

**The Dance of Leadership:  
("Scent of a Woman")**  
wayne.smith@csun.edu  
[ updated: Friday, May 8, 2015 ]

---

**Course:** *MGT 360*  
**Title:** *Management and Organizational Behavior* (3 units)

"Leaders must encourage their organizations to dance to music yet to be heard."

"Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality."

"People who cannot invent and reinvent themselves must be content with borrowed postures, secondhand ideas, [and] fitting in instead of standing out."  
---Warren Bennis (1925-2014)

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to help structure the discussion for the critical management topic of *leadership*. In particular, we will use a clip from the popular movie "Scent of a Woman" (1992).

## **Scene setup**

In this movie, Al Pacino plays a retired Lt. Colonel ("Frank") who was accidentally blinded years ago in a military training exercise. He has a young assistant who helps him played by Chris O'Donnell ("Charlie"). In this scene, Frank has traveled to New York with the help of Charlie, and the two have dinner reservations at the hotel's elegant restaurant and ballroom. They sit down at a table, and notice that at a nearby table a young woman ("Donna", played by Gabrielle Anwar) is sitting by herself (she is waiting for her date, a male companion who will arrive later in the scene).

Frank, a curious individual, investigates the situation...

(roll clip)...

## **Leadership Discussion Preface**

The instructor didn't offer this clip because it's cute; it is provided because many elements in the clip are working metaphors for one or more aspects of contemporary organizational leadership, often in very subtle ways. The hotel is the general workplace, the dance is a task, the music is the background, day-to-day work of the firm, and the characters are professionals and managers in a company. Even the perfume, interpersonal communication, and personality interplay have corresponding roles in work life. How many of these elements can you find and how many strong analogies can you draw?

## Leadership Styles

The following categories were taken (chiefly) from the textbook—Neck (Chapter 13) “Managers as Leaders”. Identify at least one issue from the video clip for each cell below (not all cells may be relevant). (*Student Last Names A-L*)

Key Attributes of various Leadership “Styles”	Issue(s)/Example(s) from the Movie
<p><i>Contingency</i> (Fiedler)  (“personality”)</p> <p>leader-subordinate, position power, task structure</p>	
<p><i>Situational</i> (Blanchard/Hershey)  (“followership”)</p> <p>commitment of “follower”, competence of “follower”</p>	
<p><i>Path-Goal</i> (House)  (“expectancy”)</p> <p>effort→performance, performance→rewards, rewards→value</p>	
<p><i>Normative</i> (Vroom-Yetton-Jago)  (“involvement”)</p> <p>decision significance, importance of commitment, leader expertise, likelihood of commitment, goal alignment, group (input) expertise, team (output) competence</p>	

## Leadership Theory and Practice

(Student Last Names M-Z)

<b>Contemporary Leadership Theory and Practice</b>	<b>Issue(s)/Example(s) from the Movie</b>
<i>Transactional Leadership</i>  (the leader provides tangible resources in exchange)	
<i>Transformational Leadership</i>  (the leader aligns the employee's goals with the leader's goals)	
<i>Leader-Member Exchange Theory</i>  (a leader strengthens past, present, and future <i>trust</i> -based relationships)	
<i>Servant Leadership</i>  (the chief task of a leader is to develop leadership characteristics in others)	
<i>Authentic Leadership</i>  (through actions, a leader garners a perception by others of a distinctive, genuine persona)	