



## 5Cs OF MANAGERIAL LEADERSHIP

— NALINI VADIVELAN

**T**wenty-first Century work life is portrayed by Hirschhorn (1997) as, “new conditions of work [that] simultaneously pull us toward interdependence while pushing us toward estrangement. This is the new dialectic of the post-industrial age” (p. 90). Dysfunctional families, socio-economic imbalances, and political instability caused by inapt leaders warrants to explore the impact of organizations on humanity. Great minds shape technology, innovation, research and development in these organizations. In return, big organizations drive the economy, politics, global warming, and business competition. Though many organizations invest in retention policies, employees have less loyalty, seek better compensation and work conditions. A concern for 21st Century workers is giving up individual interests and social welfare in exchange for meeting organizational demands and goals. According to Hirschhorn, postmodernism urges employees to tap into their passion for a more personalized connection to their job. Employees are choosing more fulfilling careers over job security.

This new sensibility stimulates more thought and this



article intends to explore the underlying causes as well as using guiding principles of servant-leadership and project management to deal with them. The need of managerial leadership is explained using 5C connectors, which combines best-in-class leadership style and management methodology to achieve business excellence. This approach emphasizes less competition and more coexistence.

## TWO ROADS DIVERGE IN A FOREST

A few years back, we went on a family vacation to Olympic National Park, located in the State of Washington, United States. We were astounded by the beauty and majesty of all the park had to offer from the crystal clear blue waters of Crescent Lake, Sol Duc Falls, and the breathtaking sunsets at Realto Beach. We hiked trails while snapping beautiful scenes of nature onto our cameras. By day three, everyone was tired and started slowing down. It was a sunny afternoon when we came near a trail head with a signboard of two different directions. One was a longer trail about 3 miles, and the other was about half as long. The longer trail would take us into Hoh Rainforest and further lead to the banks of Hoh River, while the shorter trail featured other attractions and a distant view of the river, but its path connected back to the trailhead.

My husband chose the longer trail for us. I was not pleased with his choice for many reasons - it was almost past mid-day, my legs were aching, and return journey on the same path looked boring. However, my husband convinced me that the experience of rainforest and the Hoh River were worth the



effort. We decided to rest on a huge rock near the signboard before beginning the hike. A few minutes later, a young couple probably in their late twenties passed by. They looked at the sign and quickly headed onto the longer trail with the man leading the way. Next came an elderly couple in their early sixties. They took note of the directions, looked into each other's eyes, smiled, and stepped onto the shorter trail. With the lady ahead, the man shook his shoulders and quietly followed her. Both couples did not utter a single word but their simple gestures indicated they understood one another. Jacques (1998) established several propositions on how people mature with age in different bands irrespective of education, work, race, religion, or ethnicity, based on their mental ability to process complexity.

A middle-aged couple with two young children were the next ones to arrive at the junction. The couple read the signboard and started a discussion in their low voices. After a little while, they turned back without hiking on either of the trails. I was surprised by their decision and looked at my husband. He slowly jumped off the rock, dusted his hands and whispered to me, "middle-age crisis". I smiled and followed him into the dense woods where we were surrounded by gigantic trees blanketed with lush green fibrous algae. The misty atmosphere and chilly fresh air within the rain forest is an unparalleled experience. I realized that my legs stopped aching after a refreshing quench in the Hoh River. This journey led to an epiphany of how people deal with complex problems and competing demands mixed with simple goals that



sometimes become unachievable or unsustainable impacting both personal and professional life.

Finkelstein, Hamrick, and Cannella (2009) remarked that “the small group of people at the top of the organization can dramatically affect organizational outcomes... [while they] make big and small decisions” (p. 3). They also proposed that the heart of strategic leadership is central to the intellectual, communal and administrative concepts of decisions, though not all decisions are necessarily adopted by executives. Managers are expected to act in alignment with the strategic plan and develop individual and team goals to deliver results. Middle managers usually lack authority and power, but typically carry the load of responsibilities. Today, businesses demand decisive actions at all levels, which is essential for growth and survival among its competitors. The project organizational model is very effective, however, many organizations lack proper information support systems for time-sensitive decisions.

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The practice of project management can be applied to achieve a defined set of goals by using budgeted resources and time. The project organization model has been in practice since the 1960s within large American construction companies and the US Department of Defense. Though this model was originally designed based on bureaucratic structures, it has become more agile and compatible to flat organization models. Rosenau and Githens (2005) detailed that projects are bound



within a *golden triangle of triple constraints*: time, cost, and quality; projects are successful only when all three are met. The PMBOK Guide (2013) defines that most projects have 5 phases—initiating, planning, executing, monitoring and controlling, and closing.

Dinsmore (1993) in the American Management Association (AMA) handbook of project management has defined ten commandments for project managers: (1) concentrate on how to interface / communicate; (2) organize the project team; (3) plan strategically and technically; (4) remember Murphy's Law—*things will go wrong, if not managed correctly*; (5) identify project stakeholders; (6) be prepared to manage conflict; (7) expect the unexpected; (8) listen to intuition; (9) apply behavioral skills; (10) follow up and take corrective actions.

Though project managers have necessary technical and essential managerial skills empowered by latest tools & technology, many still fail to understand the team and its culture, and are unable to fit into a leadership style—democratic, autocratic, or participative - suitable for the given team. Frame (1987) noted that the responsibility of project managers does not end with “getting the job done”, but they also play important roles in staff development, mediation between top management and the project members, and carry-on lessons learned for the future (p. 71). He also mentions that “*do things right the first time*” is the philosophy for successful project management (p. 59).



## SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

Greenleaf described “a leader initiates, provides the ideas and the structure and takes the risk of failure along with the chance of success” (1977, p. 15). He stated that management “is the ability to state a goal and reach it, through the efforts of other people, and satisfy those whose judgment one respects, under conditions of stress” (1996, p. 20). Ken Blanchard pronounced that servant-leaders are visionaries as well as implementers; they both lead and follow at same time; the nature of servant-leadership is to “*do the right things first*” (as cited in Spears, 1998, p. 22).

SanFacon and Spears (2008) articulated the “three ethical dimensions of servant-leadership: (1) motives and intentions; (2) means or methods; (3) outcomes or results” (p. 4). They stated that a servant-leader’s *motive* is usually to increase the personal capacities of self, others, and the institution, and also to make the world a better place. Servant-leaders aim to achieve the *triple bottom-line* that sustains people, profit and planet.

Spears and Lawrence (2004) listed ten characteristics of servant-leaders as: (1) listening; (2) empathy; (3) healing; (4) awareness; (5) persuasion; (6) conceptualization; (7) foresight; (8) stewardship; (9) commitment to the growth of people; (10) building community. They also affirmed that servant-leadership is not a quick behavior training program to introduce change in an organization, but it’s a way of life that slowly transforms current practices and brings positive changes to societies.



Servant-leadership *triple bottom-line—People, Profit, Planet* is aimed at best possible outcomes for all and can be noted as a result-oriented approach. Project management *triple constraint—Time, Budget, Quality* is a process-oriented approach, which is more focused on consumption of limited inputs to achieve a defined business outcome.

#### SERVANT-LEADERSHIP ANSWERS TO 21ST CENTURY DILEMMAS

**Organization model vs leadership style?** Organizations usually have a business model, which is integral to their success, but resists frequent change. Some companies create an excellent business model but still suffer due to bad leadership. Greenleaf (1998) pronounced that structure is an inhibitor of growth and an ideal structure would reshape itself as conditions change. Greenleaf (1996) contemplated that a weak organizational model with a good leader is better than a great organizational model with a poor leader, as he strongly believed leaders make the main difference. (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2001) Harvard research studies on IQ/EQ revealed that a leader's mood is infectious as it rapidly and relentlessly spreads all through the organization. Organizations should pay more attention in the selection of their executive panel and leadership team.

**Accountability vs responsibility?** How can we be accountable for the responsibility of others? How do we deal with one's lack of responsibility, if the onus of accountability precludes them? Leaders who are accountable for the project



accept their dependency on the team. Micro-management of irresponsible people would cause more stress than results. A better approach would be to raise the level of consciousness towards responsibility, so they can own the task and its outcome. For Greenleaf (1977), responsibility is not merely conformance to expectations, rather it is an inward concern for self-growth. He believed that “the outward and the inward are seen as parts of the same fabric, [and] responsible persons [see] both” (p. 293). This means that responsibility has two sides and the interdependency between oneself and others on the completion of a task is well understood by everyone on the team, including leadership.

**Do tight deadlines create conflict of interest?** Most people hurry through their day to meet deadlines. The time spent in meetings and conversations are often rushed or interrupted. The unintended effect of broken communication can result in people feeling ignored or not valued. The gap widens as neglect gets repeated and can result in a conflict-of-interest as the other’s goal become less important than their own. Conflicts based on values can be solved with open inquiry and understanding, but conflict of interest is very difficult to settle as it is connected to the chances of success or failure. Heifetz (1994) claimed that the problems of anguish lie deep under the surface, but the apparent conflict may be over timeline, process, authority, or system, which are the usual substitutes for the underlying conflict. Greenleaf (1977) noted, when strategies like time management and prioritization of tasks doesn’t help, politely withdraw from the discussion and return to that person later with enough time



for a meaningful conversation. He suggested that, “One may govern one’s life by the law of the optimum – bearing in mind that there are always emergencies and the optimum includes carrying unused reserve of energy” (p. 19). Scheduling and planning has a big role to play in creating a desirable work culture, where people can respect each other’s time and be under optimal work conditions rather than being stretched too thin over time and budget.

**Avoid errors or blow-the-whistle?** Argyris (1990) argued that people cover up errors for many reasons that include avoiding embarrassment or threat, not upsetting their bosses, and believing that it is in the best interest of the organization. Everything looks great until things suddenly dribble down and whistles are blown from all directions. Employees get into defensive routines where emotional battles and survival instincts kick-in for themselves and the project. Mundel (1991) noted that “when there is malfeasance either [one] must blow the whistle or become guilty of being a party to the act. Simply separating [one] from the activity may not provide convincing proof of innocence” (p. 132). Being critical may slightly minimize the errors but not completely eradicate them. The goal is not to avoid the error, but to find and correct it at the earliest. A group of researchers from Case Western Reserve University confirm that positive emotional attractors (PEA) such as help and empathy activate the part of the brain known as the visual cortex, which involves creative imagination. Negative emotional attractors (NEA) such as assessments and controls activate the areas of the brain where self-



consciousness and guilt are initiated (Boyatzis, 2012). Servant-leaders may accept the work inclusive of errors and help others to realize their own errors, thus creating trustworthy positive relationships.

**Organizational malaise has no cure?** Argyris (1990) declared that “organizational malaise happens when people are blind to discrepancies or do not accept errors or blame others for it” (p. 46). Micro-management and tight control might make people less interactive and more closed. Management information reports sometimes have a slanted view on performance when the goals are set too high. Greenleaf (1977) claimed, “The relative quality of staff interpersonal relations are inverse to the idealistic pretensions of the institution” (p.169). He also commented that servant-leaders make others into autonomous leaders and responsible individuals by listening, accepting, empathizing, and demonstrating trust. Argyris (1990) claims: (1) more autonomous and self-directed work teams quickly discover and correct errors rather than tightly monitor or control teams; (2) senior management that admits errors and work cooperatively can help reduce the malaise.

**Is competition the root of all evil?** Mundel (1991) stated, “corruption is born of the need to win” (p. 193). The economic financial stresses created by business competition is the fuel that fires war tensions among countries, however, greed is usually the spark that ignites. Hooks (2001) alleged that “greed and exploitation become the norm when an ethic of domination prevails” (p. 105). The need to stand out and be recognized as



the top comes from the competitive spirit, which is *what good looks like* in today's context. Greenleaf (1998) stated that the word *compete* means "to strive or contend each other" but its Latin origin *competere* means "to seek or strive together" or cooperate. Human behavior has systematically shifted to its latest form from the original meaning of this word. Starting from education to business, today's norm is to differentiate one from others in order to gain a competitive advantage. However, for creating a healthy community, he suggested that "competition must be muted, if not eliminated" (pp. 50-51).

#### ACHIEVE BUSINESS RESULTS BY COEXISTENCE AND COMPETITION

Pure competition will create survival struggles and create a community that doesn't care for each other. A competitive edge or barrier is usually created by organizations to distinguish their products and services through quality, creativity, and innovation. Often a new breakthrough means something gets destroyed to create a new system. Dr. W. Edwards Deming, known as the father of quality control (QC) stated:

Plot the variables on which the numerical goals are to be imposed. If any variable is in control and the goal pertaining to that variable lies beyond the present capability of the system, then it cannot be attained except through the possible destruction of other systems in the company... such plots make clear the futility and fallacy of management by numbers. What is needed in place of controls and numerical goals are constant improvements



through the design of product and processes involved in the operation of organization. (as cited in Mann, 1989, pp. 128-129)

Two important insights may be drawn from the above statement: (1) reaching for a goal beyond current system's capability creates negative effects on its counterparts, and (2) the numerical goals take more priority than the original product or service itself. Management starts chasing their own numbers based on individual goals and lose sight of the overall quality. The cornerstones of Deming's philosophies are to move from customer satisfaction to loyalty, to improve work conditions for better employee experience, continuous improvements of product quality and lean processes, and finally, the role of change management in leadership. Servant-leadership philosophies such as serving and leading the team by persuasion and not by objective measures, commitment to growth, and balanced stakeholder benefits perfectly align with Deming's Quality Principles.

Bhote K.R., the quality guru of America and father of "Six Sigma," who implemented the 10: 1, 100: 1 and 1000: 1 (Pass: Fail) improvements at Motorola, agrees that the same system that improved the product quality might have led Motorola's defeat in the marketplace. In his book, *The Ultimate Six Sigma*, he wrote that we should unleash the creativity of employees and help them reach their fullest potential, thereby achieving total business excellence. Bhote (2002) stated that Motorola learned a tough lesson by giving away a huge market share; "the emphasis on quality for the sake of quality alone" made its



“divisions arrogant” to each other, “. . . driving away from two fundamental obligations the customers and the profit” (p. xxv). He describes his own 1000:1 in 10 years as a “lofty quality height” and “a rallying cry for perfection” rather than a statistical measure (p. 28). He defined *leadership* as the “fulcrum of the ultimate six sigma” and described *ethics* as the “bedrock of relationships”.

Competitively oriented organizations often choose objective management styles, clearly defined numerical goals, and spend less time searching for best possible alternative solutions. Such companies may end up creating holes for themselves within the economy and may even lead to political instability. Examples of both competitive and cooperative relationships can be seen between Microsoft and IBM, and between Amazon and its suppliers. Moore (1997) used environmental ecology as a metaphor, where the organism of businesses must coexist and coevolve within their own ecosystems. Coexistence is vital to the health of any organized system including our own body. Competition between the parts would create risk of several internal failures that could impact overall health and development. New paradigms are now necessary like the “Managerial Leadership” to create a balanced approach to achieve business success while putting humanity first.

## 5CS OF MANAGERIAL LEADERSHIP

Projects are usually bound around a defined scope of work with specific goals to achieve. Hence, project management is a well-defined approach to provide organizations with



necessary guidelines and support for operational purposes. But leadership styles are boundless and open to many variations to suit the team and its strategic purpose. The servant-leadership style uses a humanitarian approach to reach excellence and fulfill both personal and business goals. Servant-leaders are often the silent unsung heroes who create solid business results.

Managerial leadership in my imagination takes shape of a butterfly that combines leadership style and organizational management model within a single body using non-dualistic approach. The purpose of the design is to show the application of servant-leadership is possible to even a tightly managed project. The 5Cs of managerial leadership as shown in Figure 1, connects 10 commandments provided by American Management Association (AMA) with 5 phases of project defined by PMI. Using 5Cs as connectors the project phases are linked with the roles usually performed by servant-leaders while exhibiting their 10 defined characteristics. The left-wing features project management, and the right-wing features servant-leadership which are internally connected by small veins to show the practical application.

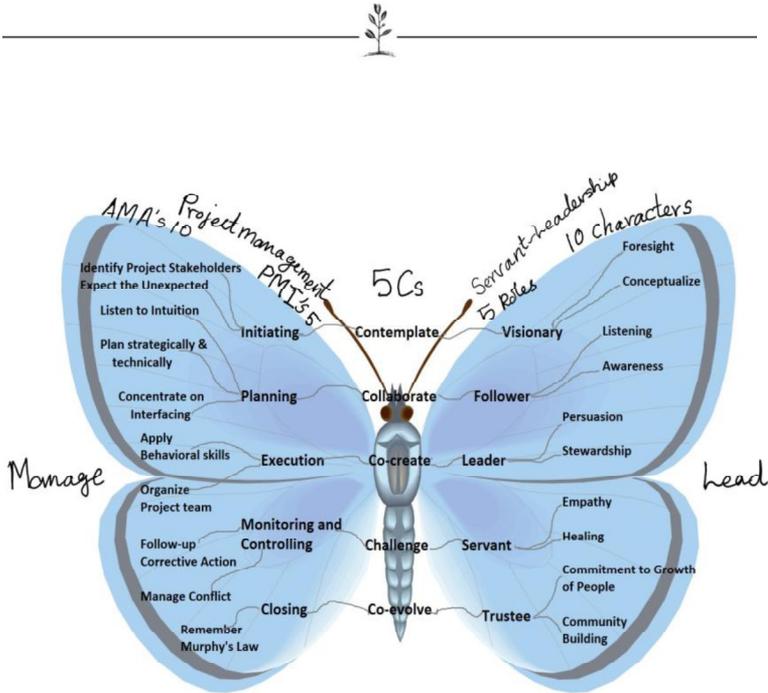


Figure 1. 5Cs combined approach to lead and manage. Picture by N. Vadivelan 2014.

Greenleaf’s (1977) essay illustrates roles such as visionaries, followers, and trustees acted by servant-leaders in various institutional settings. The 5Cs are Connectors—Contemplate, Collaborate, Co-create, Challenge, and Co-evolve comprising the main body that connects two main aspects such as a strong organizational process model with the inherent human qualities possessed by servant-leaders who rally the team to accomplish exemplary results.

Servant-leaders continuously seek to know the unknown, they *contemplate* to foresee new ideas and conceptualize them.



Once a project is initiated and stakeholders are identified, it is important to manage their expectations, while the problem at hand may be still very vague. Rather than creating a solitary project plan, servant-leaders actively listen to *collaborate* and get awareness in order to create a strategic plan to address all identified needs. Servant-leaders provide a solid foundation with their stewardship and they also persuade and empower others to build-on the plan. During the execution phase, project management provides the framework for operational excellence while servant-leadership provides behavioral excellence to *co-create* by using a coach or mentor style. Servant-leaders turn mediocre people into superior people when they *challenge* them for better outcomes. But they also empathize with individuals personally and assist them when in pain. Servant-leaders are committed to the growth of the community, while project management is committed to satisfy the stakeholders. Projects may be opened and closed, but user communities *co-evolve* while servant-leaders continue to build cooperative sharing communities.

## CONCLUSION

Project management discipline is built with systems thinking to achieve and sustain organizational growth. However, servant-leadership uses progressive thinking to reach business excellence and create responsible caring communities. Several servant-leaders exist among us with different MBTIs who are successful using their unique gifts and talents (Lewis, Spears & Lafferty, 2011). Organizations that promote servant-



leadership use positive emotional attractors such as listening, empathy, and coaching to increase employee retention and achieve greater results. Cooperative societies can establish a business eco-system that helps to reduce competitive forces and heal the tensions of today's work life. Sustainable growth and optimal performance would allow organizations to be successful and its employees to have both full-filled life and career. As Greenleaf (1996) equated, "the work exists for the person as much as the person exists for the work" (p. 117). Servant-leaders strive to establish caring communities that nourish and unleash the greatest potentials of individuals to reach business excellence. Inclusion of servant-leadership values into the project management body of knowledge will provide a combined approach that favors both institutional and individual goals to create and sustain healthy communities.

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