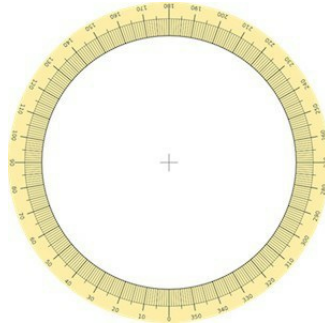

Key Traits of the 360-Degree Leader



While the opportunities or ability to achieve full leadership potential may not be possible for each radiologist, the core leadership qualities of the 360-Degree Leader may be applied by anyone, at any career level, to better manage their team, stay focused on vision, and navigate difficult situations, according to an article in press in Journal of the American College of Radiology (JACR).

360-Degree Leadership involves identifying yourself as a leader who simultaneously influences people at every level of the organisation. Leadership training and the study of the 360-Degree Leader has been commonplace in business management, with the acceptance that some traits of leadership are learned behaviours.

Selflessness. Progressing toward being a 360-Degree Leader requires learned selflessness. Great leaders are willing to expense their own personal interest and acknowledgement – driven foremost by their desire to best fulfil the organisation’s vision. In radiology, for example, a good leader values building teams to achieve the departmental goals of service, patient safety, research, and education above personal career achievement, attainment of titles and awards, or direct financial compensation. An effective tactic to demonstrate selflessness is to personally genuinely acknowledge team contributions from those you lead, often and publicly.

Trust and empowering the team. A 360-Degree Leader should recognise, without prejudice, that individuals they lead may be more talented and experienced than themselves. This realisation helps the leader to trust the team members to perform, which empowers individuals to provide their best contribution. Concepts that demonstrate trust, such as avoiding micromanagement and enabling autonomy, can be initially disenchanting and takes constraint and practice. Trust also fosters an environment that allows team members to come forward with ideas and suggestions, including oppositional views to those of the leader, which may benefit the organisation.

Abstaining from bias. A leader should practise mindful effort to avoid political sides, recognising that bias has a tendency to control the leader surreptitiously. Examples of bias can include favourable clinical shift assignment for close peers, promotion of a faculty ahead of more deserving peers, or promoting one’s own ideas in a group setting over another member’s suggestions. Biased actions, regardless of how banal they may seem to leaders, are often painfully transparent to those they are leading and undermine the team’s confidence in the leader, reducing the leader’s integrity and authenticity even in the eyes of those who may be benefiting from favouritism.

Ability to manage defining moments. Defining moments in leadership are instances where there is turmoil, which can include a need for difficult decision making. Defining moments are often unanticipated. However, a successful 360-Degree Leader can prepare for defining moments by having already established a foundation of trust, selflessness, and immunity from prejudice. Those they lead will then rely on this pre-existing behaviour to anticipate how their leader will respond to uncertainty or failure. A good leader keeps the focus on the process and the system as a whole, and begins planning for improvement rather than dwelling on the failure itself.

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Published on : Mon, 15 May 2017