

## Transformational Leadership

The leadership theory that has the greatest prevalence in research literature is that of Transformational Leadership.<sup>1</sup> Transformational Leadership centers around getting all stakeholders involved in decision-making.<sup>2</sup> “The overriding element of successful leadership is to involve people in the process of leading” (Horan, 1999, p. 21).<sup>3</sup> Most descriptions of Transformational Leadership commence by first distinguishing it from Transactional Leadership. The latter involves a leader who is primarily concerned with rewarding followers by taking care of their basic needs in exchange for favorable group

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or organizational outcomes. While Transformational Leadership also strives to meet the needs of followers, its aim is more far-reaching in that more than merely basic needs are targeted.<sup>5</sup> Transformational Leadership holds that organizational goals are achieved sooner because higher-level needs are targeted through trust, empowerment, and inspiration. Additionally,<sup>6</sup> Transformational Leaders exhibit five common characteristics. According to Hackman & Johnson, they are visionary, creative, interactive, passionate, and empowering.

<sup>7</sup>Kouzes and Posner (2002) list and describe the five practices common to all exemplary leaders, which are the following: Model the Way (interactive), Inspire a Shared Vision (visionary), Challenge the Process (creative), Enable Others to Act (empowering), and Encourage the Heart (passionate). The practice of Modeling the Way<sup>8</sup>

(empowering), and Encourage the Heart (passionate). The practice of modeling the way refers to the way some leaders lead by example; hence, exemplary leaders tend to motivate followers when they set an example by directly involving themselves in the organization's mission. When leaders<sup>9</sup> Inspire a Shared Vision, the leader formulates, articulates, and creates enthusiasm for the organization's vision. Others are inspired and motivated to work toward organizational success. To create<sup>10</sup> buy-in for working toward the organization's goals, the leader must initially motivate his/her followers by relating organizational goals to the personal goals and ambitions of the followers. A leader<sup>11</sup> Challenges the Process when he/she uses his/her leadership ability to seek and select innovative ways for improving the organization. In order to do so, the leader must become an expert on the organization and its people so that he/she may determine the best course of action to lead the organization toward improvement. The category of

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Enabling Others to Act involves of the leader's ability to engage the group as a team, build trust in the group, and empower followers to continue to work toward the organization's aims.<sup>12</sup> Finally, when leaders Encourage the Heart, they use their resilience and positive outlook to motivate and encourage others especially through the frustrating and exhausting periods that often occur with change.