

Dimensions of Leadership: Capacities, Skills and Competencies for Effective Leadership LCWR Reflections

1. Leadership is an organic developmental process.
2. Designated leaders bring to their ministry certain well-developed skills and competencies. They have demonstrated a capacity for growth in other skills/competencies.
3. Spirited leadership draws on more than skills and competencies. As with religious life itself there is always at work the “more” which is mystery, grace, and the power of God’s Spirit.
4. In a time of unprecedented change, it is essential that religious leaders have acute awareness of the impact of global forces on the social, economic, cultural and spiritual environment. Such a milieu demands expanding consciousness of the world and a recognition of the reality of limited and diminishing resources.
5. Effective religious leaders will learn to befriend change rather than resist or merely tolerate it. They will be lifelong learners and the institutions to which they dedicate their energies will be learning organizations marked by high levels of participation and inclusion.
6. Belief in the meaning and purpose of religious life will move them to mentor future leaders, promote theological education and cultivate openness to pluralism and multiculturalism.

Symbolic/Meaning-Making Dimension: the ability to connect the richness of the inner world with the significant challenges and movements of a given time. Leaders who develop this dimension of leadership can:

- A. Articulate deep rootedness in God, their mission and charism and the Gospel
- B. Connect the soul of the congregation with the soul of the global church and the soul of the world
- C. Articulate a dynamic sense of the charism in a compelling way in shifting and complex times
- D. Draw on the faith of the members
- E. Look reality in the face and also communicate hope
- F. Draw wisdom out of the information/data and articulate relevance
- G. See below facts to the significance of patterns, trends and events
- H. Recognize and draw upon the potential of multiple perspectives at the same time
- I. Have a capacity for/appreciation of theological reflection and social analysis
- J. Develop skills for a public role: writing, speaking, presenting self and community if a credible way
- K. Further results in service of deeply held convictions
- L. Be women of courage with the ability to act in spite of obstacles

Relational Dimension: Spiritual leaders place a high priority on developing and animating relational skills in themselves and others. Leaders who develop the relational dimension of leadership have a capacity:

- A. To know and to be at home with one's self
- B. To project a non-anxious presence
- C. To develop and maintain healthy relationships
- D. To listen, influence, inspire trust, acknowledge and reward service
- E. To grow and develop as a team
- F. To communicate that people matter and to express and demonstrate affection
- G. To form a "we" that includes and vivifies members
- H. To draw members into dialogue around issues that matter, conflictual topics, decisions to be made, what membership means
- I. To facilitate groups and ongoing learning
- J. To relate with multiple publics as a spokesperson imbued with the charism and mission
- K. To animate and mobilize collective energies and direction of the group
- L. To develop skills for being a change agent, for planned change, process and networking
- M. To have the ability to deal with differences, to live with diversity and to distinguish between life-promoting, life-denying and neutral realities
- N. To have the capacity for cross-cultural consciousness and global awareness.

Organizational/Structural Dimension: Spiritual leaders have an ability to perceive the culture and climate of the group and to shape learning organizations. Leaders who develop the organizational/structural dimensions of leadership have an ability:

- A. To understand the life of organizations including legal and financial aspects
- B. To bring the agenda of the congregation to life
- C. To coordinate disparate pieces as a cohesive whole and to focus strategies
- D. To administer effectively
- E. To negotiate, mediate, listen, delegate, collaborate, facilitate, prioritize, integrate, make decisions, call the questions and think strategically
- F. To resolve conflict and work with diminishment
- G. To integrate and effectively allocate resources
- H. To work with the institutional church in understanding our relationship with it, how to critique it and to claim our place in it.