

# THE USEFULNESS OF A CONNECTED LEADERSHIP MODEL FOR SPORT MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS

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## Abstract

### Aim of paper and research questions

This research aims to investigate the usefulness of a connected leadership model for sport organizations. The following research questions were designed: 1) How can professional sport managers successfully make use of the developments of new professionalism (Leijnse, Hulst & Vromans, 2006), the new way of working and managerial leadership? 2) What are the features of a connected managerial leadership model? 3) What are the design principles of an applicable learning environment for professional sport managers 2.0? 4) What are the similarities or differences of connected managerial leadership in traditionally organized sports?

### Literature review

In the last thirty to forty years, the way work was organized has changed so radically that the classic style of command and control for the managing of the production process is not satisfactory anymore. The used management model of hierarchy and control does not fit with the managerial problems which occur (Bijl, 2010). A controversy exists over the differences between leadership and management. Yukl (1989) states that nobody has proposed that managing and leading are equivalent, but the degree of overlap is a point of sharp disagreement. Birkinshaw (2010) defines leadership as a process of social influence concerned with the traits, styles and behaviours of individuals that cause others to follow them. Management is the act of getting people together to accomplish desired goals. According to Birkinshaw (2010) management and leadership are complementary to each other. To achieve necessary organizational changes professional managers often seek their certainties in the rational and planned formal world (structures and rules) while employees express their reactions and sometimes displeasure in emotions in the unconscious informal world (Homan, 2006). Gobillot (2007) appoints this informal world as the real world with authentic behavior while the formal world is

characterized as an unrealistic world of paper. New successful initiatives often start in the informal, real world where individual employees already are experimenting with new working methods while the formal world still is using traditional working methods. An example of this occurrence is the recent introduction of new social media in organizations. Renewals in organizations in the area of social media according to Janssen & Peters (2010) and Baane, Houtkamp and Knotter (2010) are mostly introduced in the formal world in the order of bricks, bytes and behaviour. The initiatives initiated in the real world are self organized and start in order of behaviour, bytes and at last bricks. According to Hoogendoorn en Kuhlmann (2008) constructive change is only possible if the formal world and the informal world are connected. Renewals in organizations are in need of adequate behavior to be effective (Baane, Houtkamp en Knotter, 2010).

To anticipate future developments such as new social media, professional managers in organized sports need to professionalize their work and hereby increase the individual and organizational performance (Hulsebosch & Wagenaar, 2011). One of the developments a professional sport manager could anticipate concerns the principles of new professionalism. New professionalism comprises of activities for permanent organizational renewal. Starting point is on new knowledge focussed behavior and a critical reflective basic attitude towards personal working-method (Leijnse, Hulst & Vromans, 2006). Another development concerns the possibilities of the new way of working. The new way of working consists of the possibilities of time and place independent working, consequently the managing of employees in relation to results, free access of knowledge and information and to work with flexible customized labour relationships (Bijl, 2010).

### Proposed methodology

This research aims to investigate the usefulness a connected leadership model. Literature review will be used to find and analyse the necessary variables to develop the model. Semi-structured interviews with experts (n=10) will be used to critically analyse the used variables and model. Finally the model will be used gaining data from professional sport managers (n=150). The data will be statistically analysed to validate the model. The experts that are engaged come from the field of new professionalism and the field of the new way of working and the field of sport.

#### Possible implications

This paper is part of a broader study which covers an extensive research of professionalism in organized sports. It is hoped that the findings will give more insight in how professional sport managers could anticipate to future developments by connecting people, the outside with the inside world, the formal with the real world and make a connection with individual talent. Possible implication therefore is the need of using a connected leadership model in sports organizations.

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