



# The Gamelearn leadership model



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Managing people is the most difficult endeavor there is. Leadership is not a single skill but rather the mastery of many skills, both personal and social. It also involves dealing with people, each of whom have their own traits, needs, problems and expectations - which change over time.

*Managing people well is enormously complicated.  
Doing it very well is almost impossible.  
Only patience, perseverance and constant learning  
can make you a better leader.*

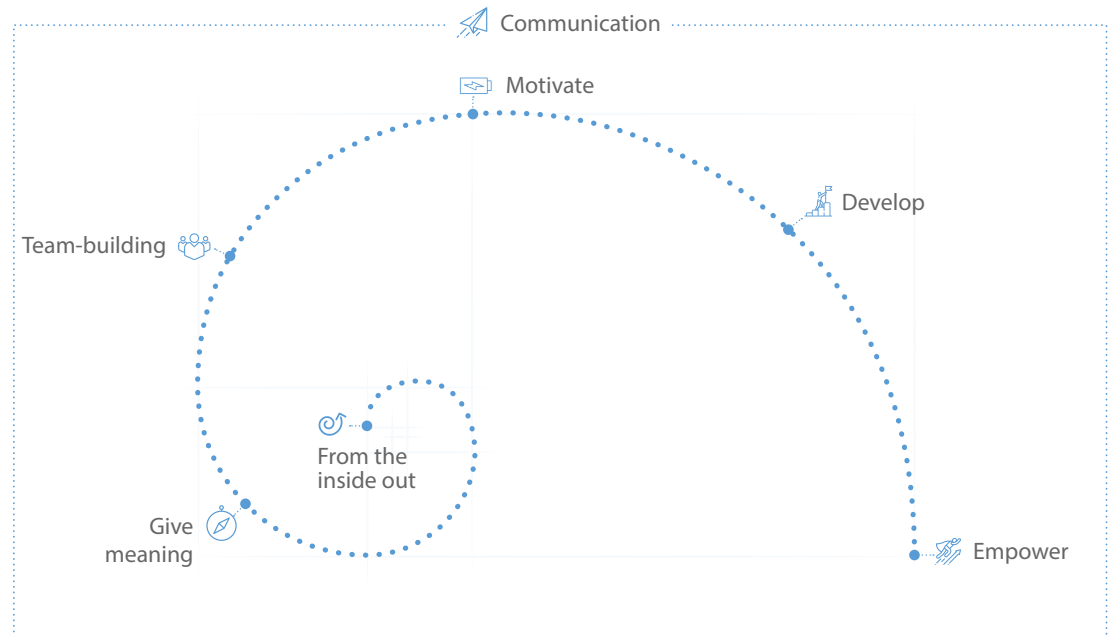
Managing people well is enormously complicated. Doing it very well is almost impossible. Only patience, perseverance and constant learning can make you a better leader, provided that is what you really want to become. That is the first question you will have to ask yourself.

The leadership model of our video game Pacific is represented by the shell of the Nautilus, a cephalopod mollusk that can be found in the waters of the Pacific.

The shell of the Nautilus consists of several chambers. The animal lives in the largest one. As the animal grows, it makes a new chamber, larger than the previous one (from the inside out). Shell growth follows a spiral pattern with a perfect ratio defined by the number Phi ( $\phi$ ).

Your leadership must also be built from the inside out, step by step and at a regular ratio, taking the following path:

- ◇ From the inside out
- ◇ Give meaning
- ◇ Team-building
- ◇ Motivate
- ◇ Develop
- ◇ Empower



Moreover, you must focus on good communication throughout the journey, as this is the cornerstone of leadership.

Come with us on this journey and discover the keys to becoming the very best of leaders.

## 1. From the inside out

Good leaders must know themselves well. Always ask yourself:

**How does my personality affect the rest of the team?** Take a good look at yourself, how you behave, how you communicate, how you interact with people... this all affects your team's attitude toward you. Your personality drives how you behave and this will have a direct (and different) impact on each member of your team.

*Good leaders must know themselves well.*

**To what extent am I the cause of the problem?** As the team leader, you are ultimately responsible for any problems that arise. Before blaming anyone else, ask yourself: to what extent have I caused the problem? In the event of a conflict, problem or lack of efficiency, start by thinking about what you can or should change.



**How can I improve?** The only way to know whether you are doing a good job at managing is to ask the members of your team. Be proactive by asking for feedback about how they see the team, the way you are managing it, what can be improved and so on. Feedback is the best tool for helping the team to improve. You will have to provide regular feedback (both positive and negative), and you will need to preach by example in order for the rest of the team to accept it willingly.

*Objectives stimulate creativity and make it easier for the team to come up with ideas on how to achieve them.*

## 2. Give meaning

### Define goals

The first step to transforming your team into a high-performance team is to define goals. Why do you need goals? Because it is only when you know exactly what you want that you can understand what has to be done to achieve it and draw up the corresponding action plan.

Goals stimulate creativity and make it easier for the team to come up with ideas on how to achieve them, but... what kind of goals?

- ◇ Specific.
- ◇ Measurable.
- ◇ With a deadline.
- ◇ With someone in charge.
- ◇ Written in black and white.
- ◇ Always in plain sight.

Define your goals as soon as possible. Ideally, before the team starts working. Each team member should understand and accept the team goals as their own. They should also understand that their individual goals must contribute to the goals of the team as a whole.

## Work with goals

Two tools are essential when you work with goals: a visualization system and a monitoring system.

- ◇ **Visualization system:** if your team can see the goals they are working to achieve, this will increase their motivation, focus and effort. Making them visible at all times is key to making the right decisions, optimizing work and setting the correct priorities. You can use any medium... Whichever you choose, make sure it is in plain view of everyone.
- ◇ **Monitoring system:** you should have a monitoring system that allows you to review goals periodically. This system should not be considered as a control mechanism, but rather as a way to ensure communication, analyze situations, locate deviations and make decisions that lead to improvements. Each team member must be told about these meetings in advance, why they are going to be held and what is going to be dealt with.

*Your team will also need certain game rules.  
Basic rules that frame the way you interact,  
communicate and behave.*

## Define team rules

Rules are the foundation on which societies are built. Your team will also need certain game rules. Basic rules that frame the way you interact, communicate and behave.

Why do you need to define team rules?

- ◇ Reduces conflicts.
- ◇ Improves work speed and efficiency.
- ◇ Consolidates the team (team-building).
- ◇ Clarifies expectations.
- ◇ Reveals many incorrect assumptions.
- ◇ Generates cohesion.
- ◇ Strengthens team discipline.
- ◇ Increases trust between individuals.

Some of the questions to be answered by team rules:

- ◇ How do we interact?
- ◇ How do we help each other?
- ◇ How do we manage conflicts?
- ◇ How do we manage mistakes?
- ◇ How do we make decisions?
- ◇ How do we define "excellence"?





The work session dedicated to defining the rules is one of the most important ones you will have with your team. The purpose is to define a working framework that will make you more efficient and allow each member to express what they consider to be important and to learn what is important for their colleagues.

You should prepare this session as a true investment in your team and their performance. We suggest you use brainstorming for the team to propose rules. Debate proposals and agree on the most important rules that the team are prepared to commit to.

As with the goals, place the rules where all the team members can see them. You will also need a system to ensure compliance with the rules. This system must be sustained by feedback. Everyone in the team must provide feedback to their colleagues when any of the rules are breached.

*Most cases of conflict and lack of efficiency are caused by poorly defined team roles and responsibilities.*

### Define roles and responsibilities

Most cases of conflict and lack of efficiency are caused by poorly defined team roles and responsibilities. Make sure that each member of your team has a perfect understanding of the following:

- ◇ Their role in the team.
- ◇ What is expected of them.
- ◇ How their work contributes to the goals of the team.
- ◇ Their exact responsibilities.

Why do you need to define responsibilities?

- ◇ Prevents conflicts.
- ◇ Prevents uncertainty.
- ◇ Clarifies expectations.
- ◇ Facilitates collaboration and teamwork.
- ◇ Eliminates overlapping assignments and dodging responsibilities.
- ◇ Improves team speed and efficiency.

Just as all members must commit to the team's goals, each member must also commit to their specific responsibilities.

## Conclusion

To guarantee the success of your team, you need:

- ◇ A clear idea of where you are headed and the commitment of all involved.
- ◇ Basic rules that regulate the way you behave, interact and communicate.
- ◇ Each team member must understand their role perfectly, as well as their responsibilities in achieving the team's goals.

These three items are grouped under what we refer to as "Give meaning", which means:

- ◇ That your team has to know which direction to take, its *raison d'être* and the goal to achieve.
- ◇ That everyone has to understand the manner in which they need to interact and behave, and why.
- ◇ Each team member must understand the meaning of their work, their role in the team and their contribution to the final goal.

But these three points are more than a matter of common sense. Your role as the team leader is to ensure that these three points are established and to adapt them to the culture of your organization and your particular circumstances.

"Giving meaning" to your team is therefore one of the first things you have to do in order for it to be successful.

*Your main responsibility as a leader is to provide the conditions that generate synergy within the team.*

## 3. Team-building

Synergy is a special kind of energy that occurs in certain teams. Actually, it is a combination of energies and characterizes high-performance teams.

The word "synergy" describes the coordination of several parts to achieve an effect greater than that obtained by the sum of individual efforts. In colloquial language: two plus two is more than four.

Your main responsibility as a leader is to provide the conditions that generate synergy within the team. One way to achieve this is to increase affinity between team members. We will call this "Team-building", which involves:

- ◇ Fostering mutual understanding between all the team members.
- ◇ Building trust.
- ◇ Creating a team identity.

### Mutual knowledge and trust

Mutual knowledge has three facets:

- ◇ You must know each and every member of the team.
- ◇ They must know you.
- ◇ They must know each other.

The knowledge we are referring to goes beyond what is strictly professional. You have to understand how your colleagues think, what they like, what they dislike, how they feel, their expectations, what motivates them, what they are afraid of, and so on. Solid interpersonal relationships need to be built in order to facilitate communication and cooperation.

The more mutual knowledge within the team, the greater their trust in each other.

*Once a team has found an identity, there is an increase in team communication, coordination and performance.*

### Team identity

Once a team has found an identity, there is an increase in team communication, coordination and performance.

This is achieved when the members feel identified with the team and have a special sense of belonging. When this occurs, the individuals place the team's interest before their own.

This identity is a bond that grows stronger as the team crystallizes its *raison d'être*, its *modus operandi*, the way it relates to other groups and, above all, as the awareness of belonging to a group becomes stronger among its members.

Team identity makes the team members feel special and different from other groups. That will be your challenge: to make your team feel special, different and "better" than other groups.

Identity is not achieved overnight. It requires time and a deliberate effort by the team.





You start building the team's identity by following the first steps of the model:

- ◇ when you define a goal clearly and ensure that all the team members are committed to achieving it
- ◇ explain the rules that will govern your behavior and interactions
- ◇ and establish your team's roles and responsibilities.

However, there are other elements that can contribute to strengthening your team's identity: symbols, slogans, myths and ceremonies.

### Team-building activities

One of your main responsibilities is to schedule team-building activities periodically to increase mutual knowledge, trust and team identity.

You will want to remove the team from its normal environment and have them share time together in a setting that allows them to behave more naturally, in more human surroundings.

These types of activities can be informal (such as having lunch or a coffee with another team member) or formal (when you organize a specific activity to achieve a concrete goal).

## 4. Motivate

*When people are motivated, they make extraordinary efforts. A high-performance team consists of motivated people.*

When people are motivated, they make extraordinary efforts. A high-performance team consists of motivated people.

Motivation is the fuel for performance, a factor that you have to work on constantly. To motivate someone, you have to:

- ◇ Discover what motivates them.
- ◇ Use these motivational factors each day: in the way you treat them, how you work with them, how you define their job, how you delegate in them, etc.
- ◇ Acknowledge their work. Especially if the results are outstanding.
- ◇ Reward them for outstanding results.

Never lose sight of the fact that everyone has different motivational factors. Your first challenge is to find out what they are. You can only motivate someone if you



understand exactly what it is that motivates them.

The only way to know what motivates each of your team members is to ask them. With time and observation, you may deduct certain things, but nothing as valuable as what you can learn directly by talking to them about it.

As you discover the factors that motivate each member of the team, you will be able to recognize which of them need recognition, support, challenges, responsibility, changes, etc. This will give you the chance to use such information to motivate them.

### The foundation of motivation

*Without a good environment, all your efforts to motivate your team will be in vain.*

A good environment is essential and without which it will be very difficult for you to motivate your team: it is the foundation on which to build your team's motivation. Without a good environment, all your efforts to motivate your team will be in vain.

You will be able to create a good environment if your team has:

- ◇ Mutual knowledge.
- ◇ Trust.
- ◇ Respect.
- ◇ Good interpersonal relationships.
- ◇ Fluid and transparent communication.
- ◇ Fair and equal treatment.
- ◇ Conflicts are resolved quickly and do not drag on.
- ◇ Good humor.
- ◇ Fun.

These are precisely the benefits obtained by team-building.

Add to your team-building actions by guaranteeing fun in the job. There is a direct correlation between fun at work and productivity, creativity, morale, satisfaction and retention.

How do you motivate your team? Besides the individual factors, there are a series of motivators that affect most people:

- ◇ Sense of achievement.
- ◇ Purpose.
- ◇ Professional and personal progress.
- ◇ Sense of belonging.

- ◇ Challenge.
- ◇ Pride.

## Recognition

Recognition is a constant process for which you, as team leader, are mainly responsible. It is an ongoing effort, not just something you do at the end of a project.

You should recognize effort, headway, good work, results, progress, etc. You need to be constantly on the lookout for reasons to acknowledge the team members. We tend to see the negative aspects, mistakes or things that need improvement and we forget to foster positive conduct.

The people in your team need to understand that you will always tell them what

*You should recognize effort, headway, good work, results, progress, etc. You need to be constantly on the lookout for reasons to acknowledge the team members.*

they are doing well and what they need to improve. Constant feedback ensures continuous team growth and improvement.

Each person is different and therefore requires different kinds of recognition. You should be able to adapt your recognition to each member individually, through the conversations you have had with them about exactly what it is that motivates them.

Recognizing the team is as important as recognizing the individuals. Do not forget to recognize the team's hard work and achievements as well.

Use recognition to set an example, to encourage the conduct you are seeking.

## Reward

Sometimes, recognition alone is not enough. People are grateful for recognition, but at times, when praise and appreciation are repeated over and over again without granting any personal benefit, they lose their motivating effect.

When achievements are outstanding and/or very frequent, you will need to reinforce your recognition with some type of reward.

Rewards will encourage the conduct, attitude and effort you want to foster.

*Fun has a direct and positive effect on team productivity, morale, satisfaction and retention.*



### Fun at work

Fun has a direct and positive effect on team productivity, morale, satisfaction and retention.

Fun achieves the following:

- ◇ Sustainable motivation.
- ◇ Energy.
- ◇ Self-esteem.
- ◇ Enthusiasm.
- ◇ Team spirit and cohesion.
- ◇ Positive attitudes.
- ◇ Relief of stress and strain.
- ◇ Better communication.
- ◇ Fewer conflicts.
- ◇ Relief from boredom and weariness.
- ◇ Empowers creativity.

Sometimes, work is not necessarily fun or exciting. But people can be. The way you work can also be that way. It is basically a matter of attitude.

We can play and have fun while also being serious and professional about our work.

## 5. Develop

Your main role as a leader is to make sure your team has the necessary tools to do their work properly.

Good leaders are at the service of their team (not the other way around). They constantly identify the obstacles that prevent their team from making progress and eliminate them.

You will need to develop people, processes and tools, at the very least.



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### Developing people

In order to be effective, productive and capable of teamwork, people need to develop certain personal skills, such as:

- ◇ Interpersonal communication.
- ◇ Assertiveness.
- ◇ Negotiation and conflict resolution.
- ◇ Time management and personal productivity.
- ◇ Sales techniques.
- ◇ Problem solving.
- ◇ Customer service.
- ◇ Teamwork.
- ◇ Meeting management.
- ◇ Creativity.
- ◇ Empathy.

Not everyone has these skills. These are not taught in schools, high schools or universities... and there is no guarantee they will be learned through experience, either. However, most of these skills are easy to develop: it is a matter of learning a series of very basic techniques and practicing them.

In addition to personal skills, each job requires certain technical skills that you will also have to focus on.

Your role as a leader is precisely to detect the development needs of each member of your team and to ensure they are covered. Be proactive in requesting training for your team.

If you are able to ensure that the people who work with you progress, grow and improve, you will not only increase their motivation, team synergy and performance; you will also achieve degrees of loyalty and commitment that are difficult to obtain by other means.

### Developing processes

Your next task will be to carefully analyze how your team works. You will need to gain perspective by "stepping back" from day-to-day work to watch your team from the side line. You will want to understand how it functions, how it does things, what tasks it performs, what problems it comes across, etc.

You will want to understand your team's work processes. The people in your team are too busy executing and do not have the time to analyze such processes, nor is it their duty to do so. As team leader, that is your duty, as well as finding ways to improve them.

**You should take on the routine task of analyzing and improving your team's work processes.** You will want to improve on these constantly. You are responsible for the continuous improvement of your team.

*You should take on the routine task of analyzing and improving your team's work processes.*

### Developing tools

In addition to the processes, you need to make sure your team has the necessary tools to do their work properly.

Does your team have:

- ◇ clear-cut goals?
- ◇ team rules?
- ◇ a strategy, schedule and priorities?
- ◇ instruments and physical tools?
- ◇ appropriate hardware and software?
- ◇ enough personnel?
- ◇ the necessary budget?
- ◇ proper environmental conditions?
- ◇ personal productivity systems?
- ◇ communication systems?
- ◇ measurement and monitoring systems?

In the event of poor performance in the team, do not assume that the problem lies with them. You are ultimately responsible for that lack of accomplishment. Are the appropriate systems being used? Are the processes adequate? Are the necessary tools available?

### The Pygmalion effect

In Greek mythology, Pygmalion was king of Cyprus and sculpted a statue of a beautiful woman. The statue was so beautiful that he fell in love with it. In answer to his prayers, the goddess Venus brought the statue to life.

We use the term Pygmalion effect to refer to the psychological phenomenon of finding what we expect in objects, situations or people.





What we expect from someone ends up having an effect on our relationship with that person. Whether consciously or unconsciously, that person will perceive what we expect of them. And they will have to respond to those expectations accordingly.

The expectations we have about someone directly affect their results; therefore it is your responsibility to trust in your team and help them develop self-confidence. And you will have to do so constantly.

How?

- ◇ Trust them.
- ◇ Ask them for their opinion and suggestions. Then, use them.
- ◇ Encourage them to be positive. Celebrate achievements and success.
- ◇ Help them to set challenging goals and then to achieve them.
- ◇ Tell them when others have praised them (not only you).

## 6. Empower

### Delegate effectively

Having the time to perform all the tasks entrusted to your team implies the need to delegate.

Delegating means that:

- ◇ You will have more time to perform added-value tasks.
- ◇ You will multiply your capacity to achieve results (through others).
- ◇ You will develop the self-confidence and skills of your team.
- ◇ You will demonstrate your trust in them, motivate them and gain their loyalty.

*Having the time to perform all the tasks entrusted to your team implies the need to delegate.*

Effective delegation requires following certain guidelines, such as: not expecting others to do things how you would do them, explaining the result you expect as precisely as possible, or providing the necessary resources, among others.

### Provide effective feedback

Feedback is your primary management tool. It is how the people in your team will find out what they are doing well and what they are doing poorly. If nobody tells them, how will they know?

Use positive feedback to foster behavior and attitudes that are advantageous for the team and negative feedback to correct those that are not.

From the outset, you should explain to all the team members who are going to receive feedback that it is a working tool and necessary to grease the machinery. Let them know that you will ask them for feedback and provide feedback yourself. They must understand that this is a normal process necessary to improve the team's day-to-day work. It should take place continuously and not only once a year, during the performance assessment interview.

### Conduct effective coaching

Coaching is a very useful way to develop the potential of people and stimulate their performance (empowerment). It is an instrument that helps the members of your team to discover their potential on their own.

A coaching session normally consists in a conversation between the coach and coachee, the purpose of which is to help the coachee to discover solutions by themselves. This is mainly achieved by asking questions that guide coachees to their own conclusions.

The coaching process lasts several sessions, until the desired result is achieved, which can range from a person's long-term development through to correcting specific problems.

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As a leader, you will have to become a coach. Think about having coaching conversations with all your team members.

The keys to coaching are as follows:

- ◇ Create a relationship of mutual trust.
- ◇ Define the problem to be solved or the goals to be achieved.
- ◇ Ensure that the coachee accepts the problem to be solved or the goal to be achieved.
- ◇ Analyze the causes.
- ◇ Explore alternatives.
- ◇ Define an action plan.
- ◇ Ensure that the coachee commits to taking action.
- ◇ Give feedback along the way.

## Communicate effectively

More than anything else, leadership and personal management is a process involving constant communication. Each and every step taken while managing your team is nothing more than communication:

- ◇ Defining goals and rules.
- ◇ Team-building, building mutual trust and knowledge.
- ◇ Motivating and recognizing.

*If you fail to develop your interpersonal communication skills, you will lack the primary instrument required to manage your team.*

- ◇ Developing people.
- ◇ Delegating.
- ◇ Giving and receiving feedback.
- ◇ Coaching.

Communication is an essential component of all these points, without exception. That is why communication is represented by the shell of the Nautilus in the team management model of our video game, Pacific. It is the structure that holds together all other elements of the model.

If you fail to develop your interpersonal communication skills, you will lack the primary instrument required to manage your team. In any event, we are going to summarize some of the basic tools you should master:

### 1. Empathy

You cannot lead them if you do not understand them. And you cannot understand them if you do not walk in their shoes.

To solve conflicts, motivate, improve processes, etc., you have to be able to analyze each situation as perceived by the members of your team.

### 2. Active listening

Nature gave us two ears and one mouth to hear twice as much as we talk. To obtain information, understand and learn, you have to listen.

Studies show that we remember between 25 and 50 percent of what we hear. Good leaders cannot allow themselves the luxury of wasting information, understanding and learning.



### 3. Questions

You will not learn anything new by talking. The only way to understand your team's problems, motivations, concerns, etc. is by asking them.

The questions:

- ◇ These will allow you to discover information that is vital for people management.
- ◇ They are an indispensable instrument to demonstrate empathy and active listening.
- ◇ They are also a magnificent tool for problem-solving and persuading.
- ◇ They show your interest in the other person, as well as respect for their opinions and ideas.

Ask more. Talk less.

### 4. Assertiveness

Assertiveness is the capacity to defend our interests while being friendly, honest and direct, without attacking others. It implies respect for the feelings, needs and opinions of others.

Assertiveness is an attitude midway between two extremes: a passive attitude (not defending your own interests) and an aggressive attitude (attacking the other).

Sometimes being assertive is complicated and implies courage, but it is very important to defend your interests and those of your organization if you are going to manage people, and that you do so assertively.

#### From one leader to another

Learning to lead people is a skill you will never master. Becoming a great leader requires never-ending learning and non-stop improvement. You will have to refresh your knowledge constantly, read books about management and leadership, study the biographies of great historical leaders, watch leaders you admire, always ask the people around you, ask your team for feedback, learn from the endless number of mistakes you will make, etc. And after all that effort, you will still not be perfect and have to continue learning - forever.

*Becoming a great leader requires never-ending learning and non-stop improvement.*

Despite the difficulties, there is no work as satisfying as being able to achieve magnificent results through other people. Very few do it well, but if you put our recommendations into practice, you will start to stand out right away.



[www.game-learn.com](http://www.game-learn.com)