Does Cost Team Leadership Matter?

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ICEAA 2021 Workship

Background

- Typical training for cost estimators is technically focused

- There is lots of guidance as to how to create the best cost estimate

- There is very little guidance as to how to be a better cost team leader

- Begs the question - does leadership matter to our cost community?

- If cost team leadership does matter – what are the skills that make someone an effective leader?

Project Oxygen – Do Managers Matter?

- Beginning in 2009 with the Google People and Innovation Lab (PiLab) questioned "Do Managers Matter?"

- Project Oxygen hypothesized that a very flat organizational hierarchy like Google's "of engineers for engineers" was ideal

- Assumed that managerial roles had very little impact on team performance metrics

- To determine if managers matter, they wanted **DATA**
  - see who the highest performing managers were
  - who were the lowest performing
  - whether the manager performance impacts the team

Based on the case study by David A. Garvin for the Harvard Business Review in 2013 highlighting the behavior measurement of Google's management, why managers matter and what the best managers do[1]

Project Oxygen – Do Managers Matter?

Academy on Air: Project Oxygen: Why Managers Matter. (2017, February 2). [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JattR1uoX7g&t=922s

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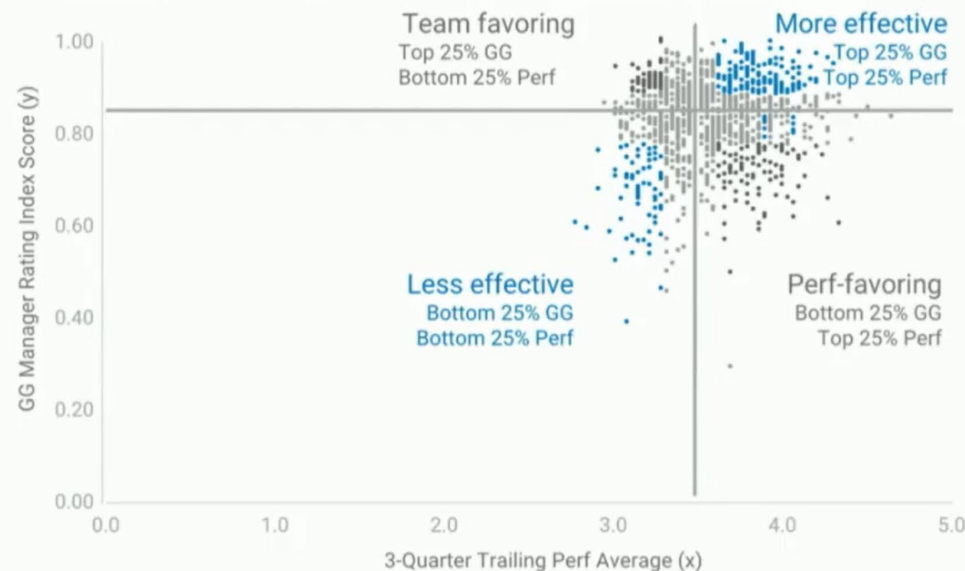
Managers Matters, A LOT!

Google Manager Behaviors

1. Is a good coach
2. Empowers team and does not micromanage
3. Creates an inclusive team environment, showing concern for success and well-being
4. Is productive and results-oriented
5. Is a good communicator — listens and shares information
6. Supports career development and discusses performance
7. Has a clear vision/strategy for the team
8. Has key technical skills to help advise the team
9. Collaborates across Google
10. Is a strong decision maker

re:Work
rework.withgoogle.com

Management Behavior Definitions

1. *Is a good coach* – Agree on development priorities and check in with employee regularly

2. *Empowers the team* – Does not micromanage

3. *Express interest for team personally* – Show your team you care

4. *Is productive and results-oriented* – Focus on priority results and deliverables

5. *Is a good communicator* – Set the stage for two-way dialogue

6. *Support career development* - Help your team grow skills for their professional development

7. *Has a clear vision* – Develop and share your vision for the team

8. *Has the technical skills to advise* – Have the expertise and technical skills to advise team

9. *Collaborates across Google* – Create stronger, more deliberate connections across teams

10. *Is a strong decision maker* - Provide guidance and act swiftly

Let's Do as Google Does

- Plan to replicate Google's study
  - Collect data via an anonymous survey shared with ICEAA members and the cost estimating community
  - Determine if the cost community agrees that team leadership matters
  - Use the ten identified Google Manager Behaviors and establish their ranking in regard to cost team leadership
  - Allow respondents to add additional behaviors for future studes
  - Note: the survey was intentionally designed to be brief to maximize participation
  - Determine if there were any differences in the perceived importance of these behaviors between leaders and non-leaders
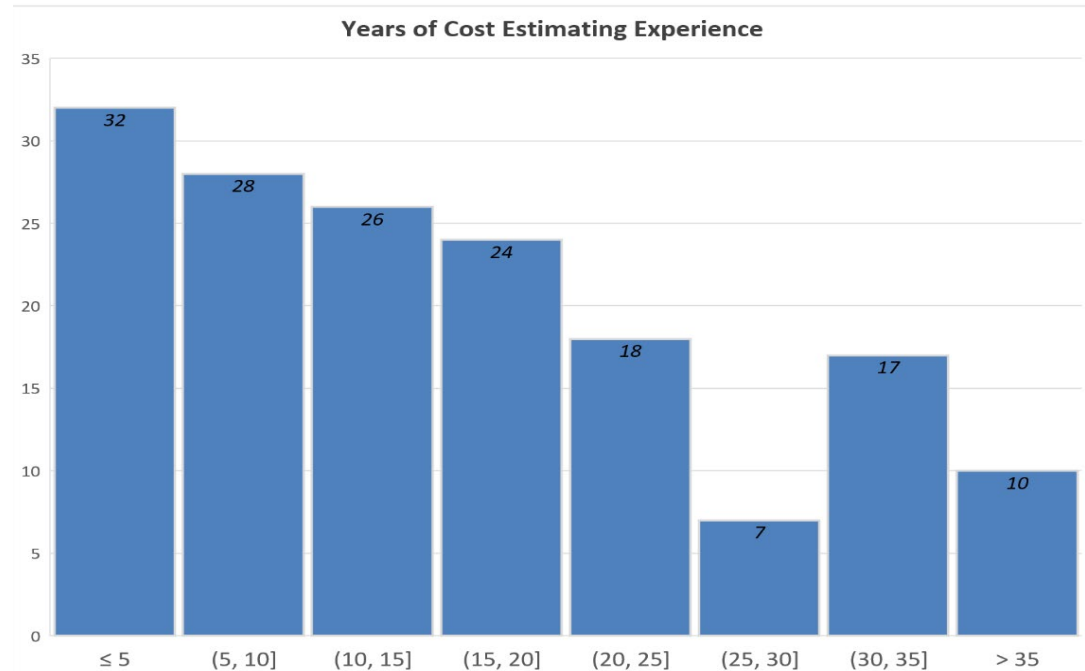
Survey Participants

MCR

163 cost analysts with cost estimating experience ranging from one to 40+ years

Approximately 80% of respondents had more than 5 years of cost estimating experience

46.6% would traditionally be considered "senior cost estimator/analysts" with over 15 years of cost estimating experience

Years of Cost Estimating Experience
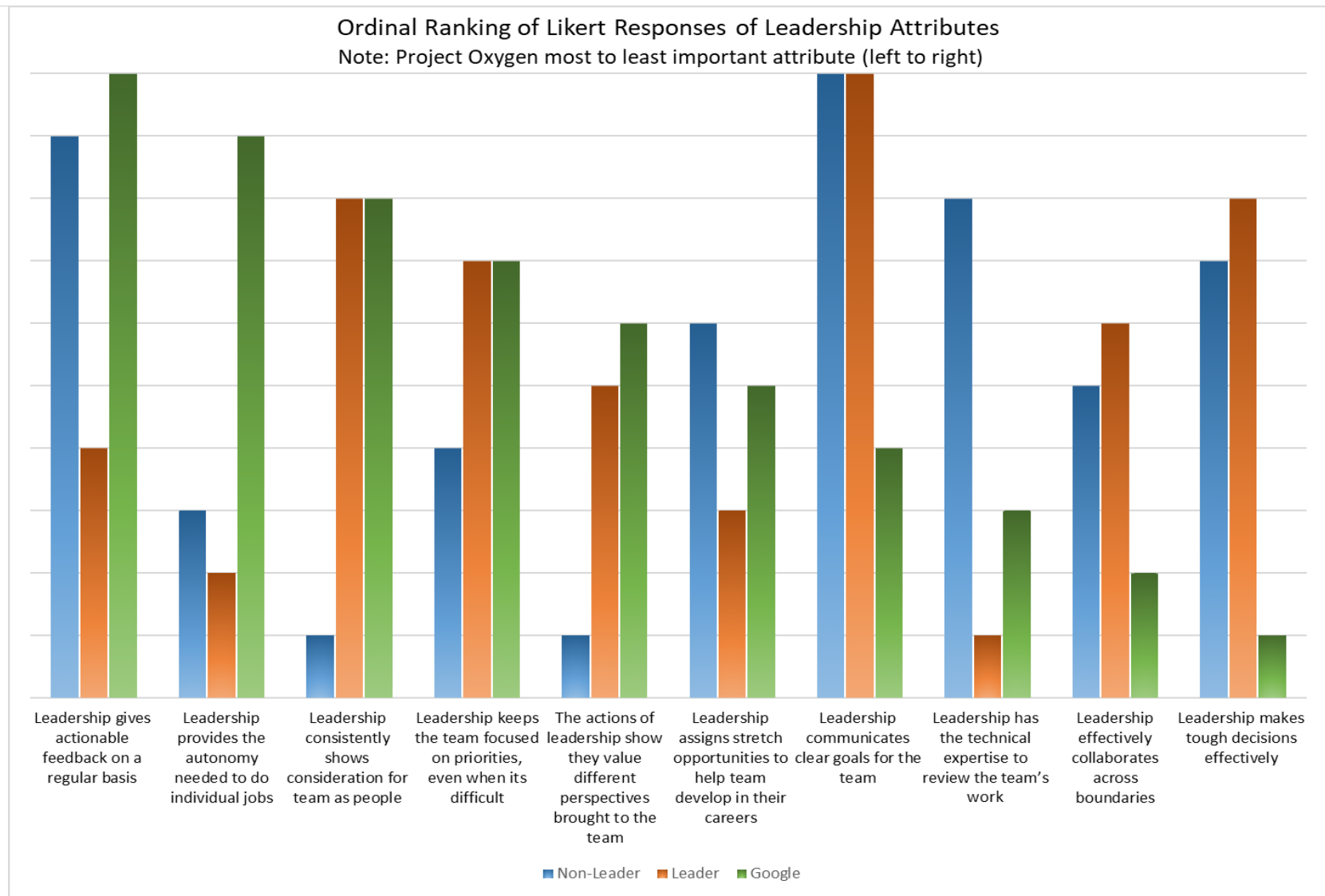
	Yes	No		Yes %	No%
Have you ever served as the leader of a cost team, as in, leading the effort for a cost product with one or more analysts reporting to you?	136	27		83.4%	16.6%
Within your current company/organization are you considered leadership or management?	89	74		54.6%	45.4%

Reactions to Google Attributes

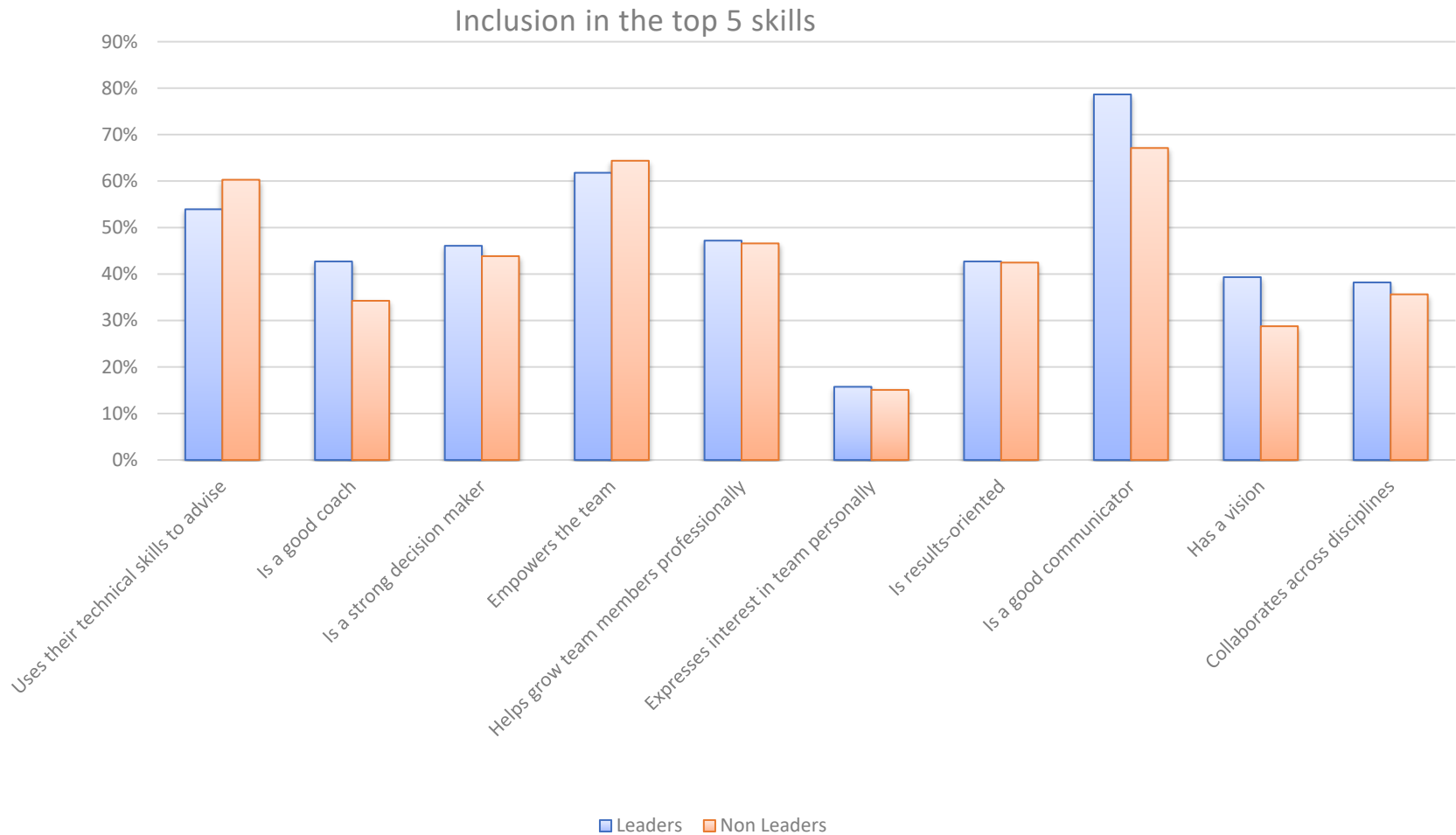|	Non-Leader	Leader
Q1	My team lead assigns stretch opportunities to help me develop in my career.	Leadership assigns stretch opportunities to help team develop in their careers.
Q2	My team lead communicates clear goals for the team.	Leadership communicates clear goals for the team.
Q3	My team lead gives actionable feedback on a regular basis.	Leadership gives actionable feedback on a regular basis.
Q4	My team lead provides the autonomy needed to do individual jobs (i.e., does not get involved in details that should be handled at other levels).	Leadership provides the autonomy needed to do individual jobs (i.e., does not get involved in details that should be handled at other levels).
Q5	My team lead consistently shows consideration for me as a person.	Leadership consistently shows consideration for team as people.
Q6	My team lead keeps the team focused on priorities, even when it's difficult (e.g., declining or deprioritizing other projects).	Leadership keeps the team focused on priorities, even when its difficult (e.g., declining or deprioritizing other projects).
Q7	My team lead has the technical expertise needed to review my work.	Leadership has the technical expertise to review the team's work.
Q8	The actions of my team lead show they value different perspectives brought to the team, even if it is different from their own.	The actions of leadership show they value different perspectives brought to the team, even if it is different from their own.
Q9	My team lead makes tough decisions effectively (e.g., decisions involving multiple teams, competing priorities).	Leadership makes tough decisions effectively (e.g., decisions involving multiple teams, competing priorities).
Q10	My team lead effectively collaborates across boundaries (e.g., team, organizational).	Leadership effectively collaborates across boundaries (e.g., team, organizational).

Leaders and Non-Leaders Compared to Google

Ordinal Ranking of Likert Responses of Leadership Attributes
Note: Project Oxygen most to least important attribute (left to right)

Leadership Attribute Divergence

|	
Q1	Assigns stretch opportunities to help team develop in their careers
Q2	Communicates clear goals for the team
Q3	Gives actionable feedback on a regular basis
Q4	Provides the autonomy needed to do individual jobs
Q5	Shows consideration for team as people
Q6	Keeps team focused on priorities, even when its difficult
Q7	Technical expertise to review the team's work
Q8	Value different perspectives brought to the team
Q9	Makes tough decisions effectively
Q10	Effectively collaborates across boundaries

Leaders were more likely to rank skills as important (1) while non-leaders were much more likely to give neutral or not important (5) responses

Top 5 Most Important Skills

Inclusion in the top 5 skills

Legend: Leaders, Non Leaders

Least and Most Important Skills

Least and Most Important Skills
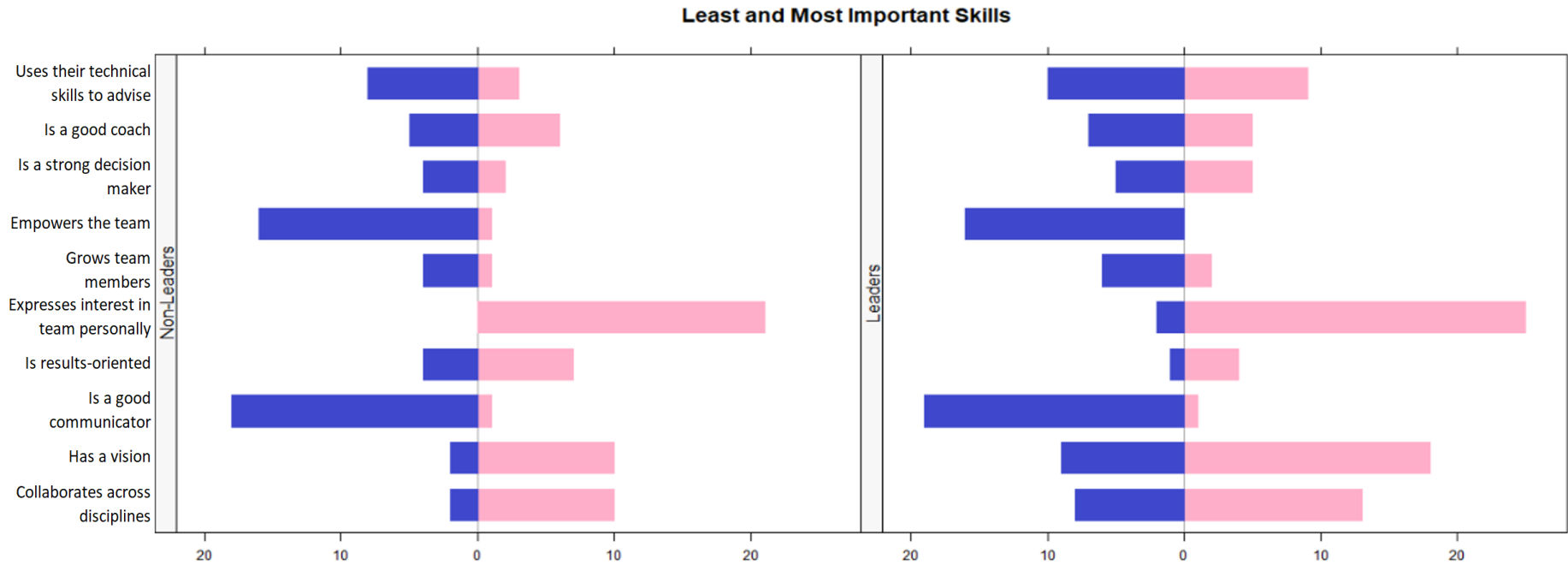
	Non-Leaders		Leaders	
	Most important	Least Important	Most important	Least Important
Uses their technical skills to advise	8	3	10	9
Is a good coach	5	6	7	5
Is a strong decision maker	4	2	5	5
Empowers the team	16	1	16	0
Helps grow team members professionally	4	1	6	2
Expresses interest in team personally	0	21	2	25
Is results-oriented	4	7	1	4
Is a good communicator	18	1	19	1
Has a vision	2	10	9	18
Collaborates across disciplines	2	10	8	13

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Additional skills from the community

"Skills outside of Cost. Cost team leaders who are too narrow into the field are stifling to innovation. Must be progressive and willing to deviate from the "guides" and "training"

What Now?

With <u>all</u> 163 respondents believing a cost team lead's effectiveness has an impact on the cost products, work to be done in future surveys and training

Future studies

- Quantify the relationship between cost product/team metrics to the leader
- All cost organizations and could do their own internal experimentation
- Should have greater ICEAA participation
- Should have greater international participation
- Incorporate the additions from this survey
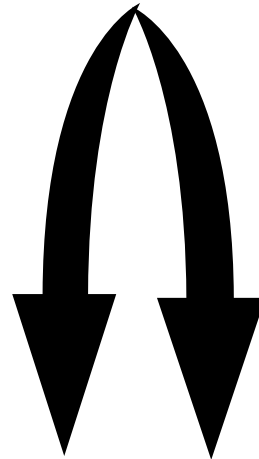
Training

- Should be developed for some of the soft skills
- Self-assessment of these skills
- We know effective communication is important – how to teach it?
- Develop the application of best practices for cost community

References

1.Garvin, D. A., Wagonfeld, A. B., & Kind, L. (2013). Google's Project Oxygen: Do Managers Matter? Harvard Business School publishing corporation.

2.Tran, S. K. (2017). GOOGLE: a reflection of culture, leader, and management. International Journal of Corporate Social Responsibility, 2(1), 2–10. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40991-017-0021-0

3.Kalliamvakou, E., Bird, C., Zimmermann, T., Begel, A., DeLine, R., & German, D. M. (2019). What Makes a Great Manager of Software Engineers? IEEE Transactions on Software Engineering, 45(1), 87–106. https://doi.org/10.1109/tse.2017.2768368

4.Impraise. (2020, October 14). Project Oxygen: 8 ways Google resuscitated management. Impraise. https://www.impraise.com/blog/project-oxygen-8-ways-google-resuscitated-management

5. re:Work. (2021). Re:Work. https://rework.withgoogle.com/

6.Google Got Rid of Its Bosses -- And Then Brought Them Back For These 10 Reasons. (2019, February 6). INC. https://www.inc.com/michael-schneider/google-didnt-always-appreciate-its-managers-now-it-relies-on-them-for-these-10-things.html

7.re:Work - Guide: Set and communicate a team vision. (2021). Re:Work. https://rework.withgoogle.com/guides/managers-set-and-communicate-a-team-vision/steps/introduction/

8.Academy on Air: Project Oxygen: Why Managers Matter. (2017, February 2). [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JattR1uoX7g&t=922s

Additional skills from the community

1. Telling the truth and doing the right thing whether it benefits you or not
2. Ability to handle conflict within the team and ability to guide client
3. Ability to include diverse perspectives
4. Ability to influence and participate in hiring of team
5. Ability to manage to scope and limit scope creep
6. Able to clearly define the requirements of the project
7. Act with personal integrity
8. An understanding of mathematics
9. Approachability. Humility. Brand new analysts have really good ideas, it's important that they have a voice. Also, important to demonstrate that it's OK to not always know the answer, and work together to find one. Being a "strong decider" often means, stubborn and not receptive, so I value the opposite and try to welcome input for the improvement of the team and our processes.
10. At our Cost Department, a CTL is the hardest job. Because we are matrixed to our program offices that have two bosses and a team handed to them. The Captain is demanding time, supervisors has requests and trainees need daily attention. Balancing every need is important and on the job training
11. Be supportive to your team members, make sure they know you have their back
12. Calmness under pressure
13. Candor and trust
14. a skill related to interfacing with the customer or translating things into requirements. I think that's a very important skill
15. Collaboration within the cost team
16. Combination of business and technical savvy
17. Creative problem solving, innovative, exceptional time management, ability to define scope and ask the hard questions of program/technical leadership, and a network of SMEs in all disciplines to provide reach-back support as necessary
18. Empathy
19. Empathy
20. Encourages open minded techniques that allow team members to think outside the box
21. Flexibility Resilience Political Savvy Influencing/Negotiation Integrity/Character
22. Flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances. It is inevitable that the assumptions at the beginning of the estimate are changed and a leader needs to not get frustrated and keep the team from being frustrated or distracted
23. Has a backbone to stand up to pressure to change an estimate
24. Has a clear plan for achieving the team's goals
25. Having experience as a member of a cost team under multiple Cost Team Leads
26. Ownership. A team lead owns the team and the outcomes, both good and bad, of the team
27. Innovation, creative problem solving, critical thinking, curiosity
28. Integrity and Responsibility
29. Know your customer
30. Knows and balances the strengths and weaknesses of the team members
31. Leaders should treat the team with respect
32. Manages time well
33. Mentoring
34. Organized, approachable
35. Planning. The team lead needs to be able to backwards plan and work the plan in order to complete the task at quality an on time.
36. Positive attitude
37. project management
38. Providing top-cover and standing up for their team
39. Remain neutral
40. Sets individual goals for each team member.
41. Skills outside of Cost. Cost team leaders who are too narrow into the field are stifling to innovation. Must be progressive and willing to deviate from the "guides" and "training" which are beyond dated (or even wrong from the start)
42. Strong and productive relationship with the customer
43. Support team members when they fail
44. Teaches
45. team leaders need to know our business
46. Technical expertise is important, but the leadership ability through emotional intelligence is the most important.
47. The ability to effectively multi-task
48. The team leader needs to advocate for the cost team in organizations that do not place high importance or regard on the cost team. I would be happy to discuss in more detail what I have experienced in this regard
49. Transparency
50. Trusting the team to finish the activities and should be able to delegate
51. Well, the ability to communicate is mentioned, but should also include working with the customer to truly understand their goals. This could be part of the "vision" but feels a bit different