Successful Transformational Radiology Leaders

Karen Douget, MSRS, RT(R)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

• Transformational radiology leaders elevate subordinates, expand self-awareness, develop lasting relationships, strive to exceed expectations, and uphold the vision and goals of the organization.

• In order for radiology leaders to become more transformational in their leadership style there are four fundamental elements they must learn: idealized influence, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation.

• Leaders can utilize personality and self-assessments to learn more about themselves, identify areas of strengths and weaknesses, and learn to be more effective when leading employees.

In today’s diverse workforce, stress and high demands create a requirement for leaders in radiology who are capable of handling the needs of an organization, employees, and a multitude of work-related responsibilities. Radiology leaders are expected to produce good results even when work situations seem counterproductive. On a daily basis, these leaders are responsible for managing company resources, handling time constraints, monitoring employee production, meeting customer satisfaction, and many other necessary responsibilities.¹

Many radiology experts agree that the industry requires an innovative group of resilient leaders who are able to withstand the challenges and fortify the profession.² In order to be successful, leaders need a vast knowledge of the world, themselves, and others; the characteristics that make a leader; understanding of personality; and a well-founded leadership style.³ Most leaders possess the skills and techniques to manage the business, but lack the abilities to value people, listen, and communicate effectively with all employees, provide employees with clear direction, and organize great teamwork.⁴ In order to improve upon these common areas, personality and self-assessments can be utilized. These assessments will allow leaders to learn more about themselves, identify areas of strengths and weaknesses, and learn to be more effective when leading employees.

Identifying and developing necessary leadership skills will help radiology leaders improve and utilize the skills needed to meet their responsibilities. Increased self-awareness will provide direction to making better choices. Possessing the knowledge of how personality affects performance will aid leaders in the development of interpersonal relationships. Transformational leadership is based on the leader’s skills, personality, and ability to create change through vision and goals.⁵

Current leaders are required to have high potential, be flexible, effectively manage change, meet demands, and continuously seek improvement within themselves. The term leader, defined by Décosterd, describes a leader as "a person or thing that leads a guiding or directing head, the principal player in an organization."⁶ Radiology leaders who possess the ability to lead others must be able to inspire, motivate, mentor, and provide vision. The most important organizational resource is the human resource; therefore, how employees are led can ensure the success or failure of a department.⁷

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Another definition of leadership is “the art and science of providing purpose, direction, and motivation to an individual, team, or group to complete a desired mission, goal, or end state.” A common mistaken belief is that leadership and management are one in the same when, in fact, leadership encompasses a much broader scope of practice. Difficulty in differentiating between management and leadership can be found in characteristics and behavior differences.

Radiology Leaders

Radiology leaders have a distinction that sets them apart from others—they create a vision and motivate staff to perform at higher levels. They are long term thinkers who are able to see the current state-of-affairs while looking ahead for possibilities. Radiology leaders observe interactions between the department and the organization to help improve overall quality of care. Transformational radiology leaders elevate subordinates, expand self-awareness, develop lasting relationships, strive to exceed expectations, and uphold the vision and goals of the organization. They understand the value in education and encourage subordinates to seek further training. These leaders also believe that increased satisfaction of subordinates plays a major role in the overall satisfaction of their patients.

The leadership style that meets these criteria is transformational leadership. Radiology leaders who are more proactive than reactive, more creative, novel, innovative, more radical or reactionary than reforming or conservative in ideology, and less inhibited in their ideational search for solutions are great transformational leaders. Transformational leadership is closer to the prototype of leadership that people have in mind when they describe the ideal leader. It can be defined as “leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and motivations—the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations—of both leaders and followers.” The brilliance of leadership is found in the way leaders see and act on their own and the beliefs and drives of the subordinates.

There are three ways leaders can begin to make the transformation and become successful leaders:

1. Elevate awareness, consciousness of importance and value for outcomes, and methods of accomplishing those.
2. Surpassing ones’ own self-interest for the good of the team and the organization.
3. Develop collection of desires and necessities. Successful leadership involves an individual’s needs and more importantly the needs of the radiology department as a whole.

In order for radiology leaders to become more transformational in their leadership style there are four fundamental elements they must learn: idealized influence, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation. Idealized influence is building trust and confidence with ones’ subordinates through the process of admiration and respect. Leaders who demonstrate idealized influence will acquire the necessary determination from their subordinates to achieve superior levels of development and performance.

The second element, individualized consideration, is when leaders should express their appreciation for subordinates who perform well. Individual consideration can also be expressed by positively assisting subordinates with areas of weakness. Particular assignments that will help support self-confidence, employ the subordinate’s capabilities, and provide opportunities of education will also demonstrate individualized consideration. Each subordinate needs to be treated uniquely based on individual needs and abilities.

The third element for transformational leadership is inspirational motivation. This is the extent that leaders communicate a vision that is engaging and stimulating. Leaders who possess inspirational motivation test subordinates with elevated standards, express confidence in future goals, and explain the meaning of current tasks. Inspirational motivation provides subordinates with a resilient sense of purpose to motivate them into action. Inspirational motivation requires radiology leaders to set high guidelines, provide insight, define purposes simplistically, encourage communication, and set greater goals.

Intellectual stimulation is the awakening and transformation in subordinates into consciousness of problems, deciphering of problems, ideas and creativity, views and principles, instead of the urges and adjustments in instant action. Intellectual stimulation means the leader challenges possibilities, takes risks, and requests ideas. Learning and utilizing the previously listed fundamental elements of transformational leadership will help radiology leaders be influential, inspiring, motivating, stimulating, and successful. When leaders set strong examples, motivate subordinates, provide clear vision, and act as a mentor, they are employing the four factors to help transform their team members into better, more dynamic and effective individuals.

Idealized influence, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation will produce performance of leaders and subordinates alike beyond normal expectations. Each of the four fundamental elements behind transformational leadership describe different aspects that are important to the overall transformation process. Utilizing these stages of transformational leadership has proven to result in improved performance with higher levels of satisfaction and commitment from subordinates. The overall goal within any healthcare organization is to improve quality. Radiology leaders who transform themselves and subordinates will be more likely to contribute to the welfare of their organizations. The transformational leadership theory is a good start for process improvement.
that leaders must obtain self-awareness and the use of emotion to enhance the compassion for the feelings of others, understanding of one’s own emotional state, emotional intelligence is encompassed in emotional intelligence. Effective leaders share similar skills. Under transformational leaders are likely to consist of “authoritarianism, maturity, integrity, field independence, creativity, and originality.”

Individual strengths affect the development and performance of leaders who practice transformational leadership. These leaders commonly display traits of captivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. Transformational leaders also display higher levels of social confidence, self-awareness, contemplation, and vitality. Real leaders—those who teach and are taught by their followers—acquire many skills in everyday experience, in on-the-job training, in dealing with other leaders and with followers. A good leader is someone with a wide knowledge of the work and an even better knowledge of the way people work; someone who knows how to treat people with respect; someone with honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, and other things that make up character; someone in short who understands oneself and the world well enough to make it better. Leaders will have different methods of leading but effective leaders share similar skills.

Many effective leadership skills are encompassed in emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is the understanding of one’s own emotional state, compassion for the feelings of others, and the use of emotion to enhance the way one lives. These essential skills can be placed into five categories. The first is that leaders must obtain self-awareness so they will be able to understand their strengths and weaknesses. This will also make the leader more assured about their objectives and values. Unless leaders know who they are and what they stand for, it is difficult to cultivate respect and trust. Some distinguishing characteristics of radiology leaders who are self-aware are: self-confidence, realistic self-assessments, and self-effacing sense of humor.

The second skill is self-regulation—this occurs when radiology leaders have the capability to govern or redirect troublesome compulsions and attitudes. Some trademarks of this skill can be seen through credibility, truthfulness, comfort with doubts, and the willingness to make changes. Motivation is the third skill of emotional intelligence—this occurs when leaders have a desire to work beyond what is expected of them. Characteristics of this skill are: resilient drive to succeed, positivity even when failure may occur, and organizational dedication.

The fourth skill of emotional intelligence is empathy. This occurs when leaders comprehend the emotional personality of others. Characteristics of this skill are: knowledge in creating and maintaining talent, multicultural sympathy, and amenity to patients and staff. The fifth skill of emotional intelligence is social skill. Signs of social skills are a leader’s success in directing change, persuading others, and knowledge in forming and leading subordinates.

An organization, department, and team’s success relies heavily on a leader’s performance and ability to lead others. Developing leadership skills will assist in directing behavior and education, arranging subordinates’ focus on organizational goals and values, mentoring others, and building agreement in times of change. Although traditional skills, such as creating a vision, motivating subordinates, striving for results, and monitoring performance are necessary, they are no longer enough in today’s healthcare. A leader’s success begins with three essential skills. First is the desire to lead, without it one will be uncomfortable in a leadership role. Second is commitment to the mission and vision of the organization. The third and final skill is integrity. Radiology leaders should actually do what they say they will and meet or exceed the same expectations that subordinates are expected to perform.

Leaders who do not possess the desire to lead others will not be effective. The effort and skills necessary to lead, motivate others, and resolve conflicts will be absent. Until a leader works for an organization he or she believes in, that leader will fail to meet their potential. This will result in subordinates failing to do the required work because the leader is failing to perform as well. Someone in a leadership role who does not want to lead will remain unfulfilled and will never find any enjoyment in their work. The mission and vision of an organization is what the business will do, who the services will benefit, and what changes the facility will make in the healthcare industry. Radiology leaders should make decisions that lead subordinates to accomplishing the company’s objectives. In an ideal world, every employee would perform as if fulfilling the mission and vision of the organization were his or her personal goal. Circumstances are typically not ideal and without proper leadership the mission and vision of an organization become more difficult to see. Knowing what to do but not understanding the process to accomplish it will leave leaders ineffective at leading others.

The final skill leaders need is integrity, defined as “being true to your word, being authentic in your actions and speech, and demonstrating the kind of behavior that you would like to see your employees have.” Integrity builds trust and is revealed through thought processes, approaches, and actions. When leaders lack integrity, subordinates do not enjoy their work and will not want to contribute. Employees will not be elevated to perform beyond expectations, will not feel committed to the
organization, and will not seek personal development. Leadership skills can be learned, improved upon, and developed when one is lacking in different areas. Commit to developing the necessary skills to become successful and use them to make improvements.

**Self-Assessments**

The transformational leadership theory is based on the leader’s personality, traits, skills to make changes through example, self-awareness, expression of vision, and challenging goals. Self-awareness is the motivator to those virtuous qualities. An individual’s development starts from within and those individuals who achieve self-awareness will enjoy flexibility, the capability of evaluating personalities of others and themselves, and also broad-mindedness that will help ensure they become successful leaders.

The development of oneself is an indispensable portion of the process to become an effective leader. Radiology leaders must set the example for others to follow. If leaders display an enthusiasm to accept and use feedback, a readiness to create change, make adjustments when new opportunities present themselves, and possess the aptitude for learning from success and failure so will subordinates, peers, and superiors. Outstanding radiology leaders will look within first to improve, broaden, and develop themselves. These leaders will use self-awareness to guide themselves and essentially have a higher degree of influence.

There are several steps in the development of becoming highly self-aware. The first is the ability to focus attention inward and study oneself. This entails becoming aware of personal traits, strengths, weaknesses, drives, values, desires, and motivation factors—these are also called “self-resources.” Self-resources can be used to heighten a leader’s ability to lead others. Assessment of one’s self-resources can be a tool to help understand more about oneself and others as well. The next step to gaining self-awareness is by watching oneself and learning. Two factors that will assist in providing effective feedback to oneself are: categorizing personal decisions and motivators, and reflecting upon analyzing outcomes.

Once leaders are able to clarify the inner self by continuously exploring beliefs, values, and preferences, the basis of who they really are will be discovered. These understandings about the inner self are what helps leaders educate themselves, provide avenues of change, and further personal and professional development. "The more self-aware a leader, the greater the possibility exists for successful use of time, focus of attention and performance of action." The last step to self-awareness is to be aware of others. This allows the leader to contemplate the skills of others in relation to oneself. By knowing one’s strengths and weaknesses, a leader will be able to build a better team. In order to do this, the leader must observe others’ strengths and weaknesses as well. Performing self-assessments will assist in helping leaders to become more self-aware.

True radiology leaders who are self-aware will know their strengths and weaknesses. They provide above average support to the organization. They are competent in critical thinking skills when solving problems. They are spirited in their desires to help others achieve goals and gain a higher level of performance. These leaders are able to reinvent themselves, others, and the organization. They are determined to perform at the highest level and promote others to reach the highest level.

Once a radiology leader develops self-awareness they will be able to view leadership requirements on a level of higher comprehension. Self-awareness will assist in creating loyal and truthful interpersonal relationships with subordinates and higher management. Gaining self-awareness will provide them with the essential tools to perform more effectively in ensuring the best quality of care is provided to all patients. However, this is still only one portion of leadership necessary to reach the higher levels of transformational leadership.

**Personality Assessment**

Before an individual can be a leader they must first be able to lead themselves. This includes obtaining self-awareness, as well as governing personality type. Leaders who discover their personality type are using a self-awareness tool to learn about themselves. The assumption behind personalities is that differences in human actions are coincidental occurrences, when in fact, those actions are actually caused by simple, recognizable variances in mental thinking. These variations involve the way individuals choose to use their mental ability, the perceptions individuals have, and the judgments they make.

Personality types are formed by four inclinations regarding judgment and perception. The inclinations are how an individual senses, an individual’s intuition, how an individual thinks, and also how an individual feels. These inclinations are a part of one’s growth and they define which paths an individual will choose. Learning about personalities will single out individual traits for future use as learning strategies to help improve leaders, subordinates, and superiors. Assessments can increase development by acknowledging strengths and weaknesses, which allow leaders to expand their collection of leadership abilities.

The following twelve personality traits are most commonly related to leaders: integrity, honesty, vision, personal courage, good judgment, compassion, intelligence, knowledge, self-confidence, perseverance, enthusiasm, and initiative. Using personality assessments will assist in determining what traits, strengths and weaknesses leaders possess and also areas that could benefit from further development. The implications demonstrate that personality differences powerfully impact a leader’s self-assessment, therefore evaluating both aspects in relation to transformational leadership is important.
Conclusion

There has been much research about transformational leaders, leaders with self-awareness, and personality types of leaders separately. When leadership is viewed as a relationship requiring individuals to be more self-aware and understand their personality types to improve the leadership of others, this research offers an explanation on how to begin the process. The definitive outcome of solid leadership is the capability of the leader to work within an organization to generate transformational change. This transformative influence is released through the relationships of the leader, team members, and the organization as a whole. Radiology leaders who adopt the transformational leadership theory will be able to develop themselves as well-rounded.

Self-awareness allows leaders to become more responsible and more accountable. Successful careers develop when leaders are prepared for opportunities because they know themselves, their strengths, weaknesses, values, beliefs, and how their personality affects performance. The process to becoming an exceptional leader is a life-long process. The journey requires constant development not only for themselves, but for their teams and the organization.

References

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Karen Douget is a project manager who enjoys expanding her knowledge base by continuously working with multiple modalities of healthcare. Originally from Louisiana, Karen currently resides in San Antonio, Texas. She can be reached at kddouget@yahoo.com.
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Home-Study Test

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Carefully read the following multiple choice questions and take the post-test at AHRA’s Online Institute (www.ahraonline.org/onlineinstitute)

QUESTIONS

Instructions: Choose the answer that is most correct.

1. Transformational leadership is based on the leader’s skills, ability to create change, and:
   a. Salary
   b. Educational degrees
   c. Personality
   d. Training

2. Décosterd defines a leader as “a person or thing that leads a guiding or directing head, the principal player in an organization.”
   a. True
   b. False

3. Which of the following is one of the characteristics of a great transformational leader?
   a. Reactive more than proactive
   b. More conservative in ideology
   c. More creative
   d. More inhibited in their ideational search for solutions

4. Leaders can begin to make the transformation and become successful leaders by:
   a. Elevating awareness, consciousness of importance and value for outcomes, and methods of accomplishing these
   b. Surpassing one’s own self-interest for the good of the team and organization.
   c. Developing a collection of desires and necessities
   d. All of the above

5. How many fundamental elements must radiology leaders learn to become more transformational in their leadership style?
   a. 4
   b. 8
   c. 12
   d. 15
6. The awakening and transformation in subordinates into consciousness of problems, deciphering of problems, ideas and creativity, and views and principles is known as:
   a. Intellectual stimulation
   b. Intelligent motivation
   c. Intellectual inspiration
   d. Intelligent incentives

7. Utilizing the stages of transformational leadership has proven to result in:
   a. A decrease in performance
   b. A lower level of satisfaction
   c. A higher level of commitment from subordinates
   d. None of the above

8. Transformational leaders are more apt to be:
   a. Responsive in their thought process
   b. More traditional in belief
   c. Less inventive in their planning
   d. Less hindered in their visionary search for answers

9. Understanding one’s emotional state, compassion for the feelings of others, and use of emotion to enhance the way one lives is known as:
   a. Expressive aptitude
   b. Emotional intelligence
   c. Sensitive intellect
   d. Conscious discipline

10. Characteristics of a leader’s social skills are:
    a. Success in directing change
    b. Persuading others
    c. Knowledge in forming and leading subordinates
    d. All of the above

11. Traditional skills, such as creating a vision, motivating subordinates, striving for results, and monitoring performance are:
    a. No longer necessary
    b. All that is required in today’s healthcare
    c. Necessary, but no longer enough in today’s healthcare
    d. The only expectations subordinates expect from a leader

12. A leader’s success begins with how many essential skills?
    a. 3
    b. 4
    c. 5
    d. 6

13. What the business will do, who the service will benefit, and what changes the facility will make in the healthcare industry is known as an organization’s:
    a. Goal and Objectives
    b. Mission and Vision
    c. Operation and Exercise
    d. Duty and Undertaking

14. Integrity builds trust and is revealed through:
    a. Thought processes
    b. Approaches
    c. Actions
    d. All of the above

15. The development of becoming highly self-aware is:
    a. Yet to be discovered
    b. Comprised of several steps
    c. Composed of a single, very important detail
    d. Too complex to be accomplished

16. Two factors that will assist in providing effective feedback to oneself are:
    a. Categorizing personal decisions and motivators, and reflecting upon and analyzing outcomes
    b. Focusing attention strictly on the performance of others and not evaluating oneself
    c. Creating improvement plans for subordinates and monitoring their progress daily
    d. Attending self-help workshops and practicing meditation throughout the day

17. True radiology leaders who are self-aware will know their strengths and weaknesses while providing:
    a. Average support to the organization
    b. Above average support to the organization
    c. Limited support to the organization
    d. No support to the organization

18. Before an individual can be a leader they must first be able to lead themselves.
    a. True
    b. False

19. Regarding judgment and perception, personalities are formed by:
    a. Four inclinations
    b. Six tendencies
    c. Nine preferences
    d. Twelve predispositions

20. The process to becoming an exceptional leader is:
    a. A life-long process
    b. Requires constant development of oneself
    c. Requires constant development of the team and the organization
    d. All of the above