SHARED LEADERSHIP

Rising Expectations

Over the last several decades, the expectations organizations have of their leaders have gone from relatively simple (deliver on your goals through basic communication, delegation, and feedback), to extraordinarily complex (deliver ambitious, innovative results while being a global, digital, mindful leader in a VUCA world).

The world - and in turn, organizations - have become more complex. Therefore, it makes sense that leadership expectations have evolved to be more complex as well.
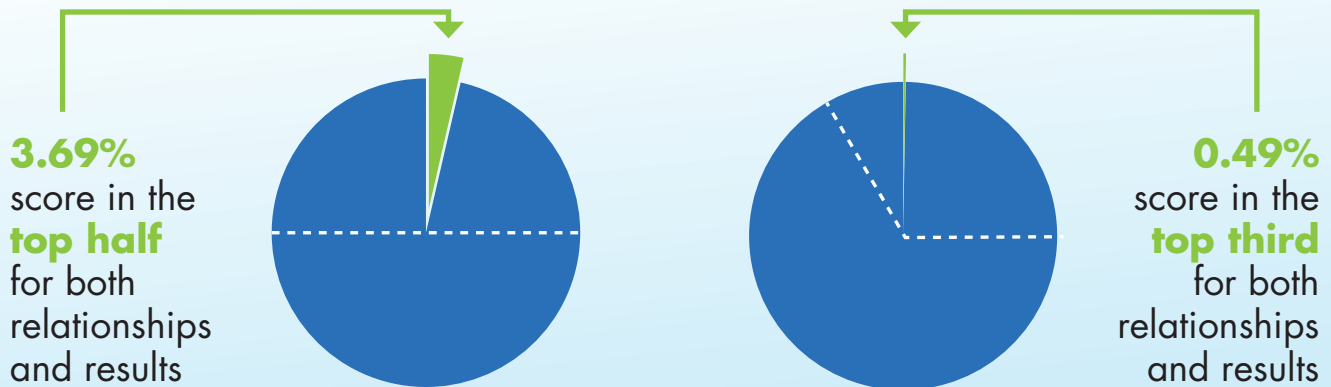
All of these skills have value in contemporary organizations. **The problem? Most organizations are seeking *all* of these skills in *each* of their leaders.**

As new research reveals, leaders who can deliver across this spectrum are exceedingly rare. When organizations hang their hopes on the myth of heroic, "do it all" leaders, they are setting themselves – and their leaders – up to fail.

Embracing shared leadership greatly increases the chances of finding all of the diverse skills an organization needs to succeed.

Leaders who Can Balance Results & Relationships: An Unlikely Find

In a global study of 18,644 leaders, we found that a vanishingly small percentage of leaders are highly effective at both managing professional relationships and delivering business results.

3.69%
score in the
top half
for both
relationships
and results

0.49%
score in the
top third
for both
relationships
and results

Creating Shared Leadership? Start with Shared Awareness.

To get shared leadership off to a sound start, leaders must understand themselves – both individually and collectively. Leaders must begin by getting a clear perspective on their own behavior patterns in order to develop an objective understanding of areas where they may need more support, and areas where they can support others. To begin implementing a shared leadership model, an organization must also look at behavior patterns across groups. Using a tool like the LEA 360™ Enhanced Composite Report can help identify areas where there are leadership gaps and further development is required. This also lays the foundation for creating a shared leadership model that leverages an organization's diversity, helping individuals and teams work more effectively.

5 Ways to End the Myth of the "Hero Leader"

1 Distinguish the leader from leadership. The leadership is the practice, the leader is the individual.

2 Help leaders prioritize. It's not about just working faster or harder or cramming in hours at night. This is unsustainable. We need to help them – and their organizations – determine what to put first, and what to leave behind.

3 Teach shared leadership methodologies. If people or organizations see shared leadership as a failure, it can't flourish. Make shared leadership expected and intentional (hint: check out the strategies below).

4 Educate the organization. Make sure that acceptance of a shared leadership model is truly universal within the organization.

5 Understand the impact of organizational dynamics. Because organizations are more fractured and less disciplined, many responsibilities of the organization are falling on the individual. Organizations need to be held responsible for this gap between expectations and reality.

6 Strategies for Shared Leadership

1 Co-Leadership.
When there's a significant initiative or an important project, putting two complementary leaders together – with clearly defined roles – can be an effective way to carry it across the finish line.

2 Thinking Partnerships.
This can be incredibly effective when leaders choose a thinking partner who approaches problems and opportunities differently and, as a result pushes each leader to think outside their norm.

3 Running units like micro-organizations.
At the top of the organization, we understand that we don't expect the CEO to be the head of finance, marketing, or operations. So when we look at teams, we can take a similar approach, and formally build some aspects of shared leadership into team members' roles.

4 Peer mentoring and coaching.
Encourage leaders to find a peer partner to meet with on a regular basis to provide support, to offer insights and constructive challenges. This can be formal or informal, but it should be scheduled frequently enough to make an impact.

5 Peer advisory groups.
This involves a small group of leaders (usually 4-6) coming together to help each other solve problems and address issues, concerns and opportunities. There is a simple but specific way to self-facilitate these groups effectively; visit **connect.mrg.com/group** for instructions.

6 A less hierarchical definition of leadership.
With the buy-in of the organization overall, we can start to reduce the formal hierarchy and start to establish a practice of providing feedback up the chain of command. This supports a culture that allows shared leadership to flourish.