

# **LEADERSHIP SINS**

## **WORKSHOP GUIDE**



## CONTENTS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES .....	3
INTRODUCTION .....	3
FEATURED VIDEOS .....	3
VIDEO 1 – CONTROL FREAKERY .....	4
VIDEO 2 – AVOIDING CONFLICT .....	5
VIDEO 3 – DITHERING .....	6
VIDEO 4 – BEING LOVED .....	7
VIDEO 5 – THE IMPORTANCE OF SMALL TALK .....	8
VIDEO 6 – VANITY .....	9
LEADERSHIP SINS – PRACTISE .....	10

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Exhibiting any of the classic leadership sins is a sure fire way to alienate your team and lose motivation. This session tackles many of the skills that are required of a leader to motivate individuals and get them working together effectively as a team.

## INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed for a manager or a facilitator to deliver a short workshop featuring videos from the Video Arts Leadership Essentials Series. Each video comes with a series of activities around the following structure:

**LOOK** - watch the video and reflect on the content and message.

**THINK** - activities and questions linking the video to their own experience and workplace.

**REMEMBER** - a summary of the key learning points.

These activities will take about 15 minutes to complete. At the end of this guide is a practical exercise to help bring all of the learning points together.

## FEATURED VIDEOS

- Control freakery (Rachel will breathe when I tell her to breathe!)
- Avoiding conflict (It's fine. It's just...banter)
- Dithering (Don't tell them about the specials board now! I'm wrapping this up!)
- Being loved ('Bezzies forever, love Bad Leader')
- The importance of small talk (But it's boring! There I said it)
- Vanity (I now rule over you all from the fourth floor)

## VIDEO 1 – CONTROL FREAKERY

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

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Empower your team by giving them some autonomy; to plan and manage work, make their own decisions and solve their own problems.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

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Ask the group to think about how leaders can give their team a sense of autonomy, without controlling how the autonomy works.

Build the following points into the discussion:

- **Let go.** Allow the team make decisions on their own. However tempting, don't micro-manage your people over every decision. Learn to let go.
- **Delegate.** Good leaders know how to delegate. To delegate effectively, choose tasks which do not require your personal involvement, then identify the skills in your team and assign tasks appropriately.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

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- A good leader cannot be a control freak.
- Don't feel you have to make all the decisions just because you are the leader.
- Involve your team in important decisions or delegate to them.
- Give your team the space to breathe - a sense of autonomy is a great motivator.

## VIDEO 2 – AVOIDING CONFLICT

### LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

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The best leaders are calm and measured in the face of conflict; they do not shy away from it and deal with it head on.

### THINK (10 minutes discussion)

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Ask the group to think and discuss what the best way to deal with conflict at work is.

Build the following points into the discussion:

- **Address conflict when it happens.** Address conflict immediately before it grows into resentment. If a discussion grows heated during a meeting, do not wait until the next meeting to address the issue. Deal with it now.
- **Discuss both sides.** Even if you are inclined to agree with one side of the conflict, do not make a final judgment until each person has had their say. Ending a discussion without hearing each person out can escalate the problem. Explain the pros and cons of both ideas, so that both people can consider the opposing view.
- **Compromise.** Make compromise a goal: more often than not, points can be combined toward a better idea or solution.

### REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

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- A good leader is not afraid of conflict.
- Tackle conflict swiftly - if you ignore the situation it will only get worse.
- Remain calm and focus on the issues.
- Listen to all sides of the argument, treating both parties with trust and respect.

## VIDEO 3 – DITHERING

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

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Being decisive is something that we'd all like to be, but secretly, most of us are ditherers. Fortunately we can learn to become decisive.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

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What's the best way to avoid dithering on every single decision?

Build the following points into the discussion:

- **Understand the situation.** Know whether the situation requires a quick decision or whether you have time to deliberate.
- **Ask for other opinions.** Get other people's advice to put your decision into perspective.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

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- A good leader is not a ditherer.
- Be prepared to analyse a situation and make a quick decision when the situation demands this.
- Do not use this as an excuse for being autocratic - involve others as needed.
- Be open to modify your decision if better information comes available.

## VIDEO 4 – BEING LOVED

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

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As a leader it should be your goal to be respected; not 'loved' by your team.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

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How can leaders earn the respect of their team?

Build the following points into the discussion:

- **Don't act emotionally: be objective.** It's your job to make decisions that are best for the company even though they might adversely affect your team. Accept that this is one of the challenges of being a leader.
- **Help improve the situation.** Leadership is not about being loved, but it is about respect. Realise that you will often have to make difficult decisions, but you can do the best for your team and maintain respect by helping them think about alternative situations for themselves. Remember, a good leader helps their team through the difficult times too.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

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- A good leader is not desperate to be loved.
- Be prepared to make decisions that provide the best solution to a problem, even if some parties may be adversely affected.
- Accept that you cannot be loved by everybody and that this is one of the challenges of leadership.
- Look to improve the negative effects for adversely affected parties without compromising the decision.

## VIDEO 5 – THE IMPORTANCE OF SMALL TALK

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

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Talented leaders are good at small talk. Not because they like to gossip but because it genuinely improves their relationship with their team, and sharing aspects of their personal lives motivates others to work harder for them.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

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Ask the group how leaders who find small talk difficult can get around this?

Responses could include:

- **Ask questions.** People like it when others take an interest in their lives. It's human nature. Asking questions provides the basis for sharing stories and finding common ground. Make sure you ask open-ended questions to give people room to elaborate on their answers.
- **Share stories.** Think of interesting stories to tell others about yourself.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

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- A good leader can do small talk.
- Engage with the people you meet.
- Ask questions and show an interest in the answers.
- Look for mutual value from every relationship.



## VIDEO 6 – VANITY

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

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Responsible leaders are more likely to welcome opportunities to learn and grow from others.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

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How can leaders avoid the 'vanity trap' and give themselves room to improve?

Suggestions could include;

- **Be open to feedback.** When you show that you are equally open to all types of feedback, you demonstrate self-awareness and the willingness to learn.
- **Give credit and don't stop learning.** When people do well give them credit; there's always something you can learn from them.
- **Be confident.** Some things you do very well, but there's always something that you can work on or a new skill to master. Be sure to keep your mind open to new ideas and possibilities.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

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- A good leader is not vain.
- Be confident about your strengths but aware of the room you have to improve as a leader.
- Be open to feedback from others about your role as a leader.
- Give credit to all those who contribute to successful performance.

## LEADERSHIP SINS – PRACTISE

This exercise takes the form of a 'confessional'. It provides participants with the opportunity to reflect on their own leadership sins and to make plans to avoid committing these sins in future.

Divide participants into groups of 3 or 4. Each participant is provided with a worksheet on which to list their leadership sins.

The sins are:

1. Control freakery
2. Vanity
3. Dithering
4. Needing to be loved
5. Avoiding conflict
6. Being unable to make small talk

In their groups, participants first individually complete their confessional worksheet, identifying those leadership sins which they have personally committed, providing examples where possible.

Participants then share their confessionals with others in their group. Participants should be warned beforehand not to make any judgmental statements about any other person because of their confessions. What they should do is ask the person confessing to provide any concrete examples of their 'sins' and then encourage them to think of ways in which they could reduce the risk of re-committing in the future.

Bring the groups back together and ask them to share any general thoughts, without revealing any individual confessions. In particular, look to share ideas for avoiding 'sins' in future.