

Leadership Portfolio
Stephen Abramowitz
SCOM 425

Leadership Portfolio Contents

Leadership visual:



This photo is iconic. Everything about it is representative of leadership, and the behavior behind making drastic change; influencing others. Washington's duty-based leadership was centered on long-term growth and was absent of egotism and self-aggrandizement. He never acted neurotic, and was steadfast in his resolve. With this pivotal leadership decision, Washington swung the tide of war in his favor knowing the risks, but acting based on the culmination of years of experience, with an extensive history of failures that he used to inform his decisions. Shifting from just this image of one act, Washington, led by example with his resignation from office, and his farewell address. He helped build a nation and acted in accordance with what would secure the longevity of his creation.

Leadership assessment results:

Kellog Cognitive Styles Assessment:

- Scored 6 for all four intuitive & sensing (gathering), thinking & feeling (evaluating)

Creativity Assessment:

- I scored a 45 which is above average for creativity.

Emotional Intelligence Assessment:

- I have average emotional intelligence with a score of 8.
- Scored average for the following: self-awareness, optimism, emotional control and flexibility
- Scored below average for social skills

Leadership Class Colors:

- My leadership color is blue, which means harmony is valued the most.

Leadership-compass-self-assessment:

- Compass is primarily on East, so my value-oriented words are “option, possibility, and imagine”

Tolerance for Ambiguity Assessment:

- 59 is over the 40-48 average score mark
 - N: Total x 25% 14.75 actual was 17 for novelty
 - C: Total x 56% 33.04 actual was 29 for complexity
 - I: Total x 19% 1.21 actual was 13 for insolubility

Leadership scales:

- The Big Five:
 - Extroversion then openness to experience then agreeableness then conscientiousness then neuroticism:
 - $E = 20 + 4 - 1 + 4 - 3 + 5 - 1 + 4 - 3 + 4 - 3 = 30/10 = 3$
 - $A = 14 - 1 + 4 - 4 + 3 - 2 + 4 - 4 + 5 + 4 + 3 = 26/10 = 2.6$
 - $C = 14 + 2 - 4 + 4 - 4 + 2 - 4 + 4 - 2 + 5 + 3 = 20/10 = 2$
 - $N = 38 - 5 + 2 - 4 + 2 - 5 - 4 - 4 - 3 - 4 - 3 = 6/10 = .6$
 - $O = 8 + 5 - 1 + 4 - 1 + 3 - 4 + 4 + 3 + 5 + 5 = 27/10 = 2.7$
- The LTQ:
 - With survey results from 7 people I got an average of 5 for diligence and dependability.
 - My lowest score was articulate and self-assured (3.5) followed by self-confident.
 - Trustworthy and perceptive were my highest, receiving a 4.8 average.
- Self-assessment:
 - Leading courageously & acting with integrity tied for 13/5
 - I deal with issues and concerns promptly
 - I challenge others to make the right choices
 - I make tough decision regardless of people approval or rejection
- Fostering teamwork was my lowest with 9/5
 - I don't build team spirit or morale
 - I don't lead the team in celebration
 - I don't always solicit advice from team members.
- Conceptualizing Leadership:
 - 15=relationship emphasis
 - 15 process emphasis
 - 14= behavior emphasis
 - 14=trait emphasis
 - 12=ability emphasis
 - 12= skill emphasis

Articles Selected:

- **4. Kellog Self Reflection.pdf**
- 1. Leaders-Average-Day-CMOE.jpg

- 2. The Best Leaders Are Insatiable Learners.pdf
- The Top 10 Insights from the “Science o... Life” in 2017 | Greater Good Magazine.pdf
- Free Yourself from What You Should Be Doing HBR.pdf
- The Disease of Being Busy _ On Being (1).pdf
- Five Science-Backed Strategies to Build Resilience | Greater Good Magazine.pdf
- How to Cultivate Gratitude, Compassion, and Pride on Your Team.pdf

Reflection Questions

1. What did you learn about yourself in the assessments you took and quantified?

The assessments results are indicative of much of the feedback that I have received both directly and indirectly from people that I have worked with across various moments in my college career. It only makes sense to start with the only assessment that was external, and based on the opinions of my close peers. I sent the questionnaire to seven individuals with whom I have been both a leader and a follower in either academic, extracurricular or peer-mentoring contexts. With this, I learned from getting “unsure” as the answer for the confidence and articulate categories, that these are two major areas of concern for myself as I move forward. Conversely, I scored very highly among my peers with trustworthiness and dependability. Using these results along with my self-reported scores, I understand a lot about myself at this point. I am a people pleaser, but I am not afraid of conflict, as seen with my high scores in leading courageously and acting with integrity but also from my compass (East) and color (blue) results. I am good at seeing the big picture, and do well with conceptualizing a mission or overarching goal of a project. When I am imagining the future of what I am involved in, I have creative insights that are refreshing to group members that may be more practical and task oriented. This ties into my survey results, because while I have creative and insightful ideas, I often struggle with articulating them in a succinct manner to those around me. This brings me to a peculiar situation in which many of my results seemed to show me. For one thing, I am extroverted and open to new experiences, but I also shy away from ambiguity primarily stemming from threats of the situation being unsolvable. This is why I sometimes come off as unfriendly, which was my lowest score in my results, across several assessments. I can come off cold when I am confronted with an issue and I simply want to use my analytical nature and intuitive thinking skills to offer solutions as opposed to being just emotional support. It is important to

note that I am incredibly dependent on collaborating with others, and sharing ideas through music, comedy, art and anything that inspires me. It is what drives me forward. These conflicts between my desire to connect with others and the misinterpretation of being unkind is where I have really seen my results proving to be insightful.

2. What personal themes based in your direct leadership experience (or experience being led) emerged from these assessments?

In several of my leadership positions, I am known to be the devil's advocate; the ideas guy. In my position as vice president of JMU's chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), as well as in my role of media and issue director for Bluestone Communications, I am inundated with situations in which I have gotten to shape the thematic elements of a personal leadership. My experiences of going from a follower to a leader are incredibly impactful and have definitely shaped my form of leadership. In both organizations, I started at the bottom of the totem pole, to now be in a position of influence in both. From watching others go through the seats of leadership, I know that I strived to emulate what they did well, and to improve upon what they failed to do in their positions. These self-determined goals were and still are a culmination of various components to leading. For instance, I saw the shortcomings of my former PRSSA executive board's wavering commitment to their roles as they prepared to graduate. I took note of how certain individuals commanded respect through personal introspection and visible desires to constantly improve. In other instances, I watched as now-graduated leaders cracked under pressure and used their team members as emotional punching bags instead of support beams and systems through which to spread positivity and constructive criticism. From being given opportunities to advance only when I was able to demonstrate my ability to understand the organization from a top-down perspective, I have held knowing my organization(s) as tantamount to any other component of what makes a leader's able to properly enact change. My experiences as a follower, are exactly what I use when determining how to complete the loop when I am acting as a leader. My experiences are the reasons for why I try to lead by example, following through on goals while always

maintaining a firm grasp of what my answers are to two questions: who are we as an organization? Who do we want to become?

3. What core themes / takeaways did you glean from the required and elected articles you read? Identify 5 themes / takeaways and explicate them in a list with a paragraph explaining (use examples from the articles) what they mean to you.

- Accept and embrace the fact that one must change in order to be the best version of themselves.
- Be introspective and strive to outline exactly what defines me and my truth.
- Don't mistake activity for productivity.
- Show self-love and lend compassion to myself attempting to forgive all.
- Realize that life is better with meaning and sharing that meaning with others.

The required readings were impactful after taking the assessments over Thanksgiving break and having some time to sit with my results before taking the time to read the articles. My list is comprised of five themes or beliefs that I generated from mixing the articles into advice that I could synthesize down into digestible parts. My first bullet is about change. It comes from reading the infographic "Leaders-Average-Day" and the article "Leaders are Insatiable Learners". The visual map of how leaders allocate a portion of their time during the day to focus on self-growth and learning. Similar to this point, my second bullet is to be introspective, and to strive to define myself and my beliefs. This is in the "Free Yourself" article, and is deeply engrained in the "Top 10 Insights" article. Actually, introspection is central to almost any of the articles that were included on the list of writings. It makes sense. How am I to achieve my goals if I don't first have goals and know why I chose them in the first place? In my journey to grow, it is important to step away from the day-to-day and to pause. Touching on my third bullet, which relates to many aspects of "The Disease of Being Busy"; I need to critically assess whether the things I have given my time to are purposeful and helping me to be the best version of myself. Taken directly from the article "Kellogg Self Reflection", I put "Don't mistake activity for productivity", which is incredibly relatable at a time when my peers and I are incredibly busy but could use a questioning of motives. My optional article pick, "How to cultivate gratitude" is what mainly inspired my fourth and fifth entries into my list. The term compassion is littered throughout the articles and it is because teams thrive on being interconnected and focused on true teamwork. I need to remember to build teams that can stand on their own if I am to leave. Teams are best when they are contained in values of mutual respect, dignity and

compassion. Taken in a different way, not only is it important to love others and build bonds with team members, but during my sessions of self-analysis and criticism, I need to remember to let myself fail and be forgiven.

4. What lessons from the class (think of your different roles, teams, groups, think of different theories, articulations, leadership lessons, concepts) can you articulate that you have learned and want to keep for future use or deep learning? (You should identify 5 key lessons, explicate them in a list, with an explanation of the lesson and why it matters to you).

- Asking is manipulation if at the very least you do not consider their suggestions and justify why you don't use them.
- Leadership is about being able to leave and if the business is running just as smoothly when you are gone.
- One of the worst things to do is to lead out of self-preservation.
- Have people who can say no to you because power is corrupting.
- Leading is collaboration with decisiveness.

From the course activities such as our case study assignments, our primary source theoretical readings and our discussions with general class members and special guest speakers I have collected my key takeaways into these five points. For starters, I have remembered one thing from our class lectures, and that is that asking for input without actually intending to utilize people's responses is a form of manipulation. This is quite a unique idea when one really ponders about this. It ties into what leadership is really about. My second point coincides with this, in that it focuses on what successful leaders are able to accomplish. That is, leave and know that they don't need to micromanage everything because they have built great teams of competent individuals that can keep things moving like a well-oiled machine. This, along with my third point, were taken from our guest lecture toward the end of the year. The third being that it is time to step down from a position when the only reason you are there is to save your own skin. My fourth point, comes from my own personal fears of what could become of my desire to challenge myself in more and more leadership positions. I included that it is essential to have people surrounding you that can tell you no. This is directly from Aaron's lectures, and in his warning of how power is corrupting. To be weary of these potential pitfalls, is to also lend opportunity to achieve real leadership, through executing my fifth point: leading is collaboration with decisiveness. It is inaction that

separates thinkers from leaders. While this can be misconstrued, this point just means that leaders influence teams by utilizing individual's skills and abilities while navigating the communicative sphere to yield progress.

5. How can you leverage the strengths that emerged from your assessments and reflections?

I can use my strengths to bring positivity and ingenuity to wherever I work. I have a tenacity when it comes to learning and wanting to understand the underlying mechanics behind organizations and systems. As previously stated, my strengths lie in ideating and in maintain a perspective of the big picture. I can use this with my ability to read people, to find what people would be best for a particular position, and build teams accordingly. Additionally, I am trustworthy and perceptive, which will translate into being able to build relationships with people that are strong and capable of being tested, which is a core part of any organization. My personality traits are also closely aligned with that of research involving the Big Five. This being, that I am open to experiences and far from neurotic. I feel I am level headed and can act under pressure.

6. How can you improve the weaknesses that emerged from your assessments?

I need to work on maintaining a feedback loop with my current relationships. First and foremost, I am great at creating relationships, but often fall short at maintaining them in the way that people prefer. For instance, I need to improve on celebrating wins with my teams and highlighting people's accomplishments and individual contributions. I can use parts of Path-Goal Leadership, focusing on catering my motivational approach to each person I am with. I need to remember to ask myself, how am I coming off to them right now? Affirmation is just as important as constitutive criticism.

7. What types of roles (both formal in a job and informal in community engagement, volunteer, etc ...) best suit your strengths?

I am best suited for positions where I can work with people who are creative and can push me to achieve more than I thought possible. Like any millennial, I thrive when open communication is important to my organization. I am designed for team collaboration, in a setting that is very free-thinking and capable of balancing between abstract and tangible activity. I will improve alongside of people that

know what our mutual goals are, along with what we each bring to the table that helps the collective.

Using diverse thinking to our advantage will be the ideal company mission statement for me.

8. What types of situations / roles should you avoid given your inclination?

I would struggle in a company where people are cold and performance driven as a primary identifier. I like to achieve, but also need to be pushed to work on my ability to show compassion. I do well when communication and collaboration are central to survival. Along with same lines, I would be thrown if I was to be in a situation where egos were celebrated instead of seen as the bane of the organization's existence. Out of anything, I need to feel free to grow with others and in an environment that cares about what they are doing, and where they care about the people that work there.

Leadership Philosophy

Using Deb Calvert's LinkedIn article as a guide, I began my Personal Leadership Philosophy (PLP) with a contemplation of my beliefs about life and human nature. These are quite simply that life is suffering, and my role is to reduce the suffering of others while I am blessed to walk on this earth. I hold that all people are connected through energy, and there are synchronicities between the things of this world that can be noticed if one takes the time to notice them. Along the same vein, those that are open to new experiences are more likely to find opportunity from these seemingly serendipitous happenings. My PLP is grounded in the idea that I am really still trying to learn who I am and what I believe. While I would like to claim my beliefs about morality, religion, politics, etc. are clearly cut out, the fact that they are far from it have translated into one core belief of mine, which is that no one has it all figured out but some are more willing than others to attempt to do so. It is from this point where I can formulate my idea of leadership. The course's central definition of leadership involving influencing others and enacting change is strongly engrained in my view of leadership. Leadership, as a domain, is filled with examples of leaders, people ascribed to the concept of leadership, when this is not the case. Leadership is a term best left in theory, separate from people. And when operationalized, should be an ideal to strive for. As with transformational leadership, I find that leadership is best seen when it cannot be seen at all. On a practical note, I want to be in a constant state of growth and self-assessment. I expect that the people around me are

equally as introspective, where individual motivations are at least somewhat involving intrinsic desires to be a sponge of knowledge and a poster-child for excellence in whatever one is passionate about.

Regardless of if I am involved as a leader or as a follower, I strive to be passionate about what it is that I am working toward, and the same goes for the people around me. I truly believe that ego is the enemy, but confidence is essential. I will always look for ways to motivate others, and to identify what brings people together. For it is in these connects that I can, and have been able to motivate people to become passionate about the tasks or goals in focus. Moving forward, my actions will reflect how I yearn to make connections with everything around me, shrinking my world and grabbing for more of it to discover.