

## **National Impact: Badgett-Kritsonis Strategic Leadership Model (BK-SLM) Applied to Managers**

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### **Abstract**

The *Badgett-Kritsonis Strategic Leadership Model (BK-SLM)* focuses on six fundamental principles of effective leadership that managers can use in their daily supervisory role and for the organization's formal appraisal process. The model emphasizes reasonable expectations for staff members regarding their performance that is clearly communicated and consistently enforced (Badgett & Kritsonis, 2014). A staff member's performance is monitored and evaluated for effectiveness by the manager in relation to expectations. The manager provides feedback to the staff member pertaining to the extent to which performance meets expectations. For unmet expectations, the manager utilizes performance coaching focused on the staff member accomplishing unmet expectations in the future. Finally, expectations are systematically reinforced or revised. The model applies to any manager/staff member hierarchical relationship.

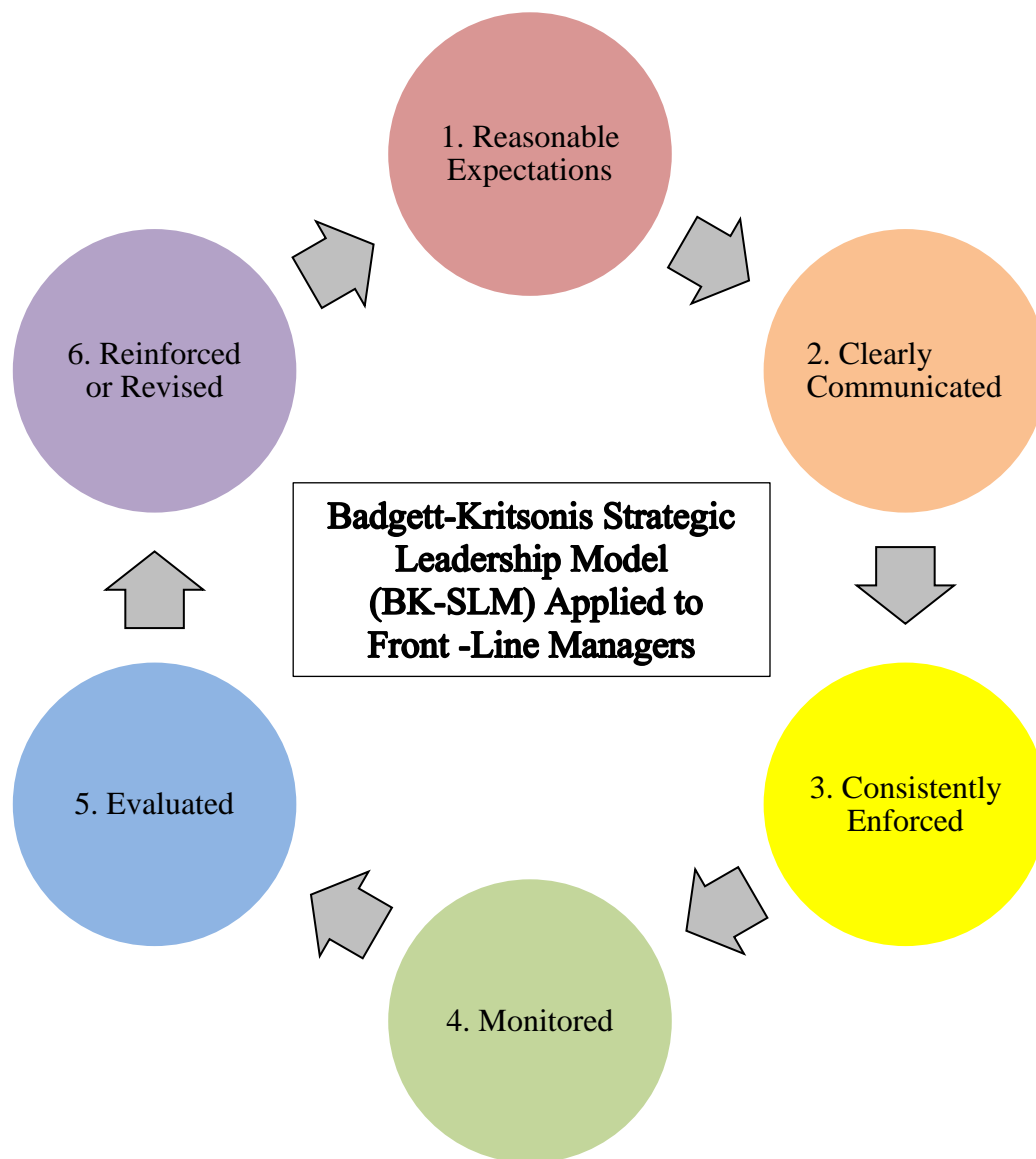
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### **The Context of the Model**

Effective organizational leadership is by design. We believe that organizations governed with clear roles, responsibilities, goals, and reasonable expectations for staff members are destined to succeed because of their consistent messages, purposes, and processes. Leaders can effectively facilitate success for an organization by articulating a supervision leadership model premised on establishing a performance culture in which staff members' performance can flourish and "be their best." This means managers supervising staff members so that they achieve expectations which are vital to the organization's mission, vision, and competitiveness.

We have identified several key principles that support the effective coordination and implementation of human capital in the context of staff members effectively meeting their expectations that are synchronized with the sustainability and future growth of the organization. These principles are outlined in the *Badgett-Kritsonis Strategic Leadership Model*. The model

(see Figure 1) is applicable as a supervisory process for managers to use on a short-term basis (e.g., weekly, monthly, semi-annually, or a project time period). It also can serve as the structure for an annual performance appraisal process.



*Figure 1.* Badgett-Kritsonis Strategic Leadership Model (BK-SLM) applied to front-line managers.

### **Badgett-Kritsonis Strategic Leadership Model (BK-SLM) Applied to Front-Line Managers**

The *Badgett-Kritsonis Strategic Leadership Model* focuses on six fundamental principles of effective supervision: *Step 1*—Expectations established are reasonable; *Step 2*—Expectations are clearly communicated; and *Step 3*—Expectations are consistently enforced. Once these foundational steps are established, the principal advances to the fourth, fifth, and sixth steps: *Step*

4—Results are monitored; *Step 5—Results* are evaluated for effectiveness; and *Step 6—Expectations* are reinforced or revised in a systematic and measured manner. This model is based on effective decision making (Badgett & Kritsonis, 2014, p. 2).

The six fundamental principles of the model are categorized into two levels—*foundation* and *advanced*—to emphasize that the initial three steps pertaining to expectations are building blocks for Steps 4, 5, and 6.

#### FOUNDATION LEVELS

Step 1: Expectations must be reasonable  
 Step 2: Expectations are clearly communicated  
 Step 3: Expectations are consistently enforced

#### ADVANCED LEVELS

Step 4: Results are monitored  
 Step 5: Results are evaluated for effectiveness  
 Step 6: Expectations are reinforced or revised  
 (Badgett & Kritsonis, 2014, p. 2)

### Assumptions of the Model

A primary purpose of this model is to align staff members' performance contributions with the organization's strategies for competitiveness, sustainability, and future growth. A goal of an organization utilizing the *Badgett-Kritsonis Strategic Leadership Model* is to create a *performance culture* (Fay, 2018) in which staff members can achieve *their best* and use their collective efforts to maximize the effectiveness of the organization's vision, mission, and goals. This culture is achieved by creating situations in which staff members are fully engaged and immersed in their pursuit to accomplish expectations.

The organization's leadership must embrace an authentic commitment to the model, including in-depth training of managers regarding how to effectively implement the model's steps. Buckingham (2016) stresses the need for managers to truly understand—conceptually and operationally—the approach an organization uses to address the performance of its staff members. It is also essential that staff members' training and development activities be conducted in advance of implementing the model for them to understand its specifics, ask questions, and offer input.

This model focuses on helping staff members perform at their highest level compared to some organizations in which managers focus on “catching them doing things wrong.” The model stresses *nearby management* in the context of managers “getting the best out of people” through working collaboratively with staff members and being actively engaged in their managerial responsibilities (Caplan, 2013, p. 175). Lastly, the model reflects a “two-way partnership between leaders and employees [staff members]” for continuous improvement beneficial to both staff members and the organization (Peters, 2016, p. 139).

### Application of the Model's Steps

Organizational psychologists have demonstrated that clear, specific, and measurable goals [expectations] lead to high performance. They have also demonstrated that feedback provides the necessary information that enables people [staff members] to improve. If you don't know whether the results are meeting the goals [expectations], how can you make changes? (Schiemann & Dinsell, 2016, p. 127)

Reasonable expectations for staff members' performance that are clearly communicated and consistently enforced are the linchpins for creating an environment in which staff members have no ambiguity in knowing where their behavioral efforts are to be focused and the factors on which they will be evaluated. As Schwandt, Hillman, and Bartz (1989) note: "Employees should know what is expected of them. But strangely enough, more times than not, they don't" (p. 17). The expectation setting process in Step 1 (reasonable expectations) and Step 2 (clearly communicated expectations) should reflect a *collaborative dialogue* between the manager and staff member, and not a monologue by the manager (Dalziel, 2018, p. 135). Staff members are viewed as partners with the manager for maximizing the work unit's productivity and high-quality work.

The model emphasizes limiting the number of expectations, so they are manageable and achievable for the staff member. "Too many simultaneous goals [expectations] can reduce performance" (Schiemann & Dinsell, 2016, p. 128). It is vital to align individual staff members' contributions through meeting expectations with the organization's strategies to succeed (Schiemann & Dinsell, 2016). Once expectations are set (Step 1) and clearly communicated (Step 2) to a staff member, the manager emphasizes the importance of the expectations by consistently enforcing their use (Step 3) as the focal point of a staff member's performance.

After the manager has collaboratively worked with a staff member regarding Steps 1, 2, and 3 (foundation level) of the *Badgett-Kritsonis Strategic Leadership Model*, the manager reviews how information and data will be collected to monitor (Step 4)—the degree to which the staff member's performance is meeting expectations. This data collection for monitoring includes direct observation of the staff member's performance, documents, artifacts, and work products anchored to expectations. Step 4 (monitoring) needs to be well-planned in advance to identify at the time of the foundation level—Steps 1, 2, and 3—the data required to monitor performance for each expectation. The manager needs to consider the *time span of discretion*—how long it takes to realize the impact of what the staff member does on the job—as a reference point regarding data collection (Lawler, 2018, p. 2).

Data and information from Step 4 (monitoring) serve as input to Step 5 (evaluation). Evaluation (Step 5) identifies explicitly a staff member's performance that: (1) met expectations or (2) did not meet expectations. The next action is for the manager to provide feedback to a staff member regarding performance for all expectations—both met and unmet. Feedback works best when staff members are *active participants* in the process (Charan, Barton, & Carey, 2018).

It is essential that the manager view furnishing the staff member with data as *only the starting point* of the feedback process. The desired end result of the feedback process is that the staff member: (1) understands, internalizes, and knows how to modify performance to meet unmet expectations in the future and (2) receives positive reinforcement for expectations met. In both instances—met and unmet expectations—the emphasis is placed on the staff member understanding the "why" of the causation of her/his behaviors with performance.

When feedback indicates that the staff member's performance does not meet an expectation, the manager provides performance coaching. Feedback and coaching are highly interrelated. The difference is that feedback represents the information that *describes performance*, while coaching is the assistance given to *improve performance* when feedback indicates expectations are not met (Hillman, Schwandt, & Bartz, 1990).

The definition for coaching used here is for *performance coaching* (Bartz, 2016). This contrasts with developmental coaching that focuses on assisting staff members in gaining knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform effectively in future job responsibilities and possible

positions representing an advancement in the organization. Performance coaching deals with the “here and now” in relation to meeting expectations.

Coaching is frequently more difficult for managers to effectively perform than is giving feedback. It is often easier for managers to indicate what is “right or wrong” with the performance for an expectation through feedback than it is to specifically identify ways in which the staff member can improve performance for unmet expectations through the coaching process (Bartz, Thompson, & Rice, 2017). When coaching, the manager should strive for a *contextual understanding* of the staff member’s environment in which performance takes place to identify needed behavioral changes more effectively. The manager should also determine the extent to which the staff member needs assistance regarding the resources and skills needed to make the behavioral changes. A basic coaching model is:

1. ***State purpose.*** Be direct: “I want to talk about the expectation for submitting the quarterly report with the agreed upon five critical elements. Element 5 (goals for next quarter) was missing.” Do not create mixed messages—be specific and identify the task(s) or behavior(s) to be addressed.
2. ***State the performance problem.*** Use pre-planned “observable/measurable” language. Describe the expected performance, the actual performance, and the effects of the actual performance on the job.
3. ***Get reaction from the staff member.*** Ask the staff member to react. Keep the discussion on the identified task(s), behavior(s) and expectation. Ask: “Do you agree with my perception of your performance?”
4. ***Analyze the reasons why performance is unsatisfactory.*** Explore with the staff member the possible causes of the performance problem. Ask the staff member to identify what factors he/she has control over which may be causing the problem. Jointly explore factors external to the staff member’s behavior which could be impeding performance.
5. ***Seek a collaborative solution (if possible).*** Ask the staff member for ideas about how to solve the problem. Consider all ideas. Be patient. If the staff member does not have viable ideas, offer your course of action and ask for the staff member’s reaction. Summarize the specific course of action that will be implemented.
6. ***Assistance and follow-up.*** Identify the future assistance you will give and get the staff member’s input. Identify what each of you will do for follow-up and future review of performance to meet the expectation in the future. (Hillman, Schwandt, & Bartz, 1990, p. 26)

Flowing from Step 5 (evaluation) into Step 6 (reinforced or revised) is: (1) positive reinforcement feedback to the staff member for expectations met and (2) coaching activities spearheaded by the manager focused on improving the staff member’s performance concerning expectations that were not met. Through performance coaching, the manager initially works collaboratively with the staff member to flesh out opinions, questions, and suggestions the staff member has regarding modifying behaviors so that an unmet expectation is successfully accomplished in the future. The manager then incorporates his/her solutions with the staff member’s input to finalize an *action plan* for the behaviors needed so that the staff member’s future performance meets expectations. If needed, expectations are revised for future use to hone in the staff member’s performance. If an expectation was unreasonable, adjustments are made

through collaboration by the manager and staff member. This output restarts the model's process back to Step 1—reasonable expectations.

### **The Utility of the Model**

The *Badgett-Kritsonis Strategic Leadership Model* can be utilized by any organization whose leadership is willing to commit to creating a positive and engaging performance culture for its employees. This model's versatility also applies to any manager/employee hierarchy. It refers to an accountant supervising a clerical staff member, a CEO supervising a vice-president, and a loading dock foreman supervising a staff member. This broad utility of the model is due to its focus on clear and understood performance expectations for each staff member that is accompanied by performance feedback and coaching, when necessary. The model's broad base of applicability is also attributable to its simplicity and positive approach in aiding employees in "being their best."

### **Summary**

The *Badgett-Kritsonis Strategic Leadership Model* provides a vehicle for managers to aid in staff members performing effectively. At the heart of this leadership model is reasonable expectations that are clearly communicated to the staff member and consistently enforced by the manager (Badgett & Kritsonis, 2014, p. 1). The staff member is intimately involved in the expectation-setting process via collaborative dialogue with the manager.

Performance data collected by the manager as a part of the monitoring process provides information for evaluating the staff member's performance in relation to expectations and serves as the source of feedback to the staff member. When feedback indicates a staff member's performance did not meet an expectation, the manager utilizes performance coaching. This performance coaching focuses on the behavioral changes needed by the staff member to meet the expectation in the future. Holistically, the performance of staff members is reinforced when their behavior results in expectations being met and revisions are identified for their future behaviors to accomplish unmet expectations.

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