

**The Dance of Leadership:  
("Scent of a Woman")**  
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[ updated: Monday, June 29, 2015 ]

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**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-H*)

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 I-Z)

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

## **Leadership-in-Practice**

Some college students may participate in a “Leadership workshop” sponsored by their employer. These workshops tend to de-emphasize theory *per se* and emphasize (research-based) practice. Essentially, this transforms the core leadership theory from the prior two pages into a more accessible and adoptable practice.

Over the past thirty years, one of the most popular leadership approaches is:

Kouzes, J., and Posner, B. (2012), *The Leadership Challenge: How to Make Extraordinary Things Happen in Organizations* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.), Jossey-Bass

### **Model the Way**

Leaders establish principles concerning the way people (constituents, peers, colleagues, and customers alike) should be treated and the way goals should be pursued. They create standards of excellence and then set an example for others to follow. Because the prospect of complex change can overwhelm people and stifle action, they set interim goals so that people can achieve small wins as they work toward larger objectives. They unravel bureaucracy when it impedes action; they put up signposts when people are unsure of where to go or how to get there; and they create opportunities for victory.

### **Inspire a Shared Vision**

Leaders passionately believe that they can make a difference. They envision the future, creating an ideal and unique image of what the organization can become. Through their magnetism and quiet persuasion, leaders enlist others in their dreams. They breathe life into their visions and get people to see exciting possibilities for the future.

### **Challenge the Process**

Leaders search for opportunities to change the status quo. They look for innovative ways to improve the organization. In doing so, they experiment and take risks. And because leaders know that risk taking involves mistakes and failures, they accept the inevitable disappointments as learning opportunities.

### **Enable Others to Act**

Leaders foster collaboration and build spirited teams. They actively involve others. Leaders understand that mutual respect is what sustains extraordinary efforts; they strive to create an atmosphere of trust and human dignity. They strengthen others, making each person feel capable and powerful.

### **Encourage the Heart**

Accomplishing extraordinary things in organizations is hard work. To keep hope and determination alive, leaders recognize contributions that individuals make. In every winning team, the members need to share in the rewards of their efforts, so leaders celebrate accomplishments. They make people feel like heroes.