Action-Centred Leadership Model – John Adair

Adair's theory approaches leadership from a practical and simple angle by describing what leaders have to do and the actions they need to take. His model is figuratively based on three overlapping circles representing:-

1. Achieve the **task**.

2. Build and develop the **team**.

3. Develop the **individual**.

The three circles overlap because they are mutually dependent, as well as being separately essential to the overall leadership role.

1. The task needs a team because one person alone cannot accomplish it and the team is made up of individuals.
2. If the team needs are not met the task will suffer and the individuals will not be satisfied.
3. If the individual needs are not met the team will suffer and performance of the task will be impaired.

Leadership Functions
Adair lists eight leadership functions that need to be constantly developed and honed to ensure success.
1. Defining the task: Using SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-Constrained) to set a clear objective.
2. Planning: An open minded, positive and creative search for alternatives. Contingencies should be planned for and plans should be tested.
3. Briefing: Team briefings by the leader are a basic function and essential in order to create the right atmosphere, foster teamwork and motivate each individual.
4. Controlling: Leaders need self-control, good control systems in place and effective delegation and monitoring skills in order to get maximum results from minimum resources.
5. Evaluating: Assess consequences, evaluate performance, appraise and train individuals.
6. Motivating: Adair identifies eight basic rules for motivating people in his book Effective Motivation (Guildford: Talbot Adair Press, 1987). Adair also created the 50:50 rule which states that 50% of motivation comes from within a person and 50% from his or her environment and particularly the leadership they encounter.
7. Organising: Good leaders need to be able to organise themselves, their team and their organisation.
8. Setting an example: The best leaders naturally set a good example. If effort needs to be made it will slip and a bad example is noticed more than a good example.

A checklist for achieving the Task:
- ☐ Have you identified the vision or purpose, and direction (define the activity/task) for the group?
- ☐ Have you created an action plan to achieve the task - deliverables, measures, timescales, strategy?
- ☐ Have you identified resources, people, processes, systems and tools? Are they available?
- ☐ Have you established responsibilities, accountabilities and measures, by agreement and delegation?
- ☐ Have you set standards, quality, time and reporting parameters?
- ☐ How will you monitor and evaluate overall performance against plan?
- ☐ How will you report on progress towards the group's aim?
- ☐ How will you review, re-assess, adjust plan, methods and targets as necessary?
- ☐ Will you role model behaviour that sets a high standard?

A checklist for building and developing the Team or Group and meeting their needs:
- ☐ Does the team understand and agree with team goals?
- ☐ Have you established, agreed and communicated standards of performance and behaviour?
- ☐ Have you thought about the style, culture, values (soft skill elements) that you want to establish?
- ☐ Are your team clear about safety standards and the consequences of not following these?
- ☐ How will you monitor and maintain ethics, integrity and focus on priorities and objectives?
- ☐ How will you develop teamwork, cooperation, morale and team spirit?
- ☐ How will you monitor and resolve group conflict, struggles or disagreements promptly?
- ☐ How will you develop the collective maturity and capability of the group to progressively increase group freedom and authority?
- ☐ How will you identify, develop and agree team roles or project-leadership roles within group?
- ☐ How will you facilitate and ensure effective internal and external group communication e.g. let them know organisational changes and issues or feed up issues on behalf of the team?
- ☐ How will you identify and meet collective team training and development needs?
- ☐ Have you though about how you will give feedback to the group on overall progress, and consult with, and seek feedback and input from the group?
- ☐ How will you encourage and develop ideas and innovations?
- ☐ Are you spending sufficient time with your team?

A checklist for developing the Individual and meeting their needs:
- ☐ How well do you understand the team members as individuals - personality, skills, strengths, needs, interests and fears?
- ☐ How do you assist and support individuals in a timely manner with plans, tasks, problems, challenges, highs and lows?
- ☐ Have you identified and agreed appropriate individual responsibilities, expectations and accountabilities?
- ☐ Do you give recognition and praise to individuals; acknowledging their effort and work, and contribution to the team?
- ☐ Do you provide regular informal and formal feedback in face-to-face discussions?
- ☐ How well do you, where appropriate, reward individuals with extra responsibility or opportunities?
- ☐ How do you identify, develop and utilise each individual's capabilities and strengths?
- ☐ How do you develop individual team members, and provide coaching and mentoring?
- ☐ Do you progressively develop individual freedom and authority?