



KAW Consulting

Consultants in Human Resources

Sample Case Studies and Application Tools

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About these Samples

Background

These samples are for evaluation purposes and demonstrate the power of **KAW Consulting's** *custom designed training*. Included are:

- 2 Cases on Leadership
- An Application Guide
- A Coaching Guide

The *Cases* normally would follow one of our modules on **Leadership** (not included) which discuss the important components of leadership via a framework that the learner can use to diagnose what leadership actions are needed in a given situation. The *Application Guide* is a job aid that guides the learner on applying the framework back at work. The *Coaching Guide* provides Manager with steps they can follow to reinforce learning, and coach the learner in day to day applications.

The cases provide the learner practice in using the *Application Guide* to diagnose a situation needing better leadership. They ask the learner to examine the situation and determine which essential leadership elements are present or missing. Based on this diagnosis, the learner formulates an improvement plan containing appropriate leadership actions.

Because the *Application Guide* applies to most leadership situations, the learner can take it back to work and start applying it. They can, for example, look at a problem they are currently facing, and use the *Application Guide* to diagnose it, just as they did with the cases.

While these *Cases* deal with leadership that is only a sample content area. **KAW** can tailor the content of both learning modules and cases to fit your company's unique challenges. In addition to leadership, topics can be on any type of "soft skills" such as teamwork, project management, delegation, coaching and counseling, and interpersonal relations.

Leadership Framework: Case 1

Background: This case is designed to provide some practice in using the Leadership Framework to help diagnose a situation, and determine needed improvements.

Instructions: Take a few minutes to read the following case individually. Then meet as a subgroup to discuss it according to the guidelines following the case. Record your answers to the questions and any additional key insights, and prepare a short report back to the larger group.



Case: Tom Warren has recently become the Division Head for the General Services Division of North American, a large east coast U.S. Manufacturer of electronic components for the computer industry.

The General Services Division, consisting of about 100 employees, was originally formed to provide centralized financial, human resources and facilities support for all of North American's Departments. Prior to the Division's formation, each Department had its own support function providing these types of services.

Recently, General Services has been receiving numerous complaints from its Departmental customers. To try to determine what might be wrong, Tom has been doing some investigating. Following is a summary of what he's found.

- The Division does not seem to have a good handle its customers' needs. Instead the focus seems to be on furnishing what was provided prior to the reorganization, without alteration to meet the Departments' changing business needs. To test how deep the misunderstanding is about the desired role of the Division, and its relationship with other Departments, Tom randomly asked some employees what they viewed the "Mission" and role of the Division to be. To his dismay, he found that most didn't know.

Leadership Framework: Case 1

- Managers seem to be always terribly overworked. When Tom meets with them about their workloads, they always seem to have more on their plates than they can possibly handle.
- It doesn't appear that the staff is being fully utilized. Tom's inquiries to Managers about how involved the staff is in various projects always seems to meet with resistance, and a lack of information about who is handling what. It seems to Tom that the Managers are trying to do much too much themselves.
- In reviewing the Division's performance, Tom also notices that for some reason, projects are frequently late. What's worse, he's met three times with managers from customer Departments in the last week to hear their complaints that not only were projects late, but not what they had really wanted in the first place.

Concerned, Tom decides he needs to take action to start to get things back on track. The question is what to do. Knowing that you are viewed as a respected leader, Tom has come to you to ask for your advice and counsel.

Exercise:

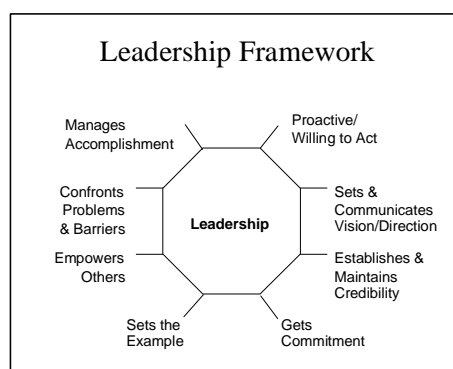
Read the case and discuss it with your subgroup. Then, using the Leadership Framework *Application Guide* to help analyze the case, answer the following questions. Capture your key insights, and prepare a short report-back to the larger group.

- Which framework elements are missing or insufficient? What evidence from the case do you have that they are missing? What's the impact of the missing or insufficient elements?
- Which of the Leadership Framework elements is Tom already doing, and to what extent?
- Based on your analysis, what should Tom do? Phrase your suggestions as tangible actions that Tom can take.
- Prepare a short report back to the larger group with your suggestions and other applicable key learnings and insights.

Note: You'll need a subgroup member to capture key discussion points and someone to act as the spokesperson for the group's report back.

Leadership Framework: Case 2

Background: This case is a follow-up to Case 1. As in Case 1, it's designed to provide practice in using the Leadership Framework to help diagnose a situation, and determine needed improvements, but this time from the viewpoint of one of Tom Warren's Section Managers.



Instructions: Take a few minutes to read the following case individually. Then meet as a subgroup to discuss it according to the guidelines following the case. Record your answers to the questions and any additional key insights, and prepare a short report back to the larger group.

Case: Mary Jones manages the Management Reports Section, one of the Financial Services Sections in General Services Division. She reports to the Division's Director, Tom Warren.

Mary recently attended an off-site led by Tom dedicated to helping Managers in the Division understand the Division's Mission and Goals, and plan for achieving these goals. The need for this session arose out of Tom's diagnosis of the problems currently being experienced in the Division, one of which was a lack of understanding by Managers and employees of the Division's role and purpose.

The Mission calls for the Division to "...proactively provide value-added services to our Departmental customers that meet each Department's unique business needs, and strategies..." Part of the plan for accomplishing the Mission includes a statement of targeted service levels. These service levels include goals regarding servicing special requests from Departmental Customers, partnering with customers to identify their needs and types of needed services, response time, etc.

Leadership Framework: Case 2

As part of the session, each Manager has to do some diagnosis of the current ability of their Section to provide services in accordance with the Division's Mission and Service level goals, and formulate a Leadership Plan to help make any needed changes.

Mary's diagnosis of the current state of her Section shows the following.

Previous to the off-site, Mary had a different perception of the role of her Section, and how it should relate to its Departmental Customers. She had viewed this role as primarily producing monthly departmental cost accounting reports. Consequently, each staff member has responsibility for producing the reports for a specific Department or Departments depending on the Department's size.

In addition to the routine monthly reports, many Departments have been requesting assistance with financial analysis and reports geared towards providing information needed for management level decision making. These requests indicate the Departments have a different view of what they want from Mary's Section. They not only want the usual cost accounting reports, but also want assistance with financial analysis.

Seeing these requests as not part of the norm, Mary has been fielding the requests from Departments for special reports herself, and doing most of the work to produce them, rather than fully involving the staff. The level of requests has continued to escalate sharply, to where Mary can't keep up.

The organization chart indicates sufficient staff to handle the true workload, if it's properly utilized, trained and led. Because the staff to date has not interacted much with Departmental customers regarding their requests, however, getting them to do so capably presents Mary with quite a challenge. Attempting to utilize the staff more fully will be viewed by many members as an attempt to "upset the apple cart". They are used to working in a fairly structured environment and taking on additional responsibilities is likely to meet with resistance. In addition, to be able to understand departmental needs and provide Departments with the type of service expected, the staff will have to utilize new skills and competencies, such as financial analysis, problem solving, consulting and customer service.

Mary's plan also needs to accommodate her own real world realities. Time is extremely limited. She is already working at full tilt, and spending considerable overtime just to meet current demands.

Tough or not, at this point Mary doesn't have much choice. Tom has indicated that an important part of each Manager's performance will be the evaluation of his or her leadership ability regarding development of his or her Section's ability to operate as envisioned in the Division's Mission, and meet service level goals.

Leadership Framework: Case 2

Exercise: Read the case and discuss it with your subgroup. Then using the Leadership Framework and the Application Guide:

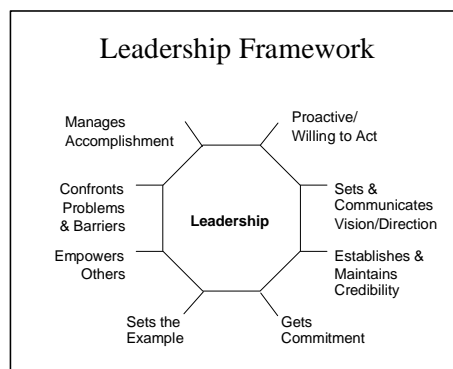
- Diagnose Mary's Section's current situation by looking at each element of the Leadership framework. For each element, ask yourself, what does Mary need to do in regard to this element?
- Use the results of your answers and any other insights to formulate a leadership strategy and action plan for Mary that will put her Section on the right track opposite the Division's Mission and Goals.
- Identify some immediate leadership tasks that Mary can do within available time constraints when she gets back to the office.
- Prepare a short report back to the larger group summarizing your answers and key learnings.

Leadership Framework: Application Guide

The goal of leadership is getting others to do what you think should be done. In accomplishing this, one of your challenges is the decision of what leadership actions to take. This *Application Guide* can help.

To apply it to a problem/situation:

- Look at each element and attribute in the Table below. For each element, list the specific actions you've taken in regard to the problem situation and evaluate your progress.
- For elements needing improvement or not yet addressed, look at the Sample Actions in the right hand column for ideas on things to try.
- Generate an Action Plan of needed leadership tasks based on your analysis.
- Schedule the tasks into your overall work plans/to-do list and calendar, and execute.



Framework Element	Attribute	Sample Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive/Willing to Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willing to accept responsibility and take needed actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deciding to Act • Doing needed Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets & Communicates Vision/Direction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifies desired future, how it adds value, and changes needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can Answer and Explain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where are we headed? - Why is it important? - What's the benefit? - What needs to change? - What are the goals? - How are we going to meet the goals? - What are the performance expectations and measures?

Leadership Framework: Application Guide

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes and Maintains Credibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fosters belief that leader has the ability to do what they propose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can explain a plan for achieving the goal that makes sense in terms of actions needed, impact, resources required, etc. • Plans include how to deal with potential problems/roadblocks. • Executes the plan effectively.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gets Commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to get Stakeholders to willingly work together to accomplish desired goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds needed Trust and Teamwork • Can explain value for individual of meeting goals and consequences if not met.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets the Example 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates needed changes in behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walks the Talk • Uses new procedures and work practices and demonstrates their value.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowers Others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively delegates tasks and responsibilities. Fully utilizes available talent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses effective delegation processes so work is delegated to staff who are ready, willing and able to do the work. • Develops capabilities of staff to handle greater responsibilities. • Conducts needed follow-up and monitoring of delegated tasks. • Provides coaching and guidance as needed on successful task accomplishment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confronts Problems and Barriers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies and develops strategies for overcoming barriers and resistance that would prevent goals from being reached. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn't back away from problems. • Researches and uses best practices for handling similar type of difficulties.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages Accomplishment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively manages day-to-day accomplishment of goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses effective project management techniques. • Includes leadership tasks in daily plans and calendar.

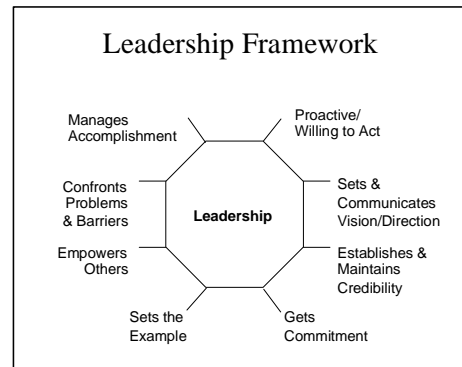
Leadership Framework: Coaching Guide

Experts maintain that one of the critical ingredients for effective training is follow-up coaching and support.

This *Coaching Guide* provides guidelines on how to coach someone on the use of what they learned in the Leadership Module in day-to-day work.

The Guide concentrates on 2 areas:

- How to reinforce what the participant learned.
- How to help the participant apply the material.



Learning Reinforcement

To help reinforce learning, meet with the learner and ask them to summarize for you what they learned. Teaching others is an excellent way of advancing the learning cycle, since it requires the “teacher “ to have a sufficient handle on the material to be able to explain it. This summary can be tailored to fit available time requirements on both your and the learner’s part.

Learning Application

To help the learner envision ways to apply the learning:

- Brainstorm with the participant on situations where the material is especially applicable. Ideal situations are current problems at hand, or use to help meet either strategic or tactical business goals. After brainstorming, jointly agree on an application.
- Ask the participant to use the *Application Guide* (see below) to generate an action plan. Review his or her plan and provide feedback on any needed improvements.
- Hold needed follow-up meetings to measure progress. You can use the *Application Guide* as a benchmark to measure progress against, and to also help diagnose areas needing additional attention.

For reference, following is the Participant’s *Application Guide*

Leadership Framework: Participant Application Guide

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To apply it to a problem/situation:

- Look at each element and attribute in the following Table. For each element, list the specific actions you’ve taken in regard to the problem situation and evaluate your progress.

Leadership Framework: Coaching Guide

- For elements needing improvement or not yet addressed, look at the Sample Actions in the right hand column for ideas on things to try.
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Leadership Framework: Coaching Guide

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