

Health and Safety Essentials

Lecture 6 – Leadership in OHS

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Undergraduate Diploma in
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Recap last week's topic

Q1. What is the main purpose of an OHS audit?

Answer:

To evaluate whether the organisation's health and safety management system is effective and compliant with legal and organisational requirements.

Q2. How does an inspection differ from an audit?

Answer:

An inspection is a regular physical check of workplaces and equipment to spot immediate hazards, while an audit is a formal, structured review of systems and procedures.

Q3. What does monitoring aim to achieve in OHS?

Answer:

To continuously track safety performance, identify trends or emerging risks, and confirm control measures remain effective.



Learning Objectives

1. Understand the Role of Leadership in OHS
2. Differentiate Between Leadership and Management in OHS
3. Identify and Explain Key Qualities of Role Model Leadership
4. Apply Leadership Styles to OHS Scenarios
5. Evaluate the Impact of Role Model Leadership Through Real-Life Examples
6. Recognise Challenges to Effective OHS Leadership and Suggest Solutions
7. Reflect on Personal Leadership Qualities and Development in



Defining Leadership in OHS

- How many of you are managers within an organisation or manage people?
- Those of whom currently do not manage people, how many aspire to be managers?

Quote: Wickens (1998) - *“A manager who cannot lead is a waste of space and money.”*

“What do you think? Is this too harsh? Or not?”



Defining Leadership in OHS

Key Definitions:

- One of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth (Burns, 1978)
- Leadership is the process of influencing others to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2006).
+ Vision

“What does leadership mean to you in the context of OHS?”



Leadership vs. Management

- Comparison:
 - Some leaders aren't managers
 - Not all managers are leaders
 - Management: Transactional, focuses on processes.
 - Leadership: Transformational, focuses on vision.
 - Assigned Leader vs Emergent Leader

“Leadership is about doing the right things; management is about doing things right.” – Dr. Ted Marra



Leadership vs. Management

Further Learning - Links on LinkedIn: view the first two videos for perspectives on the leadership-management debate:

- <https://www.linkedin.com/learning/search?keywords=leadership%20vs%20management&u=42447028>

“What are the key takeaways from each video, 1 and 2?”





Which quality is more associated with leadership than management?

Breakout Room 1 – Leadership vs. Management

- Activity: *Discuss a time when you were inspired by a leader's actions. What qualities made them a role model in your eyes?*
- Instructions: 10 minutes group discussion.
1 person from each group to brief the most inspirational experiences.

Leadership and Power in OHS

- 5 Bases of Power:



Legitimate – Reward – Coercive – Expert – Referent

- Application in OHS: How each type of power can support or hinder safety.

Leadership and Power – Legitimate

- This form of power is rooted in an individual's recognised right to hold authority over others. It is often derived from formal roles or positions within organisations or society, where the authority is accepted as justified or legitimate. Legitimate power is typically granted to leaders, managers, or officials who are seen as rightful decision-makers.

Examples:

- *Everyday:* A police officer directs traffic, and drivers comply because of the officer's lawful authority.
- *OHS:* A Health & Safety Manager mandates a site evacuation during a gas leak — workers obey because of the manager's recognised authority under company and legal duty.

Leadership and Power – Reward

- Reward power is based on the perception that an individual can provide desirable rewards or benefits, such as promotions, pay raises, or privileges. The potential to grant rewards makes others more willing to follow directions or align with the individual's goals.

Examples:

- *Everyday:* A company gives employees a bonus for meeting performance targets.
- *OHS:* A construction supervisor introduces a monthly safety reward — workers who report near misses or maintain tidy work areas receive vouchers or recognition during toolbox talks.

Leadership and Power - Coercive

- Coercive power is associated with the capacity to impose sanctions, punishments, or other forms of negative consequences. It often relies on the fear of repercussions, which can compel individuals to act in ways they might not otherwise choose.
- Examples:
- *Everyday:* A parent removes internet access when a teenager breaks curfew.
- *OHS:* A project manager suspends a contractor from site for repeatedly bypassing lockout procedures after prior warnings.



Leadership and Power - Expert

- Expert power is grounded in the perception that an individual possesses specialised knowledge, skills, or expertise in a particular area. It is commonly associated with professionals such as lawyers, doctors or engineers whose insight is trusted and valued.

Examples:

- *Everyday:* People rely on a doctor's advice during illness because of their medical expertise.
- *OHS:* A confined-space specialist is called to train teams and review entry procedures — their recommendations are followed without question due to proven technical knowledge.



Leadership and Power – Referent

- This form of power stems from personal identification, admiration, or respect that one person feels toward another. Individuals with referent power are influential due to the strong personal connection or identity they inspire in others, who may emulate them or seek their approval.

Examples:

- *Everyday:* A well-respected colleague influences team morale through integrity and empathy — others naturally follow their lead.
- *OHS:* A site foreman consistently models safe behaviour, supports his crew, and earns their trust — workers copy his habits even when he's not present.



Break



Trait Theories of Leadership

- The Big Five Traits:
 - Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Openness.
- Balanced focus on Extraversion, empathy and Conscientiousness: Key for OHS leaders to build trust and diligence.
- Activity: Role-play scenario to practice empathy in a safety conversation.



Norman's Markers for the Big 5 – OHS Context

Table 3.4 Norman's Markers for the Big Five

I. Extraversion or Surgency

Talkative–silent
Sociable–reclusive
Adventurous–cautious
Open–secretive

II. Agreeableness

Good-natured–irritable
Cooperative–negativistic
Mild/gentle–headstrong
Not jealous–jealous

III. Conscientiousness

Responsible–undependable
Scrupulous–unscrupulous
Persevering–quitting
Fussy/tidy–careless

IV. Emotional stability

Calm–anxious
Composed–excitable
Not hypochondriacal–hypochondriacal
Poised–nervous/tense

V. Culture—Intellect, Openness

Intellectual–unreflective/narrow
Artistic–nonartistic
Imaginative–simple/direct
Polished/refined–crude/boorish

Role Model Leadership in OHS

- Description: Role model leaders inspire others by exemplifying safety, responsibility, and continuous improvement.
- Key Behaviours of OHS Role Models:
 - Adherence to safety protocols.
 - Commitment to organisational safety goals.

“How could role model leadership enhance safety in your workplace?”



Examples of Role Models in OHS

- **Role Models in Action:**
 - *Mentors*: Share knowledge and experience.
 - *Coaches*: Provide practical training.
 - *Parents and Teachers*: Demonstrate resilience and dedication.

“Who is a role model in your life? What qualities do they demonstrate?”



Key Qualities of a Role Model Leader in OHS

- Qualities:
 - Integrity: Builds trust.
 - Optimism: Maintains morale.
 - Collaboration: Encourages team input.
 - Listening: Fosters an inclusive culture.
 - Empathy: Provides meaningful support.
 - Commitment: Goes beyond minimum requirements.
- Visual: Icons representing each quality.



How to Be a Role Model Leader in OHS

- Practical Tips:
 - Lead by example.
 - Take responsibility for actions.
 - Show courage and self-awareness.
- *“Which of these behaviours do you think is most essential for OHS leaders?”*



Leadership Styles in OHS

Leadership styles can be grouped into different categories, each with distinct behaviours:

- Transformational: Shapes the organisational culture.
- Transactional: Reinforces and sustains the culture.
- Servant: Supports the culture through service-oriented leadership.
- Shared Leadership: Team-based approach to leadership.
- Toxic, Narcissistic, Destructive, Unethical, or Bad: Negative or harmful styles of leadership.

Transactional Leader	Transformational Leader
Contingent Reward: Contracts exchange of rewards for effort, promises rewards for good behaviour, recognises accomplishments.	Idealised Influence: Provides vision and sense of mission, instils pride, gains respect and trust.
Management by Exception (Active): Watches and searches for deviations from rules and standards, takes corrective action.	Inspirational Motivation: Communicates high expectations, uses symbols to focus efforts, expresses important purposes in simple ways.
Management by Exception (Passive): Intervenes only if standards are not met.	Intellectual Stimulation: Promotes intelligence, rationality, and careful problem-solving.
Laissez-faire: Abdicates responsibilities and avoids making decisions.	Individualised Consideration: Gives personal attention, treats each employee individually, coaches, and advises.

Breakout Room 2 – Case Scenario

- Case Scenario: A serious accident has occurred in a manufacturing facility. How should the leader respond to prevent recurrence?
- Instructions: Discuss in groups for 10 minutes and choose a leadership style that best addresses the situation.



Real-Life Success Stories in OHS Leadership

- Examples:
 - *Alcoa*: CEO Paul O'Neill prioritised safety above profits.
 - *Toyota's Andon Cord*: Empowering employees to stop production for safety.
 - *DuPont's STOP Programme*: Proactive safety reporting.

“Have you heard of any of these?”

Which of these examples resonates most with you?”



Success Story Video – 1. Alcoa (Aluminium Company of America)

- Video: Brief YouTube video about Paul O'Neill and Alcoa.
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCEDbCH0HK0>

“Does Paul O’Neill inspire you? How?”



Paul O'Neill's Power Base

- Legitimate  Used authority to make safety the top priority
Reframed corporate purpose around people
- Reward  Recognition, visibility for safety champions
Reinforced positive behaviour
- Coercive  Limited, for ethical accountability Discouraged
hiding incidents
- Expert  Strong analytical and operational insight -linked
safety to performance excellence
- Referent  Outstanding – values-driven influence Inspired trust,
pride, and moral alignment

Success Story Video - 2 – Toyota Andon Cord

- Jidoka (TPS) was formulated in 1896 by inventor Sakichi Toyoda, who later became the founder of Toyota.
- Video: Brief YouTube video explaining the Andon cord system and its impact on safety.
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4b1KiBmdF0>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUKpxjAftnk>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVccMINnN9M>

“How does Toyota’s approach empower employees to contribute to safety?”



Challenges and Barriers to Effective OHS Leadership

- Common Barriers:
 - Resistance to change, limited resources, toxic leadership.
- Brainstorm Activity: Suggest strategies for overcoming these barriers.



Key Takeaways

- Summary of Core Concepts:
 - Leadership vs. management.
 - Impact of leadership styles and power.
 - Role model qualities.
 - Real-life examples.

Reflection: *“Which leadership quality do you wish/want/need to develop further?”*





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