

Manila Women's Forum

A Network of Women Professionals

October 2008

Leadership

By Jill Gale de Villa

To keep an audience energized after a great meal (thanks to all participants) requires a great speaker. Julia Cummins qualifies. A perfect venue and hostess (thanks to Mary Garlicki) helps a lot too.

Julia works with the Nous Group—this isn't French—they pronounce it "Nowse." Nous describes itself as "a smart, vibrant, and nimble consultancy that assists individuals and organizations to maximize their performance." Julia has been developing Nous' operations in the Philippines, with clients including AusAid, the Philippine Post Office, and the Australian Embassy.

Julia was initially a research consultant, and chanced on her current profession while handling training for "how to be a consultant." She decided she really liked it—and became part of the 10% of the working population that truly loves what they do.

To prepare for her talk with us, Julia surveyed some MWF members. From the results, she decided to gear her talk to how to develop leadership skills. She led with the oft-asked question "Are good leaders born or made?" The answer: Both—if leadership were totally genetic, then leadership development would be



Julia Cummins

useless. Truly brilliant leaders may have an innate element in their abilities, but the capability to lead can be developed, and Julia has seen this happen.

Julia structured her talk around 3

points: (1) what leadership is, (2) how to learn leadership skills, and (3) what she does with leadership training.

What is leadership? Julia asked us to describe traits of a good leader, and we responded with items such as good mentoring, ability to delegate, good listening skills, ability to give good feedback, respectful of others, selflessness, good facilitation skills, ability to give autonomy to staff, results orientation, ability to identify strengths and weaknesses in the self and others, ability to inspire good performance, ability to bring people along with them, and can transform others. Julia noted that part of knowing how to lead others was being able to determine the right balance of delegation and direction, and to avoid abdication.

Julia introduced a leadership model called "Centered Leadership" recently described in the McKinsey Quarterly. This model was based on research and interviews with female leaders globally. It describes four traits that are preconditions for leadership: intelligence, tolerance for change, the desire to lead, and good communication skills. And it articulates the 5 key aspects of centered leadership:

- **Meaning:** Good leaders have a sense of meaning, purpose, and are happy with what they are doing.

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NEXT MWF MEETING ■ **When:** 6:30 p.m., Monday, October 20, 2008. **Where:** Shyamala Abeyratne's home, 1373 Caballero, Dasmariñas Village, Makati. **What:** Tristan Choa, Founder of Bikram Yoga in the Philippines, will speak on "Yoga and Stress-Free Living." Find out why more and more people are turning to yoga as a way to combat stress, how it works and how you can benefit. **Bring:** Something to share for the potluck dinner. **November meeting:** Monday, November 10.

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They work to their strengths.

- **Engaging:** They take “ownership” of their work, are adaptable, can take risks.

- **Connecting:** Most women leaders had been sponsored and sponsor others; they have extensive networks, work inclusively and with reciprocity.

- **Positive framing:** Successful women leaders have a “glass half full” attitude; they are optimistic and inspire others to be so, and they know how to optimize situations. They have a strong foundation of self awareness and a good understanding of others. They are resilient.

- **Managing energy:** Managing one’s energy is essential, learning what situations gather energy and what situations deplete it—and this varies with the individual. We get the most energy when we do things we love and when our skills and capabilities match the work—this flow is energizing. But it is also important for women, given all their work, household and family responsibilities, to understand how to restore their energy and minimize the activities that deplete it. This could be through delegation, physical exercise, time out with friends.

The group discussed the model (shown in Figure 1) (for the full article see http://www.mckinseyquarterly.com/article_print.aspx?L2=18&L3=31&ar=2193).

How are leadership skills developed? What should a leader develop? Julia said (1) self-focus and self-awareness in multiple dimensions, (2) understanding of followers and systems, and (3) the organizational context.

Julia showed the “Performance Onion” (Figure 2), a tool she uses to help people think through the things that contribute to their leadership performance and the external factors that impact it. She uses this model to deepen and build self awareness. At the centre of the onion are personality traits you can define through tools such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI™), ideally debriefed by a trained professional. Many books are among the tools for determining what motivates us, what are our strengths. Julia recommends reading Marcus Buckingham’s books, especially *Now Discover Your Strengths*.

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Figure 1.

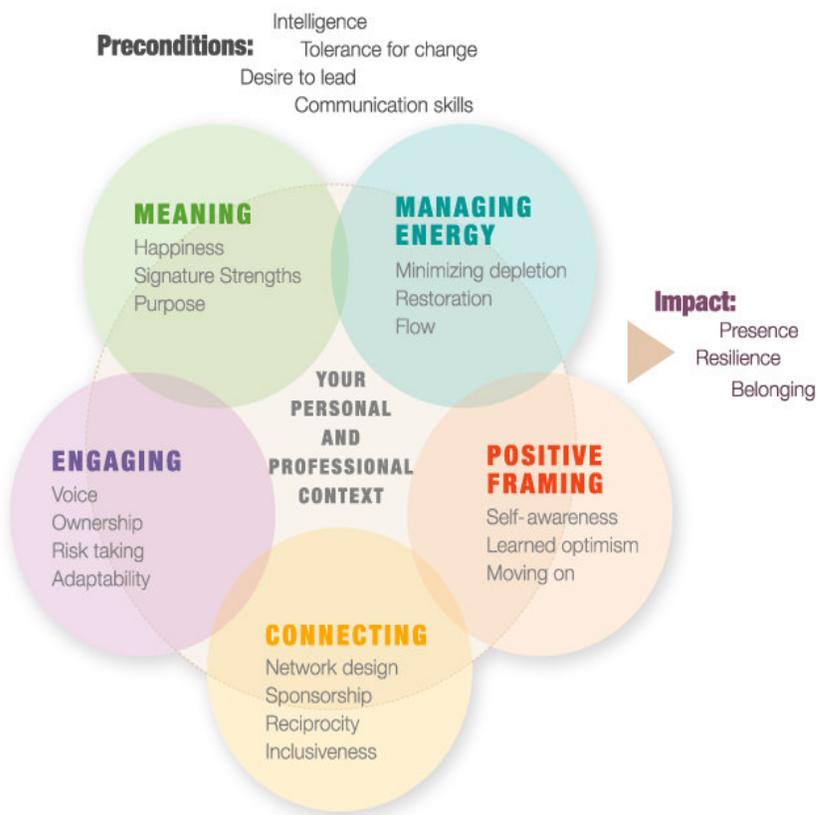
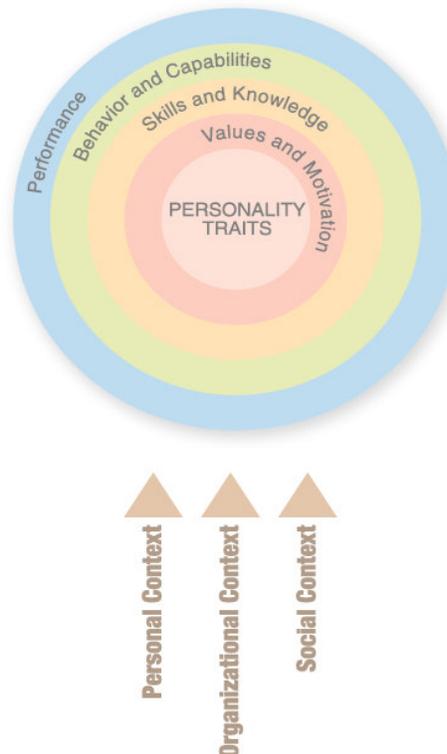


Figure 2.



“The function of leadership,” says Ralph Nader, “is to produce more leaders, not more followers.”

Makes you think, doesn't it? Here's more for us to think about—a run-down of different types of leaders. What type are you?



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Selected and edited by
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“Management is doing things right;
leadership is doing the right things.”
~ Peter Drucker (1909 - 2005)

Types of Leaders

The autocratic leader is empowered to make decisions alone and has total authority. This style of leadership is especially good for employees who need close supervision to perform certain tasks. Creative employees and team players, however, resent this type of leadership and become dissatisfied with their jobs because they have no input in the process or in decision making.

The democratic leader listens to the team's ideas and studies them, but makes the final decision. Because their input was considered when the final decision was made, team players feel that they have really contributed. There is a feeling of ownership, and employee satisfaction is high. When changes arise, this type of leadership helps the team assimilate the changes better and more rapidly than other styles. There is less resistance and intolerance among the team, because they were consulted and took part in the decision making process. On the downside, this leadership style does not work well when decisions need to be made really fast.

The laissez-faire or “let do” leader gives no continuous feedback or supervision because the employees

are highly experienced and need little supervision to obtain the expected outcome. On the other hand, this type of leadership is also associated with leaders who don't lead at all. They fail in supervising team members, resulting in lack of control, higher costs, bad service, or failure to meet deadlines.

The bureaucratic leader is very structured and follows established procedures. This style of leadership has no room for new ways of solving problems. It is usually slow paced, mainly to ensure adherence to the rules set up by the company. Leaders of this type see to it that all the steps have been followed before sending anything to the next level of authority. Universities, hospitals, banks, and government usually require this type of leader in their organizations to safeguard quality, ensure security, and minimize corruption. In this set-up, those who try to speed up the process experience frustration and anxiety.

The charismatic leader leads by infusing energy and eagerness into their team members. This type of leader has to be committed to the organization for the long run. Because the success of the division or the project hinges on the leader and not the team, charismatic leaders may pose a risk for the company when they leave for other opportunities elsewhere. It will require a lot of time and hard work to gain the employees' confidence back with other types of leadership, after they've committed themselves to the magnetism of a charismatic leader.

The people-oriented leader is one who, in order to attain effectiveness and efficiency, supports, trains and develops his personnel, increasing job satisfaction and genuine interest to do a good job.

The task-oriented leader focuses on the job, and concentrates on the specific tasks assigned to each employee to accomplish goals. Having little or no empathy for the team's needs, this leadership style is suscep-

tible to the same motivation issues as autocratic leadership. Another name for it is deal maker.

The servant leader facilitates goal accomplishment by giving its team members what they need in order to be productive. This kind of leader serves in effect as an instrument that employees use to reach a goal, rather than a commanding voice that moves them to change. This leadership style, in a manner similar to democratic leadership, tends to achieve results in a slower time frame compared to other styles. On the plus side, employee engagement is higher.

The transactional leader is given power to perform certain tasks and to reward or punish the team for its performance. The manager leads the group, and the group agrees to follow his lead in accomplishing a predetermined goal, in exchange for something. Power is given to the leader to evaluate, correct and train subordinates when productivity is not up to the desired level, and to reward effectiveness when expected outcomes are reached.

The transformational leader motivates the team to be effective and efficient. Communication is the basis for achieving goals, by focusing the group on the final desired outcome. This type of leader is highly visible and uses the chain of command to get the job done. Because transformational leaders focus on the big picture, they need to be surrounded by people who take care of the details. The leader is always looking for ideas that push the organization towards its vision.

The environment leader is one who nurtures the group or organizational environment, which in turn affects the emotional and psychological perception of an individual's place in that group or organization. Because the leader uses organizational culture to inspire individuals and develop leaders at all levels, an understanding and application of group dynamics and psychology is essential. The leader uses this psychology, together with complementary language, to influence direction through the members of the inspired group who do what is required, for the benefit of all.

(Adapted from Wikipedia)

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The next layer contains our values and motivation which we develop over time and are rarely explicitly shown to others. The next layer is our skills and capabilities, which we develop through education and experience. All of these things drive our behaviors and capabilities, which define our individual performance. Importantly there are personal, social and organizational factors that may be outside of our control but also impact on our performance and should be considered when assessing leadership performance.

“Purpose” Julia said, is the latest jargon, replacing “vision and mission statements.” If we’re doing lots of things we don’t like, we’re not likely to be performing well. We need to determine what is in our sphere of control and what is not; what and how we can and can’t influence; accepting the answer and moving on. For instance, if we’re going into a difficult meeting we may need to be prepared to stop—breathe—control—compose before responding to some questions or statements. She concluded that the foundation for effective leadership is self-awareness, so building your leadership capability starts with looking to yourself first.

Julia commented that she also uses the performance onion to help leaders think through how they can better lead their followers and manage their performance. Identifying why someone is not performing is often a matter of understanding

what layer of the onion is weak, or if an external factor is hampering their performance—and then addressing it or helping the individual to do so.

Understanding the organization is equally important, as leadership must be executed in context. Leaders need to understand their industries, markets, organizational culture and climate if they are going to perform well as a leader. Nous focuses on having fun and experiential learning.

What does Julia do? She assists clients to develop leadership in their staff by designing and facilitating training programs customized to the needs of the organization, the capabilities of the leadership team and staff, and the needs of the individual participants. The programs are grounded in rigorous and appropriate theory, the specific organizational context and maximize the use of visceral and fun experiential learning techniques.

Julia’s closing note: Don’t sacrifice your energizers. For example, if you need 20 minutes at the gym to perform at your best, make sure you get it.

A lively Q&A session followed, with participants keenly interested in learning more. ■

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View Julia’s profile at
<http://www.nousgroup.com.au/about/people.php?profile=2>

“Leadership should be born out of the understanding of the needs of those who would be affected by it.” ~ Marian Anderson

“The leadership instinct you are born with is the backbone. You develop the funny bone and the wishbone that go with it.” ~ Elaine Gather

Manila Women’s Forum

Manila Women’s Forum (MWF) is a cross-cultural network for women. It provides opportunities to build friendships, to talk to women of various cultures, and to share information about resources. Our meetings are intended to provide intellectual stimulation and lead to personal and professional development. All women are welcome to join. The current officers are **Lisa Lumbao**, Chair, Programs, Treasurer, and Newsletter. **Shari Virjee**, MWF Membership Message Board and Assistant Chair. **Cecilia Leung** and **Julia Holz**, Programs. **Lisa Stuart**, MWF Membership Message Board Moderator. **Beulah P. Taguiwalo**, Newsletter, Website.

Cost of membership is P300 per year. Members receive a copy of the current mailing list in addition to the newsletter, which is also sent to non-members. A contribution is collected at each monthly meeting: P20 for members, and P40 for non-members. Please contact Lisa Lumbao at Tel. 813-0168, or at lumbao@mozcom.com for more information about MWF.

Visit our website – a work in progress
www.geocities.com/manilawomensforum

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