



Leadership as Light



by B. Keith Simerson and Michael Venn

TO HELP LEADERS GUIDE THEIR organizations to a better place, we propose a new model of leadership—one that honestly portrays the vast expectations held of leaders in a manner that allows them to translate this knowledge into action.

To develop this new model, we built on past knowledge of successful leadership actions. We surveyed many leadership models and gleaned from them over 80 specific actions. We analyzed these, put them into three groups, and identified nine distinct roles.

Earning the Right

- **The Custodial Leader**—earn the right to wear the mantel of leadership by desiring to extend your leadership beyond your time and by making certain your actions contribute to current and future success. Leadership is the sum of all you do, the results of all your actions—the reality of what you leave behind.

Drivers of Leadership

- **The Strategic Leader**—ensure a winning strategy exists.
- **The Developmental Leader**—give people a chance to learn, develop, and contribute in a manner that allows them to achieve their aspirations.
- **The Supportive Leader**—make certain people get what they need, when they need it, in a way they can use it.
- **The Inspiring Leader**—remind people what they are a part of, how they have succeeded in past situations, and what they can accomplish together.
- **The Working Leader**—work side-by-side, help others solve problems, help

people distinguish between crises and mere inconveniences

Enablers of Leadership

Three roles help us understand how a leader can be technically excellent and still not achieve success as a leader or why a leader can succeed in one organization or job, and not in another. These enabling roles make success possible in the other leadership roles:

- **The Trusted Leader**—demonstrate you can be trusted through your actions and how they match your words.
- **The Trusting Leader**—show you trust others by allowing them to lead, by sharing your responsibility for success with them.
- **The Nurturing Leader**—take ownership of the physical, emotional, and psychological health of the people in your organization.

Our framework reveals multifaceted expectations with which leaders must deal. And yet, the challenge remains—how does a leader address such an overwhelming set of

expectations?

We pose a simple metaphor: consider leadership to be like a light. Do you need to be shining your light out into the distance? Do you need to shine it in front of people's feet? Do you need to have everyone line up behind you as you shine your light forward? Or do you need to be handing out lights to those along side you?

As you think through the nine leadership roles, reflect on the context of your job, organization, employees, shareholders, marketplace, customers, and competition. Consider where you need to shine your light today! **EE**

Michael Venn, Ph.D. and B. Keith Simerson, Ed.D., are co-founders of Tradewinds Consulting, LLC and help businesses perform better by developing their leaders. E-mail: BKSimerson@TradewindsConsulting.com and MikeVenn@TradewindsConsulting.com.

ACTION: Where do you need to shine your light?

