

Positive Leadership in Project Management ¹

Leadership for 2022 ²

By Frank Saladis, PMP, PMI Fellow

Leadership is a topic with an unending supply of opinions, tips, secrets to success, guaranteed techniques for developing high performing teams and sure fire methods for leading and managing any type of organization. An interesting statistic I found about a year ago indicated that there are more than 400 books about leadership published every year. It is also interesting that each year, there is a new list of emerging leadership trends. It seems that leadership, as a skill or competence, continues to be redefined, fine-tuned, dismantled and reinvented, and adjusted on a continuous basis. It seems that after hundreds of years of refinement and enhancement, there is no universal definition of leadership.

If you ask a group of people, in any organization, to define leadership, the responses are generally the same:

- *Vision*
- *Knowledge Champion*
- *Holistic Perspective*
- *Use of systematic processes and frameworks (The power of visualization)*
- *Effective communicator*
- *Effective interaction*
- *Openness*
- *Creative /Innovator*

¹This article is one in a series on Positive Leadership in Project Management by Frank Saladis, PMP, PMI Fellow, popular speaker and author of books on leadership in project management published by Wiley and IIL in the United States. Frank is widely known as the originator of the International Project Management Day, the annual celebrations and educational events conducted each November by PMI members, chapters and organizations around the world. Learn more in his profile at the end of this article.

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- *Strong Beliefs*
- *Optimism*
- *Courage*
- *Teamwork*
- *Prepared*
- *Confident*
- *Passion*
- *Has Values*
- *Creativity*
- *Humility*
- *Planning / organizing*
- *Business Savvy*

These are characteristics typically associated with a leader, but these responses do not answer the question “What is leadership?”

Years ago, when I attended the PMI ® Leadership Institute Masters Class, the professor, Jerry Brightman asked the class, as a homework assignment, to define “leadership”.

One of the classmates decided to ask her 5 year old son what he thought leadership is. His response was “Leadership is like follow the leader, you follow someone until they do some really stupid, and then you follow someone else.” An interesting observation and, pretty much an astute response. That quote does give us cause to step back and reevaluate what we believe leadership is.

The list of responses about leadership are actually what can be described as the “manifestation of leadership”, but not a description of what true and effective leadership is.

For 2022, one set of leadership trends includes:

1. The development of leaders at all levels of a company or organization
2. Outward looking leadership – Instead of focusing inward and being influenced by the confines of the organization, leadership must look outward and consider the

economic and social environment, technology trends, and how markets are being shaped and changed

3. Collective leadership - This approach highlights the importance of moving away from a reliance on iconic leadership personalities at the senior management level and focuses on the qualities of men and women who work together to meet the demand of a VUCA business environment. (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous).
4. Millennial Leadership – Millennials are more willing to speak out. They prefer a teamwork approach vs authoritative management, and seek purpose and fulfillment.
5. Innovative Leadership - An approach in which a person participates in the creation of their own growth process, utilizing tools and methods of their choosing. Innovative leaders are **creative visionaries** who have big ideas and, most importantly, can motivate people around them to turn those ideas into reality. Another element of innovative leadership is the willingness to consider a different concept or approach, which can be challenging for those who prefer to stick to tried and true methods.

For more about these trends visit: [5 EMERGING LEADERSHIP TRENDS IN 2022 \(studyqueries.com\)](https://studyqueries.com)

The question remains, “What is Leadership”. There certainly is no one answer to that question but, whatever you decide is your definition of leadership I am sure it will include:

1. The ability to bring about useful and value adding results through other people. (Outcomes that are meaningful)
2. The ability to respect the values of others and act on the ideas provided by team members and employees
3. The ability to not only listen effectively to the opinions of others but to take meaningful action as appropriate and acknowledge people who make contributions that enhance the value of their organizations.
4. The ability to be fair, assertive, and willing to accept responsibility for their decisions.

5. To allow other people to take the lead and mentor them along the way. To take risks by giving others the chance to lead.

There is significant emphasis today on the concept of Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership. These leadership styles that have become popular in the project management community. These styles focus very directly on people, not the leader.

Transformational Leadership - Transformational leadership is a theory of leadership where a leader works with teams or followers beyond their immediate self-interests to identify needed change, creating a vision to guide the change through influence, inspiration, and executing the change in tandem with committed members of a group; This change in self-interests elevates the follower's levels of maturity and ideals, as well as their concerns for the achievement.

Servant Leader - Servant leadership is a leadership philosophy in which the goal of the leader is to serve. This is different from traditional leadership where the leader's main focus is the thriving of their company or organization. A servant leader shares power, puts the needs of the employees first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible. Instead of the people working to serve the leader, the leader exists to serve the people.

Whatever leadership style you have decided to utilize as you lead your team, it's important to reassess your daily leadership behaviors from time to time and consider where you may need to make some changes. Leadership continues to evolve and there is no "one size fits all" approach. Obtain feedback from people you respect and respect you. Listen to their suggestions with the intent to make adjustments and adapt as the business environment changes. It really is a matter of "leadership survival."

About the Author



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Frank P. Saladis, PMP, PMI Fellow is the Owner/Founder of Blue Marble Enterprises Inc. and Project Imaginers. Frank is an accomplished leader and contributor in the discipline of project management. He is the author of 12 published books, the past editor of the All PM Newsletter and the author of over 160 project management articles. Frank provides training and consulting internationally and has educated and entertained countless audiences with a special blend of project management knowledge and tasteful humor. He is also an experienced and well-known project management instructor and consultant and a member of the PMI® Seminars World team of trainers. Mr. Saladis' 35 year career includes 28.5 years with AT&T, 3 years with Cisco Systems, and more than 25 years as a professional trainer, facilitator, mentor and keynote speaker.

Frank is the Originator/Founder of International Project Management Day which launched in 2004 and has been growing in recognition yearly. The goal of International Project Management Day is the worldwide recognition of the many project managers and project teams in every industry including nonprofit organizations and health care who contribute their time, energy, creativity, innovation, and countless hours to deliver products, services, facilities, and provide emergency and disaster recovery services in every city and community around the world.

Frank was PMI's 2006 Person of the Year. Frank is a Project Management Professional, a graduate from the PMI Leadership Institute Master's class, and has contributed significantly to the organization's growth and knowledge base for more than 20 years. His leadership activity within PMI included the position of President of the New York City PMI chapter from 1991-2001, President of the Assembly of Chapter Presidents, and Chair of the Education and Training Specific Interest Group. He received the high honor of the "PMI Fellow Award" in October 2013 and received the very prestigious "PMI Distinguished Contribution Award" in October 2015.

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