Leadership Roles in Teams

In a traditional workplace setting, a manager provides employees with specific directions and employees follow these directions. In a team setting, the role of the leader is that of a facilitator. As a facilitator, the team leader tries to guide the team towards goal attainment but (s)he does not direct the team. As such, effective team leadership roles focus on two major areas: (1) task-facilitation roles and (2) relationship facilitation roles[1].

Task facilitation roles. Effective team leaders are able to help guide the team through its tasks. Leadership roles that fall into this category include:

- Information-seeking
- Information-sharing
- Elaborating
- Coordinating
- Monitoring
- Process-analyzing
- Reality testing
- Summarizing
- Resource acquisition

Relationship facilitation roles. As teams are comprised of people with complementary skills, the team leader must help facilitate positive relationships between team members. Thus, this role includes:

- Supporting
- Harmonizing
- Tension-relieving
- Energizing
- Developing
- Facilitating
- Processing

Ineffective/Blocking roles. Team leaders must also be aware of roles that they may take or that can hinder the team. These ineffective (or blocking) roles include:

- Overanalyzing
- Overgeneralizing
- Fault-finding
- Premature decision-making
- Presenting opinions as facts
- Rejecting ideas of others
- Pulling Rank
- Dominating
- Stalling

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[1]Whetten, D. A. & K. S. Cameron (2002), <u>Developing management skills</u>, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.