

SUPERVISION, MANAGEMENT, AND LEADERSHIP EDUCATION FRAMEWORKS





SUPERVISION, MANAGEMENT, AND LEADERSHIP EDUCATION FRAMEWORKS

DEVELOPED BY THE APWA LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Background

As an organization, APWA has long provided supervision, management, and leadership resources to its membership. APWA's most successful programs, Public Works Institutes and the Emerging Leaders Academy, each develop competencies in public works professionals regarding supervision, management, and/or leadership. Other areas within APWA that address supervision, management, and leadership education needs include conference education sessions, a monthly Leadership and Management *APWA Reporter* series, webinars, and Click, Listen & Learn programs. Additionally, APWA's Leadership and Management Committee is historically one of the most prolific integrated strategy committees.

While there is much demand for education on supervision, management, and leadership within APWA, the organization has no single education framework to support the membership. The topics of supervision, management, and leadership, from definition to concept to practical application, are largely dependent on who is doing the talking, with each contributor providing their own definition and interpretation. There is no universal definition of, or language around, these concepts, nor a common understanding of what encompasses these areas within APWA education.

Purpose

The purpose of developing frameworks for each of these topics is to establish a common language and understanding as to what supervision, management, and leadership are and what they entail, ensuring consistency in concept throughout APWA resources and education. Additionally, these frameworks provide a guide for identifying educational needs in these areas.

Function/Practice vs. Role

These frameworks treat supervision and management as a function and leadership as a practice, rather than discussing them as roles. For example, supervisors also need to employ leadership practices and management functions to be successful. Additionally, supervisor responsibilities may differ slightly from agency to agency and perhaps from department to department, but the function of supervision will be consistent across public works as a profession. This allows for a cleaner and clearer understanding of what these topics universally entail in public works.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

APWA SUPERVISION FRAMEWORK	5
APWA MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK	7
APWA LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK	9

APWA SUPERVISION FRAMEWORK

DEFINITION

Supervision is the process of overseeing and guiding the work of others to ensure tasks are completed effectively and according to established standards.

ASSUMPTIONS

This framework looks at supervision through the lens of functions and responsibilities, rather than roles or positions. This influences what is and what is not incorporated into this framework document.

- Supervision is a responsibility within one's job description, and the functions of supervision outlined below are the actions and responsibilities one must do in order to supervise staff in public works.
- Individuals in a supervisory role likely have responsibilities that entail both management functions and leadership practices. So, if education around the role of a supervisor is being created, this framework information, along with pieces of the management framework and leadership framework, will likely be included.
- Supervisors, in order to be successful, should incorporate leadership practices.
- Most managers are also supervisors and, in addition to exercising management functions, will require supervision functions.

SUGGESTED TOPIC CONCEPTS

The list of suggested topic concepts is provided for your convenience. Program administrators and instructors are encouraged to use them as they see fit or to customize the concepts based on the identified participant needs, public works specific challenges and structures, and the instructor's perspective of the topic.

FOUR FUNCTIONS OF SUPERVISION

Workforce Engagement (1:1 Supervision)

This function focuses on the one-to-one connection between the supervisor and the person being supervised. It starts on day one and continues to develop from there. It encompasses recruitment, through the hiring process, to the employee experience. This function should focus on setting clear expectations and accountability, onboarding, and identifying current skills and knowledge, as well as investing in the employee's growth and development.

Topics that fall into this category:

- One-to-one meetings
- Employee recognition
- Employee accountability
- Encouraging and receiving feedback
- Guiding employee growth

Enforcing Standards

The supervisor is the front line within the agency to enforce standards, policies, and expectations both in the work performed and in how the employee conducts themselves in the workplace. This function couples performance with safety and risk management, both in keeping the employee safe on the job and mitigating agency risk and liability while completing the work. This function highlights the importance of accountability to agency standards and policies, ensuring equity among employees.

Topics that fall into this category:

- Enforcing safety measures and risk management practices
- Enforcing adherence to policies and procedures

Documentation

This function focuses on the various work documentation required as a matter of process and procedure, such as inspection forms, work order requests, etc., or as a part of employment, such as performance reviews, performance improvement plans, and employee discipline measures. The supervisor should understand the importance and role of each document as well as what the agency requires. This function also encompasses formal and informal communication between the supervisor and employee, highlighting the critical role communication plays in this supervisory function.

Topics that fall into this category:

- Knowing when to document and the process for documenting
- Familiarity with and usage of communication methods for documenting
- Knowledge of documentation saving and retention protocol

Assigning

The assigning function is where the work gets done. The function encompasses assigning personnel, time, and monetary resources for the work the team is responsible for completing. One must thoroughly understand the work to be performed, the employee's capabilities, and the resources required to accomplish it. This function helps set employee priorities and ensures the agency's work is successfully completed within identified constraints.

Topics that fall into this category:

- Project management
- Prioritizing projects and meeting goals
- Contract management
- Budgeting and procurement acumen

APWA MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

DEFINITION

Management is the function of overseeing the processes related to getting work done within an organization, program, or project to achieve the desired outcome. Rather than focusing on individuals and teams, management is the art and science of administering the organization's resources.

ASSUMPTIONS

- Management is a responsibility within one's job description, and the functions of management outlined below are the actions and responsibilities one must perform.
- Managers, as a position or role, likely have responsibilities that entail both management functions and leadership practices. So, if education around the role of a manager is being created, this framework information, along with pieces of the leadership framework, will likely be included.
- Managers, to be successful, should incorporate leadership practices.

FIVE FUNCTIONS OF MANAGEMENT

Planning

Planning is a core function in management, particularly for public works professionals. It serves as the foundation for achieving an organization's mission and vision while using resources efficiently. Effective planning ensures alignment with long-term objectives, strategic goals, and available resources, providing clarity in day-to-day operations and setting a clear course of action. It fosters organizational growth by guiding decisions and preparing for potential challenges. The most basic of plans is the budget, required of every organization. Where resources are allocated in the budget is the best way to determine an organization's priorities.

Topics that fall into this category:

- Strategic thinking and planning
- Knowledge of external factors such as regulatory processes
- Awareness of impacts on the public and public engagement

Organizing

The process of organizing work, resources, and staffing to align with the organizational, program, and/or project needs is central to ensuring work can occur as effectively and efficiently as possible. Usually captured on an org chart, the manager must answer the questions, "who does what," and "who reports to whom" for their area of responsibility.

Scheduling and Delegating

Scheduling work—that is, determining who will do what and when—is a core function of management. The process involves deciding when tasks should occur, how long they will take, the order in which they should be completed, and who will be responsible for carrying them out. This structured planning is central to effective time and resource management. Similarly, delegating authority and responsibility empowers team members to act on the manager’s behalf, fostering accountability, developing skills, and ensuring tasks are carried out efficiently and effectively.

Topics that fall into this category:

- Project management
- Balancing competing priorities and projects
- Communicating responsibilities
- Accountability practices, including check-ins and follow-up

Controlling and Improving

Controlling and improving work group processes are fundamental functions of management to ensure the outcomes match the expectations established during planning. Managers must monitor and evaluate what goes on, setting goals and measuring performance. Sometimes even a seemingly simple process involves many steps, many people, and even many agencies or offices.

Topics that fall into this category:

- Creating project benchmarks
- Building in flexibility where it makes sense for deadlines and deliverables
- Seeking input and feedback throughout the project
- Debrief and evaluation on the project and process

Staffing

This function focuses on the processes involved in staffing an organization, program, or project, including recruitment, hiring, selection, onboarding, evaluating, and continued staff growth and development. Deeper work in this function includes workforce planning, analyzing current and future organizational needs, identifying skill and resource gaps, and generating plans to fill those gaps.

Topics that fall into this category:

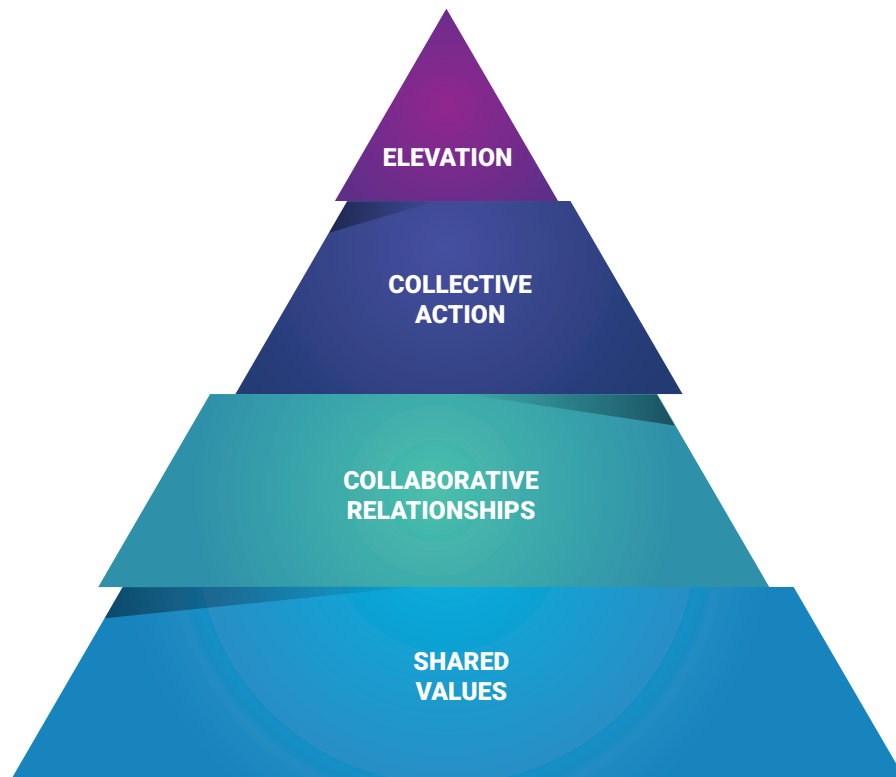
- Workforce planning and development
- Succession planning
- Creating and implementing onboarding processes and practices

APWA LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK

LEADERSHIP DEFINED

1. Leadership is the ability of an individual or a group of individuals to influence and guide followers, creating positive change within an organization, cause, or community.
2. Leadership is a process that occurs when shared values foster collaborative relationships that lead to collective action intended to elevate (or create positive change within) an organization, cause, or community.

Simply, leadership is about bringing out the best in people.



ASSUMPTIONS

- Leadership is not positional. Everyone can and should use the practices of leadership to inspire others and create positive change.
- Leadership is not a solo sport; it depends on relationships with other people.
- Leadership is not about personality; it's about behavior.
- Leadership is a process used by ordinary people to bring about the best in themselves and others.

LEADERSHIP IN THE CONTEXT OF SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT

- One manages resources. One leads people.
- Leadership practices should be used in conjunction with supervision and management functions to ensure success within one's role.

LEADERSHIP DEFINED LEADERSHIP DEFINED

Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, leadership scholars and authors of *The Leadership Challenge: How to Make Extraordinary Things Happen in Organizations*, found through their research that leaders at their best consistently demonstrate five key practices. These practices form the foundation of their widely used framework for effective leadership behavior.



The following descriptions of each leadership practice are taken directly from the Leadership Practices Inventory Assessment and the descriptions provided with the assessment documentation.



Modeling the Way

A leader needs a philosophy; a set of high standards by which the organization is measured; a set of values about how employees, colleagues, and customers ought to be treated; and a set of principles that make the organization unique and distinctive.

Leaders also need plans. They need maps to help guide people. Yet complex plans overwhelm people; they stifle action. Instead, leaders lay down milestones and put up signposts. They unravel bureaucratic knots. They create opportunities for small wins, which add up to major victories.

Words and plans are not enough. Leaders stand up for their beliefs. They practice what they preach. They show others by their own example that they live by the values they profess.

What a leader does means more to the team than what the leader says. It is consistency between words and actions that build a leader's credibility.

Leaders set an example and plan small wins.

Topics that fall into this category:

- Building trust, respect, and credibility
- The importance of consistency in words and actions
- Importance of "Doing What You Know You Ought to Do"
- Addressing difficult conversations and situations
- Ethical behavior



Inspiring a Shared Vision

There is no freeway to the future. No paved highway from here to tomorrow. There is only wilderness. Only uncertain terrain. There are no roadmaps. No signposts. So pioneering leaders rely upon a compass and a dream. Leaders look forward to the future. They hold in their minds visions and ideals of what can be. They have a sense of what is uniquely possible if all work together for a common purpose. They are positive about the future, and they passionately believe that people can make a difference.

But visions seen only by the leaders are insufficient to create organized movement. They must get others to see the exciting future possibilities. Leaders breathe life into visions. They communicate their hopes and dreams so that others clearly understand and accept them as their own. They show others how their values and interests will be served by the long-term vision of the future. Leaders are expressive, and they attract followers through warmth and friendship. With strong appeals and quiet persuasion, they develop enthusiastic supporters.

Leaders envision the future and enlist the support of others.

Topics that fall into this category:

- Communication
- Strategic planning
- Hiring practices and annual reviews



Challenging the Process

Challenging the process creates the opportunity for greatness. People do their best when they have the chance to change the way things are. Maintaining the status quo breeds mediocrity. It is only by challenging the process that a leader can elevate and create positive change within a team, organization, and community. Leaders seek and accept challenges that test their abilities. They motivate others to exceed their limits. They look for innovative ways to improve the organization. Leaders shine when there is a tough assignment or a quest for change.

Most innovations do not come from leaders. They come from customers and people who do the work. Leaders listen to advice and counsel from others. They know that good ideas enter the mind through the ears, not the mouth. Leaders experiment and take risks. Since risk-taking involves mistakes and failure, leaders learn to accept the inevitable disappointments and treat them as learning opportunities.

Leaders search for opportunities, experiment, and take risks.

Topics that fall into this category:

- Encouraging innovation and out-of-the-box thinking
- Embracing efficiencies, process changes, and technology
- Developing high but realistic standards
- Fostering a culture of excellence and continuous improvement
- Empowering others
- Active listening
- Risk-taking



Enabling Others to Act

Leaders know they cannot do it alone. It takes teamwork to get extraordinary things done in organizations. Leaders build teams with spirit, trust, and cohesion. They actively involve others in planning and give them discretion to make their own decisions. Leaders make others feel like partners, not hired hands.

Leaders develop collaborative goals and cooperative relationships with colleagues. They are considerate of the needs and interests of others. They know these relationships are the keys that unlock support for their projects. They make sure that when they win, everyone wins. Mutual respect is what sustains extraordinary group efforts. Leaders establish an atmosphere of trust and emotional safety by demonstrating these principles in their actions. Leaders make others feel strong and capable.

Leaders foster collaboration and strengthen others.

Topics that fall into this category:

- Developing ownership within the team
- Empowering team members
- Policies and procedures
- Succession planning
- Talent identification and development
- Professional growth plans
- Team collaboration
- Collaborative and cooperative partnerships



Encouraging the Heart

Getting extraordinary things done in organizations is hard work. The climb to the summit is arduous and steep. Leaders inspire others to continue the quest. They inspire others with courage and hope. Leaders encourage the heart by visibly recognizing people's contributions to the common vision. With a thank-you note, a smile, an award, and public praise, the leader lets others know how much they mean to the organization.

Leaders openly express pride in the accomplishments of their teams. They make a point of telling the rest of the organization about what the teams have achieved. They make people feel like heroes.

Hard work can also be fun work. Celebration is important to a winning team. Leaders find ways to highlight accomplishments, toast the milestones, and take a breather when the going gets tough.

Leaders recognize contributions and celebrate accomplishments.

Topics that fall into this category:

- Employee appreciation and recognition
- Taking care of your people
- Maintaining staff morale
- Developing loyal staff
- Maintaining momentum

WHY KOUZES AND POSNER?

Kouzes and Posner’s leadership theory, as outlined in *The Leadership Challenge*, serves as the foundation for the leadership education described in this framework. Although originally published in 1987 and one of many widely used leadership models, Kouzes and Posner’s theory remains relevant today. APWA considers the theory a strong foundation on which to build leadership education.

Key strengths of Kouzes and Posner’s theory include:

- **Research-based and Universally Applicable:** Grounded in research and proven to be globally universal regardless of race, gender, culture, or ethnicity.
- **Behavior Focused:** This model emphasizes behavior, something individuals can control and develop. It reinforces the idea that leadership is not about who you are, but what you do.
- **Includes Assessment:** This model provides tools to both assess current behavior and identify behaviors one could employ to become a stronger leader.
- **Leadership Regardless of Role:** Consistent with many modern theories, it reinforces that leadership is not tied to formal authority. Anyone can lead, regardless of their position.

Kouzes and Posner’s theory also offers a comprehensive foundation by focusing on core, behavior-based leadership practices that are broadly applicable and flexible enough to incorporate insights from other leadership theories. Because it focuses on behaviors rather than context-specific situations, it can be adapted to different situations and used alongside other leadership models and theories to support a well-rounded approach. In the table below are a few examples:

Theory	Description	How it Fits With Kouzes and Posner
Situational Leadership	Proposes that there is no single “one size fits all” approach to leadership. Instead, effective leaders adapt their style based on the competence and commitment of the individuals or team they are leading. The leader’s role is to assess the situation and adapt accordingly, matching their leadership approach to the needs of their team or individual.	In situational leadership, leaders enable others to act and encourage the heart by understanding and responding to the needs of others, providing intentional support that motivates individuals and celebrates their successes.
Transformational Leadership	This theory emphasizes the leader’s ability to create a shared vision, build trust, and develop strong connections with others. Unlike transactional leaders, who focus on tasks and rewards, transformational leaders aim to elevate individuals and organizations.	Transformational leadership is closely aligned with nearly all of Kouzes and Posner’s practices. A few that stand out include: Transformational leadership encourages leaders to create and communicate a compelling vision of the future to inspire others. In transformational leadership, leaders model strong ethics and responsibility and trust much like “modeling the way.”
Servant Leadership	Leadership approach that emphasizes prioritizing the needs, development, and well-being of others. This philosophy encourages leaders to support and uplift others before focusing on their own personal ambitions or recognition.	Both frameworks see leadership as behavioral and accessible to everyone. Servant leadership “encourages the heart” by asking leaders to build trust and motivate others through listening, employing empathy, and celebrating success.

Finally, Kouzes and Posner's theory allows us to speak about common issues and skill sets in public works within a leadership context, helping members look at the issue or skill through a leadership lens instead of within an employee, organizational, or management context.

References:

Kouzes, James M., and Barry Z. Posner. *The Leadership Challenge: How to Make Extraordinary Things Happen in Organizations*. 6th ed. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2017

[Kouzes and Posner's Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership](#)

[Situational Leadership Model](#)

[Transformational Leadership](#)

[Servant Leadership](#)