# Be an effective leader

A toolkit for leaders and changemakers in local governments

## Preface

VNG International is the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG). Being part of VNG, one of the oldest and strongest local government associations in the world, our roots in local government are deep. Since 1993, VNG International strengthens local governments, associations of municipalities, and local training institutes across the world to provide better futures to their citizens.

IDEAL is one of VNG International's key programmes. It is implemented in seven countries facing fragility or conflict: Burundi, Mali, Palestine, Rwanda, Somaliland, South Sudan and Uganda. Local governments play a key role in supporting the resilience of their communities against instability and fragility. The basic services local governments provide and the policies they develop have a direct effect on the lives of citizens. IDEAL works on involving citizens, including in particular marginalised groups, in local decision-making in order to ensure their needs and opinions are reflected. The IDEAL programme is financed by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Local political and civil servant leaders play a key role in promoting the objectives of the IDEAL programme. To support their development and capacities as leaders, the IDEAL programme developed this toolkit particularly aimed at leaders in fragile and conflict afflicted countries.

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# List with abbreviations

**DISC** – The "Dominant, Influential, Steady and Compliant" model describing behaviour styles. See chapter 1.2.

**GROW** – The "Goal, current Reality, Options and Way forward" model guides you in coaching colleagues. See chapter 5.3.

**IDEAL** – Inclusive Decisions at a Local Level

**LED** – Local Economic Development

**LG** – Local Government

**LGA** – Local Government Association

**LSD** – The "Listen – Summarize – Dig Deeper" method helps people to become more attentive listeners. See chapter 4.1.

**SMART** – Acronym for "Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely", the characteristics of a good output indicator. See chapter 0.

**STARR** – The "Situation, Task, Action, Result and Reflection" model for self-reflection. See chapter 1.4.

**VNG** – Association of Netherlands Municipalities

**VNG International** – The international cooperation agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities

# Contents

# Introduction

*"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."*

*- John Quincy Adams*
*Sixth President of the United States*

## Why this toolkit?

To build better futures for citizens in fragile and conflict affected countries effective leadership can make the difference. These countries face many challenges, including institutions that are ill-equipped to provide essential policies, efficient procedures, and quality services to their citizens. But this can be changed. Through its work in fragile and conflict affected countries, VNG International has witnessed that effective leadership can make the difference. This toolkit provides local decision-makers with the instruments to be an effective leader: A leader capable of influencing and empowering others to build better futures for citizens.

## Who is it for?

If you are a politician, manager, senior civil servant in a local government, or an executive director or senior staffer of a local government association, this toolkit is for you! Even more so if you are working in a fragile and conflict affected country. You play an essential role to create a better future for your fellow citizens. As politician you make the decisions on what is needed, while as a manager or senior civil servant you are tasked with implementing these decisions.

However, this toolkit is not made for just any politician, manager, or civil servant. Effective leaders seek to take charge of their responsibilities, expand their capacities and achieve their goals. If this is what you are aiming for, this toolkit is for you.

## What is in this toolkit?

Leadership is the art of influencing and empowering people to achieve a common goal. Although there is no blueprint, we believe there are five elementary characteristics: *Self-Awareness*, *Influence*, *Vision*, *Communication* and *Empowerment*. The toolkit is structured in such a way to cover each of these characteristics:

1. It all starts with **Self-Awareness**. This is paramount for effective leadership. You cannot influence and empower others without knowing yourself. The better you understand what kind of person you are as a leader, the more effective you will become. Therefore, this elementary characteristic is presented first in chapter 1.

2. The second characteristic is **Influence**, the capacity to have an effect on things and people, even without authority. You will read that effective leaders should focus on what they can change, and not on things they are concerned about but have no power over. Such an awareness is important for any leader, but especially for those operating in fragile countries. Influence is not static, a proactive and positive leader can increase its influence, as detailed in chapter 2.

3. Chapter 3 covers the third characteristic: **Vision**. Effective leaders know where they are going and why. They can promote an aspirational purpose that inspires people, especially during difficult times. More importantly, they make vision concrete and work to achieving it step by step.

4. **Communication** is the characteristic of chapter 4. As an effective leader you need to be able to communicate in a variety of ways, from transmitting information to coaching your people. One communication style cannot fit all, as you must be able to communicate with a range of people across roles.

5. The fifth and final characteristic is **Empowerment**. When you empower people, you motivate and inspire them. You make use of their knowledge and skills so that you can accomplish far more than you would have done alone. The art of empowerment is covered in chapter 5.

All five characteristics are made tangible and concrete by offering you proven effective, applicable, and practical tools. These will help your day-to-day work, and strengthen your role as a leader. As the focus is on effective leadership in fragile and conflict affected countries, each chapter gives you concrete examples of leaders working in these countries. Leaders that have applied a specific tool successfully. With these tools and examples, we hope this toolkit supports and inspires you to become a more effective leader and **lead the change you want to see**.



*Figure 1: The 5 elements of effective leadership*

# 1   Know yourself

*"If you want to change the world, start with yourself."*

*- Mahatma Gandhi*
*Leader of India's nonviolent independence movement*

Put a mirror in front of you and look at it. What do you see? What kind of person is staring back at you? By knowing yourself, you are aware of how you perceive the world around you. This chapter will help you to better understand what kind of personality you have and how this influences how you perceive the world around you. And more important, that your perspective is a perspective and not thé perspective. Reflecting on yourself is the starting point for growing as an effective leader.



## 1.1   Be open to other points of view

What do you see in this figure? If I tell you that there are two different things, do you see them?
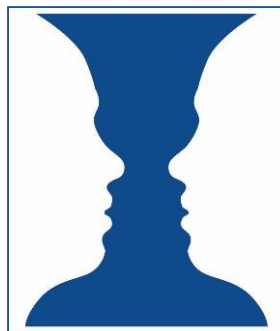


*Figure 2: Rubin's vase – What*

Most of us either see the white vase or the silhouettes of two faces. Only when we look for longer or are told what to see, do we see the other point of view. This optical illusion shows that even when looking at the same thing, two people can have two different views while still both being right! As an effective leader you need to be aware that **your perspective on things is "a view" and not "the view"**. How you perceive the world around you is based on your own set of values, beliefs, and experiences. Since these are different for everybody, different people have different perspectives.

The DISC model is an easy-to-use model to obtain a better understanding on how you personally perceive the world and how this affects your behaviour. The model identifies your behavioural styles by assessing whether you are more people or more task oriented (see the horizontal axis in Figure 3), and whether you prefer to take action or prefer to reflect on decisions (vertical axis). By combining these characteristics, the model sets out four behavioural styles: *Dominant*, *Influential*, *Steady* and *Compliant*. The DISC model can help you to increase your self-knowledge: how you respond to conflict, what motivates you, what causes you stress, and how you resolve problems. Through gaining this self-knowledge, it supports you in improving your working relationships. Let's take a closer look at the DISC model and the mentioned behavioural styles.

## 1.2 Know your preferred behavioural style

Imagine you work in a local government that has been in a lockdown for the past several months due to a virus, let's say Covid19. The national government has just decided that all local governments are re-opening again as of next Monday. People can go to their offices as long as they keep a certain distance between each other to avoid contamination. What would your reaction be?

- *'Nice! Let's get some work done!'* - In this case you probably score high on **Dominant** (task focused and active); People with this style put emphasis on accomplishing results. They tend to see the bigger picture, can be blunt, accept challenges and are straight to the point.
- *'I have some creative ideas to comply with the distance rule!'* - If this is your reaction your style is likely to be **Influential** (active and people focused). These people put emphasis on influencing or persuading others, on openness and relationships. They show enthusiasm, are optimistic, enjoy collaborating and dislike being ignored.
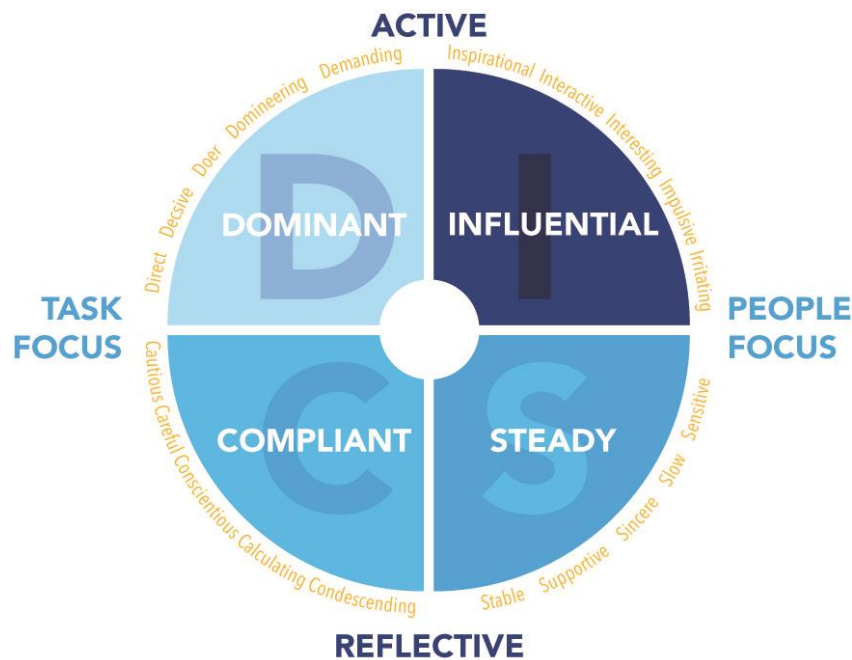


*Figure 3: The DISC Model*

- *'How nice to be back at my own desk and see my colleagues in person!'* - This would be the reaction of a persons with the behavioural preference of **Steady** (reflective and people focused). These type of people enjoy cooperation, show sincerity and dependability. They do not like to be rushed and have a calm manner and approach.
- *'It is most important to stick to the distance rule as ordained by the national government'* - This reaction is shown by **Compliant** persons (reflective and task focused). They consider quality and accuracy, expertise and competency of major importance. They enjoy independence, objective reasoning and want the details. They fear being wrong.

Please note that you do not have to fit yourself exclusively in one of these four styles, but rather see yourself as someone with a mix of different styles, though with a preference for one specific style.

As you can imagine, a person with an influential preference style will perceive behaviour of others differently than a person with a compliant behavioural style. Let's give an example: Anne a city manager of a local government always felt that Abdu, one of the senior managers in her management team was not actively participating. During team meetings, when she asked for input or ideas, Abdu most of the time was silent. Also, in discussions he hardly participates. Only when Anne found out that the behavioural style of Abdu was compliant, unlike her influential style, she could understand his behaviour better. She then decided to take his communication needs more into account. And started working with an agenda where the requests to her staff where already pointed out. The agenda could say: Request to come with input and ideas on how to deal with the shrinking budget. Communicating like this gave Abdu as a compliant person room to think the questions over before the meeting started. Abdu was now providing input and ideas during the meeting because Anne now accommodated Abdu's communication needs.

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*Look for the advantages of the different characteristics and make use of it*

*Reflections of an East-African local government professional on her DISC profile.*

*After filling in the DISC test, I found myself in the Compliance quadrant. This was no big surprise to me. I value quality and accuracy in my work and in the work of others. People often describe me as careful, analytical, and systematic; characteristics that are part of the compliance quadrant. These characteristics come in handy for me since I am working as a project manager. Being analytic, systematic, and accurate are part of the job. What I found interesting to get from this test is that it also mentioned the side effects of these characteristics. I can indeed be sometimes over analytic or restraint in showing my emotions or how I feel about something. I can improve my own effectiveness by acknowledging others' feelings and looking beyond data.*

*I scored low on Dominant. This I know from myself. I am not so much motivated by winning, competing and success. A person scoring high on Dominant tends to be outspoken, direct and demanding. Characteristics that do not reflect me. My close colleague scores far higher on Dominant. When we have meetings with for instance people from the Ministry we make use of this. Depending on the aim we decide beforehand who will play the bigger role. My colleague is better in chairing the meeting, asking the trickier questions or getting the result we want, whereas I make the clear appointments for follow-up and know the details.*

*Look for the advantages of each other's characteristics and make use of that. That is core to me.*

*What about you?*

*Know your own behavioural style. This makes you more self-aware how you respond to others, what motivates you and how you solve problems. Understand that people have different behavioural styles and thus, different communication needs. Adjust your communication to the behavioural styles of your employees. Check https://www.123test.com/disc-personality-test/ to find out your behavioural style. After you have done take some time to reflect on the below mentioned questions:*

1. *Can you think of a situation where you showed your preferred behavioural style? In what way was it shown?*

2. *How would others respond in that situation with a different behavioural style? Do you know someone with that style?*

3. *Can the DISC model help you to recognize the communication needs and behavioural styles of others like your employees? In what way?*



## 1.3 Expand your leadership style

Leadership is the art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal. As pointed out above, the key to motivation is not that you apply your own preferred style, but the style preferred by the people you want to motivate. What are their needs? This also applies to your leadership style. Effective leaders adapt their style of leadership to the situation and the person. This is called situational leadership. Let's take a look at the four styles of leadership depicted in Figure 4.

- **Directing –** Here you tell your people what they have to do and how they have to do it. You provide them with the what, how, why, when and where! Your directions are detailed and you expect to be informed on each step frequently.
- **Coaching –** Here you help people in achieving their tasks. In addition you also focus at supporting them to improve their skills and deepen the connection and trust between you and them. Think about coaches of sport teams. What they do is give directions in order to create the best players/teams.
- **Supporting –** Team members are already competent in their skills, but somewhat inconsistent in their performance and not committed to the end goal of the team (delivering qualified services, issuing permits on time, be accountable on what we do). Supporting means that shared decisions

are taken on how to split the tasks between team members. Here a leader must focus less on the particular tasks and much more on the relationships within the group (don't forget the leader is also part of the group).

- **Delegating –** Here individuals have strong skills and strong commitment. They are able to work and progress on their own. The job of the leader here is to monitor progress and still be part of some decisions. Leaders that are delegating mostly reaffirm the decisions taken by the team. There is no need for the leader to focus on tasks and relationship, but rather on providing opportunities for growth of each individual team member.
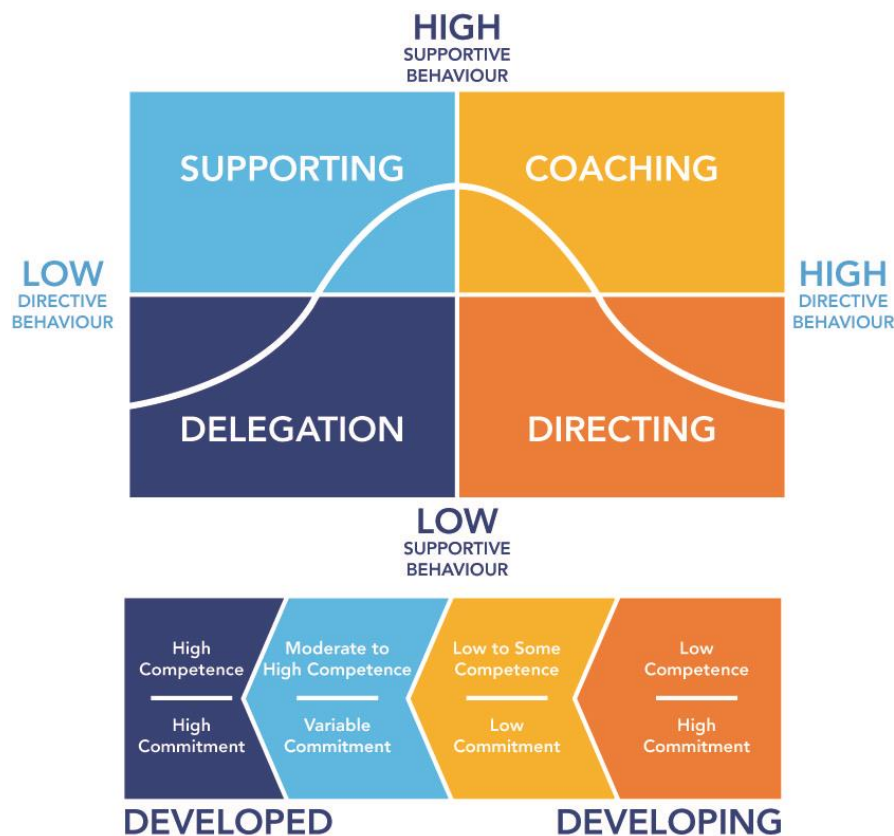


*Figure 4: Hershey and Blanchard's model of situational leadership*

Although there are 4 styles, leaders unfortunately often apply one style only. *In VNG International's experience the most dominant style of government officials in conflict affected and fragile states is directing.*

Now let's take a closer look at the Figure 4. Notice the smaller section under the 4 styles, titled development level! This points out clearly that a style should not depend on the preference of the leader, but on the situation. Hence situational leadership!

In a discussion about this model with Mohamed, a city manager in an Arab country, he mentioned: 'It is not that I do not want to delegate tasks, but I feel afraid to lose control and my staff is not capable of doing it'. This is oftentimes the reason why the Directing style is chosen. Mohamed also mentioned "It frustrates me a lot that I cannot be away for one day from the office, since then people are not doing anything. They always await and request my approval before moving ahead." Here you see the two sides of the same coin.

The situational model provides a solution to this. Mohamed mentioned he wanted to delegate task, but sticks to directing to not lose control. As the model shows he skips two step in between directing and delegating: coaching and supporting. These steps cannot and should not be skipped. When applying this model, your first step is to apply the style that follows the style you already master. If you can use directing, as you probably can, you should focus on coaching. If you can use coaching than go further to supporting. Not sooner. Note that the main difference between directing on one hand and coaching and supporting on the other is that you not only focus on the task, but on the person as well. You want to empower him or her in becoming better. More on empowering of your people in chapter 5.

*Staffers with a higher level of development need trust and confidence. Not control*

*Reflections of an Executive Director of an East-African LGA on his leadership styles.*

*"I now realise that when I started my career as Executive Director, I had a very directing style of leadership. I told my staff what to do, when to do it and how to do it. I also controlled if they did as I told. As I am now aware, I applied this style, not because my people needed it, but because I needed it. I did not yet feel confident in my role. This was shown in my controlling behaviour. Luckily at some point one of my staffers said she does not need my detailed instructions, since she was doing her job already for a long time. She felt and was indeed mature enough in her role to decide and do most things herself. As I felt she was right, I applied a more supportive style. With this I focussed less on the task and more on the relation. Staffers that have a higher level of development do not need control. They need trust and confidence. After realizing this, I focused more on building a relationship with my team and stimulating growth of each individual team member."*

*What about you?*

*Your style of leadership should not depend on your own preference but on the person and the situation. It is not necessary that you can apply all 4 styles. Most managers are capable of applying up to 3 styles. So, if you can already apply directing, then first stimulate yourself to apply coaching. If you can apply coaching than go for supporting.*

*What is the main style you use now?*

*Think of a situation where you feel comfortable to practice the next style in the model, and do so!*

*Please remember that practice takes time. Allow yourself to take that time.*

## 1.4  Reflect on yourself to grow

An effective leader is not something you are, but is something you become. Through learning, practising and self-reflection. This toolkit helps you by providing effective tools to grow as a leader. However, practising is something you need to do yourself, as only by practicing you will improve your leadership

skills and become effective. While practicing, remember to reflect on yourself, since self-reflection will help you to grow. An easy-to-use method for self-reflection is the STARR method.

An effective leader is not something you are, but is something you become.

- **Situation -** What was the concrete situation you were in when you practised a new skill (e.g. applying another situational management style). It must be a specific event like a meeting with your team.
- **Task -** What goal were you working towards? (e.g. I wanted to finalize the programme of an event using the coaching style)
- **Action -** Think of the actions you took to achieve this task. Which specific steps did you take? (e.g. I discussed the programme in detail, but instead of saying what I wanted them to do, I asked them what they needed to achieve their task).
- **Result -** Describe the outcome of your actions. What happened? What was the reaction of the group? (e.g. There was far more discussion then normal, since they felt responsible for their own tasks)
- **Reflection -** What did you learn? What would you do the same next time? What would you differently? (e.g. What I will do the same is that I ask my people more what they needed instead of tell them what to do. What I will do differently is that when they have a question, I will not answer it myself right away, but first ask others in the group what they think)

Make sure your answer contains multiple positive results.



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*What about you?*

*An effective leader is not something you are, but is something you become. Through learning, practising and self-reflection. For this you can apply the STARR model.*

*Think of a recent situation in your work and apply the STARR model.*

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# 2 Increase your influence

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*"Leadership is about making others better as a result of your presence and making sure that impact lasts in your absence."*

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*- Sheryl Sandberg*
*Former COO of Facebook*

As an elected representative or senior official with the local government or local government association, your main job is to get things done. Unfortunately many times you will find your success hindered by external factors. Whether it are national rules and regulations or social norms, or something more fundamental such as the lack of capable people, budget or a good digital infrastructure. This chapter explains that even with these unwelcome circumstances you can accomplish things. The key is to focus on your circle of influence and to have a proactive attitude.

## 2.1 Focus on what you can influence

You probably have a wide range of concerns in your daily life: dealing with corruption, lack of economic progress, the health of your family or your own finances. Everything you are concerned about can be placed in the *Circle of Concern* that you see in Figure 5. Now take a closer look at the concerns you mentioned. You might realise that some of these concerns are outside your control (e.g. lack of economic progress) and some are within (e.g. your own finances). Here the second circle comes in: the *Circle of Influence*. This circle holds every concern that you have direct influence over.
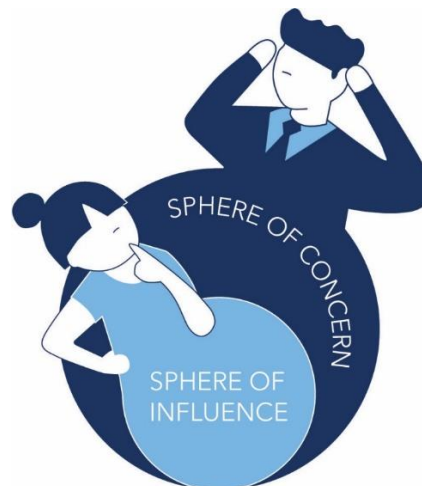


*Figure 5: Sphere of Concern & Sphere of Influence*

During a training to mayors of a Northern African country on improving the service delivery of their local government, they all mentioned they had to deal with great difficulties like a lack of budget, not being able to appoint new staff (since this was restricted by the national government), no motivated peronnel,

and unclear rules of procedure. Their conclusion was: In these circumstances we cannot improve the service delivery of our municipalities. After drawing a circle on a piece of paper and placing all their concerns in this circle, they were told this was their circle of concern. Within this circle the circle of influence was drawn. They were asked which concerns were within their influence. A lengthy discussion followed during which some claimed all difficulties where out of their influence. However, three mayors believed that at least they could influence the motivation of their personal and unclear procedures within their own organisation. The second part of the training focussed on these elements. The mayors came up with ideas on how to motivate their staff. Such as giving them more responsibility (see situational leadership in chapter 0) or joining team meetings once in a while to congratulate them with their work and compliment them with what they have achieved. Ideas were shared how to make some procedures more clear. At the end of the meeting one mayor mentioned. 'Many times I feel like a puppet who is just transferring task and assignments from the national government to my staff, without having any influence over it. This made me lethargic. I now see that although I cannot change everything I want, I still can change some. From now on I will look for what is inside my circle of influence instead of being grumpy on what I cannot influence."



*He stood up and focussed on what he could influence*

*Reflections on his circle of influence by a colleague of a town Clerk in an East African municipality.*

*As many municipalities in our country, we faced a large influx of refugees from war-torn neighbouring countries. This created many challenges, like overcrowded classes and waste everywhere. On top if that central government did not respond to our cries to provide funds to deal with this. Even development aid partners were not supportive. As a result, people within the community where so frustrated that the simply gave up. They felt there was nothing they could to about it.*

*At this point our town clerk stood up. He went to the communities to mobilize them and to discuss solutions. As for waste, he understood that reducing the amount was not possible (circle of concern) but what was possible, was how to collect it better (circle of influence). If people would not just throw it out in the open, but bring it to a collection point, the municipality was able to transport it to a dump side. A local waste management structure was created for this. Community members within their locality checked and supported that people threw their waste at the created collection points. From there the municipality brought it to the dump side. The waste problem was dealt with.*

*To deal with the overcrowded classes he requested members of the refugee community to volunteer as teacher. Thus, the schools could manage the students better. The amount of students could not be influenced, but what he could influence is how to deal with it.*

*What about you?*

*In your daily work you have to deal with difficult circumstances. Sometimes these circumstances might give you the feeling you have no control whatsoever. Indeed you cannot control everything. The challenge however is to focus on these matters that you <u>can</u> influence, i.e. your circle of influence.*

1.  *Take a piece of paper and write down max 10 items that you are generally concerned about now.*

2.  *Take another piece of paper and draw two circles on it. The outer circle is your Circle of Concern. This is where you put everything on the list that you are concerned about, but cannot influence. The inner circle is your Circle of Influence. Here you list everything that you can influence.*

3.  *What concerns do you currently spend most of your time on? The once in the circle of concern or influence?*
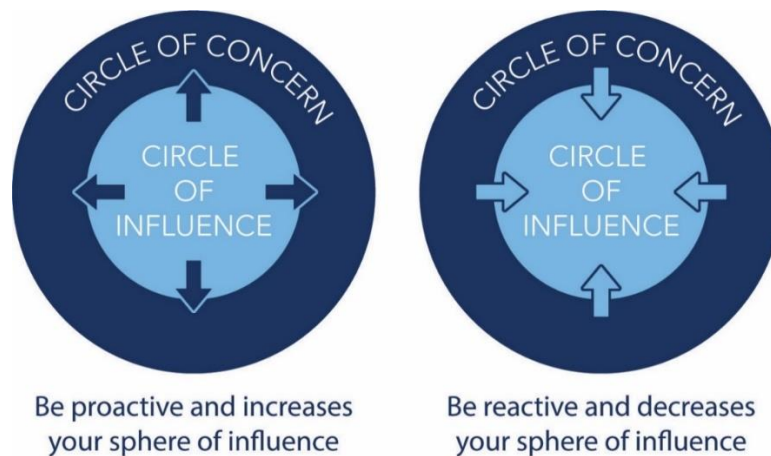


*Figure 6: Being proactive or reactive affects your sphere of influence*

## 2.2  Be proactive to increase what you can influence

Studies show that proactive people have a Circle of Influence that is bigger than people with a reactive focus. Being proactive is an attitude you take towards the world. It requires that you accept responsibility for your own situation and take the initiative to make things better. Not the conditions and circumstances are the driving force of their decisions, but their values determine the choices they make. Proactive people act rather than being acted upon. Of course, circumstances limit choices, even more so in fragile and conflict affected countries. However, a proactive person will find where he can still exercise his

influence. You will encounter corruption, lack of perspective. The seemingly inevitable response to this would be to give up and lose hope. But there is a difference between the circumstances and how you respond to them. There is a choice. Instead of choosing to lose hope, you can also chose for hope. By choosing hope you look at what you can do, your circle of influence, instead of what you can't do.

Reactive persons look at what they can't do. They let circumstances and conditions control them. So if the weather is foul, a reactive person will be in a foul mood, too. When a reactive person gets negative feedback, he becomes defensive and bitter. Reactive people don't act, they are acted upon.

The difference in pro- and reactive persons can be seen in the language they use.



| Reactive phrases | Proactive phrases |
|---|---|
| <ul><li>There is nothing I can do.</li><li>That is just the way I am.</li><li>He makes me so mad.</li><li>I cannot.</li><li>I have to do that.</li><li>I must.</li><li>If only I had X, then I would Y.</li></ul> | <ul><li>Let's look at my alternatives.</li><li>I can choose a different approach.</li><li>I control how I respond to him.</li><li>I can choose.</li><li>I prefer to do that.</li><li>I will.</li><li>I will do that.</li></ul> |

Some practical tips to be more proactive

- **Focus on what you can control –** When you do this you will have more time to think ahead. In addition, ruminating excessively about factors outside of your control will cause stress and harm your wellbeing.
- **Use proactive phrases –** That way you communicate influences your mindset.
- **Move away from directing –** You can't do everything yourself. And if you try you will become reactive, bouncing from one item to the next. Empower your staff by applying different styles of leadership. For more on this see chapter 0.
- **Focus on the future –** It's more important to know what lies ahead, since the past is something you cannot change. Do not let the past constrain your thinking about the future. More on this in chapter 3.
- **Think big picture and prioritize –** It's important to consider your ultimate goals. There will always be things to worry about, but don't get so lost in the details you lose track of what you really want to accomplish. Focusing on a few big goals will lead to better results than focusing on lots of goals. More on this in chapter 3.
- **Know who you need –** Most of the time, achieving goals is not an individual task. You need others to succeed. When you analyse in advance who you need, you can move faster and further. A stakeholder analysis can help you in this. More on this in chapter 3.

- **Communicate effectively –** By improving your communication skills you can get more things done. This does not mean talking more, but rather communicating differently. More on this in chapter 4.

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*Collecting funds for the construction of a central market*

*Reflections by a colleague on a Mayor of an East African municipality's proactive focus.*

*The municipality was in dire need for a central market. Farmers unloaded and sold their stock at unassigned places all over the municipality, causing traffic jams and rubbish. Once the local council approved the construction, the central government declared it could only contribute for 25% of the costs. The local council had no clue where to find the remaining 75%. They felt the whole plan turned out to be a useless frustrating exercise in the end.*

*The mayor, however, was imbued with the strategic importance of the market. He reached out to all kinds of people with the community to convince them of the importance. He collected money from local businessmen, small amounts per business but a considerable amount in total. He also convinced the local council to refrain from certain allowances and to donate these to the market. Once the market would function, their allowance would be increased from the income the municipality would generate from the market. As such he was successful in collecting the remaining 75% and the construction of the market could start.*

*Especially the fact that he reached out the community and came to them instead of asking them to come to the municipality was part of the success.*

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## 2.3   Know who you need and how to involve them

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*"Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much."*

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Achieving goals is most times not an individual task. You need others as well. As an effective leader it is important that you know who you need. A stakeholder analysis can help you in this.

Imagine you are the mayor and you want to improve the economic position of women in your locality. Your idea is to stimulate and support them in starting their own small business like a restaurant, administrative bureau or mobile phone shop. There are four steps you should take to determine who to involve and how to involve them, namely: 1) *Identify your stakeholders* ; 2) *Prioritise your stakeholders* ; 3) *Discover how your key stakeholders support your project* ; 4) *Figure out how to engage with them*.

*Figure 7: Steps to be taken to determine your key stakeholders*

The *first step* is to **identify your stakeholders**. Which people and institutions do you need to achieve your goal? In this case you need to have persons from your own local government administration. Employees that are responsible for issuing permits to start a company, deal with taxes, and deliver services to businesses such as waste collection. Also you need local businessmen and -women, traditional and religious leaders, women representatives, husbands, youth organisations, and the district governor. Once you have identified all your stakeholders you can go to the next step.



*Figure 8: The stakeholders in strengthening female entrepreneurs.*

The *second step* is to **prioritize your stakeholders on their importance**, as some are more important than others. Who do you need to bring your initiative a step further and how do you involve them? For this you can map out your stakeholders using a power/interest grid. You classify them according to their power over your work and their interest in it.

The position that you allocate to a stakeholder on the grid, informs you on the actions you need to take towards them:

- **Players:** These are the people with high power and high interested in your initiative. You need to manage them closely, by fully engaging them. For instance by making them part of your project team. Without them you cannot do anything. In this example local businessmen are seen as players. They are interested in the initiative since it will create competitors/colleagues. Traditional and religious leaders are a player as well, with their (moral) power they can make or break this initiative. Without their involvement and support the initiative is most likely to fail.

- **Context creators:** These are the stakeholders with high power, but less interest in your initiative. It is essential that you keep them satisfied, since they can decide to stop your initiative when resources or you are needed somewhere else. In this example the district governor is seen as a context creator. He is not so much interested in the initiative. His concern at the moment is the Local Economic Development Strategy of your municipality. This is not finished yet. If he has this he is fine with this

initiative. If not he will urge you to focus your resources on the LED strategy (and stop projects like this).

- **Involved:** This are the people with high interest but low power. You need to keep them informed and talk to them to ensure that no major issues arise. People in this category can often be helpful with the details of your project. You see the municipal employees are placed in this category as well as the women representatives. The initiative is very much to their interest but given the (cultural) context, they do not have the power to influence it. This is the main reason you started this initiative anyway. For this specific project you of course include them in your project team, since you will not speak about the target group, but also with the target group.

- **Bystanders:** The people are of low importance, since they have low power and low interest. You monitor them, but don't spend too much time on them. In this example the youth organisations are seen as bystanders. Your initiative is of no particular interest to them and they have little to no power over it.
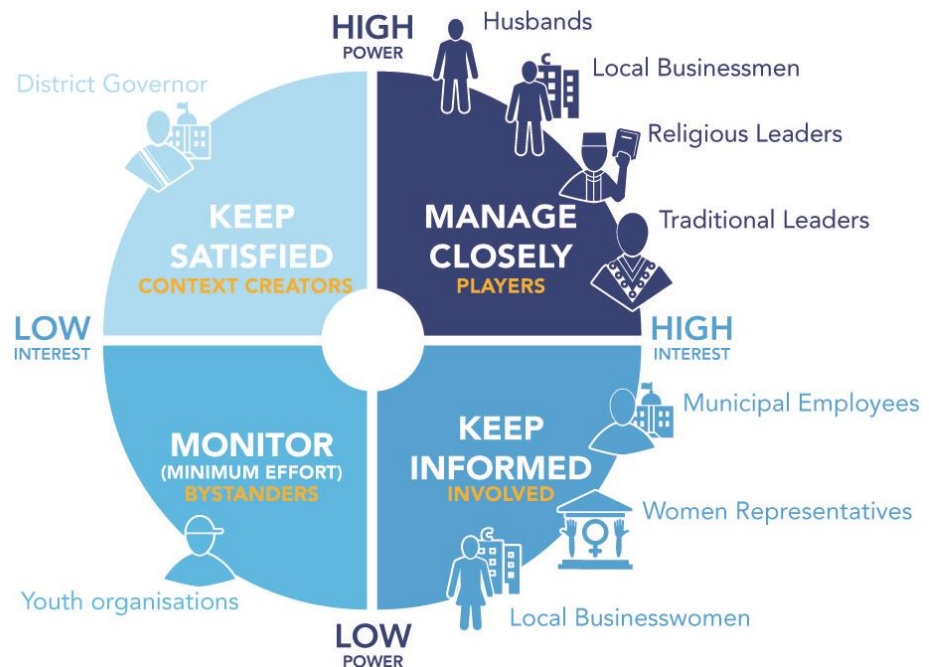


*Figure 9: Classifying and prioritising your stakeholders*

For the *third step* you need **to discover how your key stakeholders support your project**.

Questions that can help you understand your stakeholders include:

- What (political, financial or emotional) interest do they have in the outcome of your work? Is it positive or negative?
- What motivates them most of all?
- What information do they want from you, and what is the best way of communicating with them?
- What is their current opinion of your work? Is it based on good information?
- Who influences their opinions generally, and who influences their opinion of you? Do some of these influencers therefore become important stakeholders in their own right?
- If they aren't likely to be positive, what will win them over to support your project?
- If you don't think that you'll be able to win them over, how will you manage their opposition?

- Who else might be influenced by their opinions? Do these people become stakeholders in their own right?

A simple way to summarize the level of support you have from your stakeholders is to colour-code them. Advocates and supporters in green, blockers and critics in red, and those who are neutral in orange. For our example, based on the questions above, the figure could look like below.



*Figure 10: Establish how your key stakeholders support your project*

As the figure shows you need to put a lot of effort into persuading the traditional leaders and religious leaders for your initiative. You might want to make use of the district governor for this as well. Then a first step is to get him more involved and more interested in your initiative.

For this you set the *fourth and final step*: **work out how to engage them best and how to communicate with them.**

| Stakeholders | How important? ( - ; +/- ; +) | Level of Support? (- ; +/- ; +) | What is your strategy for engaging them and communicating with them? |
|---|---|---|---|
| Local businessmen | + (Player) | + | Having a meeting with only the local businessmen and discuss with them how to involve and target the traditional and religious leaders. How to win them over. |
| Traditional leaders | + (Player) | - | Organise a meeting with them to listen to their concerns. At this meeting local businessmen and district governors express their support. |
| Religious leaders | + (Player) | - | Organise a meeting with them to listen to their concerns. At this meeting local businessmen and district governors express their support. |
| Husbands | + (Player) | +/- | Organise a meeting with them and with husbands that have a wife with a business. |
| National government representative | +/- Context creator | +/- | Informing him on the project and make him a supporter by having the international donor community involved (project money). |

| Municipal employees | +/- Involved | + | Inform them on the project and the stage when their involvement is needed (once all Players are on board). |
|---|---|---|---|
| Women represent. | +/- Involved | + | Inform them on the project and the stage when their involvement is needed. |
| Local businesswomen | +/- Involved | + | Inform them on the project and the stage when their involvement is needed. |
| Youth organisations | - Bystander | + | Have it as a topic on the agenda during a regular meeting so they are informed. |

*Consultation with relevant stakeholders is of crucial importance to ensure value for money*

*Reflections by a colleague on a Mayor of an East African municipality's stakeholder engagement*

*The municipality had created nice shopping facilities for its citizens. Later people noted that the number of women making use of these facilities was limited. When asked, they answered that there were no toilets. Without this essential service they preferred other shopping areas where they could make use of public toilets. Based on this, the mayor realised that consultation with relevant stakeholders of the community is of crucial importance to ensure value for money. Now he consults on a regular basis with women groups to discuss their needs and views as well as with other stakeholder groups.*



*What about you?*

*Achieving your goals is not an individual task. As an effective leader you involve others as well. When you analyse in advance (be proactive) who you need for an initiative, you can move faster and further. A stakeholder analysis helps you in doing so.*

1. *Think of a project or goal you want to achieve.*

2. *Who can you identify as stakeholders in this? Using the table showcased above, write them down in the "Stakeholders" column.*

3. *Prioritise them according to their importance using the power/interest grid. Add this information to the table under "How Important?".*

4. *Assess their level of support. Add this information to the table under "Level of Support".*

5. *Decide on your strategy. Write this down in the final column.*

# 3  Set your goals and work towards them

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*"Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out"*

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*- Robert Collier*
*Best selling self-help author*

You probably work in an organisation that is hierarchically structured: Ministers, politicians, or directors tell you what to do and what the goals are you should work towards. This might give you the feeling you cannot set your own priorities. However, as you have read in chapter 2 it is not about what you can't control, it's about what you can control. For this you can set your own goals. What is it you want to achieve? What can you do today that contributes to the long-term goal of your organisation? In this chapter you will be provided with tools for setting your goals and more importantly, how to achieve them.



## 3.1  What is your job really about?

If this question were asked to a farmer he would reply "feed people". A doctor would say "cure people". But how would you, an elected official or senior civil servant, answer this question. What is your job truly about? Both of you influence the lives of citizens. As a politician you have the power to decide what the goal is. As a senior civil servant you have the power how to reach that goal. What defines you as an effective leader is whether you use that power wisely, influencing the lives of people in a positive manner.

What most people desire of their government, no matter where they live, is that it provides them with a safe environment where they can live, work and enjoy life. The government does so by delivering essential services such as housing, clean water, and waste collection, as well as stimulating job creation. But delivering these services as such is not enough. They should also be equally accessible to all citizens including women, vulnerable groups, and minorities. **So, your job is really about using your power to build better futures for all!**

Applying power as such does not define you as an effective leader. So called "moral power" defines an effective leader. When you exhibit moral power, you show ethical leadership and are concerned about right and wrong behaviour. Your morality guides how you exercise your power. Socrates, the Greek philosopher, believed we all have a feeling of morality within ourselves. We know what is wrong and right. It are our circumstances which determine whether we live up to our morality. Effective leaders stick to their morality despite circumstances.

## 3.2  Set your goal

So, your job is about using your power to build better futures for all and to holding a moral standard in exercising that power.

Now see yourself on your 80st birthday. All your family and friends are there. It is a wonderful party with singing, dancing, great food and drinks. Of course, there are some speeches where your loved once reflect on your achievements. What are they going to tell? Which great works are going to be highlighted? Will they mention that due to your leadership the number of women with access to the labour market has increased by 50%? Will they honour you since you protected the rights of religious and ethnical minority groups in your municipality? Will they acclaim that under your guidance the streets are clean and people can enjoy a rubbish free neighbourhood? If you want to be successful, it is important to keeping what you want to achieve in mind. If your goal is clear you can start working towards that goal. As long as your goal is not clear you might end up wasting precious time to things that matter less.

*What about you?*

*What will people honour you for on your 80th birthday? What goals have you achieved by then? Have you used your power to build better futures for all, while holding a moral standard in exercising that power?*



## 3.3  Work towards your goal

Setting a goal is one thing. Achieving it is another. In our work as VNG International we have supported many local government organisations and associations in setting their goals. Most times the result was a strategic plan with a future horizon of four to eight years. The goals formulated in there should follow the characteristics of the SMART acronym: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely. Goals which correspond to these characteristics are perceived to be well-designed goals as they clearly identify what the output of those goals should be. Two examples of SMART goals are:

- Five services will be delivered in two years from now, via a One-stop shop
- The number of members of our association has increased with 15 percent in four years.

But what do these SMART goals mean when you come into your office at the start of the week? The moment you enter the office there is immediately plenty to do: meetings to attend, people to speak, things to read, and so on. At the end of the week you might look back and realise that you have not worked

towards any of your SMART goals. You devoted all your time to other work. A few easy-to-use tips can help you to not fall into this time wasting trap and stimulate you to work towards your goal:

1.  The first tip is **make your goal visual**. Write your own personal or organisational goal(s) down on a paper. Pin this to a wall so you see it every day and are remined about it. Even better when you can make a nice poster out of it. VNG International noticed that some organisations in Africa or the Middle-East hang up posters stating: "We want to build better futures for our citizens. We do so, by having at least 2 services fully digitally available before the end of this year"; or "We want to build better futures for all our citizens, so we have organised at least 3 meetings on women's rights in our municipality this year". When you – and your team - look at this poster each day you all remember what your job is really about and what you are working towards.

2.  The second tip is **manage your time**. In order to work towards your goal the key is not to prioritise what's on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities. Otherwise, the dynamics of the day with meetings, appointments and piles of work will get you distracted from your goal. Most people overestimate what they can do in a day, but underestimate what they can do in a lifetime. By managing your time, you are capable of getting the things done that matter most. The time management matrix shown below can help you in this.
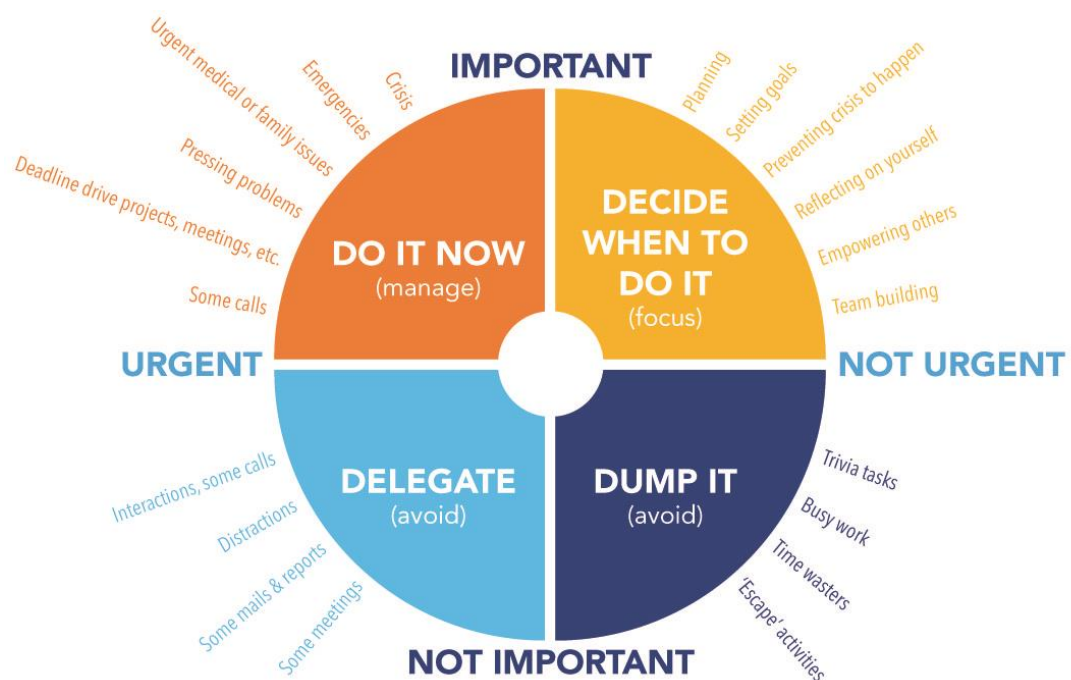


*Figure 11: Covey's Time Management Matrix*

This matrix allocates work into one of four quadrants by identifying its importance and its urgency. It forces you to think about how important or urgent a task is by deciding which quadrant it falls. This helps you to focus on what is important and what isn't. Generally speaking, if you are able to increase the work that falls into the important and not urgent, you are better at managing your time efficiently. Let's look at each quadrant:

*   The **Quadrant of Necessities** (Important and Urgent) – Many tasks you undertake on a day-to-day basis will be both important and urgent. These are often unavoidable and reactive. Like answering

important calls or dealing with emergencies. Working with externally imposed deadlines, like delivering a project report to a donor, or the annual budget plan to the city council also fall within this category. These tasks can be best managed by staying on top of deadlines. As you probably know by now, this cannot be achieved when you want to control all the work, using the management style directing (see chapter 0). The problem for many people is that important but non-urgent work often end-up falling into this category because deadlines have been allowed to slip: With a week's notice you were requested to deliver a presentation for the Ministry next Thursday and suddenly it is already Wednesday afternoon. And you have not yet had the time to prepare anything!

- The **Quadrant of Quality** (Important but not urgent) – This is the place where you ideally want to be spending most of your time. This is where your proactive time is. Here you decide to work on your presentation for the Ministry on Monday afternoon, in order to have no last-minute stress. Of course, it's unrealistic that you can place most of your time and tasks in here. But the more you can, the more you will benefit from it in the long run. Being proactive allows you to stay ahead of deadlines and crises before they loom large and fall into quadrant one. Reflecting on yourself, empowering others and team building also fall into this quadrant. These are activities that have long term benefits.

- The **Quadrant or Deception** (Not important and urgent) – Undoubtedly the area into which a lot of people's time gets sucked into on a day-to-day basis. These are the distractions and seemingly unavoidable tasks that fill up the parts of your day you'd really prefer to be putting to good use. These tasks may seem urgent, but with some honest inspection can be categorised as non-urgent. Do you really need to go to that meeting or can others go for you as well? Do you really need to go through that report again or can another colleague do the final check? To reduce the workload in this quadrant you should delegate. Chapter 0 explains how.

- The **Quadrant of Waste** (Not Important and Not Urgent) – This includes tasks that are neither important nor urgent. It is in this quadrant where you can make some of the easiest and quickest wins, when it comes to wrestling back time. To identify tasks that should be ditched, you should think hard about what benefits they bring and if those benefits are worth the work put in. If not, then it means learning to say no. If a staff member asks you to check her mail for the tenth time before sending it, should you still do it? Is your attendance needed for a team meeting to discuss the new folder and archiving structure? If not, ditch it.

Commitment is shown in what you do, not in what you say!

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*Reflections of a local project manager*

*'For our project in a West-African country we started co-operating with around 20 mayors to make it a success. All mayors expressed their commitment to the project in the beginning. But as happens more often than not, a number of them did not show their commitment through their behaviour. They did not attend project meetings, delivered no expertise to the project, and failed to provided essential reports on time. If confronted with this behaviour, they mentioned they were still very much committed.*

*Luckily the majority of mayors not only expressed their commitment but showed it as well! They never missed a partner meeting. All were on time, some even after a five hour drive. They ensured*

*the implementation of good practices of the project in their own municipalities, to set an example for others.*

*What about you?*

*Effective leaders spend more time in the quadrant of quality than others.*

1.　*Look at your agenda from yesterday. Which 5 to 6 tasks did you spend most times to?*

2.　*Was one of these tasks in the Quadrant of Quality?*

3.　*Could some of these tasks have been delegated (quadrant of deception) or even dumped (quadrant of waste?).*

4.　*Now look at your agenda again. What does the same day next week look like?*

5.　*What can you do to spend more time to the Quadrant of Quality on that day?*

## 3.4　Do it step-by-step

You know what your job is about and that exhibiting moral power is essential for this. You further know now that you can set your own goals by starting with the result in mind. You also know how to manage your time better and work towards that goal by spending more time in the Quality Quadrant. A personal week planner can help you further in managing your time. A format is presented below. Before explaining how to fill in this planner a question: In which quadrant should you place this task of filling in a week planner? The answer is given at the end of this chapter.

**Instructions for part I. - Total tasks**

- Fill in your schedule for the week to come at the last day of the previous week
- Fill in the tasks you want to have achieved by the end of that week
- Fill in how much time you need per task. Use hours or half hours for this. Not smaller amounts of time.
- Choose if this task is in the quadrant of quality (important, but not urgent). Since these are directly targeted at your goal.
- Make sure that minimum 4 tasks you are planning to do in the week ahead are in the quadrant of quality.

**Instructions for part II. - Tasks per day**

- Fill in the tasks on the day you want to work on them
- Plan the important but not urgent tasks always in the morning and preferably at the beginning of the week.
- Note that 2 actions are already mentioned on the last day of the week. These actions should always be done.

Note that you can use this week planner for you personally, but also for your team. You can fill it in together.

| Week planner | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Name**: <your name><br>**Week**: <number of the week><br>**Total time available**: <the total time you have available for work that week in hours> | | |
| **I. Total Tasks** | | |
| **Task** | **Time needed**<br>(hours or half hours) | **Quality**<br>(important but not urgent) |
| 1 | | Yes/No |
| 2 | | Yes/No |
| 3 | | Yes/No |
| 4 | | Yes/No |
| 5 | | Yes/No |
| 6 | | Yes/No |
| 7 | | Yes/No |
| 8 | | Yes/No |
| 9 | | Yes/No |
| Etc. | | Yes/No |
| **I.      Tasks per day** | | |
| **Day 1** | | |
| Morning | | |
| Afternoon | | |
| **Day 2** | | |

| Week planner |
|---|
| **Morning** | |
| **Afternoon** | |
| **Day 3** | |
| **Morning** | |
| **Afternoon** | |
| **Day 4** | |
| **Morning** | |
| **Afternoon** | |
| **Day 5** | |
| **Morning** | |
| **Afternoon** | |
| **Day 6** | |
| **Morning** | |
| **Afternoon** | • Reflect on this week's week planner. You can use the STARR method for this (see chapter 1.4). Applaud yourself for the tasks that you have accomplished successfully. Great work! Be critical on what you have not achieved. What can you improve for next week?<br>• Fill in the week planning for next week! |

To answer the question posed at the start of this exercise: This task is part of the quality quadrant. It is important but not urgent and helps you to manage your time better.

*It helps to give more responsibility to my staff*

*Reflections of a senior manager of an East African municipality on the week planner*

*'Since a few years I use a week planner to organise the work together with my staff. We started using it, since some of my employees found it hard to see what their tasks and responsibilities were. A week planner helps them to see what to do in the week ahead.*

*We use the last day of the working week to sit together and discuss the week plans of each employee. At first, I had to stimulate them to fill it in and come up with tasks they could plan. After a few months they did it independently. Now we use it mainly to see who has too many tasks and who has some time left that week for extra tasks. Now that I come to think of it, the instrument helped me to give more responsibility to my staff and for them to take more responsibilities. We all grew as a team thanks to this.*

# 4 Communicate effectively

*"Most people do not listen with the intent to understand they listen with the intent to reply?"*

*- Stephen Covey*
*Author of the best-selling book "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People"*

By improving your communication skills you can get more things done. This does not mean talking more, but rather communicating differently. The main element is that you understand, really understand, what it is the other is saying before you reply. This chapter provides you with models to help you communicate more effectively.

## 4.1 Listen attentively

The first lesson in effective communication is that you listen attentively to one another. This means, you listen with the intent to understand, rather than with the intent to reply. Attentive listening might be easy for you if you have a compliant or attentive behavioural style, as discussed in chapter 1.2. For those of you who's style is dominant or influential it will be harder. To develop your attentive listening skills you can use the LSD method: *Listen – Summarize – Dig Deeper*.

- **Listening –** show that you are listening by nodding, having eye contact and humming.
- **Summarize –** repeat the key message of the other person to check if your understanding is correct. "So what you say is…"
- **Dig deeper –** Ask questions to bring the conversation to a deeper level. The best questions for this are 'Open' question. They start with "When", "Where", "What", "Who", "Which", "Why" and "How". These questions cannot be answered with a simple yes or no. Compare 'Did you like the suggestion made by Pascalia?" with "What is your idea on the suggestion made by Pascalia?"

Using the LSD method will give you much more information and shows that you are really interested in the opinion of others.

*What about you?*

*For effective communication, attentive listening is essential. The LSD method helps with this.*

## 4.2 Communicate on the right level

You can further improve your communication if you are aware of the four communication levels a
nd know on which level to communicate. The levels are *Content*, *Process*, *Interaction* and *Emotion*.



*Figure 12: The levels of communication*

We will illustrate these levels using an example: Imagine you are hosting a meeting on behalf of your municipality on mitigating measures to deal with draught. This meeting is attended by a small group of eight livestock keepers. For this meeting, the communication levels can be described as follows:

- **Content –** They suffer from the draught and request to be compensated for their loss of income. In this case the content is discussing mitigating measures to deal with draught.

- **Process –** This is about how this content is discussed. Think of time allocated for this meeting, for instance two hours. The place where this meeting is held, like a room with chairs and tables in a U-formation or rather a theatre shape. The roles people have like a chairperson and a secretary to make notes. There might even be an agenda. At the meeting one of the livestock keepers immediately starts talking about how much compensation he requests. As chairperson you inform him that this will be discussed, after you have focussed on what the impact of the draught has been for all of them. Such a response is at the process level. You inform the farmer how the content is dealt with.

- **Interaction –** Assume that one of the farmers attending the meeting loves to talk a lot (maybe his behavioural style is dominant). Questions that you address to the other livestock keepers are answered by him most times. You respond to this by mentioning that you are interested to hear the thoughts and opinions of others as well. You request this farmer not to answer to questions not aimed at him. This intervention is at the interaction level. You talk about behaviour. It can also be that this behaviour is shown not in speaking but in body language. Pretend that one of the livestock keepers is looking at the ground and silent all the time. If you notice this, and for effective communication this is paramount, you can intervene at the interaction level by saying: "I notice that you have been silent all the time and looking at the ground. I would like to hear your opinion".

- **Emotion –** How you feel about it. In this example it can be that livestock keepers show angriness and frustration since up until this moment the municipality has done nothing to help them. Even this meeting, they requested for, took more than two months to take place.

The key to effective communication is not that you are aware of these levels, but that you intervene at the right level. If you see, hear or feel emotion, like frustration and angriness, it does not make sense to start talking about the process. If a farmer shouts out of frustration "I do not have money anymore to feed his family!" It will not help by responding on the process level, like "We will discuss compensation at a later stage". What this man wants is that his emotion is understood. This means you have to communicate from the level of emotion, acknowledging this emotion. Thus, a better response is. "I see that you are frustrated, and I can very well understand that you are. Your direct need is to get financial help". Following this you can continue at the process level: "I would suggest to discuss this point in 30 minutes, because I first would like to understand what the total impact of the draught is on you all. Would this be good?".

One of the biggest frustrations citizens from all over the world mention in direct communication with their local government, is that they do not feel heard. This can be explained looking at the levels of communication. Let's take Gilbert Mukanziza, a citizen from a town in Rwanda. He calls his local government with a complaint.

*Gilbert –* "I am very angry. This is the fourth time I call, but I still do not have my building permit." (level of emotion).

*Civil servant –* "Can you spell out your last name first?" (process intervention)

*Gilbert (just about able to keep his calm) –* "M-U-K-A-N-Z-I-Z-A".

*Civil servant –* "Could you please give me your full address?" (further on process intervention).

*Gilbert (explodes) –* "I have gone through this three times before!! I want to have my building permit!" (level of emotion).

*Civil servant –* "Yes but for this I really need to have your address details" (going further on the process intervention).

What Gilbert needs at this stage is that his frustration is understood. He wants to feel heard. The following response would be more effective:

*Civil servant –* "I am terribly sorry to hear this Mr Mukanziza. I hear that you are frustrated, and I can understand this." (level of emotion). "Can you give me your full name and address details for this so I can solve this problem for you." (level of process)

---

*What about you?*

*For effective communication it is essential that you are at the same communication level as the one you speak to.*

*1. When you are in a meeting, observe at which level people communicate with each other.*

## 4.3  Aim for win-win

Effective communication is about really understanding the other and communicating at the same level. However, as the example of the livestock keepers in the previous chapter has shown, another element is that people can have different concerns and interests. How people behave when they have different interests can be described using two axes. The first axis is *assertiveness*. The desire to satisfy your own interest. The second axis is *cooperativeness*. The desire to keep the relations good and satisfy the other person's interests. These two axes combined show five styles of dealing with interest.
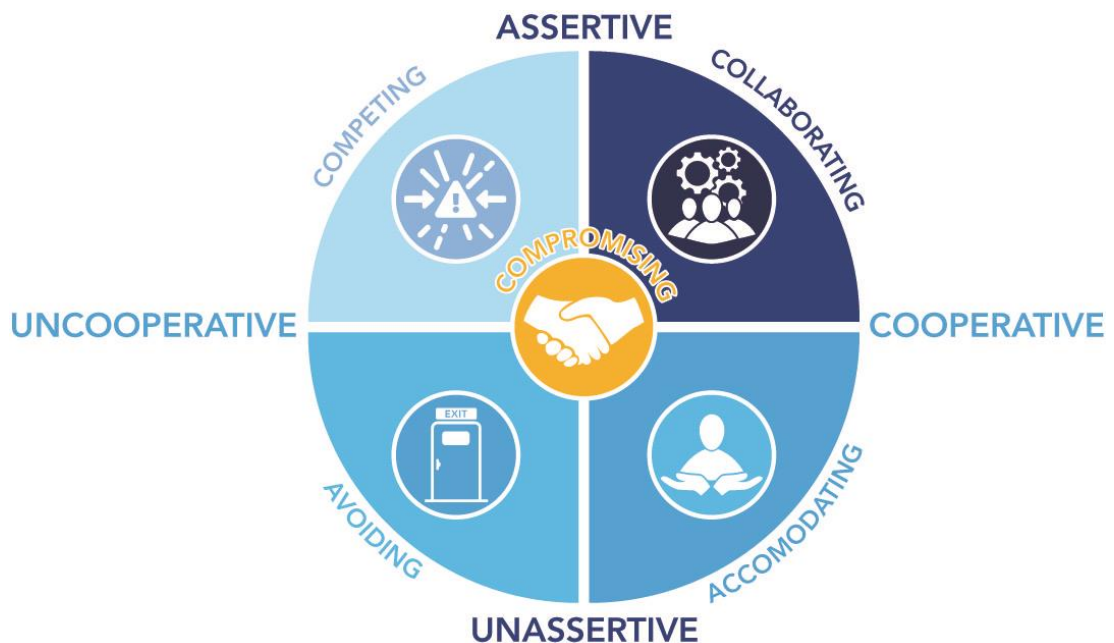


*Figure 13: Five styles of dealing with interests*

- **Competing –** You try to satisfy your own concerns at the other person's expense. You do this by persuading ("believe me my idea is better"), arguing ("others have done it as well like this") or pushing ("we are doing it like this!"). This approach can be useful if there is substantial time pressure or you are absolutely right. But in other cases this style will harm your relations with others. As well as shut out valuable input.
- **Collaborating –** You try to find a win-win situation that completely satisfies both your concerns. You do this by investigating common interests ("so we both want that the economic opportunities increase"), or common grounds ("so we both believe that family values are important"), or by inspiring ("we can be the best local government of our country if we …"), or by making matters attractive ("if we work together your position might become more important"). Collaborating is a good style when you need others to solve the problem and know that the interest of others are equally

important. When collaborating everyone invests in finding a solution and works towards an agreeable outcome for all involved

- **Compromising** – You try to find an acceptable settlement that only partially satisfies both people's concerns ("let's make a deal"). Suggesting a compromise is good as a temporary solution if the interests are not that big.
- **Accommodating** – You attempt to satisfy the other person's concerns at the expense of your own. Accommodating can be affective If you want to build up credit ("I do this for you now", "it would be my pleasure")
- **Avoiding** – You sidestep the problem without trying to satisfy both your interest ("I'll think about it tomorrow"). This is generally a temporary solution.



*The tale of the antelope*

*Reflections on a meeting with tribal families*

*The meeting was tense. Some of the participating families had been displaced. Others had machete wounds, or their huts were burnt to ashes. This was the result of a land dispute between two tribes. This meeting was organised by the local government to settle the dispute. The chief of one of the tribes narrated about an old tradition where his grandparents lived amicably with the other tribe. Issues were resolved without shedding of blood or displacing their neighbours. When his tribe speared an antelope during a hunting expedition and it crossed into the territory of the other tribe, the two would sit together skin the antelope and share the meat. He then wondered why this tradition failed to exist. This turned the meeting into a consultation on how to deal with differences. As a result, the two tribes agreed to erect an arbitration committee where differences where discussed, and no longer make use of violence.*

## 4.4 Look at intention rather than interest

A useful instrument to deal with different interests is to not look at the interest. Instead look at a person's intention. This is a level deeper. An interest is something that benefits you. An intention is something you want to achieve. You can say that an *Intention is what you want*, while an *Interest is how you want it*. This can be further explained with the tale of the two businessmen.

**The tale of two businessmen**

Once there were two businessmen that went to the market. Both wanted to buy oranges. The first businessman came to the market stall and requested 100 oranges. While the salesman was packing them the other came. He requested 100 oranges as well. Unfortunately these 100 where the last ones. So he said he wanted to pay the double amount. A conflict started where at the end the second businessman got away with the oranges for three times the original prices. Nevertheless, he was very happy, since now he could still make his famous orange juice. At the end of the day the second businessman went home sad and without any oranges. He drove by the shop of the first businessman. To his big surprise he saw the peel of the 100 oranges laying outside in the waste. Pleased, he took the peels with him, since this was exactly what he needed. As ingredient to make his medicine to reduce blood pressure. And even better he got them for free!

This example shows that both businessmen had the same interest. They wanted both to have 100 oranges. Through competing the second businessman gained his oranges, but it costed him more and his relation was under pressure. If they would have chosen to compromise both would have gotten 50 oranges. Unfortunately, this would not have been enough for both of them to make their product. When they would have dug deeper and looked at each other's intention instead of interest, they would have found that they could have collaborated.



### *From interest to intention*

*In a municipality in an Arab country, citizens of a neighbourhood requested the local authorities to collect their rubbish more often (interest). They suffered from rats and diseases spread fast. They wanted to have clean streets, to get away with the rats and not get ill (intention). The local authorities responded that they did not have the money and capacity (interest) to collect waste more often than once a week. However, they were on the same page that they wanted to have clean streets to decrease illnesses. Together with the citizens they investigated options (collaboration). One option was that neighbours collected waste themselves that they could bring to a dump site. They received a tiny payment for that. As it turned out this was the best option. It costed the municipality hardly any money, while the citizens had their streets clean again.*

### *What about you?*

*When you have to deal with different interests it is important to look further. Look at the intention. Looking at intentions opens the way for collaboration. Use the STARR method from chapter 1.4 to train your skill in this:*

1. *Think of a* **situation** *where you had to deal with different interests. It can also be a private one. Remember that it must be a specific situation.*

2. *What* **task** *did you want to achieve? What was the goal you were working towards?*

3. *What* **actions** *did you take to achieve this task? Think of which style of dealing with interest you choose and how this was concretely shown.*

4. *What was the* **result** *of your actions. Did you achieve what you wanted using this style?*

5. *What do you think now that you have* **reflected** *on it? What would you do the same next time? What would you differently?*

# 5   Empower others

*"Leaders become great not because of their power, but because of their ability to empower others"*

*- John Maxwell*
*Prominent author on leadership*

Empowering people is the fifth and final element of effective leadership. When you are able to empower people by motivating and inspiring them, they will want to work with you to achieve your goals. Empowering means that you make use of and stimulate the knowledge, energy and resources of others. In this way you can accomplish far more than you would have done alone.



## 5.1  Put power into others

Empower means "putting power into". Five elements are seen as vital for people to feel empowered:

1. Sense of personal competence – "I can"
2. Having an impact – "I matter"
3. Personal choice – "I may choose"
4. Value in activity – "I love it"
5. Security – "I'm safe and okay"

All five elements for empowerment have one thing in common: They touch upon the deepest need that each person has, namely the need for self-esteem, a sense of being important, valuable and worthwhile. Everything that you do in your interactions with others affects their self-esteem in some way. Give them what you would like to be given yourself. The previous chapters in this publication have provided you with tools to boost the self-esteem and therefore the sense of personal power of those around you.

- The **situational leadership** tool, presented in chapter 0, touches upon all five element. When you start off with staff that has low competence but high commitment, you apply the directing leadership style. Once they answer to the above five elements with a "Yes!" It means they have developed. In this case to some competence but low commitment. This also means you can move further to the leadership style of coaching. And so on.
- The **STARR** tool of chapter 1.4, helps your people in feeling that they have a sense of personal competence (I can) or an impact (I matter).

- The feeling that they matter can be further increased by presenting the **circle of influence** to them; chapter 2.1. This tool shows that they can increase their impact when they are proactive.

- Their security, the feeling that they are "safe and okay", can be increased when you apply effective communication instruments, presented in chapter 4, like the **LSD method** and the **4 levels of communication**.

- Be the first to open up and extend trust to others. When you share about yourself, you demonstrate a vulnerability that stimulates trust. Sharing your **DISC** profile (see chapter 1.2) with your team can be a perfect starting point.

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*What about you?*

*Empowering means that you make use of and stimulate the knowledge, energy and resources of others. In this way you can accomplish far more than you would have done alone. There are two things you can do immediately to put empowerment into action.*

1. *Say things to others that you would like others to say to you. This will make people feel valued and important.*

2. *Say "thank you". Express appreciation for actions your people do for you, even when it is small.*

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## 5.2  Provide constructive feedback and accept it as well

The fifth element of empowerment mentions security. Part of building a secure environment is that you are capable of giving constructive feedback. The intention of constructive feedback is to empower people, not to blame them for their mistakes. Constructive feedback can be given as follows:

- **Describe the objective behaviour you observe**: You can say: "I see that you are late for meetings". Not "I believe you are not interested in attending team meetings". Leave your own opinion to yourself and focus on objective behaviour.

- **Describe the effect it has on you**: You can say: "I get frustrated since I feel it is wasting my time" Not "I feel that you are not taken my time serious". The first is your perception which the other cannot fight. The other is arguable. You want to leave the arguments out.

- **Wait for a reaction**: No discussion here.

- **Make suggestions**: "I would like it if you can be on time next time, because than we can make better use of all our time".
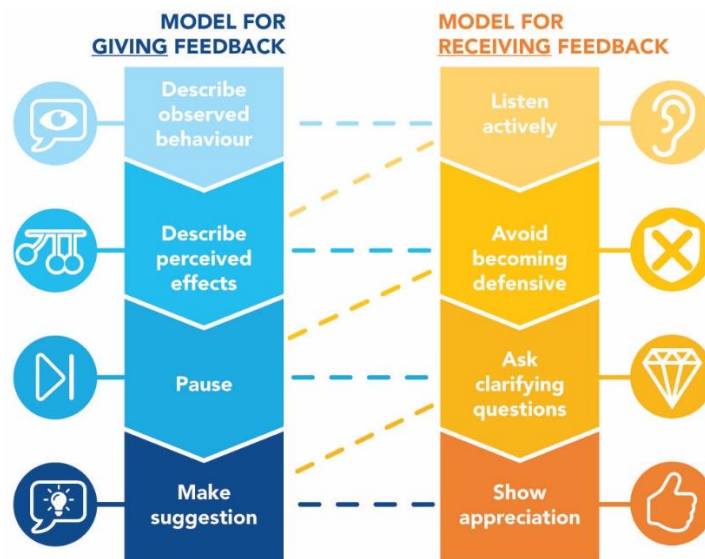
*Figure 14: Model for giving and receiving feedback*

As the constructive feedback model shows, it takes two to tango. Providing feedback requests to be open to receiving it as well. Especially for you as a leader. Be open to receiving feedback yourself. This can be a great way for your staff to connect with you better.

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*What about you?*

*For empowerment, people need to feel secure. Giving constructive feedback instead of blaming is essential. Try to apply this model at the first opportunity you have. Most essential is that you refrain from opinion and discussion.*

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## 5.3 Coach your people to grow

As a leader, one of your most important roles is to coach your people to grow. By doing so, you'll help them make better decisions, solve problems that are holding them back, learn new skills and progress their careers. The **GROW Model** is a simple, easy-to-use, yet effective tool that can help you in coaching your people. GROW is an acronym for *Goal*, current *Reality*, *Options* and *Way forward*.



*Figure 15: The GROW model*

A good way of thinking about the GROW model is to think about how you plan a journey. First, you decide where you are going: the goal. Then, you establish where you currently are, in other words the current reality. Next, you explore various routes to your destination, the options. In the final step, you decide

what your first action is to achieve your goal. For instance, leaving the office at five o'clock or get some gasoline first. This is the way forward.

When you coach your people, please note that, although you might have the solution or knowledge yourself, it's more powerful for them to draw conclusions for themselves. Rather than having these conclusions thrust upon them. Therefore, try to refrain from providing answers.

To structure a coaching conversation using the GROW Model, take the following 4 steps:

1. **Establish the Goal -** First, you and your team member need to look at what you want to achieve. Make sure that this is a SMART goal: one that is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely. When doing this, it is useful to ask questions like: How will you know that your team member have achieved this goal? How will you know that the problem or issue is solved? Does this goal fit with the person's overall career objectives? And does it fit within the team's objectives?

2. **Examine the Current Reality -** Next, ask your team member to describe the current reality. This is an important step. Too often, people try to solve a problem or reach a goal without fully considering the starting point. Often information is missing that is needed in order to reach the goal effectively. While your team member is telling you about his or her's current reality, the solution may start to emerge. Useful coaching questions in this step include the following: What is happening now ("what", "who", "when", and "how often")? What is the effect or result of this? Have you already taken any steps towards your goal? Does this goal conflict with any other goals or objectives?

3. **Explore the Options -** Once you and your team member have explored the current reality, it's time to determine what is possible – meaning all of the possible options for reaching his or her objective. Help your team member brainstorm on as many good options as possible. Then, discuss these and help him or her decide on the best ones. By all means, offer your own suggestions in this step. But let your team member offer suggestions first, and let he or she do most of the talking. It's important to guide them in the right direction, without actually making decisions for them. Typical questions that you can use to explore options are as follows: What else could you do? What if this constraint were removed? Would that change things? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each option? What factors or considerations will you use to weigh the options? What do you need to stop doing to achieve this goal? What obstacles stand in your way?

4. **Establish the Way Forward -** By examining the current reality and exploring the options, your team member will now have a good idea of how he or she can achieve his or her goal. That's great, but in itself, this may not be enough. The final step is to get your team member to commit to specific actions to move towards that goal. In doing this, you will help boost your team members' motivation. Useful questions to ask here are: So, what will you do now, and when? What else will you do? What could stop you moving forward? How will you overcome this? How can you keep yourself motivated? When do you -or we - need to review the progress? Daily, weekly, or monthly? This will provide some accountability.

*What about you?*

*As a leader, one of your most important roles is to coach your people to grow. The GROW Model can help you in coaching your people.*

1. *Apply this model at the first opportunity you have for this.*

# 6 Annexes on Instruments and Models

Links for further reading per tool.

## 1. Know yourself

- DISC - https://www.discprofile.com/what-is-disc/disc-styles
- S4
- STARR

## 2. Increase your influence

- Circle of influence
- Proactivity
- Stakeholder analysis

## 3. Set your goals and work towards them

- Time management matrix
- Week planner

## 4. Communicate effectively

- LSD technique
- Levels of communication
- Thomas-Kilmann model

## 5. Empower others

- Constructive feedback model
- GROW model