

# Extraordinary Leadership

- what it is and how to become one -

By Campbell Macpherson

Author of the 2018 Business Book of the Year

Featuring *The Chequerboard of Leadership* and *The Spectrum of Leadership Teams*

Leadership is the 'secret sauce', the 'invisible hand', the critical ingredient of any organisation. It is the key driver of success and the cause of just about every failure.

Leadership could simply be defined as delivering results through people. Or as Dwight Eisenhower put it: "*Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because they want to do it.*" Which, of course, is far from easy as we all know, for it involves influencing, herding and managing complex, often irrational, emotional humans.

Over the years, we have all discovered that leadership is not just telling people what to do: that rarely works and is never sustainable. It involves influencing people across the organisation – and beyond. It is about helping people to want to change.

Leadership today has nothing to do with hierarchy. It is about influence. And leaders can be found at all levels of an organisation – whether they have direct reports or not.

## Extraordinary leaders possess three core skills

In my 25+ years of enabling business leaders to lead successful and sustainable change, I have discovered that extraordinary leaders possess three core, critical skills:

1. The ability to deliver sustainable results
2. The ability to influence, motivate and empower people (Emotional Intelligence)
3. The ability to build extraordinary leadership teams

Poor leaders possess none of these skills. Extraordinary leaders possess all three - in abundance.

They are focused on the delivery of outcomes that are sustainable. They have honed their influencing skills and worked on their emotional intelligence, knowing that when it comes to leadership, EQ trumps IQ hands down.

And they realise that 21<sup>st</sup> Century leadership is a team game, not a solo pursuit.

They also realise that every one of these attributes requires continual development. We can all move towards becoming extraordinary leaders.

The future success of our careers and our organisations depend upon it.



## Extraordinary Leaders ... of leaders

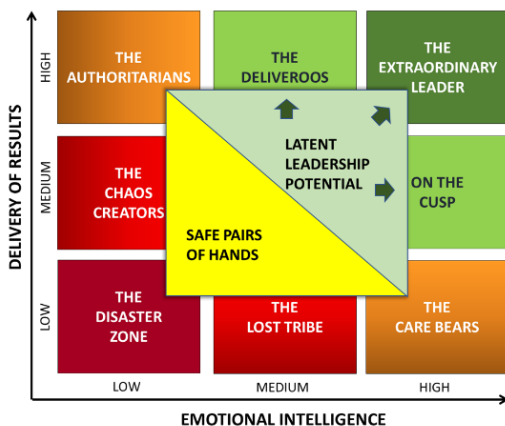
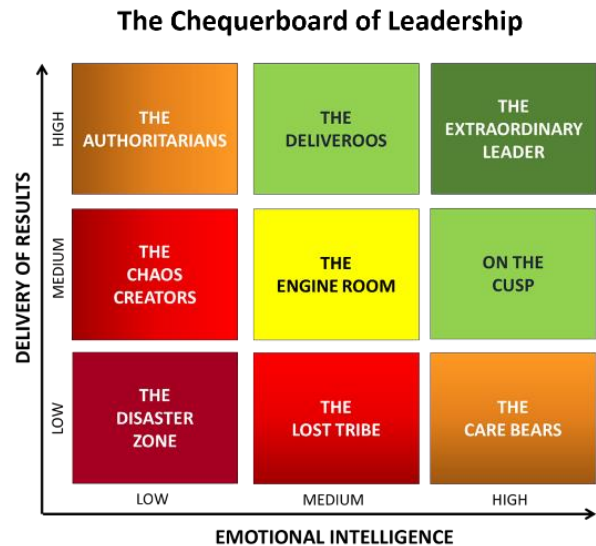
When it comes to the first two attributes of individual leadership (Delivery and EQ), each different type of leader between the two extremes of woeful and extraordinary can be plotted on a simple matrix that I have called 'The Chequerboard of Leadership'.

It is a chequerboard because a leader's position on the board is not set in stone. No matter which square a leader may occupy today, they do not have to be imprisoned in that cell forever, they can move - preferably upwards and to the right - as long as they are aware of their position on the board and possess the desire to change.

While leaders in The Disaster Zone are irredeemable in their current role, some of the leaders among the 'Chaos Creators' or 'Lost Tribe' will be capable of changing and developing to become better leaders.

Those in the light green squares are the high potential leaders of your organisation. Companies are quick to design leadership development programmes and talent development programmes for 'The Deliveroos' and those who are 'On the Cusp'.

Within 'The Engine Room' (yellow square) are the leaders and managers that can sometimes be taken for granted – and yet they are the backbone of many an organisation.



The middle square is the most populous square on the board – described by one CEO client as their “permafrost middle-management layer”. But in hindsight, he was overlooking a trove of potential.

The square can roughly be divided into two:

1. 'Safe Pairs of Hands' – competent managers that every business needs. Their leadership competence and effectiveness can be enhanced.
2. 'Latent Leadership Potential' – hidden leaders whose development will deliver substantial returns for the business.

Unlocking the potential of The Engine Room could transform your organisation.

*Where would you place yourself on the board?*

*Where would other people place you?*

*In which square would you place your manager?*

*In which square would you place each member of your organisation's leadership team?*

*Why?*

## Extraordinary Leadership Teams

21<sup>st</sup> Century leadership is a team game, not a solo pursuit. In this section we explore the third critical trait of extraordinary leaders: their ability to build extraordinary leadership teams.

Leadership teams exist on a spectrum: from dysfunctional to extraordinary, and they exist at all levels of an organisation. Each team must function as well as they possibly can if the unit, division, department or organisation is to succeed.

Organisations with dysfunctional leadership teams never live up to their full potential; they consistently under-perform. Some are weakened so much by the actions and inactions of their leadership team that they have to be rescued. Some become take-over targets. So many go under.

Dysfunctional leadership teams are eventually and inevitably replaced - starting from the top. But so much damage has been done in the meantime that these organisations can become shadows of their former selves. One reason is that dysfunctional leadership teams create dysfunctional cultures that mirror the tribal, warring behaviour at the top of the organisation. Another is that dysfunctional leadership teams are too busy fighting one another to appreciate what makes their business special or to recognise the opportunities, let alone seize them.

But even dysfunctional teams can be transformed – as long as the team leader is ready, willing and able to do so.

They can move across the spectrum – first to ‘Fragile’, then onto ‘Developing’ and finally to ‘Extraordinary’.

<b>The Spectrum of Leadership Teams</b>	<b>Dysfunctional</b> (A collection of warring individuals)	<b>Fragile</b> (Cease fire descends)	<b>Developing</b> (A new dawn)	<b>An extraordinary leadership team</b> (Delivering together)
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Transforming dysfunctional or fragile leadership teams is challenging, but the alternative is far worse – as so many leaders have discovered.

No transformation is easy and there will inevitably be casualties along the way, but it is critical for the success of the organisation or department, the success of every employee and, of course, for the success of the leaders themselves.

*Where would you place the team you lead on the spectrum?*  
*Where would you place the team of which you are a member on the spectrum?*  
*Where would you place your organisation’s leadership team?*  
*Why?*

**Leadership teams – on the spectrum**

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<b>Strategy</b>	Differing views of the strategy. Unclear strategic fundamentals.	Strategy clear but individuals not fully aligned.	Implications of strategy known. Each member aligned to the strategy.	Each member committed to the strategy - with shared objectives
<b>Personal Accountability</b>	Be accountable for as little as possible	Clear personal accountabilities and responsibilities	Clear interdependencies	Everyone accountable for team behaviour and performance. Genuine cabinet responsibility.
<b>Ego</b>	I need to emerge from this looking good	Nervous about committing to the team	This team is helping me to achieve	I am proud to be part of such a winning team
<b>Culture</b>	Constantly blaming fellow members and highlighting weaknesses	Understanding of one another's strengths, weaknesses, drivers and motives	Respect for one another's strengths, weaknesses, drivers and motives	Gratitude for one another's strengths, weaknesses, drivers and motives – as others' strengths offset another's weaknesses
<b>Team behaviours</b>	Everyone for themselves. Behaviours vary from checked out, passive-aggressive to plain aggressive	Factions	We are all in this together	Trust
<b>Results</b>	Individual performance is paramount	Yes, the team needs to perform – but not at my expense.	Both team and individual performance are important	Team performance is paramount: we all win or no-one wins
<b>Useful Discourse</b>	Discussions are superficial or adversarial. Too many elephants.	Discourse can be prickly – different opinions can still be perceived as criticism	Detailed discussion but careful not to offend	Constructive conflict
<b>Mistakes</b>	Punish the guilty	Find out why	Implement learnings without shame	Culture of continuous improvement

**Change & Strategy International (CSI)** enables organisations to instigate change, embrace change and deliver a compelling strategy that is clear to everyone.

88% of change initiatives, business strategies, mergers and acquisitions fail. CSI enables leaders to be the 1 in 8 that succeeds. Its range of programmes, workshops and consulting services enable CEOs and leaders to fulfil their potential, the potential of their people and the potential of the business.

CSI's Principal, Campbell Macpherson, is an international business advisor, change expert, keynote speaker and award-winning author. He and his team of experienced associates help leaders align their people to a clear strategy, build extraordinary leadership teams, build change-ready cultures and lead successful change. He is an Executive Fellow of Henley Business School.

Organisations contain a wealth of untapped potential and competitive advantage in their people, their leaders and their leadership teams. Unleashing this talent is not about systems, processes, spreadsheets, business models or balance sheets, it is about enabling people to be the best they can be; empowering them with clarity and trust – helping them to want to change.

As well as advising organisations worldwide large and small, Campbell has held senior executive positions including Senior Advisor of the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, Strategy Director of Zurich Life across Asia, ME and Latam, HR Director of the 1000-person Sesame, Marketing Director of Virgin Wines and eBusiness Head of the AMP Group. He was a change expert in Andersen Consulting (Accenture) and the founder of one of Australia's first multimedia companies. He started his career flying jets (badly) in the RAAF.



He is on the books of several keynote speaking agencies across the UK, US and Australasia, and has given speeches around the world – NYC, London, Las Vegas, Singapore, Sydney, Nice, Helsinki, Palm Beach, Frankfurt, Zurich and across UK.

Campbell is the author of three books – and runs workshops and programmes on each of them:

- 'The Change Catalyst' (Wiley 2017), which won the leadership category and Business Book of the Year at the inaugural 2018 Business Book Awards. It is about leading change.
- 'The Power to Change' (Kogan Page 2020), which was a Runner Up in the 2021 Business Book Awards. It is about embracing personal change.
- 'You: Part Two - thriving in the second half of your life' (Hachette 2021), co-authored by his yogi wife, Jane. Together, they appeared at the 2021 Cheltenham Literary Festival. They use content from the book to help organisations empower their invaluable Second Half employees and forge even closer relationships with their lucrative Second Half customers – the ones with three times as much wealth as every other segment combined.



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