

Part 2

Leadership Skills

Developing the skills you need to lead

The Skills You Need
Concise Guide to
Leadership

SKILLS YOU NEED
Helping You Develop Life Skills

**The Skills You Need
Concise Guide to Leadership**

LEADERSHIP SKILLS: DEVELOPING THE SKILLS YOU NEED TO LEAD

Skills You Need

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**“LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING
ARE INDISPENSABLE
TO EACH OTHER.”**

John F. Kennedy

Developing leadership skills is an ongoing process. While many of the skills that you need to lead are essential in life more generally, such as good communications skills, others are more specific to leadership positions.

This book focuses on the skills which are likely to be new or unfamiliar to you when you first take up a leadership position. It explains each one, and gives you some ideas about how you can develop and practise it.

Like the first book in this series, it is designed for those considering, or just starting, their first leadership post. Established leaders, however, should also be able to find some interesting ideas.

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Chapter 1

An Introduction to Skills for Leadership

It is a cliché, perhaps, but nonetheless true that you cannot manage and lead others well unless and until you can manage yourself, both rationally and emotionally.

The first step to leadership is therefore to recognise and manage your emotions.

Once you have done that, you can use a combination of emotion and reason to make decisions and to decide on the 'right' course of action. This will help you to stand firm as a leader when there are many different options, and you are not sure which to pursue. At the same time, it is helpful to understand what motivates you, so that you can keep yourself focused when times are hard.

All these are very much internal issues: they are about what is going on in your head. Others will see the results, but not necessarily the process.

Leaders also need to develop good organisational skills.

Leaders need to be able to manage what is going on in their own work and lives, and also those around them. This is essential to good delegation and management. Some of us find organisation much easier than others. If you are one of those who finds it harder, you have two choices as a leader.

You can learn to do it yourself, using some of the ideas in this book, or you can surround yourself with people who can do it for you, and learn to delegate effectively. However, as the leader of a team, you can be confident that you will be unable to do all the work of the team yourself.

The first area that you may wish to develop is therefore the art of delegating work.

This requires care to ensure that you delegate effectively, while still retaining sufficient control. You also need to ensure that you delegate in such a way that you motivate your team.

Motivating your team also has other elements apart from the work that you delegate, and creating an environment in which people are able to self-motivate becomes more important as you move into more senior positions. These are key skills for leaders and we cover them in some detail.

Having covered what we might describe as personal and interpersonal skills for leaders, we now turn our attention to a final key area: thinking skills.

Strategic thinking, in particular, has in recent years become an area associated with leadership. Every aspiring leader needs to have 'strategic thinking skills' on their CV, and it is probably the area that most concerns new leaders. But there is no magic to being able to think strategically and so we provide some ideas to help you get started.

Other useful thinking skills for leaders include creative thinking and innovating. Again, there is no 'magic bullet', but we hope that this book will help you to start using some techniques and ideas with confidence.