Management:
## My leadership and management approach

The purpose of this document is to outline my approach to leadership and management.

Context

I believe that the most effective leaders are those that take the time to understand the needs and expectations of their team, managers and other stakeholders, and who *design* or *adapt* their approach to deliver the best practical outcomes for all parties. Delivering against this approach then requires situational awareness, flexibility, strategic orientation, consistency and transparency, and balancing sometimes complex personal and institutional expectations and experiences.

I tend to draw a (somewhat arbitrary) distinction between leadership and management, as I've tried to illustrate below:
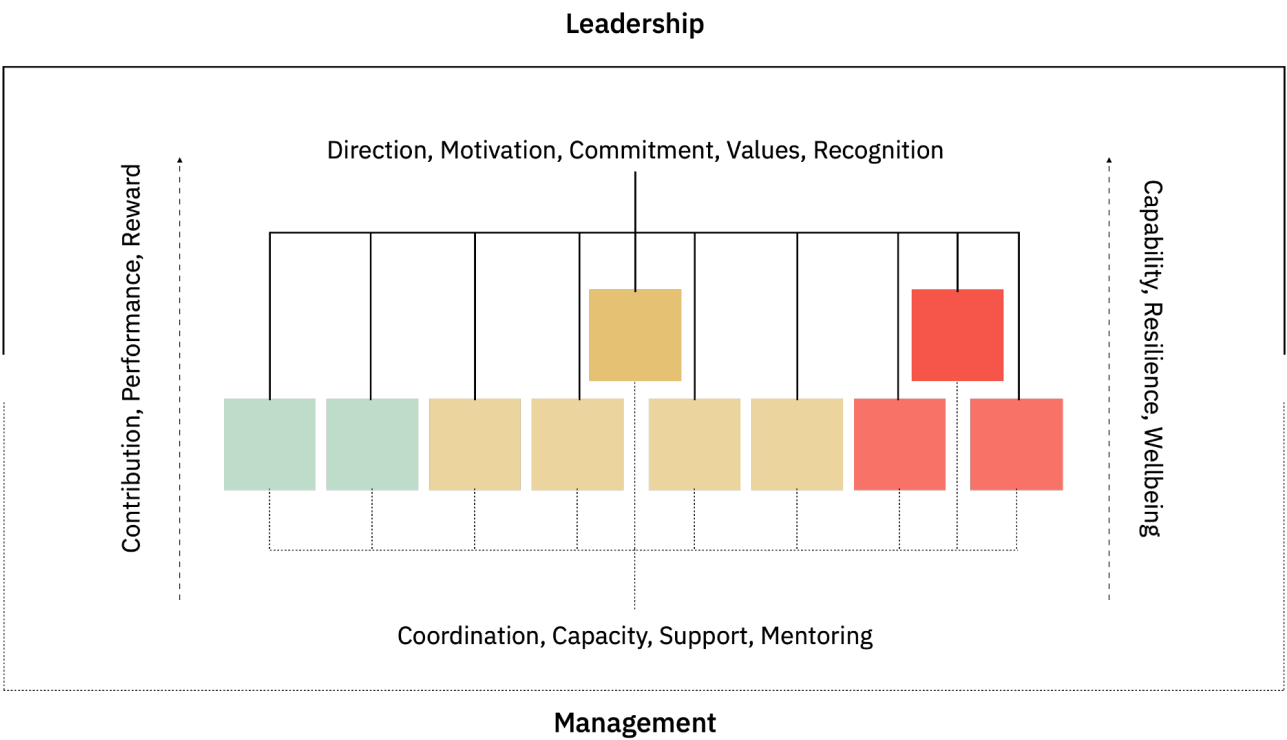
To my mind, the best managers are deeply committed to getting the best *from* and *for* their team, resolving pain points and roadblocks to improve productivity, resilience, wellbeing and the future prospects of team members. A people-centred leadership style is may natural preference in most situations.

I contrast this, somewhat, with the best leaders who, in my view, need to define and promote the achievement of goals, build and sustain motivation and commitment, agree and demonstrate values and integrity, and protect and enhance recognition and reputation.

To be effective and efficient, there must be close coherence between leadership and management approaches and intents, and getting the *dynamics* right, and engaging appropriately and persuasively with influential stakeholders is critical to success.

Sets aggressive goals and standards and drives employees to reach them. Works well with competent and highly motivated team, but can lead to burnout due to high energy demands and stress levels.

Authoritatively provides a direction and goals for the team, with details often left up to team members. This works well where clear direction is needed, but where team members are highly experienced and knowledgeable, this approach may lead to resentment being dictated to.

The leader acts as the ultimate authority and demands immediate compliance with directions, even applying pressure as needed. This can be appropriate in times of crisis or disaster, but is not advisable in healthy situations.

A positive reinforcement and morale building approach. Praise and encouragement, and refraining from criticism or reprimand is preferred. The goal is to foster team bonding and connectedness, along with a sense of belonging. This approach works best in times of stress and trauma or when trust needs to be rebuilt. It is not likely to be sufficient as a long-term or exclusive strategy.

The leader intentionally involves followers in the decision-making process by seeking their opinion and allowing them a voice in the final decision. This works well when the leader is in need of guidance and/or the employees are highly qualified to contribute and there are not strenuous time constraints that require quick decisions.

The leader focuses on helping individual employees build their skills and develop their talents. This approach works best when employees are receptive to guidance and willing to hear about their weaknesses and where they need to improve.

Pacesetting Leader · Authoritative Leader · Coercive Leader · Affiliative Leader · Democratic Leader · Coaching Leader · Goleman's Model of Situational Leadership

Teams develop and circumstances changes. Leadership and management approaches need to evolve, reflecting changing needs, team dynamics and capabilities. Further, I've found that adopting a single 'style' or approach across a team can be much less efficient than negotiating specific approaches with individual team members or groups. When done effectively, this can provide the greatest opportunities for individuals to grow, without placing undue limitations or expectations on others.

Further reading

- "Mastering Leadership - An Integrated Framework for Breakthrough Performance and Extraordinary Business Results", Robert J. Anderson and William A. Adams.

- "Learning to Lead: The Journey to Leading Yourself, Leading Others, and Leading an Organization", Ron Williams with Karl Weber.

- "Developing the Leader Within You 2.0" and "Leadershift", both by John C. Maxwell.