Leadership Skills: Volunteers Leading Volunteers

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The American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) provides many leadership opportunities for its members. These leadership roles occur in chapters, regions, practice specialties, task groups, committees, and councils to name a few. Volunteers in these roles can struggle with leading other volunteers for a variety of reasons. The single most important reason volunteer leaders struggle is because they do not recognize that volunteer members "choose" to follow them; they cannot be forced to follow. Therefore, good leaders who lead volunteers must learn to utilize their influence to motivate volunteers and achieve assigned tasks or goals. This paper was developed to explore a leadership theory and associated leadership skills that will form the foundation of achieving the goals of the Society. It also serves as a guide for personal leadership growth for ASSE volunteers or members seeking to actively volunteer on behalf of the Society. A review of several leadership theories, as summarized by Northouse (2007), indicated that the Leader Member Exchange theory (LMX) would be best suited for volunteers who lead other volunteers. This theory relies upon three major leadership skill sets: mutual respect, trust, and sense of obligation between leader and member. These three skill sets are defined through review of several leadership texts with recommendations provide for further

research and study. The article concludes with suggested actions ASSE volunteer members can explore to improve their effectiveness as volunteer leaders.

INTRODUCTION

Membership-based, not-for-profit organizations rely heavily upon their volunteers to accomplish their visions and goals. Some member volunteers will lead, many more will follow in management roles, others just volunteer on small tasks, and an even larger group of members will never step up to volunteer. A key to a successful volunteer-based member organization is to continue to develop strong leaders who can influence the membership to achieve the vision and goals of the organization. This article will focus on the identification of leadership development needs within one such organization, the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE). The points discussed will provide a framework for ASSE members to actively volunteer and participate in ASSE activities. It also provides recommendations to those members already active on how to achieve and/or improve upon their leadership abilities when leading volunteers or mentoring up-and-coming volunteer leaders.

ASSE describes its mission as, "a global member-driven association providing representation, promotion, and support for those engaged in the profession and/or the practice of safety, health and environment in their efforts to protect people, property and the environment" (American Society of Safety Engineers, 2007). Although ASSE does have a paid professional staff, they rely a great deal upon member volunteers to do the heavy lifting to achieve their vision to "…be a global champion of the safety, health and environmental profession, a global leader of the profession and a premier resource for those engaged in protecting people, property and the environment" (ASSE, 2007). An important question for volunteer leaders to answer is:

How do leaders transform their membership into volunteers, influence these volunteers into essentially becoming unpaid staff, and finally how do they create and develop future volunteer leaders? President Dwight D. Eisenhower defined leadership as "…the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it." This is the key to leadership in a not-for-profit organization. Volunteer organizations such as ASSE require some volunteers to lead and many other volunteers to follow. The future growth of this membership organization will rely heavily upon volunteer leaders. Therefore, ASSE must continue to grow the effectiveness of its current leaders and also identify and cultivate future volunteer leaders. This paper will serve as an initial guide for ASSE members to help identify the skill sets required to develop effective leadership skills and associated leadership succession plans within the Society. These leadership skills will support chapters, regions, and national office leadership. It also benefits those members who find themselves as leaders of a taskforce, committee, or special project.

THE LMX THEORY OF LEADERSHIP

Northouse (2007) found that many theories on leadership emphasize the leader's traits, skills, or style, while others focus on the follower and the environment or context of the leadership situations. The *leader and member exchange theory* (LMX theory) of leadership differs from those listed above by centering its attention on the interactions between leaders and followers. The term "leader" used here refers to volunteer leaders and the term "follower" refers to volunteer members of ASSE. The key to the LMX theory is for ASSE chapters and the Society to identify the "in-groups" and "out-groups" within the organization. *In-group members* are defined as those who do more than is expected and are continually looking for ways to move their groups and the chapter or Society's goals forward in innovative ways. The in-group is given

more responsibility, more opportunities, and more recognition for their extra efforts (Northouse, 2007). Alternatively, *the out-group* does what they are assigned and nothing more. The out-group is still valuable to the chapter and the Society but will not typically gain special support or recognition beyond the basic acknowledgements of their volunteer contributions (Northouse, 2007). Chandler (2008) states that the most important principle of motivation is to understand that leaders attain success in the areas that they offer rewards. Acknowledgement of any volunteer's contributions to the chapter or the Society must be made by leaders to build trust and to motivate those in the out-group to continue to grow. The LMX theory focuses on building trust and respect within ASSE chapters and the Society for both the in-group and out-group. This is accomplished by also offering all volunteers opportunities for growth through new assignments and responsibilities. It also provides encouragement and an additional pathway for those in the out-group to become part of the in-group.

The LMX theory of leadership really works to create special support and recognition for all members similar to those of the in-group, whether or not they are active volunteers. This requires ASSE chapters and the Society to offer all members the opportunity to take on new positions, responsibilities and expectations to the degree to which they want to be involved. This process engages inactive members to move into volunteer positions. This process also attempts to lift some out of the out-group of volunteers and into the in-group of volunteers. The LMX theory emphasizes that chapter and Society leaders need to be fair with all volunteers, especially paying attention to how special treatment is allocated and perceived by all involved (Northouse, 2007). The Society and its leaders must recognize that each volunteer is unique and has some special skill set or knowledge to offer in his or her own special way. The key to maximizing this relationship is to respect each member's unique potentials and contributions to construct a shared

trust. The LMX theory also seeks leaders to cultivate high-quality exchanges with members looking for ways to build trust and mutual respect so that all volunteer members function at their own level, yet are treated as those currently in the in-group as encouragement. Finally, this leadership theory has leaders looking beyond their current assignments to build high-quality partnerships with other members throughout the chapter, region, and the Society (Northouse, 2007). This assists the chapters and the Society with its goal to provide members with more leadership skill**s** as they pursue a greater leadership role within ASSE. The LMX theory would work best for chapters and the Society because it focuses its attention on the "…special, unique relationships that leaders can create with others. When these relationships are of high quality, the goals of the leaders, the followers, and the organization are all advanced" (Northouse, 2007).

Leadership Skills in Support of the LMX Theory

As discussed, the LMX leadership theory relies upon the mutual respect, trust, and sense of obligation between the leader and follower. Therefore, effective leaders within the chapters and the Society must recognize how these three areas impact upon their own leadership skills and those of the members they seek to develop into growing leaders. However, the chapters and the Society must also support their volunteer leaders and focus on high-quality exchanges between the Society and leaders, and from leaders to volunteers.

Northouse (2007) summarizes Graen and Uhl-Bein's (1991) theories that leadership-making develops over time in three phases: (1) the stranger phase, (2) the acquaintance phase, and (3) the mature partnership phase. The stranger phase is a low-quality exchange between leader and volunteer relating to each other under prescribed chapter or Society roles. This theory suggests that volunteers are motivated by self-interest rather than the good of the chapter or the Society. An example would include a member who joins a committee for the sole purpose of

gaining continuing education units to maintain a certification or to build up a resume. In the acquaintance phase, both the leader and volunteer explore whether there are opportunities for the volunteer to take on additional roles or responsibilities. In this phase, the quality of the exchange has improved over that of the acquaintance phase. There is a shift from self-interest and more on the goals of the Society. An example of the acquaintance phase would be a member who writes an article for a newsletter and is then offered a position as the newsletter editor. The high-quality exchanges the Society and its leaders should seek are found in the mature partnership phase of Graen and Uhl-Bein's (1991) theories. At this level, both leader and volunteer have developed a high degree of mutual trust, respect, and obligation. This exchange has now morphed into an extremely effective way to relate. This interaction now produces positive outcomes for not only the leader and volunteer, but the Society as well (see Table 1). An example of a high-quality exchange would be a volunteer working on a membership development committee who brings up an idea for a topical presentation and then steps up with committee leadership support to lead and organize this new project.

The Society and its leaders should consider incorporating the following key skills to develop these high-level exchanges within the leaders and volunteers within the Society: respect, trust, and sense of obligation.

Establishing Mutual Respect

John C. Maxwell's book "The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership" (Maxwell, 1998/2007) addresses respect in his "Law Number Seven, the Law of Respect*."* Maxwell found that the less skilled tended to follow the more highly skilled and gifted. Yet, he does recognize that stronger leaders will choose to follow a weaker leader out of respect for a person's status, rank, or past accomplishments. However, Maxwell's "law of respect" finds followers are attracted to people

who are better leaders than themselves. Those with stronger leadership skill will generally have the ability to recognize leadership strengths or weaknesses in individuals and a group in which they participate. Strong leaders will identify stronger leaders and follow, or where stronger leadership is lacking, may leave the group and pursue their own agenda. In order to gain respect, Maxwell defined six ways for leaders to gain others respect:

1. *Natural leadership ability*: Northouse (2007) discusses the pros and cons of born leaders in his discussion of the "trait approach" leadership theory. The pros are that most recognize or believe that they are born leaders. There is also more than a century of research to support this inherent trait. It also gives us some benchmarks for what to look for in a leader. However, natural leadership cannot be taught; either leaders have it or they don't. Also, the leadership approach only focuses on the traits of the leader, not the follower. This recognition of natural leaders can work against the LMX theory, which focuses on the interaction between leader and follower. However, for purposes of this paper, the Society should recognize the perceptions by followers of natural leadership and the accompanying respect associated with it.

2. *Respect for others*: Leaders cannot force a volunteer to comply. By its very definition, a volunteer chooses to act. Maxwell found that "…when people respect you as a leader, they will follow you" (2007, p. 79). In his book, *It's Your Ship*, Naval Captain D. Michael Abrashoff (Abrashoff, 2002) discusses that the main challenge for leaders in the twenty-first century is attracting and retaining "…not just employees, but the best employees—and more importantly, how to motivate them so that they work with passion, energy, and enthusiasm" (p. 12). Captain Abrashoff, a naval officer, reviewed some exit surveys and interviews conducted by the military on why people left the Navy. The top

reason he found for people leaving the military was not being treated with respect or dignity (p. 13). Dale Carnegie. in his famous book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (Carnegie, 1936/1981), found that there was only one way to get people to do something: "And that is by making the other person want to do it" (p. 47). He found that the only way to get someone to do something was to give them something they want. Respect is something everyone seeks. Giving volunteers respect makes leaders more effective in their ability to influence them to participate in activities which achieve the Society's goals.

3. *Courage:* Personal experience has demonstrated that piercing the thin veil of fear is crucial for leaders to be effective. Zig Ziglar, the famous writer and speaker on motivation, made a statement that defined the acronym F-E-A-R as "Fictitious Events Appearing Real" (Ziglar, 1986/1987). Leaders must face their fear and push through it. Good leaders do what is right, regardless of its popularity or the criticism that might be received. Maxwell states that "…a leader's courage has great value; it gives followers hope." Captain Abrashoff (2002, p. 27) discusses leaving "his comfort zone" to have a positive effect on the Navy and the young men he led. He found that what motivated him to pierce the veil of fear was not to squander an opportunity that was presented to him. He did not want to look back on a project or his life and say, "If only I had…." (p.28). The Society must encourage its leaders to push themselves and the organization forward and do the right thing. As Franklin Delano Roosevelt said in his 1933 inaugural address, "…the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Many times this fear involves the fear of change from the organization, its leaders, and/or the membership. Becoming an agent of change is important for leaders in the Society to understand. Likewise, Captain Abrashoff

found (2002, p. 54) "…change frightens workers, and their fears thrive in silence. The antidote is obvious: Keep talking." Leading and communicating change are skills required by leaders to overcome the fears within their followers. Issues on how the Society can provide a vision for change and provide supporting communications to its leaders and membership to alleviate fear is another area which must be developed within the Society.

4. *Success:* People will respect others' accomplishments. Maxwell states that the follower will follow success because they want to be part of success in the future (pg. 80). Maxwell (2007) discusses this point further in his *Law Number Nine, the Law of Magnetism*. Here he finds that leaders tend to draw followers that possess the same qualities. "Who you are is who you attract" (Maxwell, p. 104). The Society must continue to recognize the success of its leaders and followers to build a success-oriented legacy. Leaders must spend time to recognize and acknowledge the success of group members so that they too build a legacy of success for future leadership positions. The Society has a strong volunteer recognition program upon which they must continue to emphasize and expand. This will build a deep track record of member successes within the Society and the safety, health and environmental profession for their benefit as future leaders.

5. *Loyalty:* By definition, loyalty is being faithful to a cause, ideal, custom or institution. Being faithful is defined as steadfast in affection or allegiance (Merriam-Webster, 2007). This allegiance or devotion by members to the Society is what drives the volunteer to action. Therefore, the Society and its leaders must portray a sound vision that demonstrates a cause in which its members can believe. This also suggests that the Society must focus more on the member/volunteer's needs. When the Society asks for

volunteers to follow a leader on a project to reach a goal, they must first be able to understand the goal. Then the leader must be able to answer their question, "What's in it for the volunteer?" This establishes several positive conditions for the Society leaders. By answering what's in it for the follower provides a value or service a member needs that can influence him/her to want to actively participate in the project. Next, answering this question is good salesmanship. Good salesmen develop loyal customers or followers. Chandler (2008) puts it as simply as he can for leaders by saying, "…this [salesmanship] simply means asking for what you want, being very direct with your requests, and having your communication centered on requests and promises." Additional techniques leaders will need to use in salesmanship are also an area which must be developed in the Society's leaders. Ultimately, the Society must focus on developing and maintaining loyalty in its membership and leaders.

6. *Value Added to Others*: As discussed above, it is important for the Society to provide a vision of "value" to its leaders, and also to its membership. Maxwell takes it a step further and states, "…you can be sure that followers value leaders who add value to them. And their respect for them carries on long after the relationship has ended" (Maxwell p. 81). Therefore the Society must also provide a means to measure or demonstrate the increased value to the individual from participating in activities that serve the Society's goals.

Maxwell concludes his discussion on respect by discussing how strong leaders surround themselves with equals or better while less successful leaders surround themselves with subordinates. The Society, its chapters, and leaders will benefit from establishing venues where

top leaders can mentor up and coming leaders to nurture and solidify mutual respect throughout the Society's leadership.

Establishing Trust

Captain Abrashoff (2002, p. 63) found trust to be "…a kind of jujitsu: You have to earn it, and you earn it by giving it." However, leaders can only give trust to those who are trustworthy. A survey performed by Franklin Covey (Covey, 2004) of 54,000 people asked them to identify essential qualities of a leader. The study listed integrity as the clear number one choice. Steven Covey (2004) defines trustworthiness in his book, *The 8th Habit,* as having both competency and character. Covey states, "When you develop strong character and competence, the fruit is wisdom and judgment—the foundation of all great and everlasting achievement and trust" (Covey, p. 149). Most of ASSE's volunteer leadership positions evolve around capturing and sharing subject matter expertise in one form or another. If the Society has a member who has strong character but lacks the technical competency, the knowledge is suspect. Likewise, if a member has great technical competency but lacks character, he or she might withhold the knowledge and immaturely refuse to share. Therefore, it is essential to have both character and competency in the Society's leaders and volunteers. Chandler (2008) noted that good communication is also necessary for building trust. If feedback is cutoff to volunteers, their minds can sometimes run wild with speculation and fears about their performance. Chandler then goes on to state, "…it is no accident that trust and communication are two organizational problems most often cited by employee surveys" (2008, p. 30).

The Society is continually preparing and developing opportunities for its members to enhance their technical competencies and participate in professional development. The expansion of these technical competencies should also include the expansion of leadership and

communication competencies too. ASSE has a major role and responsibility in developing core competencies in its leaders, volunteers, and members. The Society and its volunteer leaders must also balance competency development with character expectations and a strong adherence to a code of conduct and/or ethics. Character and competency go hand in hand for building trust.

Establishing a Sense of Obligation

In Maxwell's chapter on the "Law of Buy-in" (2007, p. 171), he states, "People don't at first follow worthy causes. They follow worthy leaders who promote causes they believe in." He further elaborates on this point by discussing how leaders are messengers. If the followers believe the messenger is credible, then they will find value in the message. This point is illustrated by the numerous commercials viewers are bombarded with each day with athletes, movie stars, and other celebrities. Think about Oprah Winfrey and some of the messages and causes she supports. Because she supports an issue or cause, her leadership credibility influences people to follow her lead. ASSE needs their leaders to become credible messengers so that the message in the vision of the Society can be delivered to its membership. Maxwell closes his "Law of Buy-in" chapter by explaining that a leader's success is measured by his or her ability to actually take the followers where they need to go, which is only possible when they buy in (2007, p. 176). Volunteer leaders within ASSE must first sell themselves to volunteers before presenting the message.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Society's volunteer leaders should embrace the modified version of the LMX theory which creates in- and out-groups and also identifies inactive groups of members. All three groups will form a stepladder for inactive and passive volunteer members of ASSE to become

part of an in-group of active members and emerging leaders. The stepladder approach will also

develop leaders through incorporating key skills into volunteer opportunities that reinforce

strong LMX leadership theory traits of mutual respect, trust, and sense of obligation.

Additionally, other supporting skills such as communication and salesmanship will also solidify

the effectiveness of leadership creation within ASSE. Here are specific recommendations for the

ASSE Leaders should consider for achieving success and for moving up through the Society

leadership and defining the training needs, objectives and outcomes for leadership positions.

Leader Making Through the LMX Theory

The LMX theory is also referred to as the "leader making" process (Northouse, 2007).

The LMX theory fulfills the ASSE leadership taskforce mission by providing a ladder for

member development from the inactive-group, to out-group, to in-group, to chapter and Society

leadership. This theory serves two needs for ASSE chapters, regions, and the Society; it

increases the effectiveness of currently emerging leaders (the in-group) and helps the chapters

and Society provide opportunities to identify and encourage future leaders from its basic

volunteers (the out-group). The chapters and the Society currently rely upon on a small subset of

dedicated, reliable, and active members out of all available members to step up and volunteer so

ASSE can achieve its goals. It also provides support to its volunteer leaders and defines a clear

path for continued growth as a leader. The LMX theory provides a stepladder for developing and

moving leaders up through the chapters and the Society. First, ASSE chapter and Society leaders

must maximize the development of those active volunteers by recognizing in-groups and out-

groups. The in-group is the current source of emerging future leaders. Second, the out-group

must be encouraged by chapter and Society leadership to step up and take on more active roles

and responsibilities and move into the in-group. Those in the out-group are defined as members

who step up to volunteer, but do only what they are assigned. The out-group is the chapter and

Society's source for potential future leaders which have not yet emerged. The out-group should

be treated as if they were in the in-group and encouraged to take on a more active role in the

chapter and Society activities. Finally, the LMX theory must be modified and extended to a third

set of members which are termed as the "inactive-group." The "inactive-group" is composed of

the majority of ASSE members who merely pay dues, read their monthly *Professional Safety*

Journal, and might occasionally attend a chapter meeting, professional development conference

or seminar. The "inactive-group" of members is important to ASSE and also needs attention,

encouragement, and opportunities just like the more active groups defined above. This third

group is ground zero for future leadership development. This inactive-group must be inspired

and motivated to take on small tasks and move up the ladder of leadership by engaging in the

same volunteer activities of at least the "out-group."

Learning Motivation Skills

In his book *100 Ways to Motivate Others,* Chandler (2008) lists many methods for

motivating others into action. His first motivation tip is to understand the source of motivation.

Motivation volunteerism comes from within the member. Therefore, chapter and Society leaders

must learn how to get members to motivate themselves or each other. A placid or inactive

member needs to be motivated by a leader and won't motivate himself, at least the first time into

a volunteer role. This is called the influence of leadership. Leaders habitually fail to use the

ability to praise and inspire volunteers with the realization of their latent potentials and

possibilities (Carnegie, 1936/1981). However, Chandler also recognizes the value of going after

low-hanging fruit by suggesting finding self-motivated volunteers. "The best way to create a

highly motivated team is to hire people who are already motivated people" (Chandler, 2008).

The LMX theory of leadership requires that leaders focus on identifying the "in-group" of volunteers who go above and beyond the expectations assigned to them. The LMX theory helps identify self-motivated volunteers yet also encourages leaders to inspire those volunteers in the "out-group" to become self-motivated. The chapter and Society leadership must recognize the need to both select self-motivated volunteers (emerging leaders in the in-group) as well as inspire those who are weakly motivated (potential leaders in the out-group) or unmotivated (unknown potential of inactive volunteer members).

Morphing Volunteers into Unpaid Employees

One skill the chapter and Society leadership must develop in self-motivated leaders and emerging leaders is competency. In his book, *Managing the Nonprofit Organization,* Peter Drucker interviewed Father Leo Bartel of the Rockford, Illinois, Archdiocese on leading volunteers and volunteer leaders (Drucker, 1990/2005). Father Bartels discussed the problem with some of his extremely motivated and very dedicated volunteers by stating:

> *The fact is though that if people are properly motivated—and those people are deeply motivated—developing competence becomes part of their very need. My biggest difficulty in asking people to serve is that they are painfully aware of their lack of experience and lack of preparation. If we can provide them with that, they are eager to learn.*

Cultivating Leadership Skills

The LMX leadership theory stresses high level volunteer member interaction embracing mutual respect, trust, and a sense of obligation. Additionally, other supporting skills such as communication and salesmanship further enhance the effectiveness of volunteer leaders. Therefore, the ASSE chapters and the Society should provide leadership training which teaches these leadership traits. These skills can be introduced to members (inactive-group), volunteers

(out-group), and emerging leaders (in-group) through several venues: role models, leadership training, and budding leadership roles. The LMX theory relies heavily upon high-level exchanges between the leader and follower. Northouse (2007) provides a questionnaire designed to measure the quality of interaction and exchanges between the leaders and followers. A modified version of the *LMX 7 Questionnaire* (see Figure 1) is included for consideration by the Society and chapters to evaluate current quality of leader-volunteer working relationships.

The chapters and the Society should consider providing training and guidance to all current and past leaders (who are still active in ASSE) on developing mutual respect, trust, and sense of obligation. Leaders portray good role models and provide strong mentoring to all ASSE members. Maxwell (2007) stresses the importance of leaders as role models and mentors to emerging and future leaders. He found that people do what people see. By modeling key leadership qualities, volunteers and emerging leaders will have a vision of what an ASSE leader looks like. Maxwell also discusses how people buy into the leader first, then into their vision. Strong role model leaders will develop buy-in for achieving the Society's vision and goals, and in the process develop leaders. Maxwell also addresses the legacy factor, which acknowledges the need for leaders to develop successors. The ASSE chapters and the Society have a strong need for building successors to continue the legacy of many successful projects and leadership positions within the organization. Finally, Maxwell addresses the growth of new leaders by stressing that the more experienced leaders must support emerging leaders. Mentoring will accomplish this. Using current ASSE chapter and Society leaders as role models and mentors provides an example for emerging leaders while also satisfying the Society's need for developing leadership successors.

Figure 1 - Adapted LMX Questionnaire

Instructions: This questionnaire contains items that ask you to describe your relationship between ASSE and either the Team leader, and/or the Volunteer(s). For each item indicate the degree to which you think the item is true for you by circling one of the responses that appear below the item.

1. Do you know where you stand with ASSE/Leader/Volunteers and do you usually know how satisfied ASSE is with what else you do?

Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Fairly often	Very often
1	2	3	4	5

2. How well does ASSE/Leader/Volunteer understand your task problems and needs?

Not a bit	A little	A fair amount	Quite a bit	A great deal
1	2	3	4	5

3. How well does ASSE/Leader/Volunteer recognize your potential?

Not at all	A little	Moderately	Mostly	Fully
1	2	3	4	5

4. Regardless of how much formal authority you have built into your position, what are the chances that ASSE/Leader/Volunteer would use their power to help you solve problems or issues with your tasks and/or roles in the Society?

None	Small	Moderate	High	Very high
1	2	3	4	5

5. Regardless of how much formal authority you have built into your position, what are the chances that ASSE /Leader/Volunteer would bail you out at their own expense?

None	Small	Moderate	High	Very high
1	2	3	4	5

6. I have enough confidence in ASSE/Leader/Volunteer that I would defend and justify their decision if they were not present to do so.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

7. How would you characterize your working relationship with ASSE/Leader/Volunteer?

Extremely ineffective	Worse than average	Average	Better than average	Extremely effective
1	2	3	4	5

Scoring: 30-35—Very high; 25-29—High; 20-24—Moderate; 15-19—Low; 7-14—Very low. Upper scores indicate a stronger, high-quality leader-member exchange (e.g., in-group members), whereas lower scores indicate exchanges of lesser quality (e.g., out-group members).

SOURCE: Adapted from Northouse 2007, p. 169, which was adapted from "Relationship-Based Approach to Leadership: Development of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory of Leadership Over 25 Years: Applying a Multi-Level, Multi-Domain Perspective," by G. B. Graen and M. Uhl-Bien, 1995, *Leadership Quarterly,* 6(2), 219-247.

Another venue for melding mutual respect, trust, and sense of obligation is through the existing annual two-day ASSE leadership conference, professional development activities, and the *Professional Safety Journal*. Other supportive leadership skills such as communication and salesmanship must also be incorporated into these venues as well. There are also other leadership training and networking venues available through the Society's councils, regions, and chapters, which must also preach and teach leadership. An emphasis on key leadership traits and skills with emerging leaders through these educational and networking settings will support the role of modeling and mentoring efforts by existing leaders for developing a succession plan for the Society. Questionnaires similar to the one found in Figure 1 can be implemented as a measurement tool to benchmark the leadership growth and effectiveness within the Society through these venues too. Finally, these key skills and traits can be exemplified through keynote speakers at chapter meetings, local conferences, leadership events, annual professional development conference sessions, newsletters, emails, websites, and articles in the *Professional Safety Journal.*

Mentoring is another strong way for the Society and chapters to build leaders. One way to access mentors is to tap into the retired past leaders. Some important leaders to include are chapter presidents, regional vice-presidents, council vice-presidents, practice specialty administrators, boards of director members, committee chairs, and taskforce leaders. However, Drucker (1990/2005) points out that far too many organizations do not provide a venue for past leadership "alumni" to continue to lead through mentoring. The Society must re-engage with its previous leaders and provide a means to mentor new and emerging leaders. Maxwell (2007) concludes his *21 Laws of Leadership* with a discussion of how leaders like to leave a legacy in their positions. This is a leadership law that the chapters and the Society must not break. ASSE

leadership must provide an increased platform for volunteer leader mentoring that develops emerging leaders while also providing a legacy and succession plan.

The final recommendation for developing a leadership succession plan involves identifying entry-level leadership opportunities where emerging leaders can hone their skills for larger leadership roles down the line.

The literature discussed in this paper supports the need for providing emerging leaders with opportunities to lead (Abrashoff, 2002; Chandler, 2008; Covey, 2004; Maxwell, 1998/2007; Northouse, 2007). The Society and chapters are moving in the right direction for leadership building by identifying a ladder of succession within the organization for leaders to incrementally excel and grow.

CONCLUSION

The Society and chapters should embrace this modified version of the LMX theory, which creates in- and out-groups and identifies inactive-groups. All three groups will form a stepladder for providing inactive and passive volunteer members of ASSE into an in-group of emerging leaders. The stepladder approach will also develop leaders through incorporating key skills into volunteer opportunities that reinforce strong LMX leadership theory traits of mutual respect, trust, and sense of obligation. Additionally, other supporting skills such as communication and salesmanship will also solidify the effectiveness of leadership creation within all of ASSE. Finally, good role modeling and mentoring by current leaders will inspire all members of the Society and its chapters to become more active, eventually leading to the emergence of new volunteers and leaders.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Strong Leadership Tips for Leading Volunteers

- Volunteers "volunteer" to be led; they can't be forced to follow you.
- Influence is the strongest trait of a leader of volunteers.
- "He who thinks he leads, but has no followers, is just taking a walk" (Maxwell 2007).
- Develop respect from volunteers and give respect back.
- Be trustworthy; have both character and competency.
- Develop a sense of obligation for volunteers; get buy-in.
- Acknowledge appreciation for a volunteers efforts; people want recognition.
- Provide opportunities for volunteers to grow, then ask them to participate.
- Keep your eye out for emerging leaders; give them opportunities to advance.
- Mentor or provide mentors for up and coming leaders; show them the way.
- Lead by example; present an image of what a good leader looks like.
- Leave a legacy by filling your shoes with an emerging leader; always have a succession plan.

Appendix 2: Finding Time to Learn Leadership

Finding time to improve your leadership skills can be difficult. However, many of us have long commutes to and from work and jobsites. Audio and video recordings can provide an excellent venue to increase your leadership knowledge and gain competencies. Many great books and presentations on leadership are now found in many media formats. These books and presentations can be listened to while traveling. Turn off the radio and turn on your leadership training. Otherwise, make time in the morning, at lunch, or at the end of the day to read or listen to books.

Steven Covey (2004) found that individuals who dedicate one hour a day to reading or listening to books and/or watching technical presentations will gain enormous knowledge and competency in a very short period of time. He claims you can obtain up to the 90% of what is known by those considered to be experts in that field of study in only a year. Imagine if you had 365 hours of concentrated training on a given topic. Would you have a commanding knowledge of the subject matter? Think about it.

Topics to gain leadership knowledge and competencies on include:
- Leadership
- Management
- Public speaking
- Communications
- Self-esteem
- Public relations
- Writing skills
- Marketing
- Motivation
- Salesmanship