

BART

Boundaries
Authority
Responsibilities
Tasks

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THE WORK OF LEADERSHIP

Understanding Your Boundaries, Authority, Responsibilities, and Tasks

Leadership is hard to define and even harder to execute. Often, “leadership” means different things to different people in different situations. As a result, it is important that we have a helpful, transferable framework by which we can accomplish the work of leadership, regardless the circumstances.

In attempting to create a workable framework for leadership, think of BART: Boundaries, Authority, Responsibilities, and Tasks.

Boundaries:

Creating and establishing boundaries for your work is an important first step for determining exactly what you are to accomplish. Defining your interests and your influence will help you, and your work group, know when to forge ahead, and when to seek input and/or permission.

Key Questions:

- What is the scope of the job?
- What is the scope of influence for the job?
- When do you have to ask for permission?
- What can you accomplish without asking anyone?

Authority:

Authority is often defined as the right to do the work in service to the task. Understanding your individual authority and the authority within the group will allow you to understand chain of command issues such as who reports to whom, what can you ask someone else to do, and what can others ask from you. Lacking clear authority, groups tend to move into confusion and their assigned tasks take extra effort to accomplish, if they are accomplished at all.

Key Questions:

- Who reports to you?
- Who do you report to?
- What authority do you have over these people?
- Can you fire/hire independently?

Responsibilities:

Moving further into the work of leadership, understanding your responsibilities, and those of your coworkers, will help you define and execute your Task. Clearly defining your own future efforts in service to the task will free you to devote your energies to action, instead of continually guessing where you fit. The more your responsibilities are delineated, the easier it is for other members to rely and delegate effectively, based on expertise.

Key Questions:

- What is the content of the work to be done?
- At the end of each week/month/year, what should you be focused on?
- What should you be accomplishing?

Tasks:

Finally, the issue of task is the concrete set of items for you to accomplish, the end toward which your efforts are directed. Often, people seek to understand and accomplish the task at hand, while skipping through the previous steps above. And while the task, or the work product, may ultimately be what you and your group is judged on, the process of defining Boundaries, Authority, and Responsibilities will free you to create and collaborate in accomplishing the Task.

Key Questions:

- What is the task to be accomplished?
- What are the steps you take to accomplish your responsibilities?
- Can you list the actions steps for your job?
- Describe the processes you take to complete your responsibilities.

Works cited:

Hayden, C. & Molenkamp, R. (2002). Tavistock Primer II. Published from The A.K. Rice Institute for the Study of Social Systems. Jupiter, FL.