Army, or Alcoholics Anonymous. On the nation's dollar bill rest the words "In God We Trust." Pollsters have even been told by Americans that they would not vote for a President who is an atheist.

Across the world, Americans are consistently among the most religious. This faithfulness has created a fertile seedbed for religious expression and creativity in America. As we witness the many new branches of Christian religion that have appeared, along with the extensive experimentation with Eastern religions by younger generations, we can think of this faithfulness as the spiritual firewood in the workplace hearth.

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An even greater force now—the match that is igniting our interest—is the ascendancy of the workplace as a primary community for many people. If we think back some fifty years ago, we would have found that four communities actively supported us like pillars holding up a temple. The first was the extended family. Not only did we live with our parents but nearby were grandparents, aunts and uncles, and cousins. Today that community is largely in ruins. Parents may or may not be living together, and relatives are scattered across the country. The next community was our civic community. At one time, we actively contributed to our society by sitting on school boards, being active in city councils, and hosting activities for our neighborhood association. But this community has fallen prey to lives that are too busy and to citizens grown cynical and apathetic about the political process. The third community, the church and temple, have long served as important places of connection. But as their rituals and dogma have drifted away from every day lives so has their pervasive influence for many. That leaves one remaining community—the workplace. This community is not only where we spend the majority of our time, but it is also the place where we have a significant number of relationships. It is where we seek many of our important challenges. It is where we contribute to our society. It is where we have the potential to find the most meaning for our lives.

Ironically, however, the workplace is the one community that is the least community-like of the four. It is here that loyalty in both directions is often the weakest. It is here that a sense of deep personal development and support are frequently missing. And it is here that words like empowerment are promoted because such feelings are so rarely present. That does not mean, however, that a deep desire for connection, community, and meaning no longer exists among its members. Quite to the contrary, the decline of the other communities is translating into employees who are bringing (consciously or unconsciously) more of these needs to their workplaces than ever before—needs which most organizations are only dimly aware of.

These are the forces that make *now* a particularly conducive time to explore the possible role of spirituality in the workplace. But very significant hurdles remain.

### **Why It Is So Difficult To Bring Spirituality Into the Office**

Two powerful barriers face leaders wishing to incorporate their own and their employees' spirituality into an organization. The first has to do with cultural norms of the society about public expressions of faith. The second has to do with a belief that spiritual practice—other than for one's personal self—is best reserved for those who are in the religious professions.

On the issue of cultural norms, Americans are highly respectful of other faiths. Since many of our ancestors arrived here because of religious intolerance, the society has built strongly protective norms about respecting the religious rights of others. For this very reason, our forefathers created the division between church and state. The dilemma for organizational leaders is to be able to speak across different faiths in a way that respects the differences yet speaks to all. In countries or companies where a single faith may dominate, the problem is far less pronounced. So it is not unusual to see Shinto priests blessing new car models at the Mazda headquarters or Mary Kay of Mary Kay Cosmetics making references to God in her speeches without negative repercussions from employees. The challenge for multi-faith organizations is that their leadership must be able to bridge across different faiths without antagonizing any particular one.

I am convinced that this norm of respect for other faiths is one of the primary reasons why spirituality is so rarely discussed at work. It is certainly not due to a lack of religiously or spiritually-minded CEOs. For example, in a recent *Fortune* article, Sanford McDonald of the McDonald Douglas Corporation and Ken Olsen, founder of Digital Equipment, along with others were described as freely discussing their spiritual convictions in interviews but simultaneously reluctant to impose a religious or spiritual philosophy on their organizations. In a *Forbes* survey of 100 busi-

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ness executives, 65 percent said that they worshipped regularly at a church or synagogue. This compares with a national average of only 40 percent. So while many executives are spiritually inclined, they, like most of us, prefer to leave their spiritual side outside the office door.

A further outcome of this norm is a societal aversion we have towards individuals who actively promote their faith. We call them zealots or evangelists. This translates into a concern shared by many executives who fear being labeled "evangelical" if they speak too publically about their spirituality. They fear that employees will suddenly see the boss as a missionary trying to save souls.

The second barrier to workplace spirituality has to do with the expectations we hold for spiritual people in leadership positions. Many business executives and managers I know are spiritual people. Yet they feel less than competent in discussing how spirituality might help their organizations. They have few role models to show how they might link the business and spiritual worlds. Instead, role models tend to be individuals like Mother Teresa. But these role models are so lofty and so removed from the world of business that many managers feel very "unspiritual" in comparison. They tell themselves that they lack sufficient experience to speak competently about spirituality. As a result, public spiritual practice is seen as something reserved for those trained to do such activities such as ministers and rabbis.

The challenge is to recast our expectations in new ways that allow us to see that, in our own way, many of us may already possess sufficient spiritual competence to begin engaging both our colleagues and our organizations. But let us say that we overcame these hurdles, that we felt sufficiently grounded in our spirituality and wished to live out that commitment in our work. How might we apply it as leaders?

### **How Leaders Apply Spirituality To Their Workplace**

Spirituality can influence leaders in at least two directions. One is an inward process involving self-reflection and the development of a state-of-mind.

The other is an outward responsibility to create a meaningful organizational mission and to develop the talent around us.

I recently attended a leadership program that the University of Southern California hosts for its outstanding graduate students. Part of the program involved talks by successful community leaders about their own leadership experiences. When the students were polled as to what aspects of the leaders' presentations made the greatest impression, their consistent and remarkable response was—the spiritual side of each leader. For example, one leader had discussed how he used daily meditation to bring a sense of perspective and balance into his and his organization's life. Another discussed how prayer played a critical role in guiding his actions and life choices. It was remarkable to see how inward reflection and contemplation played such a balancing role in their lives and in their effectiveness as leaders. Yet none of these individuals were religious leaders, but instead, leaders of businesses and educational institutions.

As we know, all the great spiritual traditions have a practice of contemplation, whether it be prayer or meditation. The objective, literally, is to transform oneself. That might mean seeking help beyond oneself in an evening prayer to God. Or it might take the form of tranquil detachment from one's stresses or one's ego by meditation on a mantra. Leaders need such moments. The dilemma for most leaders is that they are extroverts. They love the world of action. But constant action can sometimes mean self-inflicted stress, little time to truly learn from one's actions, bruised interpersonal relations, and few opportunities to check a strong ego. Through inward reflection, leaders can temper the magnitude of their stress, maintain a healthy awareness of their fallibility, and reconnect to a larger world and their deeper obligations to it.

Gerald May, a director of the Shalem Institute, reminds us as well that the critical advantages of contemplation are the links back into our actions: "...[Contemplation] means immediate presence in the world, directly perceiving things as they really are...Contemplation practices often involve silence to

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cut through projections, prejudices, and preoccupations and to be more fully conscious of and responsive to the deep spiritual currents of life. But authentic contemplation always finds its way into action... (p.11)."

The second inward dimension has to do with a state of mind. This involves seeing daily life as having a spiritual component. Thomas Moore, in his recent book *Care of Soul* explains that: "Spirituality is seeded, germinates, sprouts and blossoms in the mundane. It is to be found in the smallest of daily activities" (p. 219). Any action that shows respect and care for the gift and beauty of life and for the well-being of the planet is spiritual.

By imagining that work is somehow completely divorced from the spiritual world is one of the great illusions of modern time. It is this false dichotomy that spiritually-guided leaders overcome. Theirs is a ministry of everyday life. Leaders can perform this ministry of everyday life in many ways such as adhering to ethical standards or donating company resources to charities or being protective of the environment. But they can also minister as individuals who create meaningful work communities, who are role models by their actions, and who help others to fulfill their gifts and talents.

In this outer world of activity, two arenas of leadership are especially deserving of attention. The first is role-modeling. The second is crafting a meaningful enterprise. As role models, leaders are setting the tone in terms of values, ethics, and interpersonal relations. Essentially, their actions define, to a significant extent, the type of workplace community that is desired. As Moore explains, leaders have an opportunity to create "convivial" workplace communities. The word itself is derived from the Latin "convivium" meaning "living together." The term conveys the sense of a relationship where people and ideas can live together, enjoy one another, and be challenged and learn from each other's differences. It is a place where variety and difference are celebrated and, in turn, produce positive and rich outcomes. This, of course, would be the ideal community that spiritually-guided leaders would seek to create.

The spiritually-guided workplace is also a place for

growth and development. For leaders, this means playing the role of mentor or people-developer. For example, each of us is given certain gifts and aptitudes—most of which were given to better humankind in some form or fashion whether it be through services that ease suffering or products that make life more wonderful. To help us realize these aptitudes, we often need others to guide, to nourish, and to instill confidence in us. When a leader takes the time and care to help develop others by instruction or by challenging tasks, they are essentially acting in a spiritual role. They are caring for the gift of life given to us and nourishing its potential to help society. George Wythe is today a relatively obscure name. But he is an example of an individual who played the role of mentor to someone who ultimately nourished and created a remarkable nation.

You see, Wythe was the mentor of Thomas Jefferson, during Jefferson's time as a young lawyer. It was Wythe who encouraged him to apply his talents towards government despite Jefferson's inclination to simply be a Virginia scholar residing at Monticello.

The second outward task of leadership is to give meaning to the organization's purpose. Here we come to the idea of vision or mission that we now know is so central to effective leadership. The spiritually-guided leader sincerely seeks a mission that is highly meaningful for both themselves and for staff. At the same time, the effective leader's vision cannot be a naively idealistic one in terms of ignoring the financial well-being of their organization. This is one of the great tensions for the spiritually-guided leader. They are running an enterprise that competes against others and that more often has demanding customers and marketplaces. So the wise leader is a pragmatic idealist. He or she knows how to hold the tensions between shortsighted markets and long range aspirations.

For many of the spiritually-guided leaders described earlier in this article, their mission is to provide a product and an organization that helps both society and their employees. For example, Tom Chappell of Tom's of Maine, a manufacturer of natural health products, describes his mission: "I'm trying to

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link what I'm doing to the environment and the community. That's what we do at Tom's of Maine, with no money. We take marketshare and shelf space away from P&G and Colgate on a daily basis, and we do it without money and muscle, both of which they have plenty. We take it away with a product that meets the expectations and aspirations of a particular customer who shares our values." Mary Kay consistently describes the mission of her cosmetics company as a vehicle to help women develop self-esteem and their professional talents.

What these leaders do is to tap into our search for meaning. This sojourn is one of the greatest and most important of our spiritual journeys on this earth. As leaders, part of our mission is therefore to provide opportunities for staff to make a meaningful difference in this world. On the other hand, the challenge to us as leaders is to create and sustain organizations that, indeed, make a meaningful contribution to society and to employees—and do so profitably. ■

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and unethical, moral and immoral. Examples include fairness, justice, honesty, freedom, equality, humanitarianism, loyalty, patriotism, progress, self-fulfillment, excellence, pragmatism, courtesy, politeness, and cooperation. Values are important because they influence a leader's preferences and aspirations, a leader's perception of situations and problems, and a leader's choice of behavior in a particular situation.

There is considerable evidence that traits are jointly determined by learning and by an inherited capacity to gain satisfaction for particular types of stimuli or experiences (Bouchard, Lykken, McGue, Segal, & Tellegen, 1990). Some traits are probably more influenced by learning (e.g., values, social needs) than others (temperament, physiological needs).

The term skill refers to a person's ability to perform various types of cognitive or behavioral activities in an effective manner. Like traits, skills are determined jointly by learning and heredity. Skills may be defined at different levels of generality and abstraction, ranging from very general, broadly defined terms (e.g., intelligence, interpersonal skill, administrative skill) to narrower, more specific terms (planning skill, persuasive communication skill, listening skill). The proliferation of skill concepts by different researchers has created a state of conceptual confusion similar to that prevailing for behavior concepts.

The most widely accepted approach for classifying managerial skills is in terms of a three-skill taxonomy. Similar versions of this taxonomy were proposed by Katz (1955) and Mann (1965). The skill categories were defined as follows:

1. *Technical skills.* Knowledge about methods, processes, procedures, and techniques for conducting a specialized activity, and the ability to use tools and equipment relevant to that activity.
2. *Interpersonal skills.* Knowledge about human behavior and interpersonal processes, ability to understand the feelings, attitudes, and motives of others from what they say and do (empathy, social sensitivity), ability to communicate clearly and effectively (speech fluency, persuasiveness), and ability to establish effective and cooperative relationships (tact, diplomacy, listening skill, knowledge about acceptable social behavior).
3. *Conceptual skills.* General analytical ability, logical thinking, proficiency in concept formation and conceptualization of complex and ambiguous relationships, creativity in idea generation and problem solving, ability to analyze events and perceive trends, anticipate changes, and recognize opportunities and potential problems (inductive and deductive reasoning).

It is evident that technical skills are primarily concerned with things, interpersonal skills are primarily concerned with people, and conceptual skills are primarily concerned with ideas and concepts. As we will see in this chapter, each of the three skill categories is relevant to the role requirements of managers and administrators.

Some writers differentiate a fourth category of skills (called "administrative skills") that are defined in terms of the ability to perform a particular type of managerial function or behavior (e.g., planning, organizing, delegating, negotiat-

See pp 442-443

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## MANAGERIAL TRAITS AND SKILLS

One of the earliest approaches to studying leadership was the trait approach. Underlying this approach was the assumption that some people have traits and skills that will make them more likely to seek and attain positions of leadership and to be effective in these positions. This chapter will review research on the personal attributes of successful leaders. The emphasis will be on traits and skills that contribute to managerial effectiveness and advancement, rather than on traits that predict who will emerge as a leader in an informal group.

### NATURE OF TRAITS AND SKILLS

The term trait refers to a variety of individual attributes, including aspects of personality, temperament, needs, motives, and values. Personality traits are relatively stable dispositions to behave in a particular way. Examples include self-confidence, emotional maturity, emotional stability, energy level, and stress tolerance.

A need or motive is a desire for particular types of stimuli or experiences. Psychologists usually differentiate between physiological needs (e.g., hunger, thirst) and social motives such as achievement, esteem, affiliation, power, and independence. Needs and motives are important because they influence a leader's attention to information and events, and they guide, energize, and sustain a leader's behavior.

Values are internalized attitudes about what is right and wrong, ethical



ing, coaching, conducting meetings). Administrative skills usually involve a combination of technical, cognitive, and interpersonal skills. The line between skills and behaviors becomes blurred when skills are defined in terms of ability to perform managerial functions. There seems to be little difference between the two constructs when they are both measured at a very low level of abstraction with items containing examples of effective behavior (Hunt, 1991). For example, ratings of how much skill a manager has in specific aspects of coaching may involve the same set of behavior examples as ratings of how often a manager uses effective forms of coaching behavior. Due to the overlap in the two approaches, some of the research on administrative skills was discussed in the earlier chapters on specific managerial behaviors (see Chapters 4, 5, 6). Administrative skills are also discussed in the upcoming chapters on transformational and strategic leadership (see Chapters 12 and 13).

#### EARLY RESEARCH ON LEADER TRAITS AND SKILLS

The early leadership researchers were not sure what traits and skills would be essential for leadership effectiveness but were confident that they could be identified by empirical research. Trait research was facilitated by the rapid development of psychological testing from 1920 to 1950. The kinds of traits studied most often in the early leadership research included physical characteristics (e.g., height, appearance), aspects of personality measured by psychological tests (e.g., self-esteem, dominance, emotional stability), and aptitudes measured by psychological tests (general intelligence, verbal fluency, creativity).

Over one hundred studies on leader traits were conducted during the first half of this century. In the majority of studies, the general approach was to compare leaders with nonleaders to see what traits best differentiated between them. A smaller number of studies compared successful leaders with less successful leaders, or correlated measures of traits with measures of leadership effectiveness. Success and leadership effectiveness were sometimes measured in terms of group performance, and sometimes in terms of career advancement. In the latter case, the definition of successful leadership was to advance farther up the authority hierarchy of the organization and earn a larger salary compared to people the same age.

In a review by Stogdill (1948) of 124 trait studies conducted from 1904 to 1948, a number of traits were found to differentiate repeatedly between leaders and nonleaders. The pattern of results was consistent with the conception of a leader as someone who acquires status through active participation and demonstration of ability to facilitate the efforts of the group in attaining its goals. Traits relevant to the assumption and performance of this role included intelligence, alertness to the needs of others, understanding of the task, initiative and persistence in dealing with problems, self-confidence, and desire to accept responsibility and occupy a position of dominance and control. However, despite the evi-

dence that leaders differed from nonleaders with respect to certain traits, Stogdill found that the results varied considerably from situation to situation. In several studies that measured situational factors, there was evidence that the relative importance of each trait depends on the situation. Thus, Stogdill (1948, p. 64) concluded: "A person does not become a leader by virtue of the possession of some combination of traits . . . the pattern of personal characteristics of the leader must bear some relevant relationship to the characteristics, activities, and goals of the followers."

In effect, the early studies failed to support the basic premise of the trait approach that a person must possess a particular set of traits to become a successful leader. Although some traits appeared widely relevant for different kinds of leaders, these traits were neither necessary nor sufficient to ensure leadership success. A leader with certain traits could be effective in one situation but ineffective in a different situation. Furthermore, two leaders with different patterns of traits could be successful in the same situation. None of the traits in these studies had a high correlation with leadership effectiveness when considered alone. Various combinations of traits correlated more highly with leader effectiveness, but only within certain limited situations.

The 1948 literature review by Stogdill greatly discouraged many leadership researchers from studying traits, but industrial psychologists interested in improving managerial selection continued to conduct trait research. The focus in this selection research was on managerial effectiveness rather than emergent leadership (see Lord, DeVader, & Alliger, 1986). The researchers extended the list of traits under investigation to include specific administrative and technical skills and specific aspects of managerial motivation relevant to the requirements of an administrative role. The selection research also used a greater variety of measurement procedures (e.g., projective tests, situational tests), and most of the studies involved managers and administrators rather than other kinds of leaders. The difference in methodology and perspective led to stronger, more consistent results than were found in the earlier trait studies.

In 1974, Stogdill reviewed 163 trait studies conducted from 1949 to 1970. Many of the same traits were again found to be related to leader effectiveness, and some additional traits and skills were found to be relevant (see Table 9-1). Stogdill (1974, p. 81) suggested that the following trait profile is characteristic of successful leaders:

The leader is characterized by a strong drive for responsibility and task completion, vigor and persistence in pursuit of goals, venturesomeness and originality in problem solving, drive to exercise initiative in social situations, self-confidence and sense of personal identity, willingness to accept consequences of decision and action, readiness to absorb interpersonal stress, willingness to tolerate frustration and delay, ability to influence other persons' behavior, and capacity to structure social interaction systems to the purpose at hand.

In retrospect, it is apparent that many leadership researchers overreacted to the earlier pessimistic literature reviews by rejecting the relevance of traits entirely. However, Stogdill (1984) makes it clear that recognition of the relevance

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Table 9-1 Traits and Skills Found Most Frequently to Be Characteristic of Successful Leaders

TRAITS	SKILLS
Adaptable to situations	Clever (intelligent)
Alert to social environment	Conceptually skilled
Ambitious and achievement oriented	Creative
Assertive	Diplomatic and tactful
Cooperative	Fluent in speaking
Decisive	Knowledgeable about group task
Dependable	Organized (administrative ability)
Dominant (desire to influence others)	Persuasive
Energetic (high activity level)	Socially skilled
Persistent	
Self-confident	
Tolerant of stress	
Willing to assume responsibility	

Based on Stogdill (1974).

of leader traits is not a return to the original trait approach. The premise that some leader traits are absolutely necessary for effective leadership has not been substantiated in several decades of trait research. Possession of particular traits increases the likelihood that a leader will be effective, but they do not guarantee effectiveness, and the relative importance of different traits is dependent on the nature of the leadership situation.

#### MAJOR APPROACHES IN TRAIT RESEARCH

The relationship of traits to managerial success has been investigated in many ways besides the static correlational studies that were predominant in the early years of trait research. In this section, several different research programs are described briefly.

Some of the studies look for traits that predict advancement to higher levels of management, whereas others look for traits related to effective performance in one's present managerial job. In reviewing this research it is important to remember that some traits may be relevant for one criterion but not the other. For example, a manager who is highly ambitious and skilled at impression management may advance faster than other managers who have greater competence in doing the current job but are not as ambitious or adept at selling themselves. Moreover, the traits and skills required for effective performance in the current management position are not necessarily the same as those needed at a higher level of management. The most useful studies attempt to identify how traits and

skills are reflected in behaviors that explain why a person is effective in a particular managerial position, or why the person is promoted to a higher position.

#### McClelland's Research on Managerial Motivation

An extensive program of research on managerial motivation has been conducted by McClelland and his associates (McClelland, 1965, 1985). In most of the research, need strength was measured with a projective technique called the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). The TAT consists of a series of pictures of people in ambiguous situations, and someone who takes the test is asked to make up a story about each picture. The stories reveal the person's daydreams, fantasies, and aspirations, and they are coded by the experimenter to obtain a measure of three underlying needs: power, achievement, and affiliation.

A person with a high need for achievement obtains satisfaction from experiencing success in accomplishing a difficult task, attaining a standard of excellence, or developing a better way of doing something. Such people prefer tasks in which success depends on their own effort and ability rather than on chance factors beyond their control, or on a group effort. They prefer a job in which they can exercise individual initiative in solving problems. They desire frequent, concrete feedback about their performance so they can enjoy the experience of making progress and attaining challenging objectives. Although they enjoy competition with other people, they are just as attracted by an opportunity to set new records or accomplish something never done before.

Humans typically have some desire for companionship and friendly interpersonal relationships in which affection and nurturance are given and received. However, the strength of the need for affiliation varies greatly from person to person. People with a strong need for affiliation are especially concerned about being liked and accepted. They are very sensitive to cues indicating rejection or hostility from others. They find enjoyment in social interactions with friends, such as parties, reunions, or recreational activities. They like to work with other people as part of a team as long as the coworkers are friendly and cooperative. In contrast, a person with a very low need for affiliation tends to be a loner or recluse. Such a person avoids social activities and feels uncomfortable when required to attend parties or receptions.

A person with a high need for power finds great satisfaction in influencing people and arousing strong emotions in them, such as fear, awe, pleasure, anger, and surprise. A strong need for power can be satisfied in a variety of ways, including some that are vicarious, such as watching movies with explicit violence and sex. The most direct form of gratification is to exercise influence over the attitudes and behavior of other people. People with a strong need for power enjoy winning an argument, defeating an opponent, eliminating a rival or enemy, and directing the activities of a group. They usually seek out positions of authority (e.g., a manager, administrator, public official, police officer, lawyer, military officer) in which they can exercise influence and direct the activities of others. They are likely to be very sensitive to power politics in an organization



and may attempt to increase their own power by building alliances and gaining control over budgets, resources, information, and projects. In contrast, people with a weak need for power are unlikely to be assertive, and they may sincerely believe that it is improper to tell others what to do.

McClelland and his colleagues found that a high need for power is expressed in different ways depending upon another trait called activity inhibition, which was also measured by coding the TAI responses. A person with high activity inhibition has strong self-control and is motivated to satisfy the need for power in socially acceptable ways, such as influencing others to accomplish a worthy cause, or helping others to develop their skills and confidence. A person with low activity inhibition is motivated to satisfy the need for power in selfish ways by dominating others and using power to fulfill his or her own hedonistic desires. The combination of a high need for power and high activity inhibition is called the "socialized power orientation." The combination of a high need for power and low activity inhibition is called the "personalized power orientation." How these different power orientations are expressed in behavior is described later in this chapter.

A sizeable number of studies have been conducted using the TAI to investigate how needs are related to managerial advancement and effectiveness. In general, the results support the proposition that the optimal pattern of needs for managerial effectiveness in large organizations includes a strong socialized power orientation, a moderately high need for achievement, and a relatively lower need for affiliation (Boyatzis, 1982; McClelland, 1975; McClelland & Boyatzis, 1982; McClelland & Burnham, 1976; Varga, 1975; Winter, 1973).

The results for advancement are less clear, perhaps because the relationship of motives to advancement depends more on the type of organization and managerial position. In one study by McClelland and Boyatzis (1982), advancement of nontechnical managers to higher levels was predicted by need for power, but advancement through lower levels of management was predicted only by need for achievement. For technical managers, advancement was not predicted either by need for achievement or by need for power, which is consistent with results found in an earlier study of navy officers by Winter (1979). Thus, advancement for technical managers may be more dependent on technical skills and verbal fluency than on motivation.

The optimal pattern of motives appears to be different also for entrepreneurial managers, such as owner-managers of small organizations. A dominant need for achievement appears to be very important for these entrepreneurial managers. Studies in several countries found that the growth rate of small firms was predicted by the achievement motivation of the top executives (Collins, Moore, & Unwalla, 1964; Hundal, 1971; McClelland, 1965; McClelland & Winter, 1969; Wainer & Rubin, 1969). Results for other needs were less clear, but there was some indication that successful entrepreneurs had a high need for independence, a moderately high need for power, and a low need for affiliation. Of course, success depends on ability as well as motivation. An entrepreneurial manager needs relevant technical expertise as an inventor, product designer, promoter, financier, or marketing specialist.

### Miner's Research on Managerial Motivation

Miner (1965) formulated a theory of managerial role motivation to describe the type of motivational traits required for success in most management positions in large, hierarchical organizations. The following traits were selected for investigation based on an analysis of role requirements common to managerial positions: (1) a positive attitude toward authority figures, (2) a desire to compete with others for status, resources, and political support, (3) a desire to take charge and be actively assertive, (4) a desire to exercise power over other people, (5) a desire to assume a position of high visibility, and (6) willingness to carry out routine administrative activities such as preparing budgets, writing reports, and serving on committees. Managerial motivation is measured with a projective test called the Miner sentence completion scale. The test provides an overall score as well as separate scores on each of the six aspects of managerial motivation.

Miner's research over a period of thirty years includes more than thirty-three studies on the relationship between managerial motivation and advancement (Miner, 1978, 1985). In large bureaucratic organizations, significant correlations were found between a manager's overall score on managerial motivation and advancement to higher levels of management. The particular motivation subscales that correlated most consistently with advancement included desire to exercise power (similar to need for power), desire to compete with peers (similar to need for achievement), and a positive attitude toward authority figures. Desire to stand out from the group and desire to perform routine administrative functions were less frequently associated with advancement and appear to be less important aspects of managerial motivation. Desire to be actively assertive was the least useful component for predicting advancement.

Miner (1967, 1977) also investigated managerial motivation in samples of leaders who were not in large hierarchical organizations. These samples included managers of branch offices in a consulting firm, administrators in a business school, and educational administrators in small school districts. The managerial motivation of these leaders was not correlated significantly with advancement. Criterion problems may account for the lack of significant correlations, but it is also possible that the aspects of managerial motivation measured by Miner's test are not important for advancement in smaller, less bureaucratic organizations. In another study on this question, Berman and Miner (1985) found that top executives who had risen up through the ranks in large bureaucratic organizations had higher managerial motivation than top executives of smaller, family-owned companies. However, both samples of executives had higher scores than a comparison group of managers at lower and middle levels of management who were the same age as the executives.

### Critical Incident Research on Competencies

Boyatzis (1982) described a program of research conducted in a variety of different private and public sector organizations to discover competencies related to managerial effectiveness. The competencies included personality



traits, motives, skills, knowledge, self-image, and some specific behaviors. The primary measure of competencies was the "behavioral event interview," a version of the critical incident method described in Chapter 3. Unlike the usual critical incident study, incidents were obtained in interviews with managers presented on the basis of effectiveness ratings. The sample included 253 managers at all levels of management, some rated low in effectiveness, some rated medium, and some rated high in effectiveness. Incidents were coded into competency categories, with traits and skills inferred from analysis of behavior in relation to the manager's intentions and the situation.

Several personality traits differentiated between effective and ineffective managers. Effective managers had a strong efficiency orientation, which included high achievement motivation, high inner work standards, and a concern for task objectives. Effective managers also had a strong socialized power orientation, as evidenced by a high desire for power, concern for power symbols, assertive behavior, attempts to influence others, and concern about the reputation of the organization's products and services. Effective managers had high self-confidence, as evidenced by a belief in their own ideas and ability, and by behavior such as taking decisive action (rather than hesitating or vacillating) and making proposals in a firm, unhesitating manner, with appropriate poise, bearing, and gestures. Finally, effective managers also demonstrated a strong belief in self-efficacy and internal locus of control, as evidenced by behavior such as initiating action (rather than waiting for things to happen), taking steps to circumvent obstacles, seeking information from a variety of sources, and accepting responsibility for success or failure.

Some competencies that differentiated between effective and ineffective managers involved interpersonal skills. Effective managers had strong oral presentation skills, including the ability to use symbolic, verbal, and nonverbal communication to make clear and convincing presentations to others. These managers also had interpersonal skills involving the effective use of socialized power, including the ability to develop networks and coalitions, gain cooperation from others, resolve conflicts in a constructive manner, and use role modeling to influence others. Another type of interpersonal skill that was strong in effective managers was the ability to manage group processes and build member identification and team spirit, by behavior such as creating symbols of group identity, emphasizing common interests and need for collaboration, facilitating successful teamwork, and providing public recognition of member contributions.

Effective managers had strong conceptual skills, including the ability (inductive reasoning) to identify patterns or relationships in information and events; the ability to convey the meaning by developing a concept, model, or theme, or by using appropriate metaphor and analogy; the ability to develop creative solutions and new insights into problems; and the ability (deductive reasoning) to use a concept or model to interpret events, analyze situations, distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information, and detect deviations from plans.

In summary, competencies inferred from descriptions of effective and ineffective behavior incidents distinguished between effective and ineffective

managers. The competencies included personality traits, motives, cognitive skills, and interpersonal skills.

#### Longitudinal Research with Assessment Centers

Research on managerial assessment centers has yielded useful insights about traits related to managerial advancement in an organization. The term assessment center refers to a standardized set of procedures used to identify managerial potential. Although no two programs are exactly alike, they all utilize multiple methods of assessing traits and skills, including interviews, projective tests, situational tests, written tests of personality and aptitude, a writing exercise (e.g., a short autobiographical essay) to evaluate written communication skills, and a speaking exercise to evaluate oral communication skills.

Two commonly used situational tests are the in-basket exercise and the leaderless group discussion. An in-basket exercise consists of letters, memos, and reports that supposedly have accumulated in the in-basket of a hypothetical manager. The candidate has a limited amount of time to deal with each of the managerial problems contained in these materials. A leaderless group discussion places candidates in a group situation where there is no designated leader. Sometimes the candidates are asked to represent competing viewpoints, with each candidate trying to persuade the others to adopt his or her viewpoint. Another variation is to have the candidates assume the roles of different managers trying to make a group decision, such as whether to merge with another company. Observers rate each candidate on qualities such as initiative, assertiveness, persuasiveness, dominance, and cooperation.

The assessment process in the centers typically takes two to three days. An overall evaluation of each candidate's management potential is made by several staff members who interview the candidate, examine test scores and biographical information, observe candidate behavior in the situational exercises, and then meet to discuss their assessment and resolve any disagreements. The assessors attempt to integrate the information from these diverse sources into a coherent picture of the motives, skills, and behavioral tendencies of each candidate.

Studies on the validity of assessment center predictions of managerial potential have found that this composite evaluation predicts later managerial success reasonably well. The most useful insights are gained from the relatively small number of studies that have examined the unique predictive power of each trait and skill measured in the assessment center. A good example is the longitudinal research conducted at American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T) by a team of researchers (Bray, Campbell, & Grant, 1974; Howard & Bray, 1988). Years after an early group of candidates was assessed at AT&T, each candidate's progress in terms of advancement into middle management was related back to the assessment scores, which had been kept confidential so as not to affect promotion decisions. Prediction of advancement was computed after eight years and after twenty years. The personal attributes that predicted advancement best after twenty years (from year zero to year twenty) included desire for advancement, dominance (need for power), interpersonal



tion summarizes and integrates the findings regarding the most relevant aspects of personality for effective leadership by managers and administrators in large organizations. Whenever possible, the relevance of traits and skills is explained by linking them back to behaviors and influence processes described in earlier chapters.

#### Energy Level and Stress Tolerance

The trait research finds that energy level, physical stamina, and stress tolerance are associated with managerial effectiveness (Bass, 1990; Howard & Bray, 1988). High energy level and stress tolerance help managers cope with the hectic pace, long hours, and unrelenting demands of most managerial jobs. Physical vitality and emotional resilience make it easier to cope with stressful interpersonal situations, such as a punitive boss, a troubled subordinate, an uncooperative peer, or a hostile client. Managerial jobs often have a high level of stress due to the pressure to make important decisions without adequate information and the need to resolve role conflicts and satisfy incompatible demands made by different parties. Effective problem solving requires an ability to remain calm and stay focused on a problem rather than panicking, denying the problem exists, or attempting to shift responsibility to someone else. Tolerance of stress is especially important for managers who must deal with adverse situations where the reputation and career of the manager, or the lives and jobs of subordinates, may hang in the balance. In addition to making better decisions, a leader with high stress tolerance and composure is more likely to stay calm and provide confident, decisive direction to subordinates in a crisis.

#### Self-Confidence

The term self-confidence is defined in a general way to include several related concepts such as self-esteem and self-efficacy. Most studies on leader traits find that self-confidence is related positively to effectiveness and advancement (see Bass, 1990). Self-confidence differentiated between effective and ineffective managers in the study of critical incidents by Boyatzis (1982), and self-confidence predicted subsequent advancement to higher levels of management in the assessment center research at AT&T (Howard & Bray, 1988). Other research finds that self-confidence is essential for charismatic leadership (see Chapter 11).

A number of behaviors related to self-confidence probably explain how it facilitates leadership effectiveness. Without strong self-confidence, a leader is less likely to make influence attempts, and any influence attempts made are less likely to be successful. Leaders with high self-confidence are more likely to attempt difficult tasks and to set challenging objectives for themselves. Leaders who have high expectations for themselves are likely to have high expectations for subordinates as well (Kouzes & Posner, 1987). These leaders are more persistent in pursuit of difficult objectives, despite initial problems and setbacks. Their

optimism and persistence in efforts to accomplish a task or mission are likely to increase commitment by subordinates, peers, and superiors to support the effort. In contrast, a leader who lacks self-confidence is likely to express doubts and act indecisive, thereby undermining his or her expert power and subsequent influence. It is especially important to act confident and be decisive in a crisis, where success often depends on the perception by subordinates that the leader has the knowledge and courage necessary to deal with the crisis effectively. Finally, self-confidence is related to a manager's behavior in dealing with problems. Leaders with low self-confidence are more likely to put off dealing with difficult problems or to shift responsibility to someone else. For example, Kipnis and Lane (1962) found that leaders with low self-confidence were more likely to respond to a problem subordinate by trying to "pass the buck" to superiors, whereas leaders with high self-confidence were more likely to handle the matter themselves and discuss the problem with the subordinate.

There are some clear advantages of having self-confidence, but some dysfunctional behaviors may also occur if self-confidence becomes excessive. Self-confidence may make a leader over-optimistic about the likely success of a risky venture, and it may result in rash decisions and denial of evidence that a plan is flawed. A manager with extremely high self-confidence is inclined to be arrogant, autocratic, and intolerant of dissenting viewpoints, especially if the manager is not emotionally mature. Because the manager is unresponsive to ideas and concerns expressed by others, the benefits of participative leadership are unlikely to be realized. Thus, in situations where the leader does not have vastly superior expertise than subordinates, a moderately high amount of self-confidence may be better than either extremely high self-confidence or low self-confidence. The arrogance and "know it all" attitude associated with excessive self-confidence has another negative side effect; it is likely to alienate people who are also very competent. An arrogant manager will have difficulty in developing cooperative relationships with people who are not dependent on the manager's specialized expertise and may make enemies who are able to derail the manager's career.

#### Internal Locus of Control

Another trait that appears to be relevant to managerial effectiveness is called the locus of control orientation, which is measured with a personality scale developed by Rotter (1966). People with a strong internal locus of control orientation (called "internals") believe that events in their lives are determined more by their own actions than by chance or uncontrollable forces. In contrast, people with a strong external control orientation (called "externals") believe that events are determined mostly by chance or fate and they can do little to improve their lives.

Because internals believe that they can influence their own destiny, they take more responsibility for their own actions and for the performance of their organization. Internals have a more future-oriented perspective, and they are



more likely to plan proactively how to accomplish objectives. They take more initiative than externals in discovering and solving problems. They are confident in their ability to influence people and are more likely to use persuasion rather than coercive or manipulative influence tactics (Goodstadt & Hjelle, 1973). They are more flexible, adaptive, and innovative in their response to a problem and in their management strategies (Miller, Kets de Vries, & Toulouse, 1982). When setbacks or failures occur, they are more likely to learn from them rather than just dismissing them as bad luck.

Research on the relationship of this trait to managerial effectiveness is still limited, but the results suggest that a strong internal locus of control orientation is positively associated with managerial effectiveness. For example, Miller and Toulouse (1986) conducted a study of chief executives in ninety-seven firms and found that internals were more effective than externals in terms of objective criteria such as profitability and sales growth. The relationship was stronger for firms in dynamic environments where it is more important to have major product innovations. Avolio and Howell (1992) conducted a study of seventy-six executives in a large financial institution and found that internals had better business unit performance than externals for the year following the measurement of personality.

#### Emotional Maturity

The term emotional maturity may be defined broadly to encompass several interrelated motives, traits, and values. A person who is emotionally mature is well adjusted and does not suffer from severe psychological disorders. Emotionally mature people have a more accurate awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, and they are oriented toward self-improvement instead of denying weaknesses and fantasizing success. People with high emotional maturity are less self-centered (they care about other people), they have more self-control (are less impulsive, more able to resist hedonistic temptations), they have more stable emotions (are not prone to extreme mood swings or outbursts of anger), and they are less defensive (are more receptive to criticism, more willing to learn from mistakes). As a result, leaders with high emotional maturity maintain more cooperative relationships with subordinates, peers, and superiors.

Most of the empirical research on traits shows that key components of emotional maturity are associated with managerial effectiveness and advancement (Bass, 1990). A study by McCauley and Lombardo (1990) with a measure called Benchmarks found that managers with good self-awareness and a desire to improve had higher advancement. Self-objectivity and general adjustment predicted advancement twenty years later in the AT&T study by Howard and Bray (1988). Other research has found that effective executives have a good understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses, and they are oriented toward self-improvement rather than being defensive (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Tichy & Devanna, 1986). The research on socialized and personalized power orientation provides additional evidence of the importance of emotional maturity for effective leadership.

Research on narcissism provides additional insights into the difficulties encountered by leaders who lack emotional maturity. Narcissism refers to a personality syndrome that involves an extreme need for esteem (e.g., prestige, status, attention, admiration, adulation), a strong need for power, weak self-control, and indifference about the needs and welfare of others. This personality syndrome can be measured with a self-report scale called the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Raskin & Hall, 1981). Narcissism includes many aspects of the personalized power orientation (House & Howell, 1992).

Researchers with a background in clinical psychology and psychoanalysis have described the origins of narcissism and the behaviors associated with it (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1984, 1985; Raskin, Novacek, & Hogan, 1991). Extreme narcissism occurs in people whose parents have been emotionally unresponsive and rejecting and who come to believe that they cannot depend on anyone's love or loyalty. In an effort to cope with their deprivation and inner loneliness, extreme narcissists become preoccupied with establishing their power, status, and prestige. They have fantasies of success and power. They have a grandiose, exaggerated sense of their own self-importance and unique talents. To support this self-deception, they seek continuous attention and admiration from others. Because they are so preoccupied with their own ego needs, narcissists have little empathy or concern for the feelings and needs of others. They exploit and manipulate others to indulge their desire for self-aggrandizement without feeling any remorse. They expect special favors from others without any feeling of need for reciprocity. Narcissists tend to oversimplify human relationships and motives and see everything in extreme good and bad terms. Relationships are polarized between loyal supporters and enemies. They are very defensive, and any criticism by others is interpreted as a sign of rejection and disloyalty. Although sometimes capable of being charming and helpful, they have a tendency to be aggressive and cruel toward people who oppose them or stand in their way.

Narcissists in leadership positions have a number of characteristic flaws (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1984, 1985). They surround themselves with subordinates who are loyal and uncritical. They make decisions without gathering adequate information about the environment. In the belief that they alone are sufficiently informed and talented to decide what is best, objective advice is not sought or accepted from subordinates and peers. They tend to undertake ambitious, grandiose projects to glorify themselves, but in the absence of an adequate analysis of the situation, the projects are likely to be risky and unrealistic. When a project is not going well, they tend to ignore or reject negative information, thereby missing the opportunity to correct problems in time to avert a disaster. When failure is finally evident, the narcissistic leader refuses to admit any responsibility, but instead finds scapegoats to blame. Finally, because they exploit the organization to compensate for their own sense of inadequacy, extreme narcissists are unable to plan for an orderly succession of leadership. They see themselves as indispensable and cling to power, in contrast to emotionally mature executives who are able to retire gracefully when their job is done and it is time for new leadership.



### Integrity

Integrity means that a person's behavior is consistent with espoused values, and the person is honest, ethical, and trustworthy. Integrity is a primary determinant of whether people will perceive a leader to be trustworthy. Unless one is perceived to be trustworthy, it is difficult to retain the loyalty of followers or to obtain cooperation and support from peers and superiors. Moreover, a major determinant of expert and referent power is the perception by others that a person is trustworthy.

Several types of behaviors are related to integrity. One important indicator of integrity is the extent to which one is honest and truthful rather than deceptive. Leaders lose credibility when people discover that they have lied or made claims that are grossly distorted. Another indicator of integrity is keeping promises. People are reluctant to negotiate agreements with a leader who cannot be trusted to keep promises. A third indicator of integrity is the extent to which a leader fulfills the responsibility of service and loyalty to followers. The trust of followers will be lost if they discover the leader has exploited or manipulated them in pursuit of self-interest. A fourth indicator of integrity is the extent to which a leader can be trusted not to indiscriminately repeat something said in the utmost confidence. People will not pass on important but sensitive information to a leader who cannot be trusted to keep a secret. A key determinant of perceived integrity is the extent to which a leader's behavior is consistent with values articulated repeatedly to followers. A leader who hopes to inspire others to support an ideology or vision must set an example in his or her own behavior. Finally, integrity also means taking responsibility for one's actions and decisions. Leaders appear weak and undependable when they make a decision or take a position on an issue, then try to deny responsibility later if the decision is unsuccessful or the position becomes controversial.

Integrity was mentioned as an important value by most of the forty-five British chief executives in a study by Cox and Cooper (1989). The study by McCall and Lombardo (1983a) described earlier in this chapter found that lack of integrity was common among the managers whose career derailed, whereas managers who succeeded were regarded as having strong integrity. The successful managers were honest and dependable, as reflected in the following precept (McCall & Lombardo, 1983b, pg. 30-31): "I will do exactly what I say I will do when I say I will do it. If I change my mind, I will tell you well in advance so you will not be harmed by my actions."

### Power Motivation

Someone with a high need for power enjoys influencing people and events and is more likely to seek positions of authority. Most studies find a strong relationship between need for power and advancement to higher levels of management in large organizations (e.g., Howard & Bray, 1988; McClelland & Boyatzis, 1982; Stahl, 1983). People with a strong need for power seek positions of authority and power, and they are likely to be more attuned to the power politics of organizations.

A strong need for power is relevant to managerial role requirements involving the use of power and influence. Managers in large organizations must exercise power to influence subordinates, peers, and superiors. People who are low in need for power usually lack the desire and assertiveness necessary to organize and direct group activities, to negotiate favorable agreements, to lobby for necessary resources, to advocate and promote desirable changes, and to impose necessary discipline. A person who finds such behavior difficult and emotionally disturbing or who believes it is wrong to exercise power over others is unlikely to satisfy the role requirements of a managerial job (Miner, 1985).

A strong need for power is desirable, but a manager's effectiveness also depends on how this need finds expression. The empirical research indicates that a socialized power orientation is more likely to result in effective leadership than a personalized power orientation (Boyatzis, 1982; House, Spangler, & Woycke, 1991; McClelland & Boyatzis, 1982; McClelland & Burnham, 1976). As yet only a few studies have examined the behaviors associated with each power orientation, but the results suggest that personalized power managers behave in very different ways from socialized power managers (McClelland, 1975, 1985).

Managers with a personalized power orientation use power to aggrandize themselves and satisfy their strong need for esteem and status. They have little inhibition or self-control, and they exercise power impulsively. According to McClelland and Burnham (1976, p. 103), "They are more rude to other people, they drink too much, they try to exploit others sexually, and they collect symbols of personal prestige such as fancy cars or big offices." Personalized power leaders seek to dominate subordinates by keeping them weak and dependent. Authority for making important decisions is centralized in the leader, information is restricted, and rewards and punishments are used to manipulate and control subordinates. The leader tries to play off different individuals or factions against each other to keep them weak. Assistance and advice to a subordinate is done in a way that demonstrates personal superiority and the inferiority and dependence of the subordinate. Sometimes personalized power leaders are able to inspire subordinate loyalty and team spirit, but organizational role clarity suffers. When problems are encountered in the work, subordinates are reluctant to take any initiative in solving them. Instead of acting quickly to deal with a problem, they ignore it or wait for explicit directions from the leader. Any subordinate loyalty that may occur is to the leader rather than to the organization, and when the leader departs there is likely to be disorder and a breakdown in team spirit.

Managers with a socialized power orientation are more emotionally mature. They exercise power more for the benefit of others, are hesitant about using power in a manipulative manner, are less egoistic and defensive, accumulate fewer material possessions, have a longer-range view, and are more willing to take advice from people with relevant expertise. Their strong need for power is expressed by using influence to build up the organization and make it successful. Because of their orientation toward building organizational commitment, this kind of leader is more likely to use a participative, coaching style of managerial behavior and is less likely to be coercive and autocratic. Such leaders "help make their subordinates feel strong and responsible, bind them less with petty



rules, help produce a clear organizational structure, and create pride in belonging to the unit" (McClelland, 1975, p. 302).

#### Achievement Orientation

Achievement orientation includes a set of related attitudes, values, and needs: need for achievement, desire to excel, drive to succeed, willingness to assume responsibility, and concern for task objectives. Many studies have been conducted on the relationship of achievement orientation to managerial advancement and effectiveness (see Bass, 1990). However, the results have not been consistent for different criteria (e.g., advancement, effectiveness) and for different types of managerial positions (e.g., entrepreneurial managers, corporate general managers, technical managers).

The relationship of achievement motivation to managerial effectiveness appears to be very complex. Some studies find a positive relationship between achievement motivation and effectiveness (e.g., Stahl, 1983; Wainer & Rubin, 1969), but other studies have found a negative relationship (House, Spangler, & Woyke, 1991), or no evidence of a strong, significant relationship (Miller & Toulouse, 1986). One possible explanation for these inconsistent findings is that the relationship of achievement motivation to managerial effectiveness is curvilinear rather than linear. In other words, managers with a moderately high amount of achievement motivation are more effective than managers with low achievement motivation, or managers with very high achievement motivation. If this explanation is correct, we would expect to find a negative correlation in studies of top-level leaders where all of the leaders probably have at least a moderately high need for achievement, as in the study of United States Presidents by House et al., 1991.

Research on the behavioral correlates of achievement orientation is still very limited, but some relationships appear likely. Compared to managers with a weak achievement orientation, managers with a strong achievement orientation are likely to have a strong concern for task objectives, they are more willing to assume responsibility for solving task-related problems, they are more likely to take the initiative in discovering these problems and acting decisively to solve them, and they prefer solutions that involve moderate levels of risk rather than solutions that are either very risky or very conservative. These managers are likely to engage in task behaviors such as setting challenging but realistic goals and deadlines, developing specific action plans, determining ways to overcome obstacles, organizing the work efficiently, and emphasizing performance when talking to others (Boyatzis, 1982). In contrast, a manager with a weak achievement orientation is not motivated to seek opportunities involving challenging objectives and moderate risks and is less willing to take the initiative to identify problems and to assume responsibility for solving them.

A strong achievement orientation may also result in behavior that undermines managerial effectiveness. If need for achievement is the dominant motive for a manager, it is likely that the manager's efforts will be directed

toward his or her own individual achievement and advancement rather than toward the achievements of the work unit headed by the manager. The manager tries to accomplish everything alone, is reluctant to delegate, and fails to develop a strong sense of responsibility and task commitment among subordinates (McClelland & Burnham, 1976; Miller & Toulouse, 1986). It is especially difficult for this type of person to function effectively in a management team in which leadership responsibility is shared.

The way in which achievement orientation finds expression in a manager's behavior depends on the overall motive pattern of the manager. Achievement motivation enhances leadership effectiveness only if it is subordinated to a stronger need for socialized power, so that the manager's efforts are directed toward building a successful team. When combined with a personalized need for power, strong achievement motivation may be focused on career advancement at any cost. This type of manager will neglect task objectives and the development of subordinates in an effort to build a personal reputation as a fast-rising star. Task decisions will be guided by a desire to make the manager's work unit look good in the immediate future, even though performance may suffer in the longer run. The manager is likely to take personal control over promising, highly visible projects, and will take most of the credit for their success. The manager may become so competitive that he or she refuses to cooperate with peers who are viewed as potential rivals. As found in the CCL study, the result is likely to be initial advancement but eventual derailment when overriding personal ambition and excessive competitiveness make too many powerful enemies.

#### Need for Affiliation

As noted earlier in this chapter, people with a strong need for affiliation receive great satisfaction from being liked and accepted by others, and they enjoy working with people who are friendly and cooperative. Most studies find a negative correlation between need for affiliation and managerial effectiveness. The ineffectiveness of managers with a high need for affiliation can be understood by examining the typical pattern of behavior for such managers. These managers are concerned primarily about relationships rather than the task, and they are unwilling to allow the work to interfere with harmonious relationships (Litwin & Stringer, 1966; McClelland, 1975). They seek to avoid conflicts or smooth them over rather than confront genuine differences. They avoid making necessary but unpopular decisions. They dispense rewards in a way designed to gain approval, rather than rewarding effective performance. They show favoritism to personal friends in making assignments and allowing exceptions to rules. This pattern of behavior often leaves subordinates feeling "weak, irresponsible, and without a sense of what might happen next, of where they stand in relation to their manager, or even of what they ought to be doing" (McClelland & Burnham, 1976, p. 104).

It is clearly undesirable for a manager to have a strong need for af-



filiation, but it is likely that there are also some undesirable consequences for managers who are at the other extreme. A person who is very low in need for affiliation tends to be a "loner" who doesn't like to socialize with others, except perhaps the immediate family or a few close friends. This type of person may lack the motivation to engage in the many social and public relations activities that are essential for a manager, including those involved in establishing effective interpersonal relationships with subordinates, superiors, and peers. As a result, this type of person may fail to develop effective interpersonal skills and may lack confidence in being able to influence others. Thus, it is likely that the optimal level of affiliation motivation is moderately low rather than high or extremely low.

#### MANAGERIAL SKILLS AND EFFECTIVENESS

The early trait studies and other research described in this chapter identified a number of managerial skills that are relevant to managerial effectiveness. The research findings will be organized according to technical, interpersonal, and cognitive skills.

##### Technical Skills

Technical skills include knowledge about methods, processes, procedures, and techniques for conducting the specialized activities of the manager's organizational unit. These skills are learned during formal education in specialized subjects (e.g., accounting, finance, marketing, engineering, business law, computer programming, etc.) and through on-the-job training and experience. Acquisition of technical knowledge is facilitated by a good memory for details, and the ability to learn technical material quickly. Effective managers are able to obtain information and ideas from many sources and store it away in their memory for use when they need it. The trait research finds ample evidence that technical skills are related to the effectiveness of civilian and military leaders, especially at lower levels of management (see Bass, 1990). The CCL study described earlier found that technical brilliance is related to effectiveness and advancement at lower levels of management, but it becomes relatively less important at higher levels of management (McCall & Lombardo, 1983).

Managers who supervise the work of others need extensive knowledge of the techniques and equipment used by subordinates to perform the work. Technical knowledge of products and processes is necessary to plan and organize work operations, to direct and train subordinates with specialized activities, and to monitor and evaluate their performance. Technical expertise is needed to deal with disruptions in the work due to equipment breakdowns, quality defects, accidents, insufficient materials, and coordination problems.

Technical knowledge is especially relevant for entrepreneurial managers. The inspirational vision of a new product or service may seem to spring

from out of nowhere, but it is actually the result of many years of learning and experience. Research on entrepreneurs who build successful companies or introduce important new products in established companies suggest that their technical knowledge is the fertile ground in which the seeds of inspiration take root to yield innovative products (Westley & Mintzberg, 1989). Some examples include Edwin Land, the inventor of the instant camera and founder of Polaroid Corporation, and Steve Jobs, the cofounder of Apple Computer.

It is not enough to have an intimate knowledge of the products and processes for which a manager is responsible. Managers also need to have extensive knowledge of the products and services provided by competitors. Strategic planning is unlikely to be effective unless a manager understands the relative strengths and weaknesses of his or her own products (or services) in comparison to those provided by competitors (Peters & Austin, 1985).

##### Interpersonal Skills

As noted earlier in this chapter, interpersonal skills include knowledge about human behavior and group processes; ability to understand the feelings, attitudes, and motives of others; and ability to communicate clearly and persuasively. The trait research shows consistently that these human relations skills are important for managerial effectiveness and advancement (Bass, 1990). Interpersonal skills measured in assessment centers predicted advancement twenty years later in the AT&T study, and the CCL study found that deficiencies in interpersonal skills were a major reason for managers who eventually derailed in their management careers. Boyatzis (1982) found that interpersonal skills differentiated between effective and ineffective managers, regardless of the situation.

Interpersonal skills such as empathy, social insight, charm, tact and diplomacy, persuasiveness, and oral communication ability are essential to develop and maintain cooperative relationships with subordinates, superiors, peers, and outsiders. A manager who understands people and is charming, tactful, and diplomatic will have more cooperative relationships than one who is insensitive and offensive. McCall and Lombardo (1983, p. 28) recount the following incident involving an abrasive manager who derailed:

The manager walked into the subordinate's office, interrupting a meeting, and said, "I need to see you." When the subordinate tried to explain that he was occupied, his boss snarled, "I don't give a goddamn. I said I wanted to see you now."

Interpersonal skills are also essential for influencing people. Empathy and social insight mean the ability to understand someone's motives, values, and emotions. Understanding what people want and how they perceive things is necessary to select an appropriate influence strategy to use with them. Persuasiveness and oral communication skill enable the manager to carry out an influence strategy more effectively. As we will see in Chapters 11 and 12, the



ability to articulate an appealing vision is an essential skill for inspiring follower commitment.

Interpersonal skills also enhance the effectiveness of relationship-oriented managerial behaviors such as those described in Chapter 5. Empathy and social insight are important for supporting, mentoring, and counseling subordinates. These skills are also important for resolving conflicts in a constructive way. Managers with strong interpersonal skills are able to listen in an attentive, sympathetic, and nonjudgmental way to somebody with a personal problem, complaint, or criticism in order to understand the person's feelings and perceptions.

Even managerial behaviors that are primarily task oriented such as making assignments and giving instructions require considerable interpersonal skill to be enacted in a way that reflects a dual concern for people and the task. For example, we saw in Chapter 8 that a manager is more likely to gain a favorable reaction to legitimate requests when they are made in a polite, respectful manner. Likewise, we saw in Chapter 5 that a subordinate is more likely to learn a task and gain confidence in performing it when the manager provides instruction in a helpful, patient way.

Some people have a misconception that interpersonal skill is nothing more than considerate behavior to be "turned on" occasionally in special situations. Katz (1955, p. 34) takes a very different viewpoint:

Real skill in working with others must become a natural, continuous activity, since it involves sensitivity not only at times of decision making but also in the day-by-day behavior of the individual. . . . Because everything a leader says and does (or leaves unsaid or undone) has an effect on his associates, his true self will, in time, show through. Thus, to be effective, this skill must be naturally developed and unconsciously, as well as consistently, demonstrated in the individual's every action.

### Conceptual Skills

As noted earlier in this chapter, conceptual skills include several cognitive abilities such as analytical ability, logical thinking, concept formation, inductive reasoning, and deductive reasoning. In general terms, conceptual skill includes good judgment, foresight, intuition, creativity, and the ability to find meaning and order in ambiguous, uncertain events. Conceptual skills have been measured with a variety of different methods, including aptitude tests, situational tests, interviews, and critical incidents.

The trait research with pencil and paper measures of conceptual skill finds strong evidence that this type of ability is related to managerial effectiveness, especially in high-level managerial positions (Bass, 1990). Conceptual skills measured with incident interviews differentiated between effective and ineffective managers in the study by Boyatzis (1982). Conceptual skills measured in an assessment center predicted advancement to higher levels of management twenty years later in the study at AT&T (Howard & Bray, 1988). In the CCL

study described earlier, weak conceptual skills were one reason for managers who derailed (McCall & Lombardo, 1983, p. 26): "The charming but not brilliant find that the job gets too big and the problems too complex to get by on interpersonal skills."

One type of conceptual skill, called cognitive complexity, includes the ability to utilize cues to make distinctions and develop categories for classifying things, as well as the ability to identify complex relationships and develop creative solutions to problems. A person with low cognitive complexity sees things in simplistic black and white terms and has difficulty in seeing how many diverse elements fit together to make a meaningful whole. A person with high cognitive complexity is able to see many shades of gray and is able to identify complex patterns of relationships and predict future events from current trends. In a longitudinal study of managers in four companies, cognitive complexity measured with an individual assessment interview predicted managerial advancement remarkably well four to eight years later (Stamp, 1988).

Conceptual skills are essential for effective planning, organizing, and problem solving. A major administrative responsibility is coordination of the separate, specialized parts of the organization. To accomplish effective coordination, a manager needs to understand how the various parts of the organization relate to each other and how changes in one part of the system affect the other parts. A manager with high cognitive complexity is able to develop a better implicit model of the organization to help understand the most critical factors and the relationships among them. A model is like a road map that depicts the terrain for a region, shows where things are located in relation to each other, and helps you decide how to get from one place to another. Managers with weak cognitive skills tend to develop a simplistic implicit model that is not very useful because it is unable to describe the complex processes and the dynamic flow of events in the organization.

A manager must be able to comprehend how changes in the external environment will affect the organization. Strategic planning by executives requires considerable ability to analyze events and perceive trends, anticipate changes, and recognize opportunities and potential problems. The importance of this "external perspective" is explained by Katz and Kahn (1978, p. 54):

The decision to merge or resist merger, to make a major change in location or to maintain a present position, to launch an entirely new line of products or to stay with the traditional items, to be the first with a new manufacturing process or to wait until others attempt it—these are the kinds of issues that demand the greatest understanding of the environment on the part of management. They are also the kinds of issues that will make the difference between successful and unsuccessful competition, between growth and stagnation, survival and failure.

Effective managers use an appropriate mix of intuition and conscious reasoning for the type of decision situation confronting them (Agor, 1986; Lord & Maher, 1991). Intuition is an insight or hunch that seems to occur suddenly without conscious reasoning. According to Simon (1987), intuition is not a mystical process but rather is the result of extensive earlier experience with similar



problems. The relevant knowledge gained from this experience can be tapped when needed without much conscious awareness, much in the same way that a champion chess player quickly understands what move to make next without having to make a careful and detailed analysis of the chess pieces on the board. Intuition is especially useful when making decisions in ambiguous situations where information is limited and there is much uncertainty. However, to make successful intuitive decisions requires extensive prior knowledge of the organization, its products and services, and its environment.

#### Skill Importance at Different Levels of Management

Managers need all three types of skills to fulfill their role requirements, but the relative importance of the skills depends on the leadership situation. One aspect of the situation influencing skill importance is a manager's position in the authority hierarchy of the organization (Boyatzis, 1982; Jacobs & Jaques, 1987; Katz, 1955; Mann, 1965). Skill priorities at different levels of management are related to the differing role requirements described in Chapter 2. The higher the management level, the more cognitive skill is needed to carry out required responsibilities effectively.

Since the major responsibility of top executives is making strategic decisions, conceptual skills are more important at this level than at middle or lower levels. Top executives need to analyze vast amounts of ambiguous and contradictory information about the environment in order to make strategic decisions and to interpret events for other members of the organization. Executives need to have a long time perspective (ten to twenty years) and the ability to comprehend complex relationships among variables relevant to the performance of the organization (Jacobs & Jaques, 1987). A top executive must be able to anticipate future events and know how to plan for them. As we will see in Chapters 12 and 13, attempts to make major changes in an organization are unlikely to be successful unless a leader is able to formulate a strategic vision to guide the change and inspire enthusiasm for it. The quality of strategic decisions ultimately depends on conceptual skill, even though some technical knowledge is necessary to make these decisions and interpersonal skills are necessary for developing relationships, obtaining information, and influencing subordinates to implement decisions (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

The role of middle managers is primarily one of supplementing existing structure and developing ways to implement policies and goals established at higher levels. This role requires a roughly equal mix of technical, interpersonal, and conceptual skills. Low-level managers are mainly responsible for implementing policy and maintaining the work flow within the existing organizational structure; for these managers, technical skills are relatively more important than conceptual skills or interpersonal skills.

Some research indicates the skill requirements for managers at each level vary somewhat depending on the type of organization, its size, the type of organization structure, and the degree of centralization of authority (McLennan,

1967). For example, technical skills are more important for top executives in organizations where operating decisions are highly centralized. Likewise, more technical skill is needed by top executives who have functionally specialized roles (e.g., selling to key customers, product design) in addition to general administrative responsibilities. More conceptual skill is needed by middle managers in organizations where these managers are expected to participate in strategic planning and management of innovation. More interpersonal skill is needed by middle managers and supervisors in matrix organizations and in organizations that make extensive use of self-managed groups.

#### Transferability of Skills across Situations

An interesting question about managerial skills is the extent to which they are transferable from one situation to another. Writers generally agree that lower-level managers cannot easily transfer to a different functional specialty (e.g., from sales manager to engineering manager) because the technical skills at this level of management are so vital and so different across functions. However, there is much less agreement about the transferability of managerial skills at the executive level. Katz (1955) proposed that top-level managers with ample human relations and conceptual skills can be shifted from one industry to another with great ease and no loss of effectiveness. Other writers contend that the transferability of skills for top executives is very limited due to variations in ownership, traditions, organizational climate, and culture (Dale, 1960; Kotter, 1982; McLennan, 1967; Shetty & Peery, 1976).

Different industries have unique economic, market, and technological characteristics. Familiarity with technical matters, products, personalities, and tradition is a type of knowledge that is acquired only through long experience in the organization. Only the general components of conceptual and technical skills can be transferred to a different situation; the unique knowledge component of these skills must be relearned. Furthermore, a period of several years may be needed by an outside successor to develop a network of contacts and reciprocal trading relationships, whereas an internal successor already has part of the necessary network in place. In general, it will be more difficult for an executive to make a successful transition to a different industry or type of organization if the difference between situations is great, substantial technical expertise is required in the new position, and the network of internal and external contacts must be extensive (Kotter, 1982; Shetty & Peery, 1976).

Recent research and theory on how organizations evolve and adapt to a changing environment suggests that even in the same organization the required skills for an executive may change over time. The skills needed by an entrepreneurial manager to build a new organization are not identical to the skills needed by the chief executive of a large, established organization. The skills needed to lead an organization with a stable, supportive environment are not identical to the skills needed to lead an organization facing a turbulent, competitive environment (Hunt, 1991; Lord & Maher, 1991).



## EVALUATION OF THE TRAIT RESEARCH

Considerable progress has been made in identifying traits and skills relevant for managerial effectiveness and advancement. Nevertheless, this line of research has been hindered by some methodological and conceptual limitations. The abstract nature of most traits limits their utility for understanding leadership effectiveness. It is difficult to interpret the relevance of abstract traits except by examining how they are expressed in the actual behavior of leaders. Unfortunately, most trait studies are not guided by a theory that explains how traits are related to managerial effectiveness and advancement. Relatively few trait studies have actually included measures of mediating variables such as leader behavior and subordinate motivation. A move in this direction can be seen in some of the current research on charismatic leadership, which is discussed in Chapter 11.

There is a need for more research that takes a holistic view and examines patterns of leader traits and skills, rather than continuing the earlier approach of focusing on each trait as a separate predictor of leadership effectiveness or advancement. Any single trait (e.g., need for power) has only a weak relationship to leader effectiveness, some of the traits are moderately correlated with each other, and some of the traits interact in complex ways. Thus, when traits are examined one at a time, the results are usually weak and difficult to interpret. In contrast, when researchers examine a pattern of related traits (e.g., self-control; need for power, achievement, and affiliation), the results are more predictive of managerial effectiveness, and they can be interpreted in ways consistent with our knowledge about the types of behavior required for effective leadership. More research is needed to determine how skills and personality traits interact in determining leadership effectiveness. For example, self-confidence and stress tolerance may increase the capacity of a leader to make use of cognitive skills in stressful situations (Mumford & Connelly, 1991).

Another useful concept that deserves more attention from researchers is the idea of balance. In some cases balance means that the optimal amount of some trait is a moderate amount rather than either a very low or a very high amount of the trait. For example, leaders need self-confidence to be effective in influencing others to believe in them and their proposals, but excessive self-confidence makes a leader unresponsive to negative information and insensitive to dissenting views. Unfortunately, most trait studies test only for simple, linear relationships. There is a need for more theory-based studies that include analyses to test whether a curvilinear relationship is supported by the data.

Sometimes balance means tempering one trait with another, which gets back to the analysis of trait patterns. For example, effective leaders balance a high need for power with the emotional maturity required to ensure that subordinates are empowered rather than dominated. Leaders often find themselves in situations involving tradeoffs between competing values (McCall, Lombardo, & Morrison, 1988; Quinn, 1988). Concern for the task must be balanced against concern for people. Concern for a leader's own needs must be balanced against

concern for organizational needs. Concern for the needs of subordinates must be balanced against concern for the needs of superiors, lateral peers, and clients. Decisiveness and risk taking must be balanced with prudent caution. Concern for control must be balanced with concern for empowerment. Toughness must be balanced with compassion. Desire for change and innovation must be balanced against need for continuity and predictability. Concern for flexibility must be balanced with concern for efficiency. More research is needed to discover how effective leaders balance competing values.

The concept of balance has been described for individuals, but it applies to shared leadership as well. For example, balance may involve several different leaders in a management team who have complementary attributes that compensate for each other's weaknesses and enhance each other's strengths (Bradford & Cohen, 1984). A better understanding of leadership in an organization may be gained by examining the pattern of traits for the executive team rather than focusing on the traits of a single leader such as the chief executive officer (CEO). This subject will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 13.

## APPLICATIONS: GUIDELINES FOR MANAGERS

The finding that particular skills and traits are positively related to managerial effectiveness and advancement has some practical implications for people in planning their own careers as a manager.

- Know your strengths and weaknesses.

Effective managers have a better understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses. Insight about strengths and weaknesses may be gained by monitoring one's own behavior and the outcomes of this behavior. In addition to self-monitoring, it is important to be receptive to feedback from others about positive and negative aspects of behavior as they perceive it. Take advantage of assessment opportunities like those offered by assessment centers and feedback workshops. Learn about the key traits and skills necessary for the type of managerial position you hold or aspire to occupy, and assess the extent to which you have them.

- Develop relevant skills that are deficient.

Effective managers are more oriented toward continuous learning and self-development. After a manager determines what skills need to be strengthened, it is wise to seek opportunities for additional training or coaching. Some training may be obtained in specialized management development workshops run by one's employer or by consulting companies. The managers who were successful in the AT&T study and the CCL study had more experience in dealing with a variety of difficult problems and assignments. Thus, another approach for developing new skills is to seek diverse and challenging assignments rather than assignments that are easy or similar to earlier ones.



• **Compensate for weaknesses.**

One way to compensate for weaknesses is to select subordinates who have complementary strengths and allow them to assume responsibility for aspects of the work that they are more qualified to perform. Sometimes it is appropriate to delegate responsibilities to qualified individuals, and other times it is better to have a management team (in which you are a member) share the responsibility for a particular problem or challenge. Sharing some management responsibilities with subordinates has another beneficial aspect in that it is likely to be a developmental experience for them.

**SUMMARY**

The early trait studies attempted to identify physical characteristics, personality traits, and abilities of people who were believed to be "natural leaders." Hundreds of trait studies were conducted, but individual traits failed to correlate in a strong and consistent manner with leadership effectiveness. The early trait research did not pay much attention to the question of how traits interact as an integrator of personality and behavior, or how the situation determines the relevance of different traits and skills for leader effectiveness. In recent years, the investigation of leader traits has been more productive, due to the inclusion of more relevant traits, use of better measures of traits, examination of trait patterns, and use of longitudinal research.

Some personality traits found to be especially relevant for effectiveness include energy level and stress tolerance, self-confidence, internal control orientation, emotional maturity, and integrity. Managerial motivation is also important for effective leadership. The motive pattern characteristic of many effective managers includes a socialized power orientation, a moderately strong need for achievement, and a relatively weaker need for affiliation.

To be successful, a leader also needs to have considerable ability. Three general categories of skills relevant to managers are interpersonal skills, cognitive skills, and technical skills. The relative priority of the three types of skills probably depends on the type of organization and level of management. The relative importance of the specific skills within each broad category also depends on the situation. Some skills such as persuasiveness, analytical ability, speaking ability, and memory for details will help a manager be successful in any situation, whereas some other skills are not easily transferred to a different type of position.

The trait approach has important implications for improving managerial effectiveness. Information about a person's traits and skills is essential for selecting people to fill managerial positions, for identifying training needs in the current job, and for planning management development activities to prepare the person for promotion to higher-level jobs. The use of selection and training to improve managerial effectiveness is discussed in Chapter 15.

**REVIEW AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What traits and skills are the best predictors of managerial performance and advancement?
2. Is it possible to have too much of a good thing with some traits?
3. How does consideration of trait patterns advance our understanding beyond what is learned from studying single traits by themselves?
4. How is managerial motivation related to the effectiveness and advancement of managers in large organizations?
5. What are the major reasons why some managers derail in their careers?
6. Why are technical, conceptual, and interpersonal skills important for managerial effectiveness?
7. Why is it important to consider the nature of the managerial job situation when trying to identify essential traits and skills?
8. Which skills are most important at lower, middle, and higher levels of management?
9. How are managerial traits and skills related to managerial behavior?
10. What has trait research added to our understanding about leadership effectiveness?

**CASES**

**National Products**

Susan Thomas is the Vice President for Human Resources at National Products, a manufacturing company with 500 employees. The company has an opening for a general manager in one of its product divisions, and the president asked Susan to review the backgrounds of three department managers who are interested in being promoted to this position. She is expected either to recommend one of the three internal candidates or to begin recruitment of external candidates. The internal candidates are Charley Adams, Bill Stuart, and Ray Johnson. The following information about each candidate was obtained from performance records, interviews with the candidates, and discussions with the boss of each candidate.

**Charley Adams**

Charley Adams has been a production manager for the past eight years. He is a very easy-going person who loves to swap jokes and tell stories. Charley stresses the importance of cooperation and teamwork. He is uncomfortable with conflict, and he tries to smooth it over quickly or find an acceptable compromise.

Before becoming a manager, Charley was always willing to take on extra assignments for his boss and to provide helpful advice to less experienced coworkers in his department. Charley is proud of his reputation as a "good team player" and a loyal "company man." It is very important to Charley to be liked and appreciated by people in the organization.



appropriate or unethical request. Indirect tactics such as role modeling, ecological control, and the design of formal reward systems are also used to influence people in organizations. Political tactics such as forming coalitions, co-opting opponents, gaining control over key decisions, and institutionalizing power are used more often in situations where there is strong disagreement about organizational objectives and priorities. These tactics become detrimental when they are used to perpetuate the power of leaders who have lost touch with the needs of the organization in a changing environment.

Leaders are better off if they have at least a moderate amount of position power, especially the authority to make necessary changes and dispense tangible rewards and benefits. The capacity to provide satisfactory benefits and facilitate the work of the group depends on the leader's upward and lateral influence in the organization. Upward influence can be viewed as a source of position power, but it is also a way of bypassing the constraints of formal authority to get things accomplished. Too much position power entails the risk that the leader will be tempted to rely on it and neglect more effective forms of influence for building commitment.

The research on participative leadership, delegation, and other forms of empowerment provides an important insight about power: it is not a fixed quantity to be divided among people, but rather a variable quantity that may grow or shrink. By allowing subordinates to have more influence over important decisions, it is possible to increase the leader's influence over the commitment of subordinates to implement these decisions. However, this outcome occurs only when there is underlying agreement about the objectives and priorities for the work unit, subordinates are willing to assume more responsibility for making decisions, and there is a high degree of trust between the leader and subordinates. These favorable conditions ensure that people will work together to find better ways to accomplish organizational objectives.

#### What We Know about Traits and Skills

The primary focus of the trait research has been on the implications of individual attributes for the effectiveness and advancement of managers. Effective leaders in large hierarchical organizations tend to have a strong socialized need for power, a fairly strong need for achievement, and a somewhat weaker need for affiliation. Related traits include high energy, stress tolerance, self-confidence, emotional maturity, integrity, and an internal locus of control orientation. Effective managers are inclined to be pragmatic and results oriented, and they enjoy persuasive activities requiring initiative and moderate risk taking.

Skills are another promising predictor of leader effectiveness. Technical skills, conceptual skills, and interpersonal skills are all necessary for most leadership roles. However, the relative importance of the three types of skills varies greatly from situation to situation. In addition, the optimal mix of specific component skills and the nature of the technical expertise required by a leader vary

greatly from one type of organization to another. However, some specific skills such as analytical ability, persuasiveness, speaking ability, memory for details, empathy, tact, and charm are probably useful in all leadership positions.

The traits required for charismatic and transformational leadership appear to be very similar to the traits found for effective leaders in earlier research. However, it is likely that charismatic and transformational leaders need more conceptual and interpersonal skill than other leaders. Strong cognitive skills (cognitive complexity, foresight, intuition, creativity) are required to identify an appropriate strategy and design an organization structure compatible with the strategy. These cognitive skills need to be supplemented with considerable technical skill (knowledge of products and services, knowledge of processes and technology, knowledge of markets and competitors). Strong interpersonal skills (oral communication, empathy, listening skills, persuasiveness, diplomacy, negotiating ability) are needed to gain the commitment of people in the organization (and key outsiders) to a radical new strategy, and to manage the inevitable political turmoil and conflict in an organization undergoing drastic change.

One of the key principles coming out of the trait approach is the idea of balance. In some cases balance means a moderate amount of some trait, such as need for achievement, self-confidence, risk taking, decisiveness, and assertiveness, rather than either a very small or a very great amount of the trait. In other cases, balance means tempering one trait with another, such as tempering a high need for power with the emotional maturity required to ensure that subordinates are empowered rather than dominated. Sometimes balance must be achieved between competing values (e.g., efficiency vs. flexibility). Effective leaders are able to achieve an appropriate balance in these inevitable role conflicts.

#### What We Know about Situational Aspects

Role expectations from others are a major influence on a manager's behavior. A manager's pattern of interactions and how much time is spent with subordinates, peers, superiors, and outsiders depends on the nature of the work and whether it is self-generating or reactive, repetitive or variable, uncertain or predictable, fragmented or sustained, hurried or unhurried. The work pattern is affected by attributes of the managerial position such as type of organization, level of management in the organization, size of the work unit, function of the work unit, lateral interdependence, and existence of a hostile or unstable environment that causes frequent crises. Executives face a number of internal and external demands and constraints. Despite the situational demands and pressures, managers have choices in what aspects of the job to emphasize, how to allocate time, and with whom to interact. Effective managers seek to understand the demands and constraints of their leadership situation and adapt their behavior accordingly. They are able to reconcile the role conflicts caused by incompatible role expectations from different role senders, and they take advantage of



Even the interpretation of results is complicated by cultural differences in underlying values and assumptions about human nature and about organizations (Boyacigiller & Adler, 1991). Thus, it is still too early for any firm conclusions about the universal and unique aspects of leadership across cultures. With the rapid pace of globalization and the emergence of more nations with developing economies, cross-cultural differences in leadership is clearly an important topic for future research.

#### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

People have been interested in leadership since the beginning of recorded history, and we have been studying leadership as a scientific discipline for over a half century. The massive literature produced by this effort is beset with confusion and ambiguity, but the selective review of theory and research in this book shows that we have made substantial progress in learning about leadership. Nevertheless, much remains to be learned. It becomes clearer every year that effective leadership at all levels of society and in all of our organizations is essential for coping with the growing social and economic problems confronting the world. Learning to cope with these problems better is not a luxury but a necessity.

The development of the field has been slower than would be expected from the large volume of publications and the immense amount of effort expended on leadership research. Fortunately, the last decade has witnessed an increase in the richness of research questions and the variety of approaches used to study them, and the field appears to be undergoing an accelerating pace of discovery. With such a vital subject as this one, it is imperative that we continue to upgrade the quality of leadership research and theory. With dedicated effort by researchers who value discovery of useful knowledge more than publishing trivial studies, there are good prospects for rapid progress in the coming years.

#### REVIEW AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Briefly summarize major findings in trait research, power-influence research, behavior research, and situational research.
2. What are some points of convergence among the different approaches?
3. What are some major gaps in our knowledge about leadership?
4. What types of future research would contribute the most to our understanding of leadership effectiveness?
5. Briefly describe how selection and placement can be used to improve leadership in organizations.
6. Briefly describe how situational engineering can be used for improving leadership in organizations.
7. What conditions facilitate learning of skills from experience by managers?
8. What types of formal training programs have been used for developing managerial skills?
9. What obstacles impede learning from experience by executives?

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