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A timeworn debate over whether leaders are made or born lies at the heart of a search for the mystical psychological characteristics which separate leaders from the rest of the population. If leaders are born and not made, then the answer to the question "Can leadership be taught?" is moot. Our glib response to this question is that all leaders are definitely born. We have little if any concrete evidence to the contrary. But the only honest answer to this question of whether leaders are made or born must be "no one knows for sure."

We strongly believe, however, that leadership is a skill and like any other talent is distributed normally in the population. Clearly, some individuals have a higher probability of succeeding at leadership than others. But even in the most comprehensive and conscientious longitudinal studies of executive progress (e.g., Bray & Howard, 1983), often more than one-third of those *not* predicted to be were in fact successful as leaders. An alternative perspective on leadership shifts the focus away from the psychological characteristics of leaders themselves to what it is that people (managers, leaders, administrators, salespeople, politicians, homemakers, military officers, priests, scientists, teachers, carpenters, and so on) *do when they are leading.*

A plethora of research studies on leadership has been conducted over the past three decades (see, for example, Bass, 1981). A host of recent books focus on leadership and leaders (e.g., Bass, 1985; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Bradford & Cohen, 1984; Kotter, 1987; Leavitt, 1986; Levinson & Rosenthal, 1984; Peters & Austin, 1985; Tichy & Devanna, 1986). Currently, the leadership research field is in transition about the essential behaviors of leaders, moving from earlier versions of initiating consideration and structure (Fleishman,

1953) and transactional leaders to what Burns (1978) has referred to as transformational leadership. Still, the field lacks consensus around such issues as what leadership is, how it differs from management, and whether it can be measured or taught.

Leaving aside these important arguments for the moment, there is ample evidence of a viable construct called leadership and attempts to understand and measure this phenomenon are worthwhile. In this paper we present first a brief review of our qualitative efforts to develop a conceptual framework for understanding leadership. Described in more detail are the empirical efforts utilized in developing a reliable and valid instrument to measure this leadership model. *

Stage One: Qualitative Perspective on What Leaders Do

We asked managers attending a variety of public and contract management development seminars to describe a "personal best as a leader"—an experience in which they got something extraordinary accomplished in an organization. This was their personal best experience as a *leader*. This was an experience in which they felt they had led, not managed, their project to plateaus beyond traditional expectations. These were experiences in which "everything came together."

The personal best survey is 12 pages long and consists of 37 open-ended questions. Several sample questions include: Who initiated the project? What made you believe you could accomplish the results you sought? What special, if any, techniques or strategies did you use to get other people involved in the project? Did you do anything to mark the completion of the project, at the end or along the way? What did you learn most from the experience? What key lessons would you share with another person about leadership from this experience? Completing the personal best survey generally requires about one to two hours of reflection and expression. More than 850 of these surveys have been collected. A short form (one to two pages) of the survey was also developed and has been completed by an additional 450 managers.

In addition to these case studies we conducted 38 in-depth interviews primarily with managers in middle- to senior-level organizational positions in a wide variety of public and private sector companies. These interviews have generally taken 45–60 minutes, but in some cases have lasted four or five hours. The various case studies (from surveys and interview notes) were content analyzed first by the authors and then validated by two separate outside raters. While the category labels have gone through several iterations, the fundamental pattern of leadership behavior which emerges when people are accomplishing extraordinary things in organizations is best described by the following five practices, each of which consists of two basic strategies:

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* *A more complete explanation of the methodology and conceptual framework is available in our book* The Leadership Challenge: How to Get Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations *(San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1987). Similarly, a more extensive psychometric report can be found in "Development and Validation of the Leadership Practices Inventory,"* Educational and Psychological Measurement *(1988), Vol 48: 483–496.*

1) *Challenging the Process*
   a. Search for opportunities
   b. Experiment and take risks

2) *Inspiring a Shared Vision*
   a. Envision the future
   b. Enlist the support of others

3) *Enabling Others to Act*
   a. Foster collaboration
   b. Strengthen others

4) *Modeling the Way*
   a. Set the example
   b. Plan small wins

5) *Encouraging the Heart*
   a. Recognize contributions
   b. Celebrate accomplishments

More than 80 percent of the behavior and strategies described in respondents' personal best case studies and interviews can be accounted for by these factors. While there may appear to be a somewhat linear or sequential flow to these practices the actual dynamics are more complex. In the course of personal best experiences individuals are likely to describe an iterative, or developmental, flow to the leadership process. Their cases provided illustrative examples of the dynamic interconnectedness among the various behaviors and strategies.

Stage Two: Measuring What Leaders Do

The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) was designed on the basis of lengthy and repeated feedback from respondents, and factor analyses of various sets of behaviorally based statements. Each statement was cast on a five-point Likert scale. A higher value represented greater use of a leadership behavior: (1) Rarely or never do what is described in the statement, (2) Once in a while do what is described, (3) Sometimes do what is described, (4) Fairly often do what is described, and (5) Very frequently, if not always, do what is described in the statement. Sample statements include: "I seek out challenging opportunities which test my skills and abilities." "I let others know my beliefs on how to best run the organization I manage." "I treat others with dignity and respect."

The LPI was originally completed by 120 MBA students. These students were employed full-time and attending school on a part-time basis at a small private West Coast university. Their average age was 29 years, nearly 60 percent were males, and almost half had supervisory experience. An item-by-item discussion was conducted after the subjects completed the instrument. Difficult, ambiguous, or inconsistent items were either replaced or revised. Feedback discussions with nine professionals in psychology, organizational behavior, and human resource management—familiar with psychometric issues, the conceptual framework, and management development—further refined the inventory.

Successive administrations of the instrument in the early stages of development involved more than 2,100 managers and their subordinates. Analysis of data from these respondents included tests of internal reliability and construct validation through evaluating the underlying factor structure (Kerlinger, 1973). Statements which loaded poorly or on an uninterpretable factor were either discarded or rewritten. Additional discussions with respondents resulted in further modification of the instrument.

The outcome of the above procedures is the current form of the instrument, which contains 30 statements—six statements measuring each of the five leadership practices. There are two forms of the Leadership Practices Inventory—Self and Other—which differ only in whether the behavior described is that of the respondent's (Self) or is the respondent's behavior being described by a third party (Other).

Sample

The sample for the current version of the Leadership Practices Inventory consists of 2,876 managers and executives involved in several public and in-company management development seminars and their subordinates. For the LPI-Self there are 708 respondents whose backgrounds represent a full array of functional fields from both public and private sector organizations. Twenty-two percent are female. There are approximately three subordinate respondents (LPI-Other) for each managerial subject (N = 2, 168). A separate sample of foreign managers was also collected, including managers from Australia, England, Germany, and Holland. While no attempts have been made to generate "representative" sample populations of managers, the relatively large total sample size involved increases the potential generalizability of these findings. The .01 level was adopted throughout the analyses as the appropriate level of statistical significance.

Procedurally, individuals completing the LPI-Self also request four to five other people familiar with their behavior to complete the LPI-Other (although in some workshop settings only the LPI-Self is completed). The LPI-Other is voluntary and confidential. The form is returned directly to the researchers (or seminar facilitators). The LPI-Self can be self-scored, but is typically returned directly to the researchers for scoring and feedback purposes.

Results

Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliability Means and standard deviations for each scale of the Leadership Practices Inventory are represented in Table 1, as well as the scores on various reliability measures. Enabling Others to Act was the leadership practice most frequently being used. This was followed by Challenging the Process, Encouraging the Heart, and Modeling the Way. Inspiring a Shared Vision was the leadership practice perceived as least frequently engaged in by managers, although there was the greatest amount of variance associated with this practice.

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* *The Leadership Practices Inventory is available from University Associates (8517 Production Avenue, San Diego, CA 92121). Scholars interested in utilizing the LPI in their research, rather than executive development programs, should contact the authors directly.*

TABLE 1
Standard Deviations and Reliability Indices
for the Leadership Practices Inventory

	Mean	Standard Deviation	INTERNAL RELIABILITY			Test-Retest Reliability (N=57)	Social Desirability (N=30)
			LPI (N=2,876)	LPI-Self (N=708)	LPI-Other (N=2,168)		
Challenging the Process	22.53	3.95	.77	.73	.79	.93	.13
Inspiring a Shared Vision	20.01	5.04	.88	.83	.89	.94	.04
Enabling Others to Act	23.68	4.23	.84	.70	.86	.94	.24
Modeling the Way	22.30	4.10	.80	.72	.81	.95	.29
Encouraging the Heart	22.31	4.92	.90	.84	.91	.93	.27

Internal reliabilities on the Leadership Practices Inventory ranged from .77 to .90, with reliabilities ranging from .70 to .84 on the LPI-Self to .81 to .91 on the LPI-Other. Test-retest reliability from a convenience sample of 57 MBA students averaged nearly .94. These students were employed full-time and attending graduate school on a part-time basis. More than 50 percent had supervisory responsibility. Forty percent were women.

Tests for social desirability response bias using the Marlowe-Crowne Personal Reaction Inventory (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960) were also conducted. This scale consists of 33 items representing behaviors that are culturally sanctioned and approved but are improbable of occurrence. The sample involved 30 middle-level managers and none of the correlations were statistically significant.

Comparisons Between the LPI-Self and LPI-Other

Table 2 presents means and standard deviations for the five leadership practices on the LPI-Self compared with those on the LPI-Other. Frequency scores on the LPI-Self were generally higher ($p < .001$) than those on the LPI-Other for all five practices. The relative rank ordering of the leadership practices on the LPI-Self was identical with the rank ordering on the LPI-Other, and in agreement with the pattern observed in Table 1. The variances for each of the leadership practices were notably greater on the LPI-Other than the LPI-Self. On the LPI-Other there was considerable variance about the Inspiring a Shared Vision practice, closely followed by Encouraging the Heart. This same configuration was found on the LPI-Self. Enabling Others to Act was reported by managers (LPI-Self) to be the practice they engaged in most frequently and there tended to be considerable agreement (low variance) among them. Others, responding about these managers, also reported this practice as most frequently engaged in but there was considerably more disagreement among them. Inspiring a Shared Vision was the

TABLE 2
T-Tests of Differences Between Scores
on the LPI-Self and LPI-Other*

	LPI-SELF		LPI-OTHER	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Challenging the Process	23.44	3.11	22.23	4.14
Inspiring a Shared Vision	21.02	4.17	19.69	5.25
Enabling Others to Act	25.09	2.63	23.22	4.54
Modeling the Way	23.04	3.16	22.05	4.34
Encouraging the Heart	23.30	3.87	21.99	5.18

* All two-tailed t-tests were statistically significant (p <.001).

practice both managers and their subordinates felt was least frequently engaged in, although this practice showed the greatest variance on both the LPI-Self and LPI-Other.

Factor Structure of the LPI The factor structure of the Leadership Practices Inventory is presented in Table 3. Responses to the 30 leadership behavior items were factor analyzed, using principal factoring with iteration and varimax rotation. The analysis extracted five factors with eigenvalues greater than or equal to 1.0 and accounted for 59.9 percent of the variance. These factors were quite consistent with a priori expectations. The individual item factor loadings were also generally as expected. The stability of the five factors was tested by factor analyzing the data from different subsamples. In each case the factor structure was similar to the one shown in Table 3 which involves the entire sample (N = 2,876).

Managerial Effectiveness and the Leadership Practices Inventory In addition to the creation of the Leadership Practices Inventory, a leadership effectiveness scale was developed and included in the investigation with several samples. This measure also went through several iterations in its development. It contained six Likert-type items on five-point scales. The questions asked about the extent to which this manager (the person who requested they complete the LPI) meets the job-related needs of his/her subordinates, has built a committed work group, and has influence with upper management. Additional items gauge the extent to which the respondents are satisfied with the leadership provided by the manager, believe that the manager's leadership practices are appropriate, and feel empowered by the manager. Coefficient alpha for the leadership effectiveness scale was .98. The test-retest reliability over ten days for a sample of 57 MBA students was better than .96. The leader effectiveness scale was found, in a sample involving 30 middle-level managers, not to be significantly correlated with the Marlowe-Crowne social desirability measure.

Utilizing only the responses from the LPI-Other (N = 514), the relationship between a leader's effectiveness and their behavior as measured on the Leadership Practices

TABLE 3
Factor Structure (Factor Loadings)
for the Leadership Practices Inventory
(N = 2,876)

Item Number	FACTOR 1 Enabling Others to Act	FACTOR 2 Encouraging the Heart	FACTOR 3 Inspiring a Shared Vision	FACTOR 4 Challenging the Process	FACTOR 5 Modeling the Way
8	.719	.173	.096	.008	.098
18	.694	.200	.176	.088	.214
23	.680	.198	.189	.231	.273
13	.526	.169	.092	.085	.006
28	.509	.280	.206	.195	.290
3	.459	.208	.235	.069	.256
5	.111	.731	.220	.099	.109
25	.152	.725	.255	.143	.128
15	.402	.689	.102	.129	.113
20	.451	.673	.163	.148	.172
10	.400	.635	.079	.154	.189
30	.224	.532	.194	.250	.240
7	.185	.215	.709	.251	.119
2	.156	.165	.657	.276	.136
27	.223	.255	.623	.384	.239
17	.173	.225	.615	.270	.240
22	.223	.151	.506	.362	.136
12	.166	.114	.481	.345	.107
16	.180	.169	.266	.641	.233
26	.164	.185	.241	.637	.057
11	.043	.082	.184	.622	.145
1	.182	.128	.219	.548	.153
21	.354	.194	.178	.473	.145
6	.170	.049	.138	.392	.173
29	.218	.185	.144	.192	.609
9	.343	.158	.031	.107	.512
14	.164	.164	.239	.228	.509
4	.232	.142	.353	.238	.411
19	.109	.156	.334	.315	.409
24	.319	.120	.115	.227	.372

Inventory, was examined. Including only the responses from "other people" about the manager provided relatively independent assessments, thereby minimizing any potential self-report bias. Using stepwise regression analysis the five leadership factors/practices were entered as the independent variables and leader effectiveness as the dependent variable. The results (not shown) revealed a highly significant regression equation ($F = 318.9$, $p < .0001$). The leadership practices model explained nearly 55 percent (adjusted R $= .756$) of the variance around subordinates' assessments of their leaders' effectiveness.

Another method for examining the validity of the Leadership Practices Inventory is to determine how well LPI scores can differentiate between high- and low-performing managers. This issue was investigated using discriminant analysis as a classification technique. This assessment of predictive validity examined how well the Leadership Practices Inventory could group managers into various performance-based categories.

The lowest third and highest third of the managers on the LPI-Other leader effectiveness scale formed the low- and high-performance categories. Approximately 85 percent of the sample of LPI-Other respondents (N = 325) were used to create the canonical discriminant function with the remaining respondents (N = 54) used to create a holdout sample for classification purposes. One discriminant function was derived. As shown in Table 4, the discriminant function correctly classified 92.62 percent of the known cases. In the holdout sample 77.78 percent of the cases were correctly classified. Both of these results are statistically significant ($p < .001$).

TABLE 4
Classification Results from Discriminant Analysis on Effectiveness by Leadership Practices Inventory for Two- and Three-Group Cases

TWO-GROUP CASE	LOW	HIGH	PERCENTAGE CORRECT
Known Sample			
Actual Members	169	156	
Predicted Members	154	147	92.62
Holdout Sample			
Actual Members	23	31	
Predicted Members	16	26	77.78

THREE-GROUP CASE	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	PERCENTAGE CORRECT
Known Sample				
Actual Members	169	108	156	
Predicted Members	123	64	121	71.13
Holdout Sample				
Actual Members	23	27	31	
Predicted Members	16	16	23	67.90

When the middle third of the sample (that is, managers with moderate effectiveness scores) was included, the discriminant functions derived were able to correctly classify 71.13 percent of the cases in the known sample and 67.90 percent in the holdout sample (see Table 4). Both of these percentages are significantly beyond probabilities due to chance ($p < .001$). That scores on the Leadership Practices Inventory are related to managerial (leader) effectiveness is reinforced by the classification results from the discriminant analyses.

Conclusions

The Leadership Practices Inventory was developed to measure empirically the conceptual framework developed in the case studies of managers' personal best experiences as leaders—times when they had accomplished something extraordinary in an organization. Various analyses suggest that the LPI has sound psychometric properties.

The factor structure of the Leadership Practices Inventory is quite consistent with the a priori conceptual model. The internal reliabilities of the LPI (both Self and Other forms) are substantial. The reliability of the LPI over time seems very good. Finally, the LPI does not seem to be significantly affected by possible social desirability response biases.

There are differences between respondents' self scores and scores provided by others about the respondent (LPI-Self versus LPI-Other). In itself this is not a remarkable finding because this same phenomenon is characteristic of many psychological inventories. Caution, however, should be exercised when interpreting the LPI-Self scores independent of LPI-Other feedback.

For both feedback (self-development) and research purposes the LPI-Other appears to provide relatively reliable and valid assessments of respondent behavior. More than one-half of subordinates' evaluations of their managers' effectiveness can be explained by their perceptions of the managers' behavior along the conceptual framework of the Leadership Practices Inventory. Moreover, significantly better-than-chance predictions about subordinates' assessments of their managers' effectiveness can be made based upon information provided by the LPI. Research is currently under way to investigate how the Leadership Practices Inventory is related to other independent measures of managerial effectiveness.

Returning to the initial question of whether or not leadership can be taught, it is interesting to note that people seldom ask: "Can management be taught?" "Are managers born or made?" These questions are central to debates about leadership, yet are never raised about management. Why should management be viewed as a set of skills and abilities but leadership be seen as a set of innate personality characteristics? It has simply been assumed that management can be taught and on the basis of that assumption hundreds of business schools and thousands of management courses have been established. Certainly some of these managers are better than others. However, on average, the caliber of managerial performance is undoubtedly better today than years ago because of the assumption that people can learn the attitudes, skills, and

knowledge associated with good management practice. Why should leadership education and development require a loftier or more genetically based set of assumptions?

Preliminary research utilizing a pre- and posttest administration of the LPI suggests that leadership skills can be taught and/or enhanced. Participants in a week-long leadership development program (conducted by AT&T) showed an average 15 percent increase in leadership behaviors (as measured on the LPI-Other) ten months following the program. Qualitative analyses revealed even more dramatic changes in leadership practices as reported to company officials by both participants and their subordinates. The search continues for specific psychological traits which predict leaders. We suggest, however, that a more fruitful approach is to examine and identify key behaviors of leaders, how these behaviors manifest themselves, and how these practices can be nurtured and developed in people.

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