



Leadership Fundamentals I

An Online Continuing Education Course for Engineers

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Leadership Fundamentals I

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COURSE AUTHOR'S COMMENTS

My professional background is in Human Resources – specifically Employee Training and Development.

I spent a lot of years working at an international engineering design-build company developing leadership talent to support our desire to grow the company into new markets with bigger clients and commensurate projects. After retiring, I thought it would be helpful to share some of that experience with other engineers on this website.

The concept of “leadership” is so broad and can include so many concepts that it nearly defies attempts to capture it in a 4-pdh course document. In an attempt to get my focus on a few specific topics (after all, I had many years’ experience teaching dozens of them and it was difficult to prioritize them) I thought I would see what the much-lauded concept of Artificial Intelligence (AI) could come up with.

So I did a quick look asking GROK on X.com a simple question, “*What topics should I include in a basic leadership course*” and received this response:

A topic called "Leadership Fundamentals" should cover the essential concepts, skills, and principles that form the foundation of effective leadership. These topics should be broad enough to apply across various contexts—whether in business, community settings, or personal development—while being specific enough to provide actionable insights.

Based on widely recognized leadership frameworks and practical applications, here’s a breakdown of key topics to include:

1. Vision and Goal Setting

- Defining a clear, inspiring vision.
- Setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals.
- Aligning individual and team objectives with a broader purpose.

2. Communication Skills

- Active listening and empathy.
- Clear and persuasive verbal and written communication.

- Adapting communication styles to different audiences.

3. Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

- Self-awareness: Understanding personal strengths, weaknesses, and triggers.
- Self-regulation: Managing emotions and impulses effectively.
- Social skills: Building rapport and resolving conflicts.

4. Decision-Making and Problem-Solving

- Analytical thinking and evaluating options.
- Balancing risks and rewards.
- Involving teams in collaborative decision-making.

5. Team Building and Motivation

- Fostering trust and collaboration within a team.
- Recognizing and leveraging individual strengths.
- Techniques for inspiring and sustaining motivation (e.g., intrinsic vs. extrinsic rewards).

6. Adaptability and Resilience

- Navigating change and uncertainty.
- Overcoming setbacks and maintaining focus under pressure.
- Encouraging a growth mindset in oneself and others.

7. Ethics and Integrity

- Leading by example with honesty and transparency.
- Making ethical decisions in challenging situations.
- Building a culture of accountability and fairness.

8. Influence and Persuasion

- Understanding power dynamics and authority.
- Building credibility and trust to inspire action.
- Techniques for negotiating and gaining buy-in.

9. Delegation and Empowerment

- Assigning tasks effectively based on team capabilities.
- Providing autonomy while maintaining oversight.
- Developing others through mentorship and growth opportunities.

10. Time Management and Prioritization

- Focusing on high-impact activities and avoiding burnout.
- Setting boundaries and delegating non-essential tasks.
- Using tools and strategies to enhance productivity.

Apparently there really is something special with AI because it **anticipated my next question by including it in its response.**

Why These Topics?

These topics collectively address the core competencies of leadership: guiding direction (vision), managing relationships (communication, EQ, influence), driving results (decision-making, delegation), and maintaining stability (adaptability, ethics). They're grounded in both theory—like Daniel Goleman's work on emotional intelligence or John Maxwell's leadership principles—and real-world practice, ensuring a balance of conceptual understanding and practical application.

Structuring the Topic

You could organize "Leadership Fundamentals" into three thematic pillars for clarity:

- **Personal Leadership:** Vision, EQ, ethics, adaptability, time management.
- **Relational Leadership:** Communication, influence, team building, motivation.
- **Executional Leadership:** Decision-making, delegation, problem-solving.

This structure helps learners progress from self-mastery to leading others and achieving outcomes, making it a comprehensive foundation for leadership development.

Certainly, this is a very impressive and comprehensive response from a non-human source.

However, before exploring any of these possible sub-topics available, there is something the machine missed that provides the foundation for any aspect of leadership – **a fundamental understanding of the legal obligations that await any new leader.** (I have a course on this website, *Civil Behavior in the Workplace – A Leader’s Perspective*, that goes into much more into the legal world of a new leader. While it is not meant to provide legal advice, it will help a new leader recognize potentially dangerous situations and seek appropriate help.)

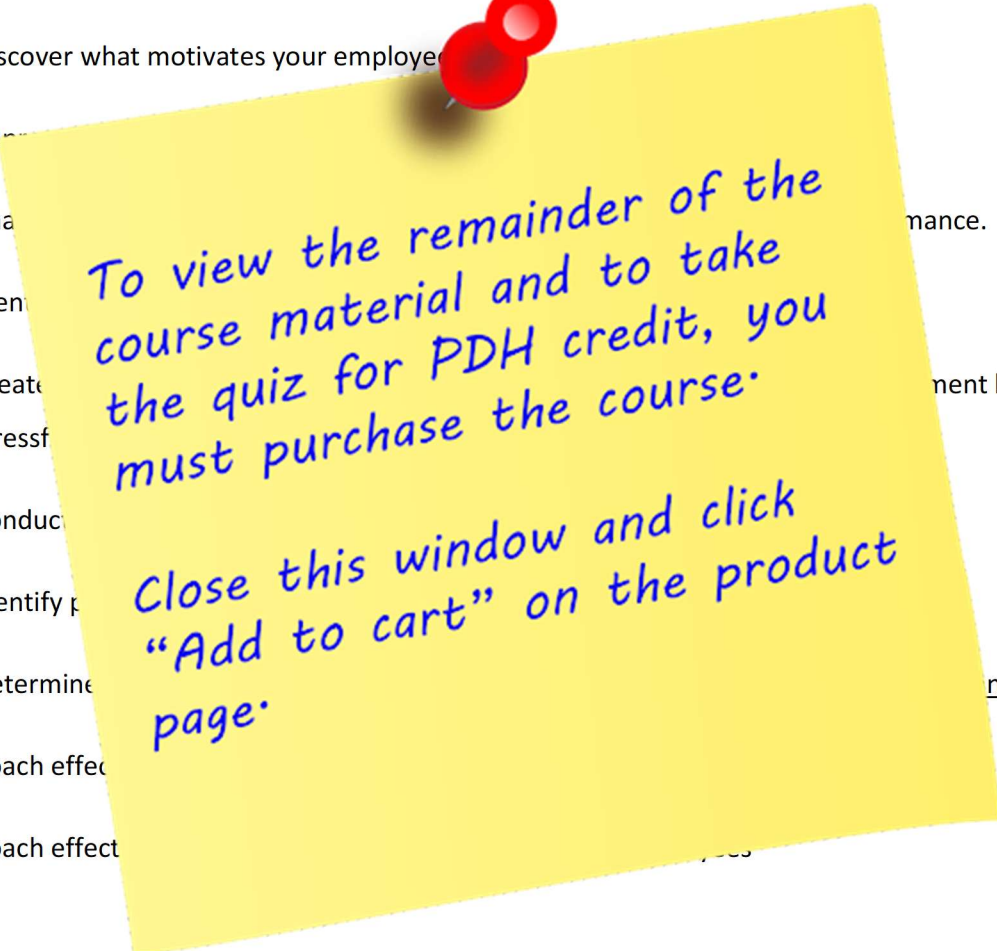
So I decided that I will start with the least a new leader needs to know regarding legal obligations and then touch on motivating employees. Also, we look at the importance of working-level knowledge – *the Ignorance Iceberg* – and coaching for desired results. Finally, we will look at how to identify, measure, and create effective performance goals for objective and subjective topics.

I do not pretend that these are the best few topics but they will get you started in the right direction.

COURSE DELIVERABLES

If you are a supervisor or manager taking this course, you will learn how to:

- Avoid potential legal problems based on your employee's behavior
- Explain how a leader or their employer can reduce the potential of financial penalties in civil litigation situations.
- Discover what motivates your employee
- Improve
- Change
- Identify
- Create
- Stressful
- Conduct
- Identify
- Determine
- Coach effective
- Coach effective



To view the remainder of the course material and to take the quiz for PDH credit, you must purchase the course.

Close this window and click "Add to cart" on the product page.

If you are the manager of someone who has taken this course, we encourage you to:

- Discuss with the participant how he or she will implement the skills taught
- Ask how you can help him or her practice more of these skills