

LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

STAGE 2: MOVING TO A MODERN MIND-SET (BUZZ GROUP – 45 MINS)

Objective:

Understand how notions of leadership have changed over time and what leadership approaches best suit a modern municipality.

Introduction:

In older organisations that have passed from a traditional culture and structure to a modern one, it is possible to see how their approach to leadership has changed in the process. Certain leadership styles are associated with the old model of 'doing business', whether in traditional manufacturing organisations or formerly authoritarian cultures. Top-down communications, for example, is one such style, when directives were issued by the 'boss' and the views of the workforce were not really taken into account.

Evidence suggests that there are specific styles of leadership that are particularly powerful in modern organisations; these are especially relevant to a municipality in today's world. For municipalities today to deliver the standards of excellence that both Governments and local people and organisations expect of them, their Mayor and his/her elected and appointed colleagues have not only to understand the kind of leadership styles that are most appropriate but also to assimilate those styles in their own thinking and behaviour.

Assignment:

Using the attached template, participants should work in buzz groups to assess where their own municipalities now stand on the spectrum of 3-4 aspects of the old and new leadership models. They should be prepared to give feedback, citing the evidence they used for their assessment. Note that being at the right-hand side of the spectrum (ie score of 10) is not necessarily best for all occasions. For example, in cases where there has been a loss of credibility in staff management, it may be good to use an external source for performance appraisal; dealing with an emergency may require top-down communications.

MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP – MOVING TO A MODERN MINDSET

ASPECT	OLD MODEL	ASSESSMENT 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10	NEW MODEL
Management	Control things and people; input measures		Control things; empower people; outcome measures
Structure	Hierarchical; bureaucratic		Flatter; boundary-less; flexible
Motivation	External; carrot and stick		Internal; whole person
Performance appraisal	External; finding faults		Self-evaluation; 360%; win-win; supportive
Information	Short term; limited		Long and short term; accessible; performance results clear
Communications	Top down		Open: up / down / horizontal
Culture	Rules; protecting position; risk avoidance; lack of trust		Based on principles and values; trust; seeking excellence
Budgeting	Top down; based on last year		Open; flexible; harnesses external resources; based on need and opportunity
Training, development	Slide-show; skill-oriented; explanatory; teaching-focused		Action-oriented; whole person; learning-focused
Staff	Expense; focus on efficiency; full capacity not utilised		Investment; empowered
Staff voice	Generally unimportant; personal initiative difficult		Strategic contribution; complementary teams; personal responsibility
Customer / citizen care	Little concern; views not sought; seen only as recipient of public services		Real test for effectiveness; contributes to service planning and review

Where is your municipality or department on the scale between old and new models? What can you do to help move the organisation's leadership towards a better style?