



Western Cape
Government



Leadership Philosophy:

“People aligned with purpose and connected by integrity.”

1. OVERVIEW

The Western Cape Government (WCG) is dedicated to achieving leadership excellence. Leadership Excellence is an important element of the WCG People Management Strategy and therefore, all leaders have a responsibility to help align the organisational culture to the vision. We believe that people are central to value creation (what is important to us, which reflects our needs) and leaders create the culture (and are the principal drivers of performance in organisations). The WCG is therefore committed to empowering our leaders and building internal leadership capability. This is achieved by creating an awareness of the important role leadership plays in the success of the organisation and by igniting a desire among leaders to lead. To ignite this desire and support from leaders on their leadership journey, the WCG ensures that they have the knowledge, skills and ability necessary to perform their role well. Furthermore, exemplary leadership does not go unnoticed but is rather reinforced by means of sufficient recognition.

Developing a Leadership Philosophy for the WCG is an exciting and innovative way to empower our leaders and connect with our core values as an organisation. The culture of an organisation or any group of individuals is a reflection of the values, beliefs and behaviours of leaders present and leaders past. Therefore, in the provision of the Leadership Philosophy, the core values are considered:



Caring



Competence



Accountability



Integrity



Innovation



Responsiveness

The connection with our core values makes it easier to understand the responsibilities of leaders. Furthermore, a values-aligned leadership philosophy will help to inspire consistent high performance and foster positive relationships between leaders and their teams.

2. WHAT IS LEADERSHIP AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

According to Barrett (1998) “leader is a label we give to an individual who holds a vision and courageously pursues that vision in such a way that it resonates with the psyche of people”. Leadership can be defined as “a process of influence, referring to the leader’s ability to influence thoughts, feelings and actions of others, resulting in changes within them that would probably not have occurred without the influence of the leader” (WorldsView Academy, p.12. 2009). It is therefore ultimately the ability to influence and recognise one’s sphere of influence. The impact of a leader’s influence will greatly affect the way the organisation will respond and perform.

Over time the depiction of leadership has created a number of leadership myths, which this Leadership Philosophy aims to demystify, correct and clarify. These myths includes the perception that:

- *“Leadership is a rare skill, difficult to find in people.”*
- *“Leaders are born, not made.”*
- *“Leaders must be charismatic.”*
- *“Leadership is a rank or position at the top of the organisation.”*
- *“Leadership comes with age.”*

3. WHO DO WE SEE AS LEADERS?

When referring to leaders within the WCG, ***it does not only refer to those who hold certain positions*** (i.e. Senior Managers, Middle Managers or Supervisors), but **every individual** who chooses to influence or lead themselves or others. Rarely are individuals willing to take leadership opportunities because it involves on-going decision-making that requires caring about others and sharing a vision that assist both the leader and follower to a better future. ***The choice to lead*** may be better encouraged by highlighting what is in it for the person willing to take up the leadership opportunity.

Furthermore, leaders need to make the ***choice to further develop their capabilities***, as leadership development is a life-long journey that is challenging and requires a holistic commitment. In addition, there is a clear distinction between Leadership and Management. Management entails operational tasks (i.e. planning, budgeting, organising, controlling and problem-solving). Leadership entails a more strategic focus (i.e. establishing direction, aligning people, motivating and inspiring others). Ideally in the WCG, both ***strong leadership and strong management are required*** to achieve organisational effectiveness.

4. WHAT IS A LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY?

A philosophy is “a theory or attitude held by a person or organization that acts as a guiding principle for behaviour” (Mertz, 2014). ***A leadership philosophy therefore encompasses the theories, attitude and principles guiding a leader’s actions, behaviours and thoughts.*** It is how leaders see themselves and it is influenced by both internal and external forces.

5. WHY IS HAVING A LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY IMPORTANT?

Having a clear philosophy for leading within the WCG has the potential of improving leadership performance by specifying the skills and behaviours required by a leader, inspiring consistency in behaviour and fostering collaborative relationships. These concepts are elaborated on below:

- ***Defining the WCG Leadership Profile***

Specifying the skills and behaviours required by a leader may assist leaders in anchoring their behaviour to ensure that they are not easily influenced by negative situations or temptations.

- ***Inspiring Consistency***

A leadership philosophy provides the guiding principles required to lead consistently, gaining the trust and respect of others.

- ***Fostering Collaboration***

An important part of leading is to build positive, meaningful relationships in order to get results. A solid leadership philosophy will guide leaders in their efforts to influence and work collaboratively with others to achieve these results (Mertz, 2014).

6. WHAT DOES THE WCG LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY ENTAIL?



Leaders within the WCG:

Are exemplars of the WCG's core values;

- **Caring:** To care for those we serve and work with.
- **Competence:** The ability and capacity to do the job appointed to do.
- **Accountability:** We take responsibility.
- **Integrity:** To be honest and do the right thing.
- **Innovation:** To be open to new ideas and develop creative solutions to challenges in a resourceful way.
- **Responsiveness:** To serve the needs of our citizens and colleagues.

Provide direction and purpose, by:

- Communicating the WCG vision and team mission persuasively and repeatedly.
- Ensuring that colleagues understand the WCG vision and team mission.
- Clearly communicating how the WCG intends to achieve this vision.

Act with integrity by:

- Creating an ethical work environment.
- Seeking the truth and doing the right things in the right way when making decisions.
- Being reliable and trustworthy and behaving consistently in word and in action.
- Acting with integrity at all levels in all instances, with zero tolerance for corruption.

Apply and support innovative thinking, by:

- Adapting our thinking or approach to the requirements of the situation
- Fostering an environment of openness to change and tolerance for disruptive innovation

- Applying innovative thinking to ensure that we deliver the best possible service to citizens

Lead with courage, by:

- Demonstrating bold but reasoned judgment.
- Displaying an assertive but reflective disposition.

Empower and support those they lead, by:

- Leading authentically and consistently.
- Respecting the feelings of others and treating them fairly (caring).
- Coaching and mentoring colleagues and ensuring that they have access to these opportunities.
- Providing the necessary learning and development opportunities.
- Being accessible and creating opportunities for colleagues to provide open and honest feedback.

Recognise and reward good performance, by:

- Recognizing the good work of team members who make success possible.
- Expressing gratitude.
- Being fair minded when giving recognition to or rewarding any employee.

Encourage collaboration, open communication and transparency, through:

- Encouraging and creating a co-operative culture.
- Ensuring that a common purpose / understanding exist within and across teams.
- Openly and transparently sharing information where possible.
- Foster and support healthy, professional interpersonal relationships between people.

Accept accountability and hold others accountable, by:

- Having a clear understanding of the vision, mission, strategic objectives, roles, delegations and responsibilities.
- Delivering on outcomes and targets with quality, on budget and in time.
- Holding each other accountable as public servants and trust each other to deliver
- Individually take responsibility and ownership for our work, actions and decisions.

7. CONCLUSION

The benefits of institutionalising a leadership philosophy are that it provides leaders with an enhanced understanding of leadership as a concept in a WCG context. The leadership philosophy clearly articulates the expected behaviours and the standard leadership efforts required.

Furthermore, the importance of leadership buy-in and support in adopting the leadership philosophy is essential to achieve the desired culture change.



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